

VIRTUAL EVENTS GUIDE



**United Way
Centraide**
Windsor-Essex County

Canadian Health and Safety Guidelines

As we maintain social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, please refer to the Canadian Health and Safety Guidelines while participating in these and any other United Way activities (read the guidelines [here](#))

The Windsor Essex Health Unit also provides guidance on ways to stop the spread of the virus. Visit their website for more info [here](#).

For more information, contact your United Way staff partner or reach out to us at: info@weareunited.com

Virtual Events Guide



In order to help support the recovery of our local community from the impact of COVID-19, the fundraising efforts of workplaces and community members is now more important than ever.

*In this guide, you will find creative ideas to turn your traditional in-person fundraising events into virtual ones. We've included an event description with how-to tips to help you organize fun, easy and engaging events in your workplace or in the community. Together, you can show your **#LOCALLOVE** for community and have a great time doing it!*

EVENT IDEAS INCLUDE:

- A FUN-raising Challenge
- Board Game Night/Tournament
- Dance Off
- After-work Happy Hour
- House Party
- Trivia Night
- Holiday Party
- Karaoke Idol
- Live Auction
- Silent Auction
- Talent Show
- Virtual Bake Off

A FUN-raising Challenge

Challenge your coworkers to take part in a fun challenge while raising money for United Way.

Have your co-workers commit to doing something physically challenging for every \$10 they raise.

Ten push-ups for every \$10? Yes! Climb ten flights of stairs? Go for it! Run a mile? They can do it! Did someone say burpees?! Not only does it inspire people to keep active and moving, it can create fun, friendly competition amongst everyone involved, not to mention all the feel-good endorphins!

Encourage them to add a personal touch to it by filming themselves doing the challenge and feature video clips in your e-mail communications or intranet to inspire others to participate or donate.

How to do it:

- **Have your participants register** and create a profile explaining what challenge they will be doing every time they hit a fundraising milestone (Teamraiser, other fundraising or sharing platform)
- **Encourage them to reach out** to coworkers, friends and family and ask for support
- **Use appropriate ways to showcase** short video clips of people doing a challenge of their choice and encourage more donations
- **Recognize participants** for the effort and sweat they put in to raising funds for United Way.

Board Game Night & Tournament

Need new creative ways to pass the time while social distancing? It may be time to get a virtual game night going. Playing the traditional game night online with friends and family can be one of the best ways to feel connected and relieve stress, have a few laughs, and get your competitive adrenaline going.

Thanks to technology, there are plenty of virtual board games you can play over Zoom, Webex, Houseparty, Google Hangout or other virtual hangout platforms.

Charge an entry fee and ask the group to 'game up' by donating to United Way. So even if you're not able to hang with your team right now, you can still feel like you're together, having fun and supporting a great cause!

How to do it:

- **Set a date and time**
- **Select a game(s)** and hangout platform
- **Send an invitation.** Make sure to let the group know if they need to download an app or watch a YouTube video with the rules so that everyone is ready to go for your virtual game night
- **Share a recipe or food theme** for game snacks and drinks
- **Send out a Thank you email** to all attendees and ask who wants to host the next game night
- Some suggested platforms: **House Party** and **JackBox**

Dance Off

Online contests and competitions are fun, easy, and allow for some friendly rivalry! Dancing is a universal language everyone understands and can partake in. What better way to raise money for a good cause AND have a great time doing it? Host your virtual Dance Off on Zoom, Webex, Google Meets or Houseparty. Contestants would pay a fee to participate and voters vote by donating to their favourite act! Kick it up a notch by having your own workplace version of So You Think You Can Dance.

How to do it:

- **Set a date and time and theme**, and assign the duration of the event
- **Pick a free and reliable registration platform** for people to join in (Zoom, Webex, Google Meets, etc.) Decide on a registration fee, and encourage minimum pledge or donation amount
- **Suggest participants wear dance/festival attire** and ensure you there is room to groove! Also, pets appearing on screen get major bonus points
- **Videos can be posted on YouTube** or a dedicated Facebook group where people can comment and show support for their favourite acts
- **Encourage participants to reach out to other coworkers, friends and family to ask for support**
- **Encourage participants to reach out** to other coworkers, friends and family to ask for support
- Depending on which platform you decide to use, **open the chat panel to allow people to connect**
- **Remember, the dance act with highest fundraising amount wins!** If appropriate, secure a small prize for the winner. It can be as simple as bragging rights or "United Way Dance Champion 2020" in their e-mail signature
- **Don't forget to thank all the participants upon conclusion of the event.** Send a thank you e-mail announcing the winner and how much money was raised by the event

After-work Happy Hour

Hosting a remote or virtual happy hour can be a great bonding experience for you and your coworkers, especially when the team might be feeling disconnected or lonely in these social distancing times. Charge a cover fee. Issue a quarantini challenge and have the attendees vote (\$10 per vote) for their favourite drink(s) with proceeds going to United Way.

