

The Evolution of Bake Sales: Non-baked Bake Sales

I have lots of good memories of bake sales and school fundraisers at my elementary school. Every year, they had a cake walkathon and I won cakes two years in a row! Times have changed and recently, there was a heated battle about bake sales. [New York City banned schools from selling homemade baked goods](#) in order to prevent foodborne illnesses. School officials said it was also to fight obesity. In spite of the obesity prevention claims, high-fat foods including Pop Tarts remain on the list of approved products.

The indisputable fact is that schools need to raise money more than ever. But does health and nutrition need to be compromised for this goal? Instead of banning things, we can come up with new ideas that are healthy, good for the community, AND raise money for schools.

You don't need to be a parent in order to make a difference at your local school and community. Perhaps you have a small business that you could promote at a school fundraiser while also providing goods or services at a discounted rate. It's a win-win situation for everyone involved.

By initiating fundraisers that do not involve selling sugary baked goods, we are sending an important nutrition message to kids. As caring and concerned parents, teachers and community members we are teaching children how to think outside the box to foster smart, healthy, and creative business entrepreneurs.

Here are some inventive fundraising ideas. I included links at the bottom that include even more options.

Create a cookbook with healthy recipes from the community. You can use Mac computers and online publishers like [Lulu.com](#) and [Blurb.com](#). It's an easy and fun way to collaborate with members of the community and create a useful product to sell.

Sell items with the school logo on it. The site [Vistaprint.com](#) allows you to upload logos that can be printed on calendars, coffee mugs, or pens. It's inexpensive, easy, and quick.

Help families go green. Sell [BPA-free water bottles](#) and eco-friendly lunch boxes.

Sell gardening kits or composting kits. Any time you make it easy for people to start a new eco-habit, you are doing a good deed!

Create T-shirts for a fundraising activity that helps the community. Start an annual school walk-a-thon or offer to build a garden at a local community center. By selling the T-shirts with an artsy logo, you're promoting a good cause and fundraising at the same time.

Hold your own farmer's market. Enlist local farmer's or grocery stores to get involved. Create your own farmer's market at the school by having the kids build little stands with signs. Ask parents who are confident cooks to hold cooking demos. One parent sold scripts from her local Farmers' Markets. The market sold tokens at a 10% discount, and then the parents sold them at

full price. According to the Florida Fruit Association, fruit fundraisers can raise \$8,000-\$10,000 in as few as one to two weeks. You'll be supporting local businesses and raising funds for the school at the same time. In 2009, schools in southern Wisconsin collectively sold more than \$50,000 of local and fairly-traded products.

Cater a dinner cooked by kids. One of my colleagues runs a wonderful nutrition and cooking program within [Children's Aid Society](#) in New York City. Some of her high school students started cooking for school staff meetings and they loved the food so much that it's now a side business where teens learn how to cook and run a catering business.

Sell flowers! You make the sales, [Flower Power](#) gets 50%, and your school gets the rest. The company will mail plants directly to each person who orders so that the parents and the school don't have to do anything after the sale.

Hold an Iron Chef event. Find a local celebrity chef to be the judge and have different members of the community participate. Charge each person per head and invite the press for media coverage. It's fun, inventive and you can hold an auction - or silent auction - at the event in order to raise additional funds. You may want to explain what an Iron Chef event is... I mean I know but some people may not.

There are lots of options out there besides selling baked goods! For more ideas and information, check out the following links:

<http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf>

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)

[School Nutrition Association - Scroll to fundraising](#)

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