

Fundraising Letters - Examples

Great letters are part of the heart of our fundraising work for Relay For Life. Without them, we would not raise over \$300 Million per year towards a cure!

Here are the keys to a great letter and making it work!

- Make it personal (refer to those who you know who are battling cancer or have lost the fight)... People respond and relate to a personal cause.
- No more than one page - Tell them what you're going to say, say it, and tell 'em what you said, or so a friend used to say.
- Tell them where to send donations/how to donate. If your event has on-line registration, give them on the on-line link to donate.. Lots of people love to donate on line!
- Be original - An original letter - including photos, a unique spin, etc. will get people's attention
- USE E-MAIL, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR FRIENDS ARE ON LINE!!!! Don't send the e-mail as an attachment... People don't always open attachments. Embed a photo if you can of a fun Relay photo...
- AND ALWAYS - THANK THOSE WHO DONATE - send a personal e-mail (some people think you should send a handwritten note - you know your friends and family best!) or note. Tell them what you raised, how the event did, and even send a photo to give them an idea of what you were a part of, particularly if they are not familiar with Relay.

Below are a lot of different fundraising letter ideas as well as other's ideas on what makes a great letter!:

Example Letter #1 - Using E-mail to get the word out! Submitted by Ramesh Moorthy, Baltimore, MD In this age of technology, leverage e-mail... I have used this idea every year, and suggested it to several other people - two of them have told me and said they raised \$1000+ from using such an e-mail! AND IT'S SO EASY!!!! Here is my letter... I paste it in an e-mail and send it to all my family and friends:

Friends and Family,

As many of you are now familiar, it has become a yearly event for me to participate in the American Cancer Society's signature event, Relay for Life. Relay for Life raises money to fight cancer and to raise awareness of cancer in the community. It is a community-developed event run by volunteers and coached by ACS staff. It honors cancer survivors, and remembers those who have lost their lives to cancer. I became involved when I lived in Iowa 3 years ago, and since then my involvement has grown.

I have been fortunate - I have worked with wonderful people on Relay and this year I am a Team Captain for one of the Relays in the [YOUR CITY OR COUNTY] area - [YOUR EVENT NAME]. The unfortunate part is that I can tell you of the impact that cancer has had on my life - In the past year, I have lost [# OF PEOPLE WHO YOU KNOW WHO HAVE BEEN IMPACTED - GIVE THEM YOUR PERSONAL SPIN - I EMPHASIZE WHO I KNOW WHO HAS BEEN IMPACTED - MAKE SURE YOU CHECK WITH THOSE PEOPLE BEFORE MENTIONING THEM...]

So, as you also know, part of this event is fund-raising, and I would like to ask you to sponsor me to walk in this event. I will be at the event for the duration of the event - from about 3pm on [START DATE], until 10am on [END DATE]. And in all likelihood, sleep will be scarce :) So those of you who are worried that I won't work for this donation don't have to worry ☺

If you would like to donate, please e-mail or call me with the amount you will be pledging, and you can send a donation, payable to the American Cancer Society, to me at the address below. I'd also be happy to let you know your pledge from last year (not to be obnoxious, but many have already asked). ☺

If you would like more information, please contact me. I'd be happy to get any information you'd like. If you would like to become involved, I'd be happy to assist you, or contact your local American Cancer Society office. There are over 4000 Relays across the U.S. where you can make a difference!

Thank you for supporting the fight against cancer!

[YOUR NAME HERE]

[YOUR ADDRESS HERE]

Example Letter #2 - Short and Simple, not a lot to customize - Use this letter if you don't want to put a lot of details on your event or fundraising, but want to communicate your fundraising goal, why it is important to you, and that's all! Thanks to the Pottstown Relay For Life for the basic format!



Dear friends and family,

The fight against cancer goes on. There is no one I know who can say they DO NOT have a friend or relative who has battled this terrible illness.

I have found a way I can fight this disease - through the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life. I am dedicating my walk this year to all those I know who have cancer right now or have lost the battle.

The American Cancer Society Relay For Life raises hundreds of millions of dollars each year in the fight against cancer. Millions of people will walk or run through the night to raise money to fight cancer. Relay For Life builds awareness of this dreaded disease and makes a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer HERE AND NOW!

My goal is to raise (your goal \$\$\$) to help fight cancer. I am asking for your support. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more will help our community step up the fight against cancer. Please send a check, payable to the American Cancer Society, to my address today:

(your address, city, state, zip)

Thanks in advance for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

Sincerely,

(your name here)

**Example Letter #3... Fast Fundraising. . . How to Raise LOTS of Money
by Art Ferranti, Redwood City Relay volunteer and Team Captain,
California Division**

Here's a way to raise a lot of money in a short amount of time. Four to six weeks prior to your Relay, set aside about four hours one day and you can have it all done.

