

# ***MARATHON KIDS***

**Fund Your Running Club**

# So, you're interested in starting a Marathon Kids running club?

Great! Know that we are here to help you along the way at each turn. This brief guide was created to identify various ways to fund your Marathon Kids running club. From securing local sponsorships to using online tools, you'll be surprised at how simple it is to get your community behind you.

This guide doesn't include every possible strategy or tip you can try. Instead, it is intended to be a starting point and a way to get your creative juices flowing. If you have questions or run into a snag, give us a call. We are here for you. Also let us know what is working well so that we can share your success with others.

Because of you, kids are going to: run, sweat, get smarter, be confident, work as a team, live life better. On behalf of those kids and all the lives they will impact, **THANK YOU!**

**Ray Blue**  
Chief Development Officer  
Marathon Kids

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# Participant Pays: Simplest Funding Strategy



We encourage you to seek individual payment from each participant whenever possible. When a participant or family is personally invested, they are much more likely to be committed to achieving their long-term goals. Think about your own experiences; if you hadn't paid to enter that race, would you have been as likely to train for it?

Evidence has shown that Marathon Kids get more physical activity, eat more fruits and vegetables, and even have a higher athletic self-perception. We think those results are worth investing in! While our program is valued at \$65 per participant, thanks to our partnerships and sponsors, we are able to offer it for only \$15 per participant, which is significantly less than sports leagues or after school programs.

Start small. It's okay if you only have five participants sign up for the first season. Trust us, the amazing experience those five runners have will spread and your club will grow organically.

The best way to set up a successful and sustainable running club is to have the participants and their families commit to the challenge by investing in it.

## RAISING SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

We never want the lack of financial resources to be a barrier to a healthy, active lifestyle. If you anticipate that a portion of your participants will be unable to pay the registration cost, then collecting funds for program 'scholarships' is a great idea. Be sure to highlight **page 21** in the **Marathon Kids Pre-Registration Packet**, which has an option to provide additional registration fees for kids who can't afford the cost.

# Peer-to-Peer Fundraising: Everyone Can Play a Part

Peer-to-peer fundraising happens when you get your supporters to raise money from their peers on behalf of your organization. By giving them a little guidance, motivation and helpful tools, your personal and professional networks can create successful fundraising drives to fund your Marathon Kids running club. Below are few ideas to consider:

## **FUN RUN**

Host a community-wide color run or fun run at your school. Set a baseline entry fee and allow people to donate more if they can. Partner with a local business to match entry fees to add an extra incentive.

## **DOLLAR TO DANCE**

Charge students (and teachers) \$1 to take a dance break during their school day.

## **SPONSOR A STUDENT**

Ask parents who are signing up their child for the run club to sponsor another kid (or four!). Create a waiting list of kids who receive the sponsored spots or create special incentives to receive one of the 'scholarships'.

## **HEALTHY SNACK SALE**

Replace the traditional bake sale with some yummy and healthy snacks that you can sell in your school or community.

## **OPEN GYM**

Get permission to open the gym before school starts and charge students to play. Their brains will be ready for school and it's an affordable way for parents to get to work a little earlier.

## **HEALTHY POTLUCK**

Invite your friends and neighbors to a healthy potluck fundraiser. You may be surprised how many people are willing to support your efforts and how much they'll enjoy swapping healthy recipes.

## **HEALTHY COOKBOOK FOR KIDS BY KIDS**

Collect your kids' favorite recipes, or better yet, have them write out their favorite healthy recipes and compile them into a cookbook to sell in your school or community.

## **ELECTRONIC 'CROWD-FUNDING' TOOLS**

There are many online fundraising tools that make it easy to get your cause out in front a lot of people with little effort. Check out sites like: GoFundMe, CrowdRise and Kickstarter. Marathon Kids doesn't promote one provider over another, so be sure to do your research to determine which solution is right for you. Also, be aware that each company takes an administrative fee per transaction.

## **USE MARATHON KIDS RUNNING CLUB AS A FUNDRAISER**

Some groups use their running club registration as a way to raise additional funds by increasing the \$15 registration fee. By increasing the fee to an amount that is comfortable for your community, forming a running club can be an effective fundraising strategy in itself.

# Local Sponsorships: It Takes a Village

Securing the support of a local business to fund your run club can be a mutually beneficial. Here are a few steps that will get you started on the right track:

## IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE

Start with your personal network and where you already have connections. Are there local businesses that already support your school, organization or neighborhood association? Focus on businesses that align with your club: running and sports stores, youth-focused businesses, healthy food stores, gyms, etc. Prioritize those businesses that would like to reach your members. Talk to your friends and volunteers; ask them where they work and if they would make an introduction.

## SET SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

First, determine the total cost of your club based on the number of runners. Then approach businesses to either fund the entire club, a portion of the costs or a specific number of individual participants. Think about creative ways to publicize their gift: invite a representative from the business to one of your club sessions, print a 'thank you' in your newsletter or offer to post signage (they provide) at each running club session. Exposure doesn't have to be elaborate in order to be effective.

## CONTACT A LOT OF PEOPLE

First, phone calls are much more effective than emails. It's a lot easier to type 'no' in an email than saying 'no' on the phone. Second, securing sponsorship dollars requires a person to get comfortable being told 'no'. Don't take it personally because it's not personal. Graciously thank them for considering the opportunity and move on to the next call.

## PREPARE A SPONSOR LETTER

Follow up phone calls with a short and simple letter addressed to the local business that states the amount you're requesting and how you plan to recognize the gift. Further personalize the letter by adding a handwritten post-it note thanking them for speaking with you. We have provided a sample letter at the end of this packet on **page 8**.

