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A Web Tour: Grassroots Fundraisers, Deals, and Discounts

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Sometimes all it takes is a few dollars to replace a broken piece of equipment, facilitate a special class activity, or celebrate success—and there are lots more ways to raise cash than an old-fashioned bake sale. Visit the following sites to learn how your school or classroom can earn some extra dollars in unexpected places.

- **School Fundraisers (school-fundraisers.com)** At this site, you'll find useful information to ensure fundraising success, including links to "Fundraising 101" and "Top 10 Selling Tips." You'll also find links to several products your school could sell to raise money, including cookie dough, flower butter candy, coffee, gourmet nuts, and more.
- **PTO Fundraisers (www.newton.mec.edu/bigelow/news_and_events/pto/ptoFUNDRAISING.htm)** Pick up some fundraising ideas from this high-energy parent-teacher organization that raises big bucks every year in Newton, Mass. Initiatives include a "Buy a Book" program to keep the school library well stocked with new reading material, a magazine drive, and a technology drive for the purchase of classroom computers and other equipment.
- **Internet Auctions (www.internetnews.com/ec-news/article.php/79791)** Lebanon Elementary School in rural Maine held an Internet-based fundraiser to send its fifth-graders to an environmental residential program. The winning bidder and three guests lunched with Governor Angus King in the Governor's Mansion. Check out this news clip for the details on how they did it.
- **Funding Factory (www.fundingfactory.com)** It's not easy being green, but at this site you can set up your school for an environmentally friendly fundraiser that turns trash into cash and teaches students the value of recycling. Don't toss those spent inkjet and laser cartridges or old cell phones. Recycle them to earn credit towards the purchase of technology, sports, and recreation equipment. A welcome kit provides everything you need to get started.
- **ABC Fundraising Presents (www.abcfundraising.com/fundraising/pta-fundraisers.htm)** ABC Fundraising has helped over 10,000 schools, youth groups, and other nonprofits take home over \$1 million via a modified scratch-card program. Fundraisers receive a booklet with 50 scratch-off circles hiding donation amounts ranging from \$.50 to \$3.00. Prospective donors are asked to scratch off one or more circles and donate the revealed amounts. In return, each donor receives a sheet of eight coupons good at places like JC Penny, Subway, and others. Every booklet sold brings in \$100 and a \$80 profit.
- **FreeAfterRebate.Info (www.freeafterrebate.info)** Simply put, before you purchase any computer gear, consumer electronics, or office equipment for your school, visit this site to see if those items come with a cash refund. Other helpful resources at the site include a comparison-shopping feature.

locating the best price for a particular product. In addition, you can subscribe to a weekly e-mail newsletter about special deals.

- **Box Tops for Education** (www.boxtops4education.com) Schools can earn major cash with a little help from parents and community members. There are three ways to earn dollar rewards at this site: 1) Save box tops from General Mills products; each one is worth 10 cents. 2) Begin an online shopping activity at the Box Tops Marketplace and earn up to 8 percent of the purchase value for a school you designate. Participating merchants include Apple, Dell, Target, and over 200 others. 3) Make a purchase with a Box Tops Visa credit card and the school you designate will earn 1 percent of the purchase price.
- **Government Auctions** (www.governmentauctions.org) At GovernmentAuctions.org you can buy seized and surplus items at a heavy discount. Also of note is Steal-it-Back.com (www.stealitback.com), where several law enforcement agencies sell stolen or forfeited goods—including laptops, handhelds, and printers—at bargain basement prices. Computer equipment deals can also be found at Police Auctions (www.policeauctions.com) and Bid4Assets (www.bid4assets.com). (Note: all purchases are buyer's risk sales. If items turn out to be broken or parts missing, there are no refunds or exchanges.)
- **Fresh Start for Donated Computers** (www.microsoft.com/education/FreshStart/FreshStart.aspx) This Microsoft program helps primary and secondary schools receiving qualifying donated computers ensure they have a legitimate Windows 98 or 2000 operating system license. To qualify for free license documentation and a software installation CD, simply fill out the online application and mail or fax the response acknowledgement with a print-out of the order page and a copy of the documentation attesting accreditation and certification of approval.
- **Target Take Charge of Education** (target.com/target_group/schools/search_school.jhtml) See Target's eye for education at this site intended to benefit K-12 schools. In addition to donating 1 percent of your Target Visa and Target card purchases at Target and a half-percent of all your Target Visa purchases made elsewhere to the school of your choice, the company has created an online Classroom Wish List. Teachers log on to create a list of items they need for their class, which parents can view and purchase. In addition, Target makes small reading and arts grants available through local stores. Schools can apply for up to \$3,000 to fund arts-oriented projects, field trips, and reading programs.
- **Verizon Extra Credit for Schools** (www.verizonld.com/ecfs) Earn some extra money while you talk! Verizon's Extra Credit for Schools, if available in your area, lets Verizon users who choose Verizon as their long distance carrier designate a beneficiary school. The company then gives the designated school 5 percent of the user's monthly long distance calling costs in a quarterly check.

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