



Loop Abroad Fundraising Guide

Welcome to Loop Abroad!

Congratulations! By joining Loop Abroad, you've taken the first step on a huge adventure. Whenever you travel somewhere new and meet new people, you become a different person. But this journey isn't just about you – it's also about the lives you'll impact and change through what you do.

When you get out and see the world, you get to apply your perspectives and opinions to real issues in the real world. And when you dive into a new culture like that, things start to change: you make new friends, you question what you learn, and you're inspired to make a difference.

Your trip is going to change your life. We really can't wait for you to join us.

But to make it possible, you're going to have to fundraise. You can do it!

You aren't alone here; many Loop Abroad students fundraise to pay for their trips. We know that fundraising can be overwhelming, especially when you're busy with homework, school, jobs, internships, and whatever else you have going on. We put together this fundraising guide to help you make a plan so that you can raise the funds you need to make your dream of seeing the world and changing the world a reality.

Some Things to Remember

Remember that money that you fundraise for your trip is just for that: your trip. That means you can use it for travel expenses such as tuition, airfare, travel insurance, necessary vaccines, and donations for places you're visiting. However, spending fundraising money on things like clothes for your trip or a digital camera isn't ethical. Your family, friends, classmates, and neighbors want to support you, but they need to know their money will be spent in the right place!

If for some reason you can't travel with us, we expect that you will let your sponsors know that you have to cancel, and either return their money or donate it to the Loop Abroad scholarship fund. If you raise more than you need, please either return those funds, donate them to the Loop Abroad scholarship fund, or donate them to a cause you will support during your trip.

We are happy to issue tax receipts to your donors, but their donations will not be deductible. We would love to send a letter of thanks to your donors and share them on our social media if they would like!

Don't forget: we're here to help!

Loop Abroad supports our students, especially when it comes to fundraising. If you don't know what to do, or you get stuck, or you just aren't sure you can make it, call us! We want to hear from you. We want to know how it's going and what you've tried and what we can do to help you. Get in touch!

Fundraising: Leadership in Action

Fundraising is hard work. You have to make a plan and execute it. You have to re-evaluate your goals along the way and make changes when you fail. You have to be creative and have a good attitude, and you have to persevere even when you want to quit. If that isn't good leadership training, I don't know what is!

Think of your fundraising efforts as part of your trip. What can you learn from them? What can you do that you've never done before to make your own future better? You might be surprised how amazing the trip feels when you know you've worked to make it happen.

Get Organized

Most people who tell us they can't fundraise or that it hasn't worked for them... never started. Fundraising takes effort and focus, but it's far from impossible. Getting organized lets you figure out how much money you'll need to raise, what options are available to you, and what might work best for you.

First, determine how much money you'll have to raise. **Add** tuition, air travel, travel insurance, and any necessary vaccines or medicines. **Subtract** any money you plan to contribute on your own, funding already provided by your family, or financial aid awards you received from Loop.

Then, figure out how many days you have until your funds need to be raised. This date is BEFORE the day you leave, because your tuition and airfare have to be secured before then. Being clear about how many days you have to raise the funds you need will help you achieve your fundraising goals.

Helpful Hint:

Potential sponsors may be more likely to help if they know that you're contributing your own money as well. When you're adding your savings to the trip fund or working hard, you tell them something like, "I've already earned x dollars toward this program, but I can't raise all the funds on my own."

Next, brainstorm possible fundraisers. No idea is too silly, too big, or too small at this point – just start thinking of ideas.

We suggest you include a letter campaign in your fundraising plans, as it's extremely effective and doesn't require many resources.

Put your Gifts toward your Cause

Have a birthday between now and your Loop trip? What about Christmas or Hanukkah? Instead of asking for other gifts, ask for funding toward your trip. Make it more rewarding for parents, family and friends: instead of asking for \$50, ask for the money to feed an elephant for one week. Instead of \$100, ask for the cost of a spay or neuter surgery for a street dog. Be sure to take photos of these things once you do them and send them to whoever "gifted" each event.

You have "gifts" other than the presents you receive as well. We're talking about the stuff you're good at. So before you get out and ask others to give on your behalf, make sure you're doing your part as well. Create some art to sell, babysit, give skiing lessons, walk dogs... you get the idea. Take whatever you know how to do and start offering your services to help fund your trip. You might be surprised what you can earn!