Please note: This activity is intended for participants 19 years of age and older. We encourage all participants to drink responsibly. Please do not drink and drive or operate machinery. If you plan to travel after participating in this activity, please make appropriate travel arrangements, such as calling a taxi to ensure you arrive safely.

How to do it:

- **Select a video conference platform** (Zoom, Google Meets, etc.) and set a date and specific time (1–1 ½ hour event is ideal)
- **Send out the invitation to your guests** and include a dress code, recipe ideas for themed cocktails, non-alcoholic beverages and snacks
- **Issue a 'Quarantini' challenge.** Share two to three submitted recipes with the group ahead of time. Encourage attendees to make and taste the drinks prior to or during the event so they can cast their votes (\$10 per vote) for their favourite drink(s)
- **Have an event host** who will be responsible for moderating the evening. They can gently guide the conversation, introduce ice breakers, conversation topics, etc.
- **Have a quick check-in at the top** to release any awkwardness of video chatting. Guided by the moderator, everyone goes around and briefly shares a highlight of their week and their current mood
- **Send out a Thank you** email to all attendees post event
- **Other fun ideas:**
 1. Theme attire: Decade party, Pop Culture Dress up, Halloween costumes
 2. Quarantini challenge
 3. 'Meet my family/pets' theme
 4. Ice breaker games: Show and Tell, Two Truths and a Lie, Never Have I Ever, Trivia, Cribs: Quarantine Edition

House Party

Don't put your social time with your colleagues on pause. Host a virtual House Party to catch-up and celebrate with your work friends! Have your colleagues submit theme ideas for your house party and hold a vote (via email or using a platform such as Survey Monkey or Formsite) to determine the night's theme. Ask for a minimum donation to attend. As the official House Party host(s), plan a range of activities for your party guests to enjoy:

- **Encourage guests to decorate their Zoom box** according to the night's theme and vote for the best
- **Costume contest**
- **Cocktail making session** (send out a pre-determined cocktail recipe that you can all make together or that everyone can prepare ahead of time)
- **Dinner recipe** (determine the 'menu' for the night and have everyone prepare their meal in time to eat together or alternatively, curate a list of local restaurants/businesses that guests can support by ordering in a meal of their choice for the evening)
- **Conversation Starter Games** (to get guests feeling comfortable and chatty, use an app like Party Qs or this Conversation Starters list to get the ball rolling)
- **Trivia** (using an app like Kahoot!, create a series of Trivia questions related to your party theme and have guests play virtually using their smartphones or from their web browser)
- **Dance party** (host a group dance party and play DJ for your guests, taking requests ahead of time or live via the online chat box)

See next page for some "how to" tips!

House Party continued...

How to do it:

- *Select a date and time* for your virtual House Party (we recommend a 2-3-hour timeframe)
- *Conduct a vote* for your house party theme
- *Determine your house party activities*
- *Draft a theme invitation* with date and time, agenda (with activities), minimum donation (registration) amount, and registration mechanism (ex. register via email)
- *Promote your house party* across your organization and ask for support by email and your staff newsletter/intraweb
- *Determine your platform*, ensuring it is reliable such as Microsoft Teams, Webex, Zoom, or Skype
- *1-2 days out from event day, send your House Party agenda* and access link to all registered guests
- As the House Party host, ensure you prepare and test your platform and activity apps ahead of event day
- *After the House Party, send a thank you to guests* and promote dollars raised in support of your community

Holiday Party

Hosting a virtual holiday party can be a great way to connect with your colleagues over the holiday season. Sure, it might not bring all the glitz and glamour or an in-person event, but aren't holidays all about spending time together? Another purpose of the holiday season is to offer gratitude, and one way to do that is through love and charity. Bring your coworkers together for a holiday meal and mingle by hosting a virtual holiday party.

