



# Correspondent Volunteer Fundraising

*On your way to an adventure!*

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# Fundraising

Fundraising is an integral part of AMIGOS' philosophy and training. It provides an outlet for the core concepts of service, lifelong learning, and community involvement. Volunteers, through their efforts to raise money, are responsible for the Latin American program costs. The good news is, you are not alone! AMIGOS has many support networks in place. All of the suggestions in this booklet are proven successes. When you arrive in your host community in Latin America, it is possible that only a few people will know about AMIGOS. You will have to **promote AMIGOS** and yourself before you begin to promote public health, community development and education. These skills that are crucial to your success in the field can be learned and developed through fundraising. Whether you are rallying community members behind a dental hygiene program or convincing the Rotary Club to support your volunteerism, you must know how to explain AMIGOS and convince people to support your efforts.

**Fundraising is building relationships**—People give to people! Donors are more interested in the **why** of AMIGOS than they are in the **what**. People give in order to get: they don't want to feel that they are "giving away" their resources. They want to feel that they are "investing" and getting something in return. They are living adventures and humanitarianism through you.

**Never apologize for asking.** To quote John D. Rockefeller, Jr. "Never think you need to apologize for asking someone to give to a worthy cause, any more than as though you were giving him an opportunity to participate in a high-grade investment."

**Never let the statement "Why are you helping Latin America when there is so much to do right here in our own country?" stop you from pursuing a gift.** The answer is that service in Latin America is the means by which AMIGOS develops leaders who are sensitive to cross-cultural differences, brave enough to explore, and who understand and can relate to the challenges of diversity. These skills are important for tomorrow's business, government, and service leaders, at community, nation-wide and global levels.

**Why Pay to Volunteer?** (Excerpt from Transitions Abroad Magazine, by Le Ann Joy Adam July/August 2000 issue, p.83)

*"Why pay money to volunteer?" There was a time when I fully shared the thinly veiled suspicion behind this frequently asked question. But having learned the hard way, I now encourage everyone I talk to about volunteering to go through a well-established placement organization. The benefits include:*

- **Orientation:** This usually includes important pre-departure reading materials as well as on-site orientation on local culture, history, and customs.
- **Language and Technical Training**
- **Arranged Accommodations:** A supportive and caring homestay environment provides an important connection to the culture and a first-hand view of social and political events in the country.
- **A Safety Net:** Staff are there to provide logistical and emotional support.
- **Clear Expectations:** The volunteer's responsibilities are clear and well-defined.
- **Affordability:** When you calculate the difference between traveling to a country on your own and the cost of participating in a program, you might be surprised by how little the difference is.

*My advice to the would-be volunteer with good intentions, great organizational skills, and a real interest in international development and cross-cultural education is to allow an experienced organization to channel that energy, intelligence, and good intentions into an established volunteer program."*

# EMAIL & LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

Letters and emails are very effective, and can personally target individuals or groups. Your objective is to describe AMIGOS briefly, including personal information about why you want to be an AMIGOS Volunteer and what you hope to gain from it, and to capture your reader's desire to help make a difference in someone's life. The letter-writing campaign is a cycle which requires attention in every phase. Important elements include to whom you are writing, the letter itself, follow-up, thank you, and obtaining further leads for fundraising contacts.

## Identify Potential Donors

You should strive to develop a list of 100 or more potential donors to whom the fundraising letter will be sent. An effective list is vital to your success and is one that includes a large number of people who are likely to give generously to AMIGOS on your behalf. Previous Volunteers who successfully fundraised most or all of the participation fee through a letter-writing campaign have suggested these guidelines for developing such a list:

- ❑ Giving is personal. Think of people who know you or your family well.
- ❑ Involve your family deeply in preparing the list. Face it – they know a lot more people than you do who are able to give.
- ❑ Preparing your list will take some time, so give it time. Start early. And you'll want to break up the task and look at it from different angles.
- ❑ Use your own judgment to think of people who will a) want to give and b) have the means to give.