- Compose a one-page letter. Write your own as if you are sending it individually to a close friend. Use a computer. Copy it twice. Adjust one copy to be sent via email; the other for regular mail.
- Both versions should begin with a quick apology for the impersonal nature. Include a preface that as a friend, you thought they would be interested in this important cause.
- Send it to EVERYONE who has ever sent you something! For the emails, blind copy (bcc) them all. They don't need to know who else is receiving your note. This can result in more than 100 emails.
- Balance fact with feeling. Include: what Relay is (fact); why you are involved/what it means to you (feeling); where and when your Relay is, where the money goes (facts); describe the luminaria ceremony and how to purchase one (feeling); remind them to seek a company gift-match if offered (fact); and, on the back of the letter or at the bottom of your email, recreate a receipt and a luminaria sign-up form (time-saving tip).
- Early on, make the ask. Don't limit your donors, but ask for a specific range. My phrase is to ask for, "\$10, \$20, \$50 or whatever your budget will allow."
- Give a ten-day deadline for response. People respond when there is a sense of urgency. Tell them to write the check to the American Cancer Society and send it to your address.
- Write up envelopes for everyone who will not receive an email. This is a great activity to do in front of the TV.
- Copy the letters and before stuffing into the envelope, handwrite in colored ink, on the top of the letter the person's name and a quick line, "Hope you can support me." Sign it to add the personal touch.
- Mail the letters (yes, you will be out-of-pocket the postage and copying costs but they are minor compared to the return and, of course, the cause). Transmit the emails.



Now, sit back and watch the checks roll in. And they will. One final thing: Send a brief handwritten thank-you to everyone who responds immediately upon receiving the check. So, in that spirit, good luck and for all the people who will benefit from your cancer-fighting efforts... thank you!

Example Letter #4 - Surprises and Birthday Gifts - Submitted by Sheryl Trautman, Relay For Life Director, Southwest Division - This is a great way to link in the battle of a survivor to your letter to make it more "real"

A special volunteer, Thom, has a good friend, his college roommate who is battling breast cancer for the second time. She is a team captain at a Relay in Wooster (Wayne County) Ohio. On his birthday June 2, he sent an email to all of his friends and family and asked that in lieu of gifts they send donations to him for the Relay For Life. He collected about \$850.

Through the staff person and found the chair of the event. He arranged for them to help him surprise his friend. He drove to Wooster on Friday night and using one of the chair's cell phones, called his friend. He told her he collected this money but was afraid to mail the checks for security reasons. She was getting a little impatient. As he walked behind her, she was talking on the microphone, on the stage... until he finally said, "SO, I decided to bring it here personally!"

Example Letter #5 - Shave Your Head for Cancer Letter - Submitted by Minette Genuchi, Development Specialist, Heartland Division - A great idea that not every person will be willing to do (Shave their head!) but it is a great example of how to connect a fundraiser (such as shaving your head) to your fundraising letter

To raise both funds and awareness for his campus Relay For Life, Clint Eckstein, a student at the University of Nebraska, shaved his head—then sent a letter to friends on and off campus and family members. In his letter, he described what cancer patients have to go through as they fight their disease. Cost Cutters, a hair styling salon in Lincoln, donated a hair stylist to attend the event and shave heads to promote cancer awareness. Clint raised \$500 and four other people shaved their heads to raise money and awareness.

Example Letter #6 - Canine Fundraising Letter - Adopt As You See Fit - Here is a great letter written from the standpoint of a dog... who is seeking fundraising on behalf of his "owner" Make sure you put in a picture of the dog; pictures of owners optional. Note that the text next to the picture is in a "text box" (you can read on MS Word Help on how a text box works; if you are copying and pasting the letter below, you'll need to edit the text box information separately from the first paragraph of the letter. If you have problems, contact us via acsrelay.org ☺

Dear Friend,

Greetings, salutations, and a wag of my tail from XYZ town in [YOUR STATE HERE]! I am writing- to you today because I know that my master needs my help. As you probably know, Robert has always managed to get himself in some real "jams". Well, this is no exception. In my three short years with him he has managed to come up with some "doozies": Do you know what he has done this time? He has promised to raise at least \$1000 in sponsorship for the upcoming 24-Hour Relay For Life to benefit the American- Cancer Society. He has teamed up with a bunch of other crazies who have agreed to take turns walking laps throughout a 24-Hour period May 15th and 16th. Surely you realize that he can hardly "raise sand", much less \$100.00. That is why I "borrowed" his keys and drove over to his office last night in order to type those - this letter (excuse me, but it is rather difficult to type with my big paws. My claws keep getting in the way).



