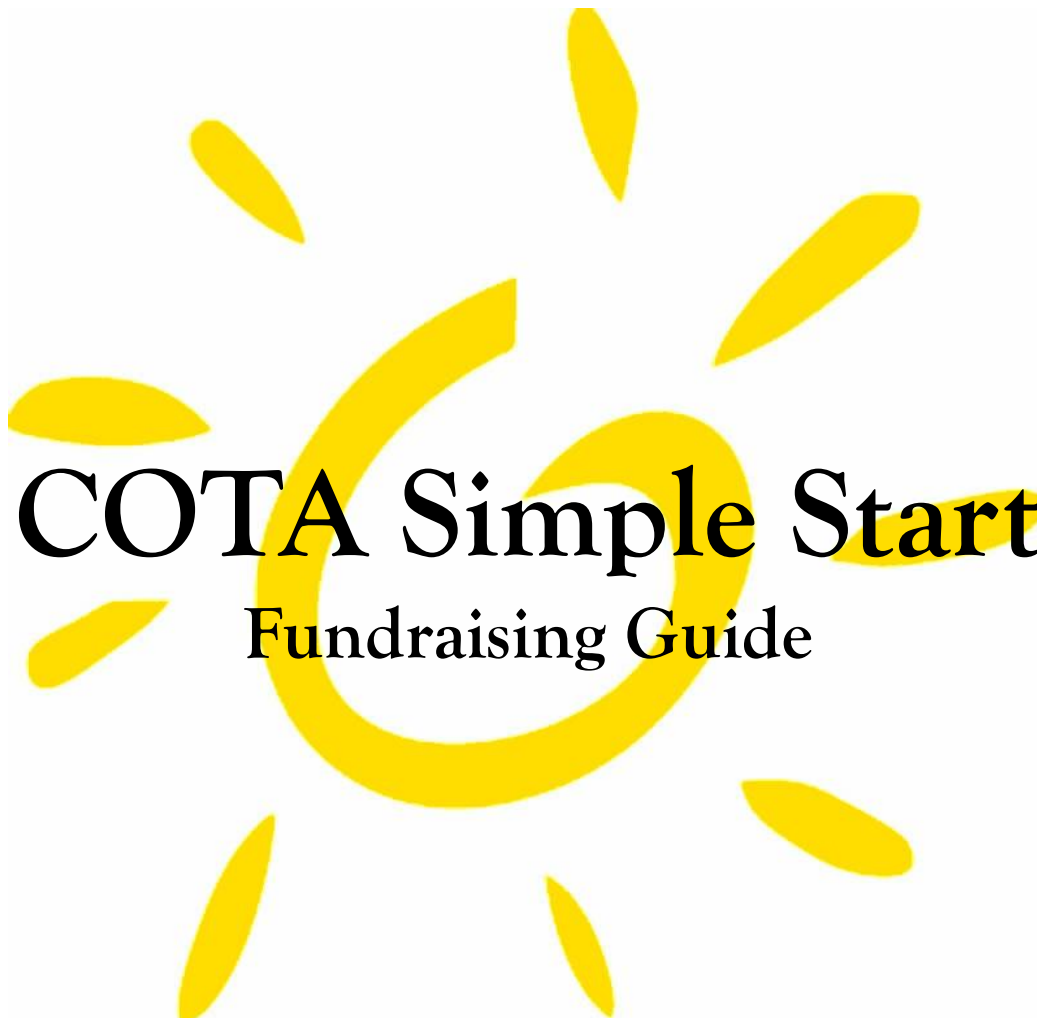


**Children's Organ Transplant Association®**

**The Trusted Leader Supporting Families ... For a Lifetime**



# **COTA Simple Start**

## **Fundraising Guide**

2501 West COTA Drive • Bloomington, Indiana 47403

800.366.2682 • [COTA.org](http://COTA.org)



## **If you could help make a life-saving difference for a transplant family, would you?**

The question is as simple as that. If your answer is ‘Yes,’ then we invite you to join hundreds of members of The American Legion Family who, since 1988, have generously donated their time and money to the Children’s Organ Transplant Association (COTA) and the families we serve throughout the nation. For more than 30 years, gifts and grants from Legionnaires at every level -- national, department, Post, squadron, unit and riders -- have helped COTA kids with more than \$1.5 million. In the future, The American Legion Family will help transplant families in several departments across the country and ensure that no child is denied a life-saving transplant due to a financial barrier.