The table below provides sources of names for your list. Of course, this is only a guide to spur your thinking. You will no doubt think of additional sources. If you use this approach you will have no trouble coming up with 100 or more names who want to give.

<b>Family Members and Family Friends</b>	Your extended family	Aunts, uncles, and grandparents on both sides of the family
	Everyone whom you and your friends know	Holiday greeting cards lists
		Church, synagogue, & mosque members (whether you attend or not)
<b>Professional Acquaintances</b>	Everyone who works with you in a professional capacity	School teachers, academic advisors & coaches
		Music teachers, exercise instructors, tutors, club/organization sponsors, counselors & work supervisor
		Doctors and dentists, especially those with Latin American backgrounds (whether you know them or not)
<b>Parents' Professional &amp; Business Associates</b>	Who do your parents work with?	Co-workers
	Who do they know through business or professional activities?	Banking contacts and brokerage account
		Business clients or customers or suppliers
		Professional associations
<b>Parents' Social Contacts</b>	Who do you and your parents know through clubs, societies, support groups or leisure activities?	Service clubs (ex: Rotary, National Charity League), PTA, social clubs, country club members, scouts, or sports partners (for ex. golf, tennis, racquet ball)
<b>Parents of Your Friends</b>	Who among your friends' parents will give to AMIGOS if you ask?	School friends, work friends, extracurricular friends

## Your Letter/Email



Potential donors are most likely to respond to emotional appeals. Rational arguments, poetic paragraphs and brilliant displays of vocabulary will not connect the potential donor to you. Use the following guidelines: [example letters follow]

- ❑ Create an email for on-line donations and send a letter, as well. It is OK to send both to the same person.
- ❑ Establish a personal relationship with the potential donor.
- ❑ Put yourself in the place of the person reading the letter.
- ❑ Use language that would appeal to the reader on an individual level. ("I am writing to you on behalf of AMIGOS because I want you to know how important your help is.")
- ❑ Always conclude with a personal note.
- ❑ Write from your heart, not your head. ("Only through your donation will this experience be possible.")
- ❑ Do not use sensationalism or exaggeration; be descriptive and precise.
- ❑ Do not overload the reader with data; however, mentioning some current issues about Latin America is effective.
- ❑ Don't show off with long words, sentences, and paragraphs. The longer the letter, the less likely it will be read completely.
- ❑ Tell a story to illustrate the need, rather than just describe the issue.
- ❑ Inform but do not moralize; do not try to change the way the potential donor thinks.
- ❑ Use facts and reasoning that appeal to human compassion, justice, love, and caring.
- ❑ Show how the recipients benefit; tell what their money will do to help others. For example, "With your \$100 contribution, cement and other necessary supplies can be purchased to construct four latrines in Paraguay."
- ❑ Request a specific dollar amount after showing what donations mean for the project.
- ❑ Give them directions on how to donate. Ask them to either write a check to Amigos de las Americas or to go to our on-line credit card donations link at <http://io.amigoslink.org/commerce/donationform-cv.html>. If you direct people to donate online, you must make them aware of a **service fee of 2-5%** of their donation. The credit card companies vary in the service fees they charge, and as a non-profit organization, AMIGOS cannot absorb these surcharges. Be sure to ask donors to include your **name and account number** when they submit an online donation.
- ❑ Include a copy or attachment of the AMIGOS fundraising brochure.

## Follow-Up: The Key to Success

You should follow-up every letter with some form of personal contact. The best follow-up includes both a phone call and/or a personal visit. Within two weeks of sending your letter, call the potential donor and see if your request for support has been considered. If given the opportunity, talk more about AMIGOS.

Ask if you could arrange a personal visit to discuss AMIGOS and your goals in greater depth. If you are invited, treat the personal visit as if it were a job interview. Dress appropriately, arrive prepared (bringing AMIGOS materials with you) and let your enthusiasm for AMIGOS do the rest!

