



The 12 Days of Fundraising

BY SANDY ROBINS

There are lots of fun ways to get creative and help cats in need. And there's no better time than the holiday season when people are thinking of others and being generous. To kickstart your imagination, check out these 12 Days of Fundraising ideas to boost the coffers of your favorite shelter or rescue.

1 Start a holiday adoption window

For more than three decades, Macy's in San Francisco, partnering with the SF SPCA, has set up a holiday adoption window in its flagship Union Square store filled with adoptable pets. Over the years, hundreds of pets have found forever homes after being showcased here. Take a leaf out of this playbook and "sell" the idea to a store in your community. Or, consider copycatting the annual Kitten Bowl sporting event that takes place every Super Bowl Sunday. Set up a game in a shop window. Big cats love to bat balls, too!

2 Bake cat-shaped cookies

You can find lots of fabulous cookie cutters in feline shapes. (Like the \$9.99 Ann Clark 3-Piece Kitty Cat Cookie Cutters at amazon.com) Get a local school involved and make baking cat cookies a fun fundraising project. The kids can help sell them, too!

3 Get crafty

Host a craft day and make lots of fun, fringed, fleece blankets



for your favorite shelter. There's no sewing involved — just a good pair of scissors and a measuring tape. Cut the cloth to the size you need, cut out 5-inch squares at each corner, then cut the fringe all the way around, making 1- to 2-inch incisions. Knot the fringes taking two pieces at a time, and done. It's an easy and wonderfully social activity to do with family and friends. (For more, see *5 DIY Projects* on Catster.com)

4 Get artsy

Art created by young kids can be fun and very engaging. Team up with a local school to have a cat-art painting project and exhibit and sell the artworks. Or think big by arranging for a local art gallery (even a pet store) to feature some of the art for sale. All proceeds to benefit cats.

5 Make cat-themed raffle baskets

There are lots of fabulous cat-themed merchandise from earrings to T-shirts, socks and wines. You name it! Manufacturers can be very generous with donations and often have a link on their websites so you can reach them directly. You can sell the raffles anywhere. If you are computer savvy, you can put it up online. If not, ask any 8-year-old you know to help ...





6 Get snapping!

If you are good with a camera, snap away with a photo day at a cat café or your local shelter. Rent fun costumes besides a Santa Claus outfit. Or donate your time and skills by taking photographs of cats for the shelter's website on an ongoing basis. Great photographs really help in getting a cat adopted fast!

7 Plan a cleanout

Get together with a few neighbors and host a garage sale. It's a great way of having a "spring-clean" and donating the proceeds. A win-win.

8 Create a calendar

Pet parents love to see their pets featured on a calendar. Both wall and desk calendars are easy to create. Team up with your favorite shelter and run a contest for pet owners to submit an entry in order for their pet to be featured (and charge for the submis-

sion). If you get lots of entries, people can vote and donate, too. Use your Facebook page to ask who would be interested in having their pet on the calendar. Run the "photo contest" on a shelter's Facebook page. This takes time and planning, so think ahead.

9 Throw a fur ball

Every year organizations like the San Diego Humane Society host a fabulous glitzy occasion called the Fur Ball. It's a great excuse to get dressed up and have a furrific evening — and all for a good cause.

10 Go for yoga

Rock 'n Rescue, a South Salem, New York-based rescue organization, has some novel fundraising ideas you can copycat, like kitty yoga classes. Arrange to take cats along to a yoga class at a studio, or set up specially arranged sessions in a private home for invited guests willing to donate.

11 Donate your time

Shelters can never have too many volunteers. Commit a fixed number of hours every week or month to help your favorite animal organization. Let staff know what skills you can bring to the table so that they can make the best use of your time.

12 Sponsor a fabulous senior feline

There are many reasons why someone may not be able to have a companion feline. The next best thing is sponsoring a cat in a retirement center. Contact the sanctuary of your choice to learn about its sponsorship programs or ways you can help by purchasing medical supplies and other needs for elderly felines. Here are some organizations with such programs: Hearts That Purr Feline Guardians (heartsthatpurr.org), Blue Bell Foundation for Cats (bluebellcats.org), Belleglen Sanctuary (belleglen-sanctuary.com) and Milo's Sanctuary & Special Needs Cat Rescue (milos-sanctuary.org). A sponsorship is a gift that keeps on giving year-round. 🐾



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