COTA is a national nonprofit organization that helps children and young adults who need or have had a life-saving transplant by raising funds for transplant-related expenses. Over the years, COTA has helped raise millions of dollars for transplant-related expenses.

Because COTA is a 501(c)3 organization, contributions to COTA are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. COTA is the premier national organization supporting transplant families because **100% of all funds raised in honor of patients are used for transplant-related expenses.** COTA does not charge a fee or retain a percentage of the funds raised.

Please check out the ideas included here for simple fundraisers. For more tools, resources and fundraising ideas, please visit [COTA.org/Legion](http://COTA.org/Legion).

Keep reading and start turning your ‘**Yes ... I want to make a life-saving difference**’ into action.



## **COTA Simple Start Fundraising Ideas**

### **Restaurant Night Fundraisers**

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Restaurant Night fundraisers are quite popular. The restaurant gives your COTA fundraiser a percentage of the sales on a designated night for all the customers who visit because of your contact; some restaurants will provide a percentage of ALL sales for the designated evening. COTA Restaurant Nights require little effort and can be planned by a single person. Ask the restaurant, promote the event with flyers and on social media, and collect the proceeds!

### **COTA Paper Icons**

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COTA Paper Icons can be used to build awareness, gain support *and* raise funds. Simply partner with local businesses to provide supporters the opportunity to display a COTA Paper Icon for a contribution of \$1.

### **Third-Party Fundraisers**

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Third-Party Fundraisers are similar to Restaurant Nights as an outside person, group or business plans the fundraising event to benefit your COTA fundraiser. Think of individuals who could host a Lipsense, Mary Kay or Tupperware (and many others) fundraiser for COTA.

### **T-Shirt Fundraiser**

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T-shirt fundraisers are extremely popular. Supporters contribute to your COTA fundraiser to receive t-shirts and then raise awareness by wearing the shirts. Consider partnering with a third-party distributor, like [Booster.com](http://Booster.com) or [Bonfire.com](http://Bonfire.com), which handles everything from printing to shipping. All you have to do is create the design. You will find COTA logos and other help on COTA's dedicated pages on these websites.

### **COTA Coin Canisters**

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Like Paper Icons, COTA Coin Canisters can be used to build awareness, gain support *and* raise funds. Request permission from local businesses to place coin canisters at cash registers. This program requires slightly more effort because a volunteer will need to put together the coin canisters using a copy of the Coin Canister Sheet provided by COTA; place them around the community; empty the coin canisters on a regular basis; and send proceeds to COTA before removing all coin canisters.

## Restaurant Night Fundraisers

Did you know the average American family eats out four to five times per week? Given that fact, you will want to consider a Restaurant Night program as part of your efforts to fundraise on behalf of COTA.

These fundraising opportunities are quite popular, so make sure to connect with your local restaurants well in advance to secure a night for your COTA event. You may want to consider partnering with a different restaurant each month or every other month, which will allow you to provide a variety of dining options for those who wish to support your fundraising efforts. Restaurant Nights can provide a steady source of proceeds.

### *How does a COTA Restaurant Night work?*

The restaurant gives a percentage of the sales on a designated night, for all the customers who visit, because of your contact. Often restaurants will require that a patron bring a coupon or flyer to demonstrate they are supporting your fundraising effort. Some restaurants will provide a percentage of ALL sales for the designated evening. Check with each restaurant to determine the policy, as well as the method by which your post will receive the contribution to send to COTA.

### *What makes a COTA Restaurant Night successful?*

**Follow instructions.** Many restaurants have policies regarding the format and timeline for a fundraising night. Be sure to know their policies and follow the guidelines.

**Promote the event.** Share information about the event in a variety of ways. Post information to your website, use social media like Facebook and Twitter to spread the word, send email messages to all your contacts and ask them to forward the message, create flyers and distribute them throughout the community and remember to include an announcement in the local newspaper, church bulletins and school/business newsletters. Remember to send all promotional materials to [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org) for review prior to distribution.

**Attend.** Many restaurants will allow your volunteers to work on fundraiser nights by taking orders, wiping tables or greeting guests. This provides an opportunity to share the story and enlist new volunteers and supporters for your COTA fundraiser.

**Consider additional fundraising activities.** The restaurant may allow you to display COTA coin canisters or promote COTA paper icons during your fundraising event, which allows you to increase proceeds from the Restaurant Night.

**Celebrate success.** Post photos from the Restaurant Night on your website, social media and use it as an opportunity to promote your next COTA fundraising event!

## COTA Paper Icons

Paper Icons can be used to build awareness and raise support. We encourage your post to partner with local businesses to provide the opportunity for supporters to display a COTA Paper Icon for a contribution of \$1.

To implement a successful COTA Paper Icon program, follow these steps:

1. **Recruit a Paper Icon Chairperson.** This person will oversee the program, including ordering the COTA Paper Icons, preparing the contributors' sheets, tracking contributions, and establishing incentive contests.
2. **Set a timeline.** The program should be launched simultaneously at multiple locations within the community to build recognition and awareness. Try to avoid times during which other charities are known to have similar programs (i.e. March of Dimes Shamrocks at St. Patrick's Day). The typical length of a COTA Paper Icon program is four weeks.
3. **Recruit Paper Icon program volunteers.** Be sure to utilize volunteers you know and trust. Because proceeds are all in cash, it is important to keep a record of which volunteer(s) are collecting funds to avoid any confusion or concern.
4. **Prepare supporting materials for the Paper Icon program.** Templates for a promotional poster and business permission letter are available at **COTA.org**.
5. **Distribute Paper Icons in the community.** Provide Paper Icons, promotional posters and business permission letters to committee members. Request permission from store managers to place a Paper Icon display at cash registers. It is critical that a volunteer placing Paper Icons understands proceeds *must* be collected and additional Paper Icons delivered on a routine basis – at least once each week. Ensure proceeds match (or exceed) the number of displayed icons. Some businesses will offer to handle the accounting for the Paper Icons and provide a check for all proceeds at the end of the program.
6. **Send proceeds to COTA.** Funds raised should be sent to the Children's Organ Transplant Association, 2501 West COTA Drive, Bloomington, Indiana 47403. Checks should be made payable to COTA. Please include your Post information on the memo line.
7. **Say Thank You!** Remember to collect any unused Paper Icons at the end of the program. Send a note of appreciation to business owners or managers who have supported your COTA Paper Icon program.



## **Third-Party Fundraisers**

Want to raise funds for COTA but you are short on time? Have a friend or know a business wanting to help? If so, please consider a third-party fundraiser.

**An event, promotion, sale or contribution drive organized and hosted by a group, business or organization on behalf of COTA is a third-party fundraiser.**

*How does a third-party COTA fundraiser work?*

The organization of these events varies depending on the vendor or organizer. For example the host of a product party, like Mary Kay, may give your COTA fundraiser a percentage of the sales from that party. Typically no matter the vendor, third-party organizers take the responsibility of the event. When planning a fundraiser, the third-party event organizer is responsible for vendor agreements, contracts, insurance and necessary permits for the event.

Simply confirm event details, explain how proceeds should be sent to COTA, and promote the fundraiser.

Please remember that any promotional materials created and shared on behalf of COTA still need to be submitted to [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org) for approval – including social media posts. Volunteers may share flyers created by the vendor as long as the language is IRS compliant and clearly states that proceeds benefit COTA.

Restaurant Nights are a version of a third-party fundraiser, but there are many similar opportunities to explore. You probably know independent distributors of products like LipSense, Mary Kay, Scentsy, Thirty One or Tupperware. Consider reaching out to one of these consultants and asking them to host a party where a portion of the proceeds benefit your COTA fundraiser. This party could be hosted online -- stretching across communities. Facebook and other social media platforms are helpful to use to promote these online fundraisers.

Check out COTA's Third-Party Resource List for more examples of third-party fundraising opportunities.

## **T-Shirt Fundraiser**

Do you want to spread the word about your COTA fundraiser and raise money for transplant-related expenses? Many have found a t-shirt fundraiser is the perfect way to do both.

The first step in this fundraiser is designing the t-shirt. As you begin, consider how you will brand your fundraiser. Use [COTA logos](#) and consider a theme specific for your COTA fundraiser. Be creative! The t-shirts will be seen by many, and you will want the shirts to direct ‘viewers’ to learn more about your efforts to raise funds on behalf of COTA. Remember to send your design to [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org) for approval before production.

You will be most successful if you are able to order t-shirts at a discount from a local t-shirt distributor who may be able to also discount the cost of screen printing. You may provide an in-kind gift receipt for a vendor who provides t-shirts at no (or deeply discounted) cost to the COTA fundraiser. Also consider seeking sponsors who will underwrite the cost of t-shirts. Include their names on the back of the shirt to thank them for their support.