If at any point during your contacts, potential donors indicate a lack of interest in contributing, express appreciation for their time. Even if you don't receive a donation, try to get at least one referral or fundraising idea from every contact.

You will be amazed to find out how many people will be honored to help you raise the funds to participate in AMIGOS. After all, you are devoting an entire summer to do something that others can only dream of doing.

## Thank You

The people who support you deserve a proper thank you. This means: 1) a phone call followed by a thank you note, 2) a letter from Latin America, 3) a letter and picture upon your return from the project, or 4) a personal visit.

This type of follow-up allows donors to have a connection to you and your project experience and may make them a very supportive donor if you decide to return as a veteran Volunteer.

# TARGETING GROUPS

## Identify Key Groups



**Local Service Clubs** generally choose two or three major fundraising projects each year. All clubs, including the **Kiwanis, Jaycees, Optimists, Junior League, Rotary, Elks, Masons, Knights of Columbus, Circle K,** and **Lions** should be approached. Any community service organization is a possible funding resource.

**Religious Organizations** will sponsor young people who perform community service work. Your best bet is within your family's own religious affiliations; however, don't be afraid to venture outside your denomination. Most large churches have clubs and funds that can be tapped, i.e.--youth groups, women's auxiliaries, business breakfast groups, missions abroad, community outreach programs, etc.

**Corporations and Small Businesses** generally have some funds set aside for public relations and community outreach. AMIGOS is an easy choice for these groups because they can see their money directly making a difference in people's lives. Remember, the best businesses to approach are those where you already have a contact. However, do not be afraid to approach new businesses.



## Your Letter to Groups

Send your letter to a personal contact within the organization or to a decision-maker on the funding committee. Follow the same general guidelines as outlined previously. This time, make a conscious effort to match your request with the needs of the organization. In addition, suggest a format where you could make a presentation to the group as a whole or to the funding committee.

## Set-Up Call

Within two weeks of sending your letter, call your contact to make sure that your letter was received. Ask your contact when you could give a presentation; offer to share more information about your plans with AMIGOS.

When you schedule a presentation, be sure you have all the details: time, location, number of people expected, room set-up and technical/ AV support available.

## Presentations

This is your opportunity to show the potential funding group members that they should support you. Have a well-thought-out agenda with specific requests ready for the potential funders. Don't forget to practice, practice, practice. The more comfortable you are with the content of your presentation, the smoother your delivery will be.

Here is a sample outline:

- ❑ Relax and look happy.
- ❑ Introduce yourself and explain why you are there.
- ❑ Briefly summarize "your history" and your involvement in the local area.
- ❑ Introduce AMIGOS to the group— Looking at the AMIGOS informational materials will help you.
- ❑ Show the video.
- ❑ Conclude your presentation with the sales pitch. Explain why you want to volunteer and what the experience will do for you. Energy and enthusiasm are crucial here!
- ❑ Ask for questions and invite interested individuals to come up and talk to you.
- ❑ Thank the group for inviting you.



## Follow-Up

Within 24 hours of your presentation, handwrite a letter to the individual who invited you. Reaffirm your enthusiasm for AMIGOS, elaborate on an idea or question that came out during your presentation, and reiterate the deadline for decisions and receiving funds.

## Thank You

Send thank-you notes to the primary people in the group, within 48 hours. You have already thanked your personal contact in the follow-up letter; now it is time to make one last impression on the important decision-makers in the organization.

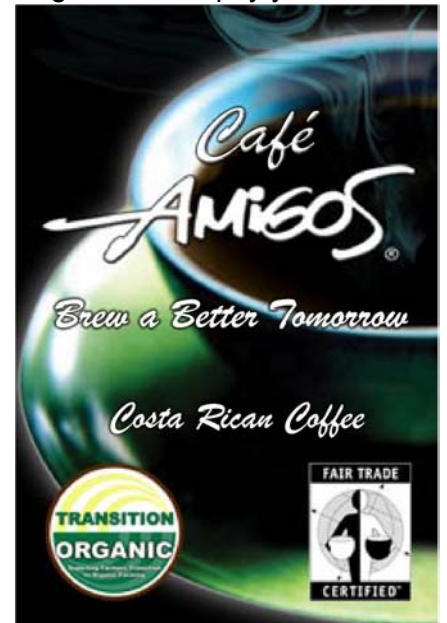
# CAFÉ AMIGOS: THE AMIGOS BRAND OF COFFEE

Selling Café AMIGOS is an effective way to raise money for your participation fee. If you do not have the resources to start a letter writing campaign, you always have the option of sell our coffee to your friends, relatives, neighbors, local coffee shops, and progressive grocery stores.

## How do I sell Café AMIGOS?

Coffee sales are as easy as directing people to order coffee through the Café AMIGOS website, [www.cafeamigos.org](http://www.cafeamigos.org), similar to how you would direct people to donate online for you. When they place their order, they should write **your name and account number** in the “Comments” section of the order form. An alternative to this is to order a shipment of coffee for yourself and distribute it in your neighborhood to interested people. If you choose this method, you will have control of the price, and past volunteers were able to sell coffee at \$15 per bag or more, giving you a larger share to pay your participation fee.

Where the Money Goes:	
\$4	Goes toward your participation fee
\$4	Directly goes to CoopeAgri and host communities in Costa Rica
\$4	Covers administrative costs incurred in shipping, labeling, and marketing
<b>\$12</b>	<b>Total Cost per pound (bag)</b>



**Supporting Family Farms** Café AMIGOS coffee is grown and roasted by a cooperative of coffee growers called CoopeAgri, which includes AMIGOS host families high in the lush mountains of San Isidro, Costa Rica. Many of the farmers are current or past host families for AMIGOS volunteers. Others live in the communities where we work. While helping to protect the environment, this fair trade coffee promotes sustainable development by raising the income and living standard for small farmers in Costa Rica. The cooperative is certified Fair Trade by FLO International. For more information, visit [www.coopeagri.co.cr](http://www.coopeagri.co.cr).

**Protecting the Environment** Costa Rica is beautiful, mountainous and lush, full of rainforests, beaches and diverse animals. Café AMIGOS is working hard to make sure it stays that way. How? We partner with local farmers who own the land they work on and care about its future. Our coffee beans are dried using only solar energy and what’s leftover is used as organic fertilizer.

**The Best Beans** Why do our coffee beans taste so good? Because they are grown in an environmentally friendly way. Café AMIGOS is Transition Organic, meaning that it is grown using organic farming practices established by the FDA. Farms that have been using these practices for at least three years are given the official Organic label. It guarantees you a safe and healthy cup of great tasting coffee. Since our beans are grown, harvested, roasted and packaged by workers who are paid a Fair Trade Certified wage, you can taste their love in every cup.

**A Win-Win-Win Situation** Heard of a win-win situation? We decided that wasn’t good enough. Café AMIGOS takes it one step further. You win by getting a great bag of delicious coffee. AMIGOS Volunteers, partners and communities win the support they need. And Costa Rica’s people, plants and animals win good jobs and a clean environment. All proceeds from the purchase of this coffee help support AMIGOS volunteers and community development projects throughout the Americas.

# APPLYING FOR GRANTS, INTERNSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS



## Identify Funding Sources at School

Every school offers different opportunities for fundraising. Your challenge is to consult with people who can help you find the money. Expect to have informational interviews with at least five school administrators before locating sufficient funding. Here are possible sources:

- Career Center (Internships)
- Committee of Admissions
- Spanish/Portuguese Departments
- Education Schools
- Multicultural Studies Department
- Alumni Fund (President's Fund)
- Latin American Studies Program
- Peace Studies
- Study Abroad Office
- Summer Programs Office
- Nursing Studies
- Anthropology Department
- Financial Aid for Special Studies
- Community Service Groups
- Women's/Minorities Studies Program
- International Studies/Development Dept

## Identify Funding Sources

### 1) On-line

Several websites have gone up recently to help people like you identify funding sources for international volunteer work. At the time of this publishing, the websites below offered numerous funding sources. They are definitely worth reading through, investigating, and then applying for the scholarships which you are eligible for.