I would appreciate it (and so would he) if you could help him out in any way possible with his fundraising. He is dedicating his efforts in honor of his wife (and my "Momma") Debra. Your tax-deductible gift made payable the American Cancer Society would get him out of this "jam". If you are able to help, please use the return envelope provided before May 10th. Thanks! I knew I could count on you (us dogs are great judges of character)! Well, I gotta go now. It's time for me to go bark at something. Take Care.

Sincerely,

Squirt, Dalmatian [OR YOUR TYPE OF DOG HERE], Topeka, Kansas [OR YOUR HOME HERE]

PS - I have enclosed a fact sheet about the event in case you wanted to know more about it.

Example Letter #7 - Marathon Fundraising Letter - Change to fit your race/ survivors/ etc. - The Top 10 list here is very applicable to your letter - incorporate it to make your "pitch" more interesting.

Dear friends...

On April 16th, 2002 I am lacing up my sneakers and running the Boston Marathon to raise money for the American Cancer Society as part our family team fundraising for the Relay For Life where I participate with my family team in St. Albans, Vermont. I am taking on this challenge of my life in honor of my friends Susan Silodor, Marietta Stevens, and Bev Gross of Cheyenne Wyoming. Each one of these special people has survived cancer because of their positive attitude and the breakthroughs in cancer research funded by American Cancer Society. This is my third Boston and it will be the most memorable because of the courage and strength of these special survivors behind me. I qualified with the Hartford Marathon in October of 2000, with a 3:40 marathon qualifier time. This will be my 15th marathon since 1989.

Now, your part is easy. All you need to do is commit to sponsoring me. My part is a little tougher, I've committed to raising \$2,620 for the American Cancer Society by completing the 26.2 miles-- no matter how long it takes. Please donate as generously as you can by sending in your check payable to the American Cancer Society to the address below. Just in case you need a little extra motivation to sponsor me, here are a few reasons.

Top 10 Reasons to sponsor Nancy in the Boston Marathon:

10. You can sleep in late on April 16th while still funding cancer research, while I get up drive to Boston for the marathon.

9. You can transform my sneakers into a money machine as I raise \$100/mile.
8. Your donation is tax deductible.
7. If you sponsor me than I have no excuse to walk or to crawl and will run the entire 26.2 miles.
6. If I do not raise the total \$2,620 they make me wear a shirt saying "I came \$500 short of my goal".
5. The public can access comprehensive cancer information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through the American Cancer Society's toll-free information line (1-800-ACS-2345) and web site (www.cancer.org). During a time when so much cancer and health information is available through the internet, much of which should be viewed with caution, the American Cancer Society is a dependable resource for accurate, unbiased information.

4. When I was in high school playing basketball, my ankles were sprained so many times they would give out on my in the hallways of school. The doctor said I would never be able to walk the same again, help me prove him wrong.
3. You can help me make it to Brighton, MA where Bronya is having a party 3 miles from the finish and will have signs celebrating the end of my trek. Help me continue on to her house to celebrate in reaching both goals! (They plan to have chocolate, which will fuel those last few miles!)
2. I've gone through 896 oz. of Gator Aid, 43 Power Bars, 5 pairs of running shoes, a new pair of cross country skis (for winter training) 53 lbs of ice for my knees, 2 bottles of Alleve and all you need to do is send in a check payable to the American Cancer Society.
1. The overall trend lines for cancer are going in the right direction. In 1990, for the first time in history, death rates from cancer in the U.S. began a sustained decline (at a rate of 0.6% per year). In 1992, the rate of new cancer cases also turned the corner and began to drop (at a rate of 0.9% per year).

We will eventually cure cancer...why not help find the cure a little sooner?

Example Letter #8 - Community Support Letter - This is a very standard letter you can use that covers the facts, but doesn't personalize as much... some folks who are doing mass mailings like to use this format.

Dear Community Supporter:

I am writing on behalf of the American Cancer Society to request a donation for our signature fund-raiser, Relay For Life, which will be held the weekend of June 15-16, 2001 at Phelps Stadium, Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire.

Relay For Life is a family oriented event where participants can walk or run on a track relay style for 18 hours. Participants camp around the track, and when they are not taking their turn, take part in other fun activities. Former and current cancer patients, their families, and the public are invited to take part in this existing team relay event. The team consists of individuals representing corporations, clubs, organizations, and families.