You will want to promote your t-shirt fundraiser through as many avenues as possible including social media. Post photographs of supporters, friends, family and volunteers in their t-shirts. Encourage others to post photographs, too.

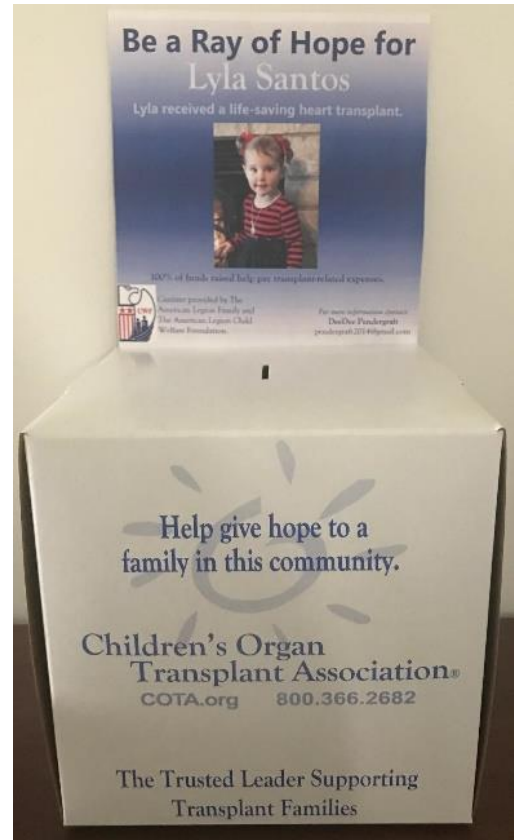
Please contact [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org) for more information about getting started with your COTA t-shirt campaign.



## COTA Coin Canisters

If you would like to use Coin Canisters, please follow these steps:

- 1. Recruit a Coin Canister Chairperson.** This person will oversee the coin canister program.
- 2. Utilize COTA's Coin Canister Sheet.** COTA will provide a sample canister sheet that may be used. The sample canister sheet has a COTA logo where a photo can be inserted. Please email [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org) to request an electronic version of the COTA Coin Canister Sheet.
- 3. Ask a printer to donate color copies of the Coin Canister Sheet.** In return for the copies, the printer will receive a charitable gift receipt. Be sure to complete the [COTA Gift-in-Kind Form](#) and send the original form to COTA headquarters. If you cannot get this service donated, ask the members of your team to print copies using their personal computers or copiers.
- 4. Make copies of the Coin Canister Sheet on heavier 'card stock' paper.** To look their best, COTA Coin Canister Sheets should be copied on heavy, white paper.
- 5. Have extra copies on hand.** If you get copies donated, request 25 extra copies. This gives you replacements for sheets that may be damaged or lost.
- 6. Cut on the dotted line.** The trimmed sheet is the same width as the COTA Coin Canister. Align the sheet so contributors will see the local contact and his/her phone number above the coin slot.
- 7. Attach securely.** Use rubber cement or glue to attach the sheet to the COTA Coin Canister. Be sure to attach the Coin Canister Sheet to the back of the canister so COTA contact information is visible on the front of the canister.
- 8. Recruit volunteers.** Be sure to utilize volunteers you know and trust for the coin canister fundraiser. Because proceeds are all in cash, it is important to keep a record of which volunteer(s) are collecting funds to avoid any confusion or concern.





- 9. Place the Coin Canisters throughout the community.** Number the canisters on the bottom and begin distributing them to committee members. Use the canister committee list to keep track of who has the canisters and the canister locations. Request permission from store managers to place canisters at cash registers -- canisters can stay in one location about four to six weeks. It is critical that a volunteer placing canisters understands that the canisters *must* be emptied on a routine basis, which is at least once each week. When placed in a good location, each COTA Coin Canister can collect \$25 to \$40 per week.
- 10. Send proceeds to COTA.** Funds raised should be sent to the Children's Organ Transplant Association, 2501 West COTA Drive, Bloomington, Indiana 47403. Checks should be made payable to COTA. Please include your Post information on the memo line.
- 11. Remove Coin Canisters.** Remember to remove Coin Canisters when contributions begin to decrease. Place canisters in a new location. Please return unused canisters to COTA.
- 12. Order COTA Thank You Cards.** Coin canister volunteers are encouraged to send a note of appreciation to business owners or managers who have supported the Coin Canister program.

**If you have questions or need help implementing these *Simple Start* fundraisers, contact COTA at 800.366.2682 or [MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org](mailto:MiracleMakerInfo@cota.org).**