Start with Scholarships and Grants

It's a good idea to check with your school and see if they have any scholarships or grants available for this type of travel. If your school has a global programs office, that would be a great place to look. Otherwise, the college counseling office often has a good understanding of what possible scholarships are available.

Don't stop with just your school! Your church or other organization you're involved with may have funds available for students who want to travel, study leadership, and work to better the world – just ask!

There are also some travel grants available. You can Google "Travel Grants for Teens" or "Travel Grants for Students" to get some ideas, but here are a few options to get you started:

- The [Student Youth Travel Association](#) has scholarships available to help students who could not otherwise afford it fund their group travel experiences.
- If you are a high school student from the Chicago area, the [Farther Foundation](#) offers student travel grants to fund up to \$4,000 of a student's travel program.

Earn Referrals

Loop Abroad has a referral bonus which is a great way for students to help cut the cost of their trip. Once you're accepted to a Loop Abroad program, you can earn money off your tuition by referring another student who attends a Loop Abroad summer or semester program. And, even better, the student you refer receives money off his or her program tuition as well!

So spread the word around your school about your trip! You might make a short presentation to let people know they can contact you for more information, or set up a table in the cafeteria to hand out info.

Make a Plan

Before you start anything, it's a good idea to talk with your family about what fundraising strategies are going to work the best. Maybe someone you know has access to a location for a dinner, has a close friend who owns a business that can donate for a raffle, or works in a large office that has fundraising days all the time. You don't have to have everything planned out perfectly, but you might want to get a little more information before you start narrowing down your list.

Make a Potential Sponsor List

Your letter-writing campaign, which is an effort to reach out to your whole community and ask for donations from individuals and organizations alike, will likely be a large part of your fundraising strategy. In order for it to be successful, you should start by making an exhaustive list of all the people you can contact.

Of course your family, friends, teachers, former teachers, and neighbors will be on your list. But don't forget about other people who you know who might help you out: coaches, co-workers, present or former bosses, your doctor or dentist, families you babysit for, parents' friends, parents' employers or co-workers.

But don't stop there. Local businesses can be a huge help when it comes to fundraising. You can walk around and look for businesses close to you, but better yet, get a more complete list from your local Chamber of Commerce.

Businesses are not the only organizations in your community that may be able to support you. You might also want to think about contacting organizations like:

American Legion • Knights of Columbus • Professional organizations • League of women voters • Media Organizations • Veterans of Foreign Wars • Local bloggers • Rotary Club • Local political organizations • Local environmental organizations • Lions Club • Kiwanis • Elks Club • Elected Officials • College organizations • Law firms • Chambers of Commerce • Schools • School Boards • Parent-Teacher Associations (PTA) or other Parent Groups • Alumni Associations • Church and Temple Groups

Helpful Hint:

Remember that small donations add up. You shouldn't focus only on organizations that can give you hundreds of dollars... \$20 and \$30 at a time really makes a difference! You never know what someone has to give, so remember to treat every donation with appreciation.

Fundraising letters

A fundraising letter can be a very effective way to raise awareness for your cause and funds for your trip.

A fundraising letter does a few important things:

- Informs people about your cause
- Shares why the cause is important to you
- Gives an opportunity for others to help

We've included a template letter at the end of this guide to give you an idea of what you might write, but you should feel free to use your own words and express yourself! Be sure to explain what you hope to get out of your Loop Abroad trip and how you plan to share it with your community when you return. At the end of your letter, ask kindly for a donation to help you in your efforts, and explain how people can donate (it may be easiest to set up an online donation site as well as including a mailing address).

However you personalize your letter, you should be sure to keep it to one page and include all the information that someone needs to donate (who checks are payable to, etc).

For larger potential donors who you will meet in person, you may want to prepare two additional pages, which can either be stapled into a packet or placed into a pocket folder.

On one page, include information on Loop Abroad and on the projects you will be helping with. On the second, include information about you – this can be a resume if you have one, or just a description of your GPA, activities, and achievements. You might consider clipping a self-addressed, stamped envelope to your packet to make it easier for them to donate.

3, 2, 1... Contact!

Some of your one-page letters can go directly in the mail. Mail them to family and friends. Ask your school for permission to put them in teacher's or professor's mailboxes, or even student mailboxes! Put them in your neighbors' mailboxes to save yourself postage. You can send an email version instead if you have a big list, but be sure to ask email recipients to forward your request to others, and be sure to include a link to give digitally.

Helpful Hint:

It's much easier to send a letter than to request an in-person meeting... but it's also much easier to say "no" to a letter than to someone sitting across the table from you. Get an in-person meeting whenever you can – it will be worth it!

For other sponsors, you'll want to call first to request a short meeting. If they give you an appointment, bring your letter, information page, and resume and use that to guide your discussion and request. You can leave it behind at the end of the meeting. If you can't schedule a meeting, mail the packet and follow up with a phone call in a week or two.

It's important that you keep a list of everyone you contacted. Record their phone numbers and addresses, and try to record the dates you mailed your letters or met with someone at the organization, as well as the name of who you met with. (You can ask for a business card to be sure you have correct contact data.)

... And then Contact Again

In a week, get back in touch with businesses and organizations you have presented your letter to. Give them a call, and speak slowly and clearly on the phone. Remind them who you are, when you met, and what about. Ask if they've decided to make a contribution. If so, thank them and offer to do a small

presentation in order to meet your supporters and tell them more about the trip and what you plan to learn and do.

If they aren't sure, ask if you could meet with them to talk about this trip and what it means to you. If that's not possible, have a brief discussion on the phone and tell them it means a lot to you that they're considering your request.

If they say that they've decided not to donate, send a short, polite email to thank them for meeting with you.

If you are unable to reach your contact by phone, a follow-up email is perfectly appropriate. Again, remind them who you are, when you met and what about, and ask if he or she has decided to donate to your efforts. Offer to meet again to discuss your goals, and politely ask for a response by a certain date (approximately a week into the future).

You should try to thank each and every person you've met with or contacted within 24 hours of hearing from them, whether they donate or not. You can thank them by call, email, or note. If you contacted everyone at an organization (your parent's office, the teachers or professors at your school), it would be appropriate to thank them as a group by mass email or with a posted sign. Let them know what they as a group contributed to your success, and thank them for letting you contact them.

Use the Internet

While you don't want to stay in your room and try to do ALL your fundraising online, you can use the internet to support your fundraising efforts.

One option is to set up a blog about your trip, and start it by discussing and advertising all your fundraising efforts. News stories can link to this, as can other blogs. You can install a paypal button so that people can make donations directly to you! This is an easy place to direct people in donations emails.

Share your story with blogs that are on your topic. Ask if you can write a guest post about your trip in exchange for posting your donations link, post to Facebook, Instagram and TikTok, tweet potential donors, or ask sponsors to post and tweet about you. This is also a good (additional) way to publicly thank your donors... and potentially get more.

You can announce your fundraisers online by posting an announcement on your local Patch or Craigslist.

There are also plenty of fundraising sites online that allow you to advertise your fundraising cause to your email contacts, social media pages or anyone you like. Beware that most of these keep a percentage of your donations, but they can still be a nice addition to your portfolio of various fundraisers.

10 Fundraiser Ideas

This is not the be-all-and-end-all of possible fundraisers, but it's a list of ideas to get you started.

Bike-a-thon

One of our former students funded his entire trip with a bike-a-thon. He asked sponsors what they'd be willing to donate to him for his trip for every mile that he rode his bike. He talked to teachers, friends, family members, businesses, and people from all over his community. When the big day came, he rode over 30 miles! He invited the sponsors to watch him at the finish line.

If you don't like to bike, you could do something else. A walk-a-thon, run-a-thon, or any other "thon" you can think of shows sponsors that you're willing to put time and energy into this cause. It's also a great event for attracting media attention! Let your newspaper, TV, and radio station know what you'll be doing ahead of time, and include information on how people can donate. Then, invite the same media to come cover your story that day. Be sure to wear a T-shirt or something else that advertises your cause: we can send you a Loop T-shirt if you want!

Bake Sale or Healthy Snack Sale

Bake sales are an obvious fundraiser, but with a little tweaking they can rake in some big bucks. Some helpful suggestions are:

- **Keep costs low through donations.** Ask local bakeries, donut shops, and grocery stores if they'd be willing to donate some baked goods to your cause. In addition, ask grocery stores, convenience stores, and big-box stores if they might be willing to donate baking supplies – many will be happy to give you cake mix with a dented box or cartons of eggs with one broken, or seasonal items. Your best bet is to call a few days ahead and ask to speak with the manager, tell them what you're raising funds for, and ask for their help.

Packaged items like candy and bottled water are great donations as well. If you have these left over, you can sell them at another event to raise money.

If you get donations, be sure to post your sponsors' names at the sale.

- **Know your audience.** If your school or event is focused on healthy eating, have a Healthy Snacks sale instead, and sell bags of baby carrots, pretzel mix, flavored popcorns, fruit kabobs, chocolate zucchini bread, oatmeal bars, carrot muffins, and other similar snacks.
- **Include big-ticket items.** Include a few cakes, pies, or other large items that you can charge \$10 or even \$20 for. Maybe you can get these items donated.
- **Have a donation jar.** Let people know exactly what you're raising money for. Tell them about your trip, talk about it with all your customers, have signs showing where the money you raise will go, and wear a Loop Abroad T-shirt (we can get you one!). Have a large and prominent donation jar where people can give additional money to support you.

- **Choose a great location.** A sporting event or concert, a parent’s office building, or a school or college campus can be a good choice – anywhere there are lots of people!
- **Advertise.** Put up signs for your sale ahead of time. Make them clear and include a picture of where you’re trying to go. Get the word out whatever way you can – if you’re in an office building or school, a mass email can really help.

Coffee House

A “Coffee House” is an event where you bring together musicians and performers from your community to raise money for a cause! People who attend get to listen to some great music or watch some performances, hear about your trip, and have a good time.

First you need a venue, a place to have the event. Maybe you could have it at your school in an auditorium or common room, maybe you could use a hall or event space in town, or maybe you could have it at a restaurant or an actual coffee shop. Ask around! Be prepared that a lot of public or community spaces are reserved well in advance, so get started today!

Then, you’ll need to invite bands, musicians, or other performers to provide entertainment. You could put a fun spin on the night by having an open mic portion, or a Karaoke portion to the night as well if you can borrow a karaoke machine. Tell the bands that you’ve asked to play what you’ll be doing to advertise the event and ask for their help. Don’t ignore dance groups, dancers, improv groups, or small theater groups who might be able to add to the night.

You’ll need help selling tickets, advertising via posters, announcements, and media, and decorating the event when the night comes. You might want to combine your Coffee House with another fundraiser, like a raffle, bake sale, painting sale, auction, or anything else. If your event is not in a restaurant, you should sell coffee as well.

Most Coffee House events charge \$5 or \$10 for admission, but think about your audience. You want to make sure it’s affordable enough that you get a good turn-out. And then start advertising: fliers, announcements, online postings, word-of-mouth, newspapers, newsletters ... whatever you’ve got! Include the date, time, location, and explain what the event is for. Get people motivated to support you!

At your Coffee House, set up a table with pictures and information about your trip. Have a donation box, as well as pledge forms so that people can choose to sponsor you. You may want to make short reminder announcements between performances, use facts about the cause you’re visiting to motivate donations, or even do a slideshow to show people what you’re raising funds to do (but be sure to keep it short!).

50/50 Raffle

A 50/50 Raffle is a simple concept that can be a great way to raise funds. The basic concept is that you sell tickets for a certain price, and the prize is half of the money you’ve raised by selling tickets. So, if you sell \$1,000 worth of tickets, the raffle prize will be \$500! If you’re really lucky, maybe your winner will donate some or all of their winnings back toward your cause.

You can buy premade raffle tickets, but it can be more effective to make your own tickets. You can put some information about your trip or a picture, and include your contact info on the back so that people can reach you to get more involved if they want to! You should number the tickets with a number on both ends. When someone buys a ticket, they can tear off one number and put it in for the drawing, and keep the other half as their proof if their number is drawn.

You can offer \$1 per ticket or 12 for \$10 to encourage people to buy more. You can sell tickets to teachers, friends, and classmates, but don't stop there. Why not set up an information table at a sporting event, concert, community event, or any place with lots of foot traffic, and bring a few friends to sell tickets there? Or, call a local grocery store or movie theater and ask the manager if it would be okay to set up a table for a few hours. Bring a couple friends, dress nicely or in matching shirts, and ask people coming in and out if they'd buy a ticket to support your cause. Talk to them about what you're doing! You'll find the best times for the grocery store (or similar stores) are the late morning or early afternoon on the weekends, where the best time for someplace like the movies would be Friday or Saturday night. Coffee shops, school events, bakeries, or anywhere that has lots of people can be an opportunity to sell tickets!