Because this event is quite long and exhausting, we look towards local businesses to help out in donations for our participants. We need food, drink, and gift certificates of all kinds to help make our event fun and rewarding. We expect to have over 700 participants this year, ranging from you

children to people in their fifties. Most of our participants are between the ages of 30-50, and at least 60% of them will be female.

Cancer touches so many people in our community and Relay For Life is a great way to help fight this terrible disease. Please seriously consider this request and let your neighbors, your customers, and your community know that you are joining them in the fight. If you would like more information about Relay For Life, and any of the programs it supports, please feel free to call the American Cancer Society at _____

Kind Regards,

Relay Volunteer

Example Letter #9 - Letter from baby - Here's another way to make your letter much more personalized and interesting... Thanks to Kal and Scott!

Hello to all my family and friends!

My name is Kal. I'm about to participate in my first **Relay Life**. Now, I've been to a lot of **Relays** with my mom and Mom says she takes me to Relays for two reasons: (1) it's her job - she works for the **American Cancer** and (2) it's a chance to pay tribute to the memory of my **Grammy**.

Why do I Relay? First, I like the fact that I get to **luminaria** for my **Grammy**. I also like to take laps around track in my **purple** Baby Jogger...beats trying to walk (I'm working on that). Daddy pushes me really fast! The other thing I like about **Relay For Life** is that I usually always score a balloon, and I get to **camp out** all night!

Relay For Life is a lot of fun... but it's serious business, too. You see, it raises a lot of money so the **American Cancer Society** can help people who have been touched by cancer. It also raises oodles of money to fund research to **cure** this silly disease. Mom says by the time I grow up, cancer should be something that's treated at t Cool, huh?!

Send donations to: that
Kal Lunders
Rohnert Park, CA

So - how can you help? You can make a **donation** to my team - **Kal's Krew**. Just write a check to the **American Cancer Society**, and send it to me. If you include the name of a cancer survivor or someone who's lost the fight, I'll make a special **luminaria** bag for them. That's all you have to do... I'll do all the walking and my team will make sure there is someone on the track the entire 24 hours (even while I'm sleeping!). Be sure to put your donation in the mail soon. The **Relay** is coming up fast - it's on October 12-13th. Thanks for the support!

Love, **Kal Lunders** (& my mom & dad -- Becky & Scott)



Becky

For
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Example Letter #10 - Link a personal event like your Birthday!

Subject: My 30th Birthday Wish, by Erika

Now that I have your attention, yes, I have a birthday coming up in less than two weeks. And yes, my birthday wish is about fighting cancer.

But wait, there's more! My 30th birthday wish is not just for me, but for all of us that have been, or probably will be touched by cancer.

I am a team member on one of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life teams for the Albuquerque Relay this June 2-3. (Quick review: Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. I think that's because everyone has such a great time and realize it's not just about raising money.)

But wait, there's more! Most of my teammates are cancer survivors, and I am honored they asked me to be on their team this year. Our goal for this event is \$200,000 for the year 2000.

Okay, you've seen those old commercials selling those can't-live-without products for \$29.99, right? From the Ronco automatic egg scrambler to those aluminum cutting Ginsu knives. (Why anyone would want to cut a Coke can in half is beyond me.)

But wait, there's more! At the moment, I am feeling Very 29.99 with that 3-0 looming just ahead.

So here's the deal: I'm asking all of you to make a tax-deductible donation of \$29.99 to my Relay team towards our team goal of \$2,000.

But wait, there's more! If not at least \$29.99 then \$2.99 or whatever you choose. Any amount gets us a little closer to putting me out of a job -- not necessarily a bad thing.

How? Mail to:

American Cancer Society
5800 Lomas Blvd., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Attention: Erika M.

Make checks payable to the American Cancer Society, Albuquerque Relay For Life.

But wait, there's more: Call me if you prefer to use your credit card at 505-260-2105 ext. 20. Operators are standing by....

OR, e-mail me at either e@email.com or e@yahoo.com

OR, cash works too.

But wait, there's Even More: I have a candy jar in my office again this year, especially for the chocolate-dependent.

Even More: Check out the Web site at www.cancer.org where we have recently added a way to "FIND A RELAY" in New Mexico, Arizona and Nevada (as well as across the country) via the Relay For Life pages.

This year there will be over 3800 Relays across the country - get involved today!

My thanks, and thanks from your American Cancer Society... 1-800-ACS-2345 for answers to cancer.

Example Letter #11 - Letter for a Kid's Team - Here's another way to make your letter simple but fun! The key to this letter, is to have the kids write a personal note (you can photocopy it) asking for the support and include it along with this letter that has the details.

Hi!

