

# HOW TO: PLAN AND HOST A FUNDRAISER

We can't all go overseas to help the most vulnerable—but you *can* help fund Catholic Relief Services' on-the-ground efforts by hosting a personal campaign or event. CRS' online platform makes it easy. Here are a few tips to ensure your fundraising effort is a success.

1

**Start early.** It's never too early to begin planning your campaign or event. Whether it's 1 week or 1 month, consider these questions when thinking about how you want to raise money for CRS.

- **What kind of event or campaign do you want to host?** A memorial campaign to honor a loved one, donations instead of birthday gifts, running a race to support CRS ... the sky's the limit. See **Event Ideas** for inspiration, and get creative!
- **Why are you passionate about CRS?** What inspires you about CRS' mission? What cause(s) do you care about the most? Identifying what you care about and why, and being able to communicate it, will give other people a reason to care and get involved.
- **Who can you contact for support?** Start thinking about who you know and how they might be able to help you reach your goal—by making a donation, helping you plan or by sharing your campaign with their network. You can get more strategic about who—and how—to ask later, but start brainstorming early.
- **Where, when and how?** If you're hosting an event, start thinking about logistics. Do you need to reserve a venue? Will you serve food or refreshments? Will there be any costs associated with the event?

Remember to review the [CRS Guidelines for Fundraising](#) when planning your event. You can find them in the **Resources** tab of your **Fundraise for CRS** dashboard.

2

**Set a goal.** How much do you want to raise for CRS? \$100, \$1,000, \$5,000? Be ambitious but realistic. You can always adjust your goals as you go.

3

**Don't be afraid to ask for help.** Once you launch your campaign, you'll be asking people to share it via social media. You may also want to ask for help *before* you launch your campaign. If you're planning a big event, put together a small committee of people who can help you strategize, call vendors, etc. If you're planning something smaller, ask a friend or two for feedback on your fundraising page to ensure it's user friendly and typo free. You don't have to go it alone!

4

**Spread the word.** Share information about your campaign and event via social media, email, phone calls, in-person ... any way you can think of to get the word out. Quick tips:

- **Don't be shy.** Most people make annual charitable donations—so keep in mind that you're not asking people to *become* givers: you're giving them an option.
- **Create your potential supporter list wisely.** Who shares your passion for CRS and its mission to help the poor and vulnerable overseas? Your fellow parishioners? Your book club? Parents at your kids' schools? Your family? Be strategic about who you ask—and what you ask for. You might feel more comfortable asking closer connections to give more. If you know a connection is not in a position to give financially, you can ask him/her to support you by sharing your campaign or event with his/her network. See **A Network of Support** for suggestions on how to plan your direct asks.
- **Use social media.** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram ... Use social media to launch your campaign and share updates with your friends. Social media is a great way to reach people in your network who might not be close enough for a direct ask. Check out our **Sample Messages for Social Media**. Be sure to share a link to your personal fundraising page in your messages.

5

**Inspire your supporters.** The key to creating excitement about your campaign or event is giving people a reason to become involved. In your messaging, share stories about the people CRS serves and the impact that your financial support can have on their lives. Statistics and numbers are important, but stories and photos make it personal. See our list of **Talking Points** for examples and download from our **Photo and Video Resources**. Include why you're passionate about CRS on your personal fundraising page and in your messaging. By sharing your passion and our stories, your event will build its own momentum.

### Quick Tip

Nobody likes to be first. Get your fundraising off to a good start by making the first contribution.



## 6

**Recognize and thank your supporters.** It's important to acknowledge the generous donors who contribute to your campaign. Send a personal thank you email or handwritten note after each contribution—within 2 or 3 days, if possible. You can also recognize your supporters using social media or email updates. Post an update to Twitter each time you get a donation, or send a weekly email naming everyone who has contributed to your campaign. Showing your gratitude will increase the likelihood of people supporting you in the future.



“Whenever we do something together, something good, something beautiful, everyone changes - all of us change in some way - and this does us good.”

- POPE FRANCIS