

# IDEAS FOR INCENTIVES & SPECIAL EVENTS



Middlesex United Way

## INCENTIVES

Utilize incentives to get pledge forms in early or to encourage participation, increased giving, or department competition. People give when they are educated and informed about the needs and the impact of their gift, but incentives are a fun addition to the campaign. Some ideas include:

- Reserved parking spots
- Sleep-in late/leave early days
- Extra paid vacation days
- Lunch or breakfast with the CEO
- Birthday vacation day
- Casual dress days
- Movie tickets
- Restaurant gift certificates
- Company merchandise
- Traveling trophy for the department/shift with highest participation

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Events are your opportunity to add a little something extra to the campaign. Not only do they raise extra funds for United Way, but they can be instrumental in team-building and strengthening company spirit. Use this as an opportunity to further educate your employees about United Way and most importantly, have fun. Here are some things to keep in mind when planning special events to enhance your campaign:

- Not every event has to be elaborate
- Be creative
- Include lots of volunteers to help in planning and running the event—it's less work for each person involved and more people will want it to be a success
- Make it easy for employees to participate
- Secure the support of upper management
- Not all events must be fundraisers—some, such as a *Day of Caring* volunteer project, may be best-served as a team-building exercise or morale booster
- Events should be strategically placed throughout the campaign so that no one feels pressured to give too much at any one time
- You might even consider holding a few events throughout the entire calendar year

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## IDEA GALLERY

**Snack and Dessert Cart**—It's a new twist on the old bake sale idea. Employees donate items; carts travel around the building in the morning and afternoon and offer treats at a minimal cost.

**Balloon Sale**—Sell balloons for a few dollars each which contain small, token prizes or informational facts about how contributions are getting things done in the community. Encourage people to buy balloons for themselves and have them delivered to others.

**Jeans Day**—Based on level of donations, employees can wear jeans to work on days not designated as casual.

**International Lunch**—Have employees bring in ethnic dishes for a potluck. Charge \$5 per plate.

**Chili Fest**—Employees cook their favorite chili recipe and enter it into a cook-off contest. Sell tickets to taste the chili and to vote for a favorite. Offer a prize for the winner.

**Book/Video Sale**—Employees donate their old books/DVDs/CDs for a sale with all proceeds donated to United Way.

**Ice Cream Social**—Have an ice cream party with several types of ice cream and toppings for everyone who made a pledge or increased their pledge.

**Hole-in-One**—Set up a portable putting green and let people try their luck at a putt for a donation.

## CONTESTS

**Baby/Pet Picture Match Game**—Invite employees to try matching baby and/or pet pictures to pictures of the employees. Award an incentive to the entry with the most correct answers. Charge employees a set amount for each ballot.

**Funny Photos**—Employees bring in the funniest photos of other employees and have everyone vote on the funniest. Charge a certain amount for a ballot or hand out ballots when employees turn in their pledge forms.

**Children's Artwork Contest**—Invite children of employees to enter drawings of people helping people. Use United Way agency stories or the theme "BE A SUPERHERO" to spark the drawings. Post them and vote for the most heartfelt, the best faces, etc.

**Penny War**—Each department/shift is designated a jar. Employees are encouraged to fill their own department's jar with pennies, each equaling one point. Opposing departments/shifts may add other coins to the jar that are equal to their value only negative (example: a dime is minus 10 points). The department/shift with the most positive points at the end of the week is awarded a prize.

## JUST FOR FUN

**Ugly Tie/Hat Contest**—Have management team members wear their ugliest hat or tie and charge a quarter to vote for the ugliest.

**Kiss the Pig**—Employees vote through contributions to executive-labeled piggy banks for the boss who must kiss a pig.

**Dollar-an-Inch Contest**—Executives participate in an all day competition to end the day with the shortest tie. Employees cut an inch off their favorite executive's tie each time they make a small donation. You can have prizes for the shortest tie, ugliest tie, etc.

**Executive Tricycle Race**—Set a relay course for employees to go through riding a tricycle. Charge an entry fee. Use a stopwatch to time participants, with the fastest one getting a prize.