



# Creative Event Fundraising Ideas

Like all AMBUCS Magazine readers, I've seen a few chapters embrace Wacky Golf, a comedic spin on the typical golf tournament. I love seeing this sort of concept come to life in event fundraising.

Pick a typical fundraiser and then make it your own. By choosing a fundraiser that's a little more common, you're sure to find tons of how-to guides all across the internet which will help you get the structure of your event in place. But before you launch into planning, just ask yourself if there's any way you can revamp the event concept to bring something fresh and fun to your community. Make your event a conversation piece. Here's just a few spins on typical fundraisers.

**Homemade Miniature Golf** – Since we're talking tee time, let's continue there. I've planned my fair share of golf tournaments and can recall some courses being rather particular or expensive. Remove them from the equation with homemade Putt-Putt. Whether it's outdoor or indoor, call upon teams of volunteers who will craft miniature courses out of everyday household items. Charge admission and watch your attendees face the challenge of, say, putting through a gutter.

**Junk Car Show** – Remove the "class" from the typical classic car show by featuring lemons instead. It's lively and fun, and people actually enjoy laughing about their truly junky cars. I mean, don't even get me started on some of my former car quirks because I'll talk about the '89 Ford Taurus Wagon all day. Charge admission to spectators and/or car owners, and consider offering a prize to the crappiest pile of aluminum, rubber and steel. Liven up the fun by asking a junk yard to donate a couple of scrappers. Sell the right to relieve pent-up aggression by taking a couple of swings at these donated cars with a metal baseball bat.

**Barter & Trade Fair** – Like the yard sale concept, a barter and trade fair brings together a community; only this time, it's more so with collectors in mind. Participants pay a fee to feature their goods and then can buy,

sell, trade with the other vendors. As long as you recruit committed participants, you're guaranteed some fundraised dollars with very little overhead on the front or backend of the event. Unlike the yard sell, your event isn't hinged upon selling the donated items.

**Pooch Party** – There are a lot of people who enjoy getting gussied up for galas, but I'd venture to say there's a larger population who enjoy spending time with their dogs. Sell tickets for this doggy affair, and consider giving half-priced tickets to service dogs. Make it a day about dogs with play stations, tasty treats, a photo booth and more. And if you're so inclined, have some goodies for their human companions too.

**Recipient Art Show** – Revamp the typical art auction by making the featured pieces mission-specific. Invite people who have benefited from your charitable programs to a social event where they'll sit and create art together. While there, collect stories and take pictures of each artist. During the night of the art auction, feature information about the piece creator so that each buyer can appreciate the uniqueness of their new beautiful artwork.

**Haunted House** – Holiday fundraisers are plentiful around Christmas, but consider a holiday-inspired fundraiser during a time of year when few others are. Shout-out to the Las Vegas Chapter for helping me see the beauty of a Halloween fundraiser with their Trykes and Treats event. Develop a haunted house or trail and then charge admission. Imagine the fun your Scholars and Amtryke recipients could have playing some of the spooky characters.

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## Charles M. Blye

Charles M. Blye, 88, of East Peoria passed away Sunday, June 9, 2019, in Peoria, IL. He was a U.S. Marine Corps Veterans, serving from 1950 until his honorable discharge in 1952. He married Carol Keil on June 1, 1952. The couple had four children: Steve, Sharon, Laurie and Lisa. After graduating from the University of Illinois, he worked as an architect at Phillips Swager and Associates from 1956 until his retirement as a Partner in 1996.

Charlie Blye became a member of the Peoria Fun-Raisers AMBUCS chapter in January of 1960. He earned his Big Hat in 1962 and became a Life Member in 1966.

Jim Denverman, charter member of the Pekin chapter, said it wouldn't exist without Charlie's "determination that Pekin, a city of 34,000 residents just 10 miles from Peoria, could easily support an AMBUCS club of its own. Thanks to Charlie, the Pekin club was chartered on February 11, 1966." Jim describes Charlie as a go-getter that wouldn't quit, with all the pins in his Big Hat to prove it. "I was one of those original 15 who were mesmerized by Charlie's enthusiasm for AMBUCS and what they were doing for children in particular."

Charlie served as National Big Hat President 1969-1970 and AMBUCS National President 1975-1976. He joined the Pekin chapter he helped found when the Peoria Fun-Raisers chapter folded in 2009. His wife, Carol, was also a member of the Peoria chapter from 2000 until it closed.

Charlie was National AMBUCS oldest living Past National President, but he attended National Conferences until 2017 and chapter meetings through the end of 2018. "We will miss Charlie and his dedication to AMBUCS and to helping others," said Jim. Through all his 59 years of service to AMBUCS, Charlie seldom missed a meeting except for health reasons.

"You know that AMBUCS was one of the passions of his life," said Charlie's daughter, Laurie. "He dearly loved serving the community through AMBUCS and enjoying the friendship of many of you.... We are so proud of Dad and thankful for his chance to serve with you all." In Charlie's obituary, the family asked that memorial gifts be made to AMBUCS or his church.