Set the prize drawing date about a month into the future so that you have time to do a few events if you want. Then, once you've picked a winner, contact them and let them know they've won!

Bottle and Can Drive

If you live in a state that offers a refund on soda cans and bottles, a can and bottle drive can be a great way to raise money. You might need to get permission from your town, so be sure to ask first.

Then, make fliers. Bright paper will get people's attention. Choose a date about one week into the future and let people know you will be collecting can and bottle donations to raise money for your trip. Put the fliers on community bulletin boards, on telephone poles, and in other conspicuous places. See if you can get local media to publish an announcement of your fundraiser. Ask people to bag their cans and bottles and put them by the curb.

You're going to need a bunch of friends to help you, and you're going to need cars, trucks, or vans to transport the bottles. You will probably want to bring some plastic bags and wear rubber gloves; if you can get these donated, all the better! Go door to door, picking up the bags people have left at the curb, or knocking on doors asking if people have any cans and bottles they would donate to your fundraising cause.

Once you've collected all your bottles and cans, take them to the grocery store or another recycling depository to return them. If you want to undertake a bigger fundraiser, see if you can get a community or school group, like the school band or the Lion's Club, to participate along with you and split the donations with you.

Yard Sale

You can either have your own yard sale with stuff from your house, or you can have a bigger-scale fundraiser and create a community yard sale. Either way, the steps are similar:

- **Arrange a time and place.** Set a date and time – usually a Saturday in the morning is best. If you’re planning to have the sale at home, set a rain date for Sunday. If you’re planning a bigger sale, see if you can get the use of a hall in town (Knights of Columbus, VFW, etc.) for free for the day of your sale.
- **Collect items:** If you’re having a home yard sale, work with your parents to collect items for sale from around the house. If you can tag these as you go, all the better. Keep prices reasonable, with lots of items around \$1, \$2, and \$5. If your sale will be bigger, you’ll need to ask people for donations. You can reach out via email, social media, your school announcements or newspapers, your school’s PTA, your town newspaper, radio and TV mentions, and anything else you can think of. Be sure to mention what kind of donations you’re accepting, where people can drop them off, when the sale will take place, and what it’s for.
- **Organize:** You want to make sure set-up goes as smoothly as possible, so start sorting items into different categories: books, clothes, toys, baby items, kitchen items, and household goods. If you can tag these as you sort them, you’ll save a lot of time on sale day.
- **Publicize:** Tell everyone you can! In the week leading up to your sale, publicize the event and what it’s raising money for through social media, town signs, newspaper articles, Craigslist ads, school announcements, posters on bulletin boards and public places like the library, TV and radio mentions, and with large, bright, clearly worded posters at main intersections and on your street.
- **Set up and sell!** You’ll need friends and family to help you unload all the items and, if the space you’re using doesn’t have tables, you may have to borrow card tables from neighbors and friends. Price items individually with tags or as a group with signs (“All books 50 cents”). Have a safe place to keep money, and have change available for your volunteers to check people out. You may want to ask everyone volunteering to wear the same color T-shirt so that they’re easy to find.
- **Mix with other fundraisers:** Community yard sales can bring in a large number of people, so they are a good time to offer other fundraising efforts as well. Why not have a bake sale on the side? Why not see if a few companies in your town will donate items to be raffled off? Why not have a 50/50 raffle at the same time?

Household Needs Sale

Selling chocolate bars, pizza kits, wrapping paper and candles are all fundraisers that have been done before, but you don’t have to buy something from a fundraising company to use it as a fundraiser. Why not sell something that people actually need? Bagged coffee, adhesive bandages, driveway salt, light bulbs, tissues, shampoo, or other items that are frequently used by households can make good fundraisers because people often need them anyway. Buy in bulk, use coupons and sales, ask for discounts, or get items donated whenever possible to keep your costs low.

Then, set up a sales table anywhere that people can stop and talk to you. School events like back-to-school nights, sporting events, concerts, or open houses are good options. Or, maybe you can

send home an order form with everyone from your school. Come up with a theme that matches whatever item you can get cheaply. For example, if you're selling light bulbs, title the flier "What a great idea!", or if you're selling tissues, title it, "I'll cry if I can't go!" Charge just \$1 more for the item than it cost you. You might find it helps your sales to tie each item with a ribbon and a little tag that thanks the donor for his or her donation and tells them how they can follow along with your journey (through your social media pages, blog or email, or whatever else).

