

IMAGINE

100+ MISSION-BASED
FUNDRAISING IDEAS

MORE



swell
FUNDRAISING

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Introduction

Having a long-standing, signature event can cement your non-profit's name in your community and beyond. For example, when you read about or see a headline that mentions the Met Gala, you probably know who the benefitting non-profit is even if you live nowhere near New York City.

This popular event benefitting the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute has been around since 1948, but did you know that it hasn't always been called The Met Gala? It's also known as the Met Ball and in former years, it was the Costume Institute Gala or Costume Institute Benefit. Even the most well-known events need to be freshened up now and then!

- It could be that you're looking to give your signature event a refresh or even replace it with something new.
- Maybe you're in a new position in your organization and you're looking to make your mark with a new event concept.
- Perhaps your non-profit is just getting started and you don't yet have a signature event.

Regardless of your situation, we hope you'll find some inspiration as you look through the concepts in this guide. If you'd like to learn more about Swell and how we can help you execute these ideas, [reach out!](#) We'd love to learn more about you and show you what we do.



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CONCEPTS BY MISSION OR FOCUS

Animals

1. ["Paws for a Cause" Dog Walk](#): Organize a charity dog walk event, with participants seeking sponsorships for each mile walked with their dogs.
2. Pet Photo Contest: Run a pet photo contest with entry fees and donations supporting animal rescue efforts.
3. Cat Cafe Fundraiser: Host a cat cafe where visitors can interact with rescue cats, with the cafe profits going to animal rescue.
4. Veterinary Services Day: Partner with local veterinarians to offer discounted services, with fees going to animal rescue organizations.
5. Virtual Pet Show: Organize an online pet show, with participants submitting videos or photos of their pets and paying an entry fee.
6. Pet-themed Trivia Night: Host a trivia night with questions about animals, charging an entry fee for participants.
7. Doggie Daycare Fundraiser: Host a fundraising event at a doggie daycare with pet games, pet treats, beverages for adults, etc and have the proceeds going to animal rescue organizations.
8. Animal Yoga Event: Host a yoga class where participants practice alongside rescue animals, with donations supporting animal rescue.
9. "Tails and Tales" Storytelling Event: Host a storytelling evening featuring heartwarming tales of rescued animals, with ticket sales supporting rescue efforts.
10. Pet Talent Show: Organize a talent show for pets, with participants seeking sponsorships for their performances.
11. Virtual Pet Parade: Organize an online pet parade with participants paying an entry fee and seeking donations for their pets.

Arts

1. **Arts Showcase Night:** Organize a night of performances and exhibitions, charging an entry fee to support the arts.
2. **Creative Writing Contest:** Run a writing competition with entry fees supporting literary and writing programs.
3. **Street Art Festival:** Organize a festival celebrating street art, with ticket sales benefiting local arts organizations.
4. **"Art for a Cause" Paint Night:** Organize a paint night event, with participants creating art and donating part of the proceeds.
5. **Dance Marathon:** Host a dance event, with participants seeking sponsorships for each hour of dancing. You could even expand this concept by adding a dance lesson element and/or marathon!
6. **Digital Art Competition:** Run a digital art contest, with entry fees supporting digital art initiatives.
7. **Digital Art Gallery:** Create a virtual gallery showcasing digital art, with donations supporting artists and art programs.
8. **Artistic Film Festival:** Organize a film festival focused on art-related themes, with ticket sales going to arts initiatives.
9. **Digital Art Webinars:** Host webinars on digital art techniques, with fees supporting digital art programs.
10. **Art-Based Community Cleanup and Gala:** Organize a community cleanup in the morning. Have artists use recyclable materials to create centerpieces for tables and/or temporary art installations that could be viewed and purchased at the gala later that evening.

DEI and Racial Justice

1. **Literacy Challenge:** Create a fun challenge (e.g., reading a book from a different culture or in a different language) and seek pledges for successful completion.
2. **Cultural Exchange Fair:** Organize a fair showcasing diverse cultures, with vendor fees and donations supporting racial justice organizations.
3. **Diversity and Inclusion Workshops:** Offer workshops to businesses and organizations on fostering diversity and inclusion, with fees supporting racial justice initiatives.
4. **Racial Justice Poetry Slam:** Host a poetry slam centered on racial justice themes, with entry fees going toward racial justice organizations.
5. **"Step Up for Justice" Dance Marathon:** Organize a dance event, with participants seeking sponsorships for each hour danced.
6. **"Empowering Voices" Spoken Word Event:** Organize a spoken word event featuring performances focused on racial justice, with ticket sales supporting the cause.
7. **"Healing Through Art" Workshops:** Offer art workshops as a means of healing and expression for individuals impacted by racial injustice, with fees benefiting racial justice causes.
8. **Youth Artivism Contest:** Run an art contest for young artists to express their views on racial justice, with entry fees supporting advocacy work.
9. **Racial Justice Comedy Night:** Organize a comedy show featuring comedians from diverse backgrounds, with ticket sales supporting racial justice initiatives.
10. **Racial Justice Virtual Run/Walk:** Host a virtual run/walk event, with participants seeking sponsorships for each mile completed.
11. **Cultural Food Festival:** Host a festival featuring diverse cuisines, with proceeds supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
12. **DEI Speaker Series:** Organize a series of talks by experts on topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, charging admission fees.



