

GREEN APPLE DAY OF SERVICE

Fundraising Tips

Green Apple Day of Service is all about local impact. Project leaders put local resources, networks and creativity to work in order to get what they need for a successful Day of Service. Many projects don't cost money, but it is likely that there will be some costs associated with a project—from volunteer snacks to classroom supplies to building equipment. The key is to be clear about what is needed and to be unafraid of asking for help.

Support from businesses

Many local and national office and hardware stores, garden centers, supermarkets, construction suppliers and others have resources for supporting local volunteer events like Green Apple Day of Service with materials, manpower, expertise and grants. Below are a few ideas to get you started:

- First, check with businesses that already hold design, construction, and operations contracts with your school or school district. These companies are most likely to be motivated to give back to the school for your project. They are often eager to show good will and demonstrate additional value to the school and school district.
- Local Home Depot stores can often approve small grants for local projects if you talk to the store manager. The Home Depot Foundation also approves [Community Impact Grants](#) on a rolling basis throughout the year.
- Lowe's also gives small donations to local service projects, and grants from the [Lowe's Charitable and Education Foundation](#) are managed in two buckets: Community Partner Grants and Toolbox for Education Grants. Both have application deadlines in late summer and early fall.
- Staples store managers are able to approve "We Care" gift cards to community groups and schools who ask for project donations. The company's foundation also has a grant program called [2 Million and Change](#) for community efforts.
- Walmart Foundation gives funds to community projects through applications to its [Community Grant Program](#).

Fundraising events

With a little advance planning, hosting a fundraiser early in the year for your project could serve double duty: building buzz for your event while also raising money for the supplies you'll need. Ask parent groups, boosters, a garden club or other community partners for materials or for assistance in organizing a fundraiser. The more you talk about your plans, the easier it will be to find people eager to help you reach your school's goals.

DonorsChoose.org

The Center for Green Schools has engaged several corporate partners to match donations to Green Apple Day of Service projects through the crowdfunding platform DonorsChoose.org. The platform is an educator-only site where teachers can raise money for supplies and equipment at their schools. The match grants will give additional assistance of up to \$200 per project to match what communities are able to raise through the platform. Projects must include “Green Apple Day of Service” in their online description, and they must target the impact areas of the Day of Service: environmental impact, health impact, and/or environmental and sustainability literacy. Instructions for getting your project on to DonorsChoose.org and connected to our giving network will be available during online project registration.

Additional Guidance

While the terms “sponsorship” and “donation” are often used interchangeably in fundraising, the difference is significant per IRS regulations. It’s useful to know how to tell them apart.

- Sponsorships are business transactions whereby a sponsor receives benefits in exchange for a sponsorship payment. Sponsorships are only tax deductible to the extent that the payment exceeds the fair market value of any “substantial return benefit” provided to the sponsor. What constitutes a substantial return benefit is explained in more detail below.
- Donations are philanthropic gifts to advance the funded organization’s mission. They do not bear an expectation of substantial return benefits—again, as defined by the IRS—for the donor. As such, they are fully tax deductible.

The nuance of this differentiation between sponsorships and donations is complex but important. You can read more about it in this article from the [National Council of Nonprofits](#).

Keep in Touch

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About Green Apple

Green Apple Day of Service is a unique day of action to join communities across the world to celebrate the central role that schools play in preparing the next generation of sustainability leaders. Since 2012, over almost one million volunteers in 73 countries have participated in events. Each school’s project makes an impact on one or more of the three pillars of a green school: environmental impact, health and wellness, and environmental and sustainability literacy. The Day of Service is an opportunity to give students hands-on-experience with sustainability, strengthening environmental literacy, project management skills, and civic leadership.

About the Center for Green Schools at USGBC

The Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council works with school decision makers, community volunteers and thought leaders in the public and private sectors to drive progress at the intersection of sustainability, education, public health and the built environment. We believe that all students should have the opportunity to attend schools that sustain the world they live in; enhance their health and well-being; and prepare them for 21st century careers.