Tee Shirt Sale

Selling tee shirts can be a great way to raise money for your trip. The trick is to come up with a cool shirt that people will actually want to wear and that shows their support for your cause. You'll have the most luck if you focus not on your trip, but on the cause your trip supports. For example, you might make a beautiful elephant tee shirt for your trip to work at the Elephant Nature Park. You could also buy bracelets or scarves made in the country you're visiting and sell these instead.

You can pre-order your items and sell them at an event, or sell them from a photo (print a large, color glossy photo to show people who order) and then order the exact right amount. Whether you design your own shirt or bracelet or pick a design that's already for sale, your sale serves another purpose. The shirts or bracelets themselves get people talking about your trip. Maybe you can even recruit a friend to join you and earn a discount for each of you.

Blue Jeans Day

If your school (or your parent's office) has uniforms, see if you can have a Blue Jeans Day to raise funds for your trip. The idea is simple: everyone that donates \$5 gets to wear blue jeans on a certain Friday. At an office, you might charge \$10, or you could charge \$10 for teachers at your school and \$5 for students. You might help get people motivated by giving a short presentation or sending an email (full of pictures) about why this trip is important to you, how you'll help while you're there, and what you plan to bring back to your community with you.

Blue Jeans Days are great to combine with a donations drive, because people have your cause on the mind before they leave home. You could let them know that on Blue Jeans Day you'll be collecting used clothes, school supplies, toiletries, or whatever else you'd like to bring as donations to your project.

Spaghetti Dinner

You're going to need some help with this one, but whether you have it at your house, school, church, or a hall in town, it's sure to be a success.

Basically, you are selling tickets to a spaghetti dinner. (You can make it any kind of dinner you want, even themed to the cuisine of the country you will visit on your trip. A spaghetti dinner is common because it's easy to cook, relatively cheap, and everyone likes it.) You and your family and friends prepare all the food, and for \$10 per place (charge a smaller price like \$3 or \$5 for kids), people can attend and have a nice night with the community. If you prefer, you can charge more and have a fancier dinner or even offer live entertainment – get a feel for what might work in your community.

Once you've found a place to have the dinner, start advertising! Give yourself a month or so to sell tickets, and get creative! Sell them at school, at the grocery store, or anywhere that there are a lot of

people. Ask your parents and the parents of friends to sell them through work, and ask local businesses to sell tickets at the counter. Use Facebook invites or lunch table booths to sell tickets as well. You might plan your dinner right before or after another school event, like a sports game, to increase attendance.

Once you know how many tickets you've sold, figure out how much food you need. Anything you can get donated will help – whether it's paper plates and plastic cups or parmesan cheese and pepper, maybe local grocery stores or restaurants will be willing to help.

A popular alternative to a spaghetti dinner is a pancake breakfast – pancakes are inexpensive and easy to prepare, and this can be a fun event for families if you also provide entertainment like face painting or balloon animals. Consider planning the pancake breakfast for a Saturday or Sunday before another town event to increase traffic, and sell tickets through elementary schools in town.

You'll need lots of friends to help you cook, decorate, serve, and clean up. You should have a little information booth or presentation during the dinner so that people can learn about what you plan to do on your trip. Make sure to have a place where people can give additional donations if they'd like, and be sure to thank everyone for coming at the end. It would be a good idea to send thank-you notes to everyone who helped you prepare or donated funds, time, supplies, or connections.

... And Another Ten Ideas!

Now that you have some idea how to set up a fundraiser, here are a few more ideas to which you can apply those same skills!

Chocolate, Coffee, or Pizza Sale: There are lots of products sold specifically for the purpose of raising donations, but you don't even need any of those. You can sell chocolate bars, donuts, cups of coffee, or pizza by the slice at a local sporting event or any kind of outdoor event as a fundraiser. If you are on a college campus or have a college nearby, consider selling food outside the dorms in the evenings.

Household Chores Drive: Allow people in your neighborhood or town to sign up for chores by the hour, and suggest an hourly donation that will help fund your trip. You may offer only a certain chore (raking leaves, shoveling snow) or make yourself available for anything. Be sure to let your family know where you plan to be, and get help from a friend if you'll be going to homes you don't know well.