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13. "Walk Together" Unity Walk: Organize a community walk event that promotes unity and inclusivity, seeking sponsorships from individuals and businesses.
14. "Unity in Dance" Performance Night: Host a dance performance featuring diverse dance styles, with ticket sales supporting DEI efforts.
15. "Faces of Inclusion" Photography Project: Run a photography project that highlights diverse faces and stories, collecting donations for DEI causes.
16. "Our Voices Matter" Spoken Word Event: Organize a spoken word event featuring performances that address social justice and inclusion, with entry fees benefiting DEI initiatives.
17. DEI Virtual Summit: Host a virtual conference featuring panel discussions and workshops on diversity and inclusion, charging registration fees.
18. "Equality Through Music" Concert: Organize a music concert that celebrates diversity and promotes social unity, with ticket sales supporting DEI projects.
19. Inclusive Storytelling Project: Fundraise to collect and share stories of individuals from diverse backgrounds to promote empathy and understanding.
20. "Together We Stand" Community Picnic: Organize a picnic event that fosters connections and promotes inclusivity, with donations supporting DEI initiatives.
21. "Embracing Abilities" Talent Show: Organize a talent show that showcases diverse talents with entry fees supporting DEI causes.
22. "One World, Many Stories" Storytelling Festival: Organize a storytelling festival featuring narratives from diverse cultures, with ticket sales supporting DEI efforts.

Domestic Violence Prevention/Awareness

1. **Domestic Violence Survivor Speaker Series:** Host a series of talks featuring survivors sharing their stories, while encouraging donations for domestic violence shelters and support services.
2. **Community Awareness Walk:** Organize a walk or march to raise awareness about domestic violence, with participants seeking sponsorships for each mile walked.
3. **Virtual Panel Discussions:** Host virtual panel discussions with experts on domestic violence prevention and support, encouraging donations during the event.
4. **Virtual Candlelight Vigil:** Host a virtual event to remember victims of domestic violence and raise awareness, encouraging donations during the vigil.
5. **"Purple Power" Dress-Up Day:** Encourage people to wear purple clothing or accessories to show support for domestic violence awareness, with donations collected. Many Junior Leagues participate in a similar campaign to alleviate poverty called The Little Black Dress Initiative. [Here's an example.](#)
6. **Virtual Self-Defense Classes:** Offer virtual self-defense classes, with fees supporting domestic violence prevention programs. These could also be in-person classes. Reach out to a local dojo and ask them to donate their space and/or expertise.
7. **"Raise Your Voice" Karaoke Night:** Organize a karaoke event that encourages participants to sing empowering songs, with donations supporting awareness programs.
8. **"Break the Cycle" Bike-a-thon:** Organize a bike-a-thon event with routes highlighting the journey towards breaking the cycle of domestic violence.
9. **"Protect the Nest" Birdhouse Building Competition:** Invite artists and individuals to design birdhouses as a metaphor for building safe homes.
10. **"Unlocking Hope" Puzzle Challenge:** Organize an online puzzle challenge, with participants encouraged to donate to participate.

Education, Reading, and Literacy

1. **Readathon:** Host a sponsored reading event where participants read for a certain number of hours or books to raise funds. Alternatively, organize a continuous reading session with participants taking turns to read aloud for an extended period.
2. **Read-a-Thon Relay:** Create a team-based read-a-thon with relay-style reading challenges.
3. **Digital Detox Read-a-Thon:** Encourage participants to read instead of using electronic devices. Have them seek sponsors for pages read. This concept is a neat twist on the read-a-thon! November/December when the kids are off of school and people are celebrating thankfulness would be an excellent time of year for this campaign.
4. **Literacy Night:** Host a literacy-themed event with games, activities, and book sales to support the cause.
5. **Write-a-Thon:** Encourage people to write stories, poems, or essays and seek sponsorships for each piece they create. This idea would be especially good if it was timed to coincide with NaNoWriMo. After the event, self-publish an anthology of the finished pieces and sell copies.
6. **Guest Author Event:** Host a reading and Q&A session with a well-known author and sell tickets to raise funds.
7. **Storytelling Evening:** Organize an event where people share personal stories or read their favorite passages from books.
8. **Bedtime Story Night:** Organize a family-friendly event with volunteers reading bedtime stories to children.
9. **Bookstore Crawl:** Plan a fundraising event where participants visit multiple bookstores and complete challenges.
10. **Literary Trivia Night:** Organize a trivia night with questions focused on books, authors, and literary history.