<http://www.charityguide.org/charity/scholarships.htm> -lists several corporate and private foundation scholarship opportunities to encourage and reward community service involvement.

[http://www.studyabroad.com/forum/financial\\_aid.html](http://www.studyabroad.com/forum/financial_aid.html)

<http://www.fund-raising.com/ideabank3.html>

[FastWeb](http://www.fastweb.com/ib/charityguide-1f) ([www.fastweb.com/ib/charityguide-1f](http://www.fastweb.com/ib/charityguide-1f)) offers on-line scholarship searches that will be customized to your individual skills and interests. Although you will be presented with a fair amount of advertising, [FastWeb's scholarship search](#) is free and its database is highly accurate and continuously updated.

### 2) Books on Sources for Funding Your AMIGOS Experience

Alternately, you may wish to review Miriam Weinstein's 240 page book: *Making a Difference: Scholarships for a Better World*. The book showcases prestigious scholarships and fellowships that: reward community service, invest in "social entrepreneurs," and provide funds for studies in public health, labor, peace, and the environment.

## Make Contacts

Once you have located a target source of funds, you must make **personal contacts with the decision-makers**. It is important to know whether a committee or an individual decides who receives funding. Your purpose for this contact is to informally discuss your proposal. Ask what types of proposals have been funded in the past, what project characteristics are desired, and ask for any suggestions regarding the application process. In short, try to get a feel for the needs of the potential funder and make them aware of and confident in your candidacy.

## Tailor the Proposal

Each funder has different requirements. **All funders will require some kind of statement of purpose.** Use the general guidelines already mentioned. **Always be aware of your audience.** A proposal that sounds great to your twenty-year-old cousin probably won't convince a college professor to give you a few thousand dollars. Do anything that you can think of to further enhance your candidacy, such as sending resumes and references or having a teacher who supports your efforts make a personal phone call to the chair of the funding committee.

Your goal is to frame your AMIGOS experience in a manner that is attractive to your potential funder while at the same time proving that you are legitimate and more than ready, willing and able to successfully complete the program.

## Complete the Requirements

When you receive the funding, be absolutely sure to complete the funder's requirements. Be sure to follow the guidelines outlined in the "thank you" section of the letter-writing campaign. If the funder requires that you write a paper or give a presentation upon your return, then by all means do it! **Failure to follow through on requirements will make you look bad, and it will discourage funders from supporting future AMIGOS Volunteers.**

# OTHER PROVEN FUNDRAISING METHODS

**1) Percentage of Sales** from a merchant, live music venue, restaurant, or café. These locations can donate proceeds from an evening or special event. Remember donations are tax-deductible so everyone wins.

**2) Concert or Party.** Hire a musician or get friends with bands to do a benefit concert. Give a "Latin America" party. Build a theme around the entertainment (musician, piñatas, dancers, costumes, movies, and food) and invite friends and family to enjoy themselves (for a cover charge) in a benefit for AMIGOS. To hosting a concert or party you will need to:

- ❑ Find an entertainer—Relatives, friends, or a teacher may be a good source. Make sure the theme is workable. Be objective. Ask yourself, "Is this performer really good?" If the performance is not donated, include the fee into your budget.
- ❑ Find a location—Large hall? Auditorium? Roller Rink? Don't rule out a park or someone's home or garden. A commercial location will require you to budget for rental costs. Remember, it is always better to do a small event well than a large event poorly. Often churches, temples, and synagogues have the space for events and may be willing to donate the space.