Gift Basket Raffle: Put together gift baskets of like items, such as a movie-themed basket with popcorn, and candy, or a travel-themed basket with a neck pillow, novel, and wrap. Sell raffle tickets for these baskets at public events or places. This works best if you can get the baskets or the items for the baskets donated by local businesses, whose names should be prominently displayed on or near the baskets.

Plaque Sale in your Donor's Name: For a set price (\$50 or \$100 is a good start) you can put a donor's name on a small plaque to be posted in the school, community, or project where your trip will attend. You will be able to provide photos for the media.

Babysitting Fundraiser: Get a few friends together and have a babysitting fundraiser, where families can drop their children at your house on a particular evening or weekday for a set price that will go straight to your trip fund. You'll want to have pre-arranged activities, games, movies, and books.

Book Sale: Collect donations of used books and put on a book sale! You'll need to use a public space and give yourself about a month to collect donations – and it will help if you have lots of media attention (ask in your local newspaper and through local organizations) and a public place where people can donate books for your sale.

Media Stories: Contact local newspapers, radio stations, and TV stations and ask if you can write or share the story of your upcoming trip and ask for donations. You might even ask for a newspaper, blog, or organization with a newsletter to sponsor you in return for your writing a weekly column during your trip.

Tutor for Tuition: Put up signs around your school, library, and town bulletin boards offering to tutor whatever subjects you're good at for \$10/hour, with all proceeds going toward your trip tuition.

Teach for my Trip: Arrange to teach a class where all the admission fees will go toward your trip. Maybe you can teach aerobics at an adult ed program in the evenings, teach an arts-and-crafts class after school at an elementary school, or teach a one-time class at a library or other community center. Charge \$10 for admission.

Coffee in Class: Get permission from your school administration to charge \$1 or \$2 for students to have permission for one day to drink coffee in class. Or, you could charge more and allow everyone to pre-order and pick up their coffee in the lobby that day. (Make sure you know the drink prices before setting your prices so that you're sure to make at least \$2 on each drink.) This can work with gum, soda, or anything not normally allowed in your school classrooms.

After your Fundraiser

Be proactive about saying thank-you! Thank your donors with thank-you notes. See if you can get the newspaper to publish a story on your fundraiser, mention the people who helped you in the story, and send a copy to them. Let people know how much money you raised, and how far you have left to go! Keep the community involved in and excited for your journey.

Some Tips

If you haven't fundraised before, you might not be sure what's appropriate. Ask! Ask your parents, or call us and ask us – we can help you figure it out!

Do:

- **Be up-front.** Let potential sponsors know early in your conversation that you're asking for money.
- **Suggest a donation amount.** Most people aren't going to be sure how much they should donate. Suggest a smaller amount (under \$50) for individuals, but do some research on organizations or businesses and suggest an amount that matches their resources.
- **Be enthusiastic.** Don't be afraid to show potential sponsors why this trip means so much to you and why you're so excited to go.

- **Plan ahead.** When you want to set up a fundraiser, give yourself plenty of time to figure out the logistics and make sure you have everything you need to succeed.
- **Ask for help.** There are people around you who've held fundraisers before – ask for their help. They may have a good idea of what works and what doesn't, they can probably tell you what you'll need to do to be successful, and they may even want to get involved.
- **Double-check.** Make sure you proofread your letter, check the spelling of any names, put subject lines in your emails, and keep track of all info so you can follow up.
- **Collect the money.** Sometimes people or organizations forget to send a check, even though they've agreed to donate. Politely remind them and, whenever possible, collect payment on the spot.
- **Network.** Ask people to refer you to other organizations that might be interested in helping you – you never know! When you contact that organization, be sure to tell them who referred you.

Don't:

- **Don't Procrastinate.** Your program will be here before you know it! People will be more willing to donate when they see you planning ahead than if you're scrambling at the last minute.
- **Don't Lie.** Be clear that this money is for you to participate in a Loop Abroad program. You can mention that your tuition helps support all kinds of wonderful organizations, but in the end, these are funds so that you can travel, explore the world, help out, learn something new, and have a great experience.
- **Don't Give up!** Some people will say "no", but that's okay. Just say thank you and keep going.
- **Don't be shy!** Approaching new people and organizations to ask for money and planning a successful fundraiser don't work if you aren't willing to reach out and politely but directly ask for help.
- **Don't keep the money if you don't attend.** It's disingenuous to fundraise for a trip and then not attend. If for some reason you decide not to attend, you should return all raised funds.