## THANK THEM AND INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THEY WILL GIVE AGAIN

Send a personalized thank you note and consider having each member of your running club sign it. Another good idea is to take photos throughout your running club sessions and email them to your sponsor to show their investment in action. Finding sponsors (and keeping them) requires you to build a relationship with them and create opportunities for them to get involved whenever possible, which feels more like a 'partnership' than just a one-time gift.

# Grants: Anyone Can Write One

A grant is a sum of money given by an organization (usually a private, family or corporate foundation) for a particular purpose that typically does not have to be repaid. In order to receive a grant, some form of proposal or application is required. The following tips and suggestions will help you identify and apply for grants to pay for your running club:

## **DETERMINE YOUR TARGET AMOUNT**

All grant applications require a specific dollar amount, so the first step is to determine the total cost of your club based on the number of runners.

## **NARROW YOUR FOCUS**

There are a lot of foundations out there, each funding different causes. With a little research you can narrow your search based on the following information and increase the chance of receiving funds:

- Prioritize foundations that fund issues like physical activity, childhood health, active lifestyles, preventative health, healthy eating, intergenerational health and sports.
- Target opportunities that align with your financial requirements; most grant websites will show the range of their funding.
- Some applications have to be submitted during certain times of the year, while others are rolling, i.e. can be submitted anytime throughout the year. Make sure the application deadline fits with your timeline.
- Choose grant opportunities that have a short period of time between submitting the application and being awarded funds. This information is also on most websites.
- Focus on grant applications that are short, concise and do not require significant reporting after the grant has been awarded.

## **WEBSITES TO HELP IDENTIFY GRANT OPPORTUNITIES**

[www.sparkPE.org](http://www.sparkPE.org)

[www.FuelUpToPlay60.com](http://www.FuelUpToPlay60.com)

[www.KidsInTheGame.org](http://www.KidsInTheGame.org)

[www.GetEDFunding.com](http://www.GetEDFunding.com)

[www.LetsMoveSchools.org](http://www.LetsMoveSchools.org)

[www.PHIAmerica.org](http://www.PHIAmerica.org)

## **PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION**

Follow the instructions carefully when you prepare your application and only answer what is asked. Supply any additional documents or information requested and remember that we are only a phone call away if you need any help or guidance.

# Existing Funding

Sometimes there is existing funding right under your nose that you didn't even know was there. Before you start approaching local businesses or submitting grant applications, make sure there aren't dollars already available. Here are a couple of places and sources to consider out of the blocks:

## **LOCAL CAMPUS/PRINCIPAL'S BUDGET**

Speak with your local school's campus Principal or bookkeeper and explain that you want to create a Marathon Kids running club at your school. Be sure to share the impact your club will have on the health and academic performance of the participants. There may be certain line items already in your campus budget to cover the costs.

## **PTA/PTO ORGANIZATIONS**

Identify and contact your school's PTA/PTO to discuss forming a running club in your community. These groups are typically very good at organizing fundraising activities and sometimes have annual budgets that could pay for the club. It's a good idea to get these groups involved in your running club whether they pay for them or not.

## **HOME OWNERS ASSOCIATION (HOA) RESERVE FUNDS**

Identify and contact your local HOA leader to determine if they have a reserve fund that could be used to pay for your running club. Treat the HOA as a local sponsor and offer to publicize their generous support in the same way you would a local business.

## **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMMING FUNDS**

If you choose to schedule your running club after school hours, you might be eligible for local afterschool funding. Check with your Principal to verify.

## **CHURCH OUTREACH FUNDS**

Many churches and places of worship set money aside in their annual budget for community engagement or health and wellness dollars. Identify the ones in your area and treat them as you would any other local sponsor.

# Sample Sponsor Request Letter

Date

Name of Contact  
Name of Organization  
Address  
City, State Zip

Dear Friend:

My name is [name] and I am following up on my [email or phone call] about organizing a Marathon Kids running club for our [school, neighborhood, community, etc.] Marathon Kids running clubs use the power of running to improve the physical, emotional and cognitive health of kids who join. Each runner sets a goal to run the equivalent of four marathons (104.8) over the course of our season. One day at a time, one mile at a time, they track their mileage and earn exclusive Nike rewards for each marathon completed.

I am writing to request your help in getting our running club off the ground. A modest sponsorship of [\$ amount based on number of participants] would allow [# of participants] kids to join our running club, receiving all of the tools necessary to track their miles and the rewards for each marathon completed.

There are several opportunities to publicly recognize your generous support throughout our community:

- We will highlight your sponsorship in all recruitment materials (i.e. flyers, social media posts, etc.)
- You can promote your business at our running club Kickoff Ceremony and Finisher Celebration
- You can provide signage that will be present at every running club session
- We can explore other creative forms of recognition

Feel free to contact me if you would like to speak earlier at [email or phone number] at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to connecting in the coming week.

Best regards,  
[name]



# MARATHON KIDS



Marathon Kids is a nonprofit organization committed to improving children's health through a fun, goal-driven youth running program—and it's partnering with Nike to get even more kids moving.

**MARATHONKIDS.ORG | @MARATHONKIDS**  
**FACEBOOK.COM/MARATHONKIDS**

Nike believes in the power of sport and physical activity to help athletes\* reach their human potential and ultimately to transform the world. Nike is excited to partner with Marathon Kids to give kids positive, early experiences in sport and physical activity to get them active for life. *\*If you have a body, you're an athlete.*

**NIKE.COM/MARATHONKIDS**