How to do it:

- **Choose a date, time and theme** that is most suitable for the event. Two hours should be plenty of time
- **Encourage guests to dress up** and decorate their backgrounds. You can share a virtual background photo with all the participants to create a sense of being in the same room
- **Come up with a holiday worthy dinner recipe** everyone can prepare at home and enjoy during the virtual get together
- **Fundraise** by charging a symbolic plating or cork fee
- **Plan a holiday celebration** worthy program such as a short presentation about United Way, a silent or live auction, best dressed award, a couple of interactive games, etc.
- **Encourage guests to bid** pre- or post- party, and vote for best dressed by placing an additional donation. To make it more competitive, guests can ask their friends and family to vote for them too!
- **If appropriate, secure a prize** for a best dressed guest - this can be as simple as a small gift basket
- **Have fun by taking some screen shots** of your virtual event and encourage guests to take as many fun selfies and share them with the group. Holiday inspired props welcomed!
- **Upon conclusion of the event, thank everyone for participating.** The following day follow up with a more formal e-mail thanking everyone – include a quick recap of the program, favourite moments, screen shots, auction and best dressed winner. Remind guests of how their gift will make a difference.

Karaoke Party

Being at home doesn't mean you can't sing your heart out with your coworkers. In fact, now might be the best time to host a karaoke party – virtually. Music is a great way to connect with friends and coworkers and release some pent-up emotion while showcasing their singing/performance talents. Charge an entry fee and encourage the attendees to vote (\$10 per vote) for their favourite singer with proceeds going to United Way. Make sure to have a prize for your winner. It could be such as being featured in your next all staff/team e-mail, getting an extra vacation day or other prize and recognized as your company's Karaoke Idol!

How to do it:

- **Select a video conference platform** (Zoom, Webex, Google Hangout, etc.) Optional: Download Watch2Gether (this app allows everyone to watch the same karaoke videos simultaneously) or simply have everyone use YouTube as it has an abundant of karaoke videos
- **Send a karaoke party invite** to your coworkers. Make sure to include instructions on using the video conference platform and Watch2Gether or YouTube
- **Have the attendees email you their songs** of choice in advance
- **Have a dedicated karaoke jockey (KJ)** for the night. Part of the KJ's job is to gather the track list, queue up the next songs and introduce the singers
- **Do a test run with the KJ** prior to the event day to work out any glitches
- **Choose a prize** for the best singer
- **Have the attendees vote** for their favourite singer by making donation towards that person
- **Announce the winner** before the event closes
- **To close the karaoke party on a high note, end with a big group number and have everyone join in**
- **Send out a Thank You email** to all attendees post event
- **Other Fun ideas:**
 1. Have singers dressed up in costumes for their performance
 2. Engage family members as backup dancers
 3. Use disco ball lights in the background

Live Auction

Live auctions are classic, high-energy events that can generate a lot of excitement and money, especially if you bring in an experienced auctioneer who knows how to work the crowd and pump up the bidding. Ask around to find a stand-up comic who has a good history running auctions or a member from Auctioneers Association of Ontario. Turn the live auction event to a virtual experience by using appropriate online platform, and to give your auctioneer a hand during the actual live event around the chat room to keep an eye out for people trying to place a bid, calling the auctioneer's attention to any bidders they might have missed. Seek out some high-end theatre tickets, all-expenses-paid trips to a ritzy resort or some fancy experience gifts as live auction items. Livestreamed elements to create good atmosphere and peer-to-peer tactics can be helpful for making successful Live Auction events.

How to do it:

- **Form a committee** to set a special goal for the live auction event. The committee plans and promotes the event via social media or any other online tools
- **Your procurement team gathers an exciting range of live auction items** from sponsors
- **Pick a date and time and use a registration platform** for supporters to register online, ideally the platform can save their payment information in advance
- **Send out link for registrants** to access the event, such as by using Zoom or Webex
- **The auction begins.** The auction items are presented in the PowerPoint one-by-one by using share screen. The auctioneer hosts the event by asking participants to place bids in chat room or livestream
- **Assign two committee members** as assistants to keep an eye on the chat room or livestream for participants who place bids and record the bids
- **Your team distributes items to winners** and follows up with the payments
- **Send thank-you messages** with final achievement result and ask for final donation if appropriate

Silent Auction

Online auctions work similar to in-person ones, and the concept is simple - the highest bid wins! Besides offering a variety of unique and useful items, remember to also include services (when the situation permits) and virtual experiences. Encourage your co-workers to donate popular items (gift cards, wine and spirits, gift baskets, etc.), as well as unique and rare ones (sports memorabilia, autographