

# Discovery Eye Foundation Hosting a Fundraising Event

Thank you for your interest in supporting the Discovery Eye Foundation (DEF). Only with the help can we support the research to find the treatments and cures of retinal and corneal eye disease and provide the education and support for families affected by low or no vision. The information below is designed to spark your creative thoughts and help you get started. It is by no means your only resource. DEF staff is available to help with ideas, forms, tips and more. Contact Susan Lee DeRemer at 310-623-4499 or sderemer@discovery.org.

## GETTING STARTED

**The first step** is to decide what you would like to do. Examples vary widely and include intimate private dinners with researchers, office and holiday parties, to poker or bowling tournaments. No event or amount of support is too small!

Below are some ideas and examples of successful events. Remember, your only limitation is your imagination.

### Parties -

- Invite friends and co-workers over for a fun social event and raise money at the same time! Ask guests to bring a donation in lieu of a birthday or hostess gift.
- Organize a benefit performance or concert and donate ticket revenue to DEF.

### Nights "In" -

- Invite close friends and family for a private dinner in your home where a chosen researcher will explain current research projects and answer questions.
- Invite friends who are also affected by macular degeneration or keratoconus for an evening of information and support.

### Tournaments -

- Turn a day of your favorite sport into a fundraiser! Golf, snowboarding, miniature golf, croquet or pool - it all works. Organize a tournament, charge an entry fee and donate the fees to DEF. If you want to have a large event, solicit corporate sponsors to underwrite the costs in exchange for exposure of their product or logo.
- Enjoy your favorite game, such as poker, dominos, or Trivial Pursuit and charge an entry fee. Based on the nature of each game, devise additional ways people can make donations.

### Pledge Events -

- Hold a walk, run or other activity and ask participants to collect pledges. Pledges can be per mile, bowling pin, pool lap, etc.

### Business Proceeds -

- If you have a business or know of one that is having a Grand Opening, ask them to donate a portion of the proceeds to DEF.

- Ask your favorite restaurant or bar to have a charity day and donate a portion of the proceeds of that day's sales to DEF. If you belong to a club or can get enough friends or business associates together you can ask to be the wait staff for a lunch or dinner and donate your tips.

### Sales -

- Bake sales, car washes and other "sales" types of events are great and can be regularly scheduled events. Monthly events can raise a significant amount over the course of a season or even a year.

### **Step Two**

Once you have decided what kind of event you would like to host, it is time to start gathering help. If you are going to host a big event, you will want to enlist the help of friends, family and co-workers. Tell them about DEF and why you are a committed supporter. Assign responsibilities based on individual strengths. Make sure to designate a point person who communicates with DEF.

When you have formed your committee, schedule a visit to the DEF Research Laboratories at UC Irvine. It's a great way to help build their passion for DEF. If you are interested in scheduling a tour, please contact Deanna at 310-623-4466 or ddube@discoveryeye.org.

### **Step Three**

Now, you are ready to start raising money!

First, familiarize yourself what we do at DEF. We have a variety of educational tools, including newsletters, brochures, fact sheets and staff members to walk you through the basics of our organization. Once you feel comfortable, start talking to other people about DEF and your event, inviting them to participate.

Next, decide if you want PR around the event. If your activity is open to the public, you may consider contacting your neighborhood newspaper to do a story about your event to help increase participation. Or you may want to distribute flyers or posters. DEF can also list upcoming events in our newsletter (subject to printing deadline) and on our website ([www.discoveryeye.org](http://www.discoveryeye.org)). If you need collateral materials to hand out to prospective participants, just call DEF and we can send them. We also have sample pledge forms that you might want to use.

Other tips and suggestions to help raise money:

- Be optimistic - excitement is contagious!
- Set a fundraising goal and display your progress.
- Be committed. When you raise money for DEF, you are helping to support cutting-edge research and education that will help over 15 million people.
- Ask anyone and everyone! Ask family and friends for support first. After tackling the "easy ones," branch out to clients, co-workers, clubs, etc. Make a list of places where you spend money and ask them for pledges. Restaurants, medical offices, dry cleaners - they are all great resources. Remember...anyone and everyone.
- Ask for a specific amount. Tell sponsors what your average pledge is and ask them to beat it.

- Ask for donations on pay day. Timing is very important.
- Send letters and emails. Send an announcement of your plans to raise money for DEF to all of your contacts. Don't forget company, church and school newsletters. Ask for support in writing.
- Double your pledges by using matching funds. Be sure to ask donors if their company will match their donation and request matching gift forms.
- Save spare change. You will be surprised how quickly the spare change adds up and makes a terrific pledge!
- Call us to borrow a DEF banner to display.
- Call DEF anytime for more ideas and tips.

#### **Step Four**

Now it is time for the event. Make sure you have fully read and signed the External Fundraising Event guidelines and agreement (download it at [www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org).) Let DEF know if you would like a staff member or researcher to come to the event. We are more than happy to attend and talk about DEF, subject to advance notice and availability.

#### **Step Five**

To wrap things up, you need to collect money from participants and sponsors, give the funds to DEF and thank your supporters. You may choose to collect money as you go or wait until the event to get the pledges. Once the funds are received, DEF will automatically send a thank you letter with tax information to the donor as long as you provide us with contact information. Of course, it is always nice to thank donors yourself, as well!

For further information please contact Susan Lee DeRemer, VP of Development, at 310-623-4499 or [sderemer@discoveryeye.org](mailto:sderemer@discoveryeye.org).