My name is _____. Most of you know me... And I know you... And you have already read my note about helping me to find a cure for cancer (enclosed).

But do you know about **Relay For Life**? If you do, you know that Relay for Life is (1) Lots of Fun! And (2) Raises a lot of money to fight cancer for the **American Cancer Society**. It's like a party or a carnival, with games and stuff.

If you don't, let me tell you a little more about **Relay For Life**... It is a great event that the **American Cancer Society** and a lot of great volunteers put on all over America. It has games and music and lots of people camp out all night. Doesn't that sound like fun? But it has a serious side too - people take turns walking around a track all night to raise money to find a cure for cancer and help people who have it or have friends and family with it.

Why do I Relay? Lots of reasons. I like the fact that I get to light a **luminaria** for _____. I get to take laps around the track... And finally, I get to **camp out** all night with my friends - We have a team at Relay! It's called _____! We'll dress up like _____ and _____ (describe what the team will do).

How can you help? Write out a check to the **American Cancer Society**, and send it to:

Name Address City, State, Zip

Please put our team name, _____ and my name _____ in the Memo area.

My team will have someone on the track all night! The **Relay** is coming up fast - it is on _____.

Thanks for the support!

Love, _____

Example Letter #12 - Thanks to the Pottstown Relay For Life for this great letter that you can customize for your event!



Dear (name):

The fight against cancer goes on. There is no one I know who can say they DO NOT have a friend or relative who has battled this terrible illness.

I have found a way I can fight this disease - through the American Cancer Society's INSERT LOCATION HERE Relay For Life. I am dedicating my walk this year to two people very special to me who have cancer right now:

(name)

(name)

The 2004 Pottstown Relay raised \$544,000, 2nd highest in the state and 14th in the NATION. These funds are being used for research, cancer prevention and detection programs, and patient services in our local communities.

On June 4 and June 5, 2005, hundreds of people will spend 24 hours at the Pottsgrove High School stadium, walking or running relay-style. My goal is to raise (your goal \$\$\$) to help fight cancer.

I am asking for your support. Your tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more will help our community step up the fight against cancer. Please send a check, payable to the American Cancer Society, to my address today:

(your address, city, state, zip)

Thanks in advance for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

Sincerely,

(name)

Your Favorite Relayer!

Example Letter #13 - Another simple letter variation - thanks to Terese!



Dear Friends and Family,

The fight against cancer goes on. There is no one I know who can say they DO NOT have a friend or relative that has battled this terrible disease. I have found a way to fight against cancer- through the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. I will be dedicating my walk to my dad, who is currently battling lung cancer.

Relay for Life is a team event that celebrates cancer survivors, and raises funds for the American Cancer Society research, education, prevention, advocacy and patient services. It is a fun, outdoor and overnight fundraising event where teams take turns walking or running around a track. My team, which will have 40 people on it, will be joined by hundreds of others (*insert date here*) at the (*insert location here*). Millions of people take part in Relay for Life events around the country and it raises over 40% of the funding for the American Cancer Society.

The Relay starts off with a Survivor's Walk, where cancer survivors walk the initial lap, symbolizing the courage that survivors and their families display and sustain in their lives. On the opening night, there is a beautiful and touching Luminaria Ceremony that pays tribute to cancer survivors and to loved ones who still live on in our hearts.

How can you help?

You can support me by making a tax-deductible contribution to the American Cancer Society. If you would like to donate, please call me with the amount you will be pledging, and you can send the donation, payable to the American Cancer Society, to me at the address below. I must have all donations by (*insert donation due date here*).

Additionally, you may purchase a luminaria to honor someone fighting cancer or in remembrance of someone who has lost their battle with cancer. Please complete the form at the end of this letter and send it back to me, along with a \$5 donation. During the Luminaria Ceremony, candles are placed in luminaria bags and will be lit on (*insert date of luminaria ceremony – usually first night of Relay*) at (*insert time of luminaria ceremony*). The votives burn throughout the night, serving as a reminder of the purpose of Relay for Life.

Relay for Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported and that one day cancer will be eliminated.

Thank you for supporting the fight against cancer!

Relay for Life-There is no finish line until there's a cure!

----- DONATION FORM- *Help*
us fund a cure

1. Donation Amount: _____

----- LUMINARIA FORM- *Light*
the way to a cure

1. This candle is lit for: _____

Dedicated by: _____

2. This candle is lit for: _____

Dedicated by: _____

3. This candle is lit for: _____

Dedicated by: _____

Please include your \$ ***(fill in luminaria suggested donation amount)*** donation.

Checks should be made payable to American Cancer Society.

Please send donations to:

(address to send donations to – could be your address or ACS address in your community)
