

2025

Personal Fundraiser Guide



OTTAWA THERAPY DOGS

Host a personal or community fundraiser for Ottawa Therapy Dogs and help us celebrate 25 years of good dogs doing great work!

By fundraising for Ottawa Therapy Dogs, you will help us deliver on our mission to provide invaluable care and support through canine-assisted interventions to people of all ages in the National Capital Region—including those coping with physical, and/or mental health challenges.

As a small charitable organization, our work relies on the support of community partners like you. Make a difference by turning your activities into a personal fundraiser hosted by you/your group to help raise awareness and funds for our cause.

You can create a personal fundraiser in just a few steps:

1. Decide to fundraise for Ottawa Therapy Dogs.
2. Set a goal and make a plan.
3. Complete our [third-party fundraising application](#).
4. Spread the word and invite people to donate!

Getting Started

What is a Personal Fundraiser?

A personal (or third-party) fundraiser is an initiative organized by someone not directly affiliated with Ottawa Therapy Dogs. Whether you are an individual, group, or organization, you can make a difference by hosting your own fundraising initiative independent of Ottawa Therapy Dogs, but with funds supporting our programming.

Please note that these funds are raised through individual supporters of your fundraising initiative, and you should not request donations/sponsorship from organizations, businesses, non-profits or foundations on behalf of Ottawa Therapy Dogs. Requests for funds of this nature are led directly by staff of OTD who manage these partnerships/funding opportunities.



Planning your Event

We recommend using our Event Planning Checklist to help you keep track of all the details. Here are a few steps to help you get started.

- Set your event date and location
- Create a budget
- Recruit volunteers through your personal networks (if needed)
- Plan your own activities and entertainment! As this programming is spearheaded independently from Ottawa Therapy Dogs, it is a great opportunity to align your event with you/your fundraising team's area of interest! We have also included potential ideas for programming further below.
- Arrange for necessary permits or permissions
- Set up your donation collection method
- Create a timeline of activities

First Steps

01

Choose Your Event Type

This may include a personal event with family and friends, workplace fundraiser, community event, virtual fundraiser, or digital fundraiser.

02

Set Your Goals

Determine your fundraising target, decide on event date/duration, and choose your venue (in-person, virtual, or hybrid).

03

Register Your Fundraiser

Contact info@ottawatherapydogs.ca to let OTD know about your plans. Receive guidance and support from OTD, including access to branding materials for use in your outreach.



Promoting Your Fundraiser

When promoting your fundraiser, we kindly request that you mention in your communications that it is a third-party fundraising initiative being hosted by you/your organization/your group in support of Ottawa Therapy Dogs. This helps provide clarity between external events, and events being hosted directly by Ottawa Therapy Dogs. If you do any local media outreach/receive invitations to speak to media, please connect with Ottawa Therapy Dogs prior to doing so to discuss these details.

Online	In-Person
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a Facebook event page• Share on social media• Send email invitations to your networks• Create a digital flyer• Tag our Instagram or Facebook accounts so we can see the posts you share!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post flyers on local community boards or workplace bulletin boards• Word of mouth through friends and family• Ask to place your flyer in local pet stores, veterinary clinics, and/or businesses that are dog-friendly



**What (or who) is your WHY?
Think about WHY you are raising
money for Ottawa Therapy Dogs.
Sharing the personal story behind
WHY this cause is important to
you can help inspire donations
and cultivate community support!**

Tips for Effective Promotion

1. Start promoting four to six weeks before the event, and consider save-the-date outreach if you plan further in advance of this timeline;
2. Share stories about OTD's impact as provided through staff of the organization;
3. Use clear calls to action in your outreach.

Event Day Success Tips

- Don't forget to take photos and videos, and pass these along to info@ottawatherapydogs.ca (please ensure all consent has been obtained by those in the photos)
- Have a first aid kit available for attendees
- Have a backup plan for outdoor events in the case of inclement weather, such as an alternative location or back-up 'rain date'

Wrapping Up Your Fundraiser

Thank Your Supporters

- Send personal thank you notes/emails to those who attended/supported your event
- Share photos and highlights through social media/email
- Announce final amount raised for OTD through channels that were initially used in your outreach

Document Success/Considerations for Future Fundraising Initiatives

- Create a summary of the event that may be shared internally with those who collaborated on your fundraiser (i.e. work colleagues, teammates)
- Note what worked well, and identify areas for improvement
- Document any contacts that you connected with as part of this initiative in the case that they may assist you with future fundraising events

Submit Donations

- Collect and count all donations
 - Complete donation forms
 - Contact Ottawa Therapy Dogs to arrange to submit the funds to the organization
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Celebration Time

- Share your success story with OTD, including any photos/videos that may be re-shared, and the total donation amount so we can include an acknowledgement in our communications
- Consider making it an annual event
- Inspire others to host their own fundraisers

Important Reminders

- Connect with Ottawa Therapy Dogs before starting any outreach so we are aware of the initiative, and can provide our support
- Follow our [third-party fundraising guidelines](#)
- Stay in touch with Ottawa Therapy Dogs staff by tagging us in your posts, or reaching out if we can help contribute to the success of your initiative in any way

Here are some great fundraising ideas with your friends and/or co-workers!

Personal Events with Family & Friends

- Host a dinner party with a suggested donation
- Organize a game night
- Hold a pet-themed trivia evening in your home
- Create a neighborhood dog-walking group
- Special Occasions
- Request donations instead of birthday gifts
- Celebrate anniversaries with a fundraising component
- Host a graduation party fundraiser



Workplace Fundraisers

- Casual Friday donation program
 - Office bake sale
 - Lunch and learn sessions (OTD is happy to help provide resources if the focus is on therapy dogs!)
 - Pet photo contest
 - Check if your company offers matching donations
 - Create a workplace giving campaign
 - Games/Bingo (where a portion of proceeds from participating go to OTD)
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Put the 'fun' in fundraising with these 'paw-some' seasonal ideas!

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog walking challenge (those can register by making a donation, winner gets bragging rights) • Yard/garage sale • Sweet treat fundraiser with businesses such as Cookie Crumbles or Scoop n'Bake Cookie Dough • Garden/tea party (a donation is your ticket!) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog wash station (collaborate with a local business who has dog baths) • Outdoor movie night • Pet-friendly picnic • Pizza party with Little Caesars® Pizza Kit Fundraising Program • Ice cream social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halloween pet costume contest • Fall photo sessions • Holiday pet art auction • "Pawctober" fitness challenge (a donation is your registration) • Thanksgiving bake sale • Trivia night • Comedy night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday gift wrapping station • Hot chocolate stand • Easter chocolate sale (check out Purdy's Chocolatier online fundraiser) • Host a holiday get-together, and encourage those who attend to make a gift as their 'ticket' in!

Did you know? Ottawa Therapy Dogs' volunteer teams provide more than 1,600 visits each year to people of all ages in the National Capital Region, including The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre and Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario.



info@ottawatherapydogs.ca