When You Return

It's very important that you formally thank all your sponsors not only right after receiving their help, but also when you return from your trip. Big or small donor, friend or stranger, it doesn't matter. Send them a letter or email telling them about your experience and thanking them for making your dream come true. Include a photo or two from your trip, and be sure to send them a link to any media coverage you receive.

You may even want to arrange for a story in the local paper where you share what you've learned and thank everyone who sponsored you, either as a group or by name. This not only shows gratitude for

what you've received, but helps to ensure that future students have the same fundraising opportunities that you had.

This is a good time for you to give back. Offer to give presentations of what you've learned to the organizations and groups that supported you. Write a story for the paper that published your fundraising story. Be sure to show your supporters what this experience meant to you.

Help from Loop

Need a phone call to a potential donor? Need a letter or signature? Want to know if you can do something special for a donor during your trip? Let us know! Call us or email admissions@loopabroad.com.

Sample Letters

On the next couple of pages, you'll find sample fundraising letters to business and organization heads, and newspaper editors or other media professionals. You can fill in the blanks and use these letters as they are, rewrite them as you see fit, or write your own letter completely. We hope you'll find them helpful.

Congratulations again on your acceptance to Loop Abroad! Get ready for a life-changing adventure. Stick with your fundraising goals, and you'll get there.

Ms. Business Professional
President
Name of Organization
Street Address
Town, ST 12345

Dear Ms. Professional:

I am a junior at Name of School. I have been accepted to a Loop Abroad based on my academic record, references, and demonstrated interest in giving back and learning about leadership. I am writing to ask if you will sponsor me with a financial contribution.

I'll be attending the in . [Here you should discuss what will take place during your trip, why it is of particular interest to you, and what you hope to learn and apply to your community and your future plans.]

Loop Abroad provides small, focused travel programs that allow motivated students to experience other cultures and give back while learning about real-world problem solving. Their programs are a life-changing experience where students can build leadership skills, question their beliefs, and work toward discovering what it takes to make a real impact on the world.

Through readings, workshops, discussions, and hands-on activities, I hope to learn all about a new culture and develop some new skills. My trip is certainly about giving back, but it's also about expanding my horizons and experiences. I feel honored to have the chance to travel and study with an organization that works with and supports the Elephant Nature Park, the Save Children in Asia Organization, the Somaly Mam Foundation, Pour un Sourire d'Enfant, the Serengeti Foundation, and the Karen hill tribes of Northern Thailand.

I have enclosed a short biography to tell you more about me: who I am, what I bring to this program, and what I hope to accomplish in life. I have also included a page about Loop Abroad and my program in particular, but I encourage you to visit www.Loopabroad.com for more information.

My tuition for the program is \$ _____. I have \$ _____ from my savings/my family/financial aid/previous fundraising, but I still need another \$ _____. It is my hope that Name of Organization will assist me with a donation.

I would greatly appreciate any contribution. If you want to sponsor me, please make your check payable to Loop Abroad and write my name in the memo line. I have attached a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

I would be happy to discuss my request with you. Please feel free to call me at 123-456-7890.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Student, Name of School

Ms. Newspaper Editor
Editor
Name of Newspaper
Street Address
Town, ST 12345

Dear Ms. Editor:

I am a junior at Name of School. I have been accepted to Loop Abroad program based on my academic record, references, and demonstrated interest in giving back and learning about leadership. I am working to raise funds for my tuition. I'd like to propose an article for Name of Newspaper to help me reach my goal.

I'll be attending the in , [Here you should discuss what will take place during your trip, why it is of particular interest to you, and what you hope to learn and apply to your community and your future plans.]

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My proposal is this: I would like to write a series of three articles on my experiences abroad. I could share what I've learned and interview leaders in their field. I think my story would be interesting to your readers and help inspire others of any age to travel and volunteer abroad and to learn about other cultures.

In return, I would ask Name of Newspaper to help me cover part of my tuition. Even with my fundraising efforts and contributions from my savings, I still need \$400. Could Name of Newspaper donate that amount?

I've attached a short biography of me and a little information on my Loop Abroad program as well. I'll call you in one week to discuss this proposal, or I can be reached any time at 123-456-7890.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Student, Name of School