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11. Story Marathon: Host a virtual event where participants tell non-stop stories to an audience. Encourage donations for longer tales.
12. "Education for All" Documentary Screening: Host screenings of documentaries focused on education access and equity, collecting donations.
13. "Adopt a Classroom" Campaign: Encourage donors to sponsor specific classrooms, providing resources and supplies.
14. School Garden Initiative: Fundraise to create and maintain gardens at schools, supporting hands-on learning experiences. Offer a tour of the area/space/garden involved
15. "STEM Stars" Coding Challenge: Host a coding challenge for students, with registration fees supporting STEM programs.
16. "Math-A-Thon" Challenge: Organize a math challenge where participants seek sponsorships for solving math problems.
17. College Preparation Workshops: Offer workshops to prepare students for college, with fees benefiting college readiness programs.
18. Debate Off: Pit high school debaters against local lawyers for a fun and educational experience. This concept is particularly good for Bar Associations. Charge admission and let attendees vote for their favorites with their donations.
19. "Spotlight on Learning" Talent Show: Organize a talent show featuring student performances, with ticket sales supporting education initiatives.
20. "Education for Everyone" Advocacy Campaign: Run a campaign to advocate for accessible and equitable education, seeking donations to support the cause. This would be good as an online champion campaign.

Environmental Conservation

1. Green Gala Dinner: Host an eco-friendly gala dinner with sustainable cuisine and decor, raising funds through ticket sales and donations.
2. Eco-Friendly Fashion Show: Host a fashion show featuring sustainable and eco-friendly clothing, with ticket sales supporting conservation efforts. [Here's an example](#) we put together based on an actual event held on Swell.
3. Outdoor Movie Screening: Arrange an outdoor movie night showcasing environmental documentaries with a pre/post discussion. Sell tickets for admission.
4. Green Gala Dinner: Host an eco-friendly gala dinner with sustainable cuisine and decor, raising funds through ticket sales and donations.
5. Environmental Art Workshop and Gala: Conduct workshops for creating art using natural materials, charging a fee to participate. Use the art created as centerpieces for a gala supporting the organization.
6. Sustainable Gardening Class: Offer classes on sustainable gardening and organic farming, with fees going toward conservation efforts.
7. Environmental Quiz Night: Host a quiz night with questions about environmental issues, charging entry fees.
8. Zero-Waste Challenge: Encourage participants to reduce waste for a month and seek pledges for their efforts.
9. Earth Day Clean-Up: Organize a community clean-up event for Earth Day, seeking donations from participants and sponsors.
10. Firefly Walk: Host a guided night walk to observe fireflies, with donations for participation and information about firefly conservation.

Medical Condition or Disease

1. Walk/Run for [Disease]: Organize a charity walk or run event, with participants seeking sponsorships and donations.
2. Disease Awareness Gala: Host a formal gala dinner to raise funds and educate attendees about the disease.
3. Virtual Fitness Challenge: Run a virtual fitness challenge where participants complete workouts and seek donations for their efforts.
4. Virtual Trivia Night: Host an online trivia event with disease-related questions, encouraging participants to donate to participate.
5. Virtual Health Fair: Run a virtual fair featuring health-related exhibitors, with sponsor fees going to disease research.
6. Offer a virtual cooking class featuring disease-friendly recipes, with fees supporting research efforts. Collaborate with local chefs or restaurants to host a cooking class or food-tasting event. Participants can pay to learn new culinary skills or sample different dishes.
7. Community 5K Fun Run: Organize a fun run for families and friends, with registration fees benefiting disease research.
8. Virtual Dance-a-thon: Host a virtual dance event with participants seeking sponsorships for each hour danced.
9. Virtual Science Fair: Organize a virtual science fair for students with a focus on disease-related projects, encouraging donations to support research.
10. "Beating [Disease]" Video Challenge: Launch a video challenge where participants share messages of hope and support, encouraging viewers to donate. Do this one as an online champion campaign.
11. Online Talent Show: Host an online talent show featuring performances from individuals affected by the disease, with donations collected.

Poverty

1. "Live Below the Line" Challenge: Encourage participants to live on a limited budget for a set period, seeking sponsorships for their efforts to experience poverty firsthand.
2. Poverty Awareness Documentary Screening: Partner with a film organization to host screenings of documentaries that shed light on poverty issues, collecting donations from attendees.
3. Hunger Banquet: Organize an event where attendees are randomly assigned to different income groups and served meals accordingly. Raise funds through ticket sales and in-event giving.
4. Poverty Relief Maratho/Walk: Host a fundraising marathon event, seeking pledges for every mile completed.
5. Personal Fundraising Challenges: Encourage supporters to take on personal challenges (e.g., walking a certain distance, giving up a luxury). Have them seek sponsorships for each milestone.
6. Empowerment Gala Dinner: Host a gala dinner celebrating the achievements of individuals who have overcome poverty, with funds raised supporting others in need.
7. Global Dinner Night: Host a dinner event featuring cuisines from various cultures, raising funds through ticket sales.
8. Poverty Alleviation Walkathon: Organize a walkathon with participants seeking sponsorships for every mile walked.



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EVEN MORE IDEAS

Fundraisers for Any Mission/Focus

1. **Gaming Tournament:** Host a video game, board game, or sports tournament where participants pay an entry fee and the winner gets a prize. You can also offer food and drinks for sale during the event.
2. **DIY Workshop:** Organize workshops where participants can learn skills like painting, crafting, or gardening. Charge a participation fee, and provide all the necessary materials. You could also easily turn this into a team competition by dividing the event into two parts. In the first part, teach everyone the same skill or craft. Have teams collaborate over a set period of time to build the best/most unique/funniest version of the craft and then present their finished products online or at a venue. Have people donate to vote for their favorite team/participant.
3. **DIY Marathon:** Set up stations for various DIY projects, and participants can move from one station to another. Charge an entry fee and provide materials.
4. **Pet Parade:** Host a parade where participants show off their pets, and attendees can vote with donations for their favorite pets.
5. **Fashion Show:** Collaborate with local designers and models to put on a charity fashion show. Sell tickets and offer merchandise for sale.
6. **Silent Disco:** Host a silent disco party where attendees wear wireless headphones and dance to different music channels. Charge an entry fee for the event.
7. [Talent Show/Dance Competition](#): Host a talent show where contestants showcase their abilities, and attendees vote with their donations.
8. [Mini Golf Tournament](#): Organize a mini-golf competition and offer prizes for the winners.
9. [Pickleball Tournament](#): Pickleball has taken the nation by storm! Capitalize on its popularity by hosting a pickleball competition.

Add-ons

The ideas in this section aren't large enough to form an entire fundraising campaign around, but they would make excellent add-ons to existing events/fundraisers.

1. **Dessert Dash:** Encourage friendly competition between tables at your gala by allowing the table that raises the most money during your event to choose their dessert first!
2. **Book Swap for Literacy Gala:** Organize a book exchange event where people donate books and pay a fee to participate. Bring your favorite book to swap or donate to our literacy efforts!
3. **Corporate Book Club:** Run corporate book clubs targeted toward your mission for sponsors. What a unique benefit for sponsors and their employees!
4. **Pop-up Reading Lounge:** Set up cozy reading corners in public places and collect donations for their use. This would be a great add-on to a read-a-thon.
5. **Interactive Storytelling:** Organize an interactive storytelling event with live actors and audience participation. This is a great twist on the entertainment at a fundraising dinner.
6. **Recycled Art Exhibition:** Organize an art exhibition featuring artwork made from recycled materials, with entry fees supporting conservation initiatives. Use the art for centerpieces or decorations around the room at your gala.
7. **Interactive Art Installation:** Create an interactive art installation that encourages audience participation, seeking donations for its creation.
8. **Voter Registration Drive:** Run a campaign to increase voter registration and participation among marginalized communities.
9. **"Hands Against Domestic Violence" Campaign:** Encourage community members to trace their handprints on a large banner as a symbol of solidarity, with donations supporting domestic violence initiatives.

What Is Swell?

Swell is an easy, affordable, online and event fundraising solution designed to help non-profits achieve more. We are committed to building a different type of software company where our success is driven by yours.

You'll feel the difference from the first call. Ready to see for yourself? [Let's chat!](#)

[Click here to book a demo!](#)

Features

- Easy-to-Create website to fuel your online campaign or event
- Content management system allows you to create a custom look and multiple web pages
- Evergreen event site (i.e. same site URL from year to year)
- Sponsor logos integrated throughout the site
- Full-featured ticketing system
- Complimentary ticket management
- Discount Codes
- Custom ticket images to impress your guests
- Table guest registration
- Peer-to-Peer fundraising pages created easily and without user logins
- Fundraising leaderboards
- Virtual Fundraising (Livestream/Fundraising/Chat components)
- Online donation forms
- Honorarium/Memorial Fields
- Recurring Giving Option
- Integrated QR codes (static included with base license)
- Integrations: Salesforce, Mailchimp, CardConnect/Bluepay, Authorize.net, and Stripe