- ❑ Decide on refreshments—You can include them in the price of the ticket or sell refreshments separately. Try mock sangria with fruit punch and ginger ale or serve sparkling waters, lemonade, limeade, herbal teas, spiced cider, or Mexican hot chocolate.
- ❑ Compile a mailing list for invites.
- ❑ Plan well in advance.
- ❑ Choose a time and a date that is conducive to good attendance.
- ❑ Send out invitations or flyers and hang posters (depending on your list and your budget). Consider a postcard that KINKOS or other copy places can typeset and reproduce. Consider the options for different typesetting and graphics that computers provide. It is also important to include all the pertinent information.
- ❑ Put up posters with information about the upcoming event.
- ❑ Keep a list of RSVPs—use for event planning and thank you's.
- ❑ Set up and decorate as early as possible.
- ❑ Take time to relax and rest.
- ❑ Arrange for someone to greet people and to collect money, if necessary.
- ❑ In your introduction of the program or event, make your plug about AMIGOS, thank every one for their support, and have AMIGOS information available.
- ❑ Have the courage to cancel; it is more prudent to cancel if continuing would be a waste of donated services, food, energy and/or money.

**3) Ask for pledges** for a bike-a-thon, walk-a-thon, etc. Have people sponsor you per mile.

**4) Donate a day** cleaning the community, park, or roadside and accept donations for your effort. People feel good about seeing results in their own community as well as helping others. Get a couple of friends to help and accept sponsorship pledges for your time and effort.

**5) Sponsored a "Dress Down Day."** If you attend a private school, get the O.K. from administration for students to dress casually for a designated day. Charge them \$1 or even more. Perhaps this could work at a place of business as well!

**6) Car Wash.** Talk to a store with a corner location and ask to use their lot. Bring sponges and buckets, make signs, wear a bathing suit, and catch some rays while earning money for your trip.

**7) Garage Sale.** Ask your friends and neighbors for items to donate. Make and sell jewelry, soap, knitted items, art, etc.

**8) Gift Wrapping** during Christmas time. Ask a mall or shopping center if you can set up and solicit your services to frantic shoppers.

**9) Bake sale or Fruit Sales.** Bake cookies, muffins, cakes, quiches or buy crates of fruit and sell them door-to-door.

**10) Raffles.** Ask area merchants, travel agencies, or restaurants to donate prizes. Create raffle tickets listing the items to be won and a place for buyers to write their name and phone number. Sell them for \$2 each or a book of 6 for \$10. Don't be shy approaching merchants as they not only get a tax deduction, but also advertising.

## HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

- ❑ Get started sending letters and emails and organizing events.
- ❑ Have all checks made payable to: **Amigos de las Américas**. If they are made payable to you, the donation will not be tax deductible.
- ❑ Donors send their checks to you, you record them, and then forward the checks onto the AMIGOS International Office.
- ❑ You will be given an account number to be used when sending checks to the International Office. **Make sure this account number is on every check you send in.**
- ❑ If you direct people to donate online, you must make them aware of a **service fee of 2-5%** of their donation. Most retail businesses include these charges in their pricing. The credit card companies vary in the service fees they charge, and as a non-profit organization, AMIGOS cannot absorb these costs. Again, be sure to ask donors to include your **account number** when they submit an online donation.
- ❑ All record keeping is done at the International Office to track fundraising efforts.
- ❑ The International Office will send official acknowledgment letters to donors who meet the IRS guidelines to indicate tax-deductible status.
- ❑ Personal donations or those from your parents are not tax-deductible. All other donations are.
- ❑ Please remember to send a thank you note to all your donors.
- ❑ Be sure and keep copies of your fundraising ledgers.
- ❑ Need-based scholarships are available as defined in your Volunteer Application.

### One Last Note

As with all efforts to build consensus and gain support, you will find some obstacles in raising funds. It is always important in those times to step back and remember your goal: a summer with AMIGOS. The open arms of your future Latin American community are just on the other side of your fundraising efforts. So...

**Have Fun!**

**Good Luck!**

**And call us if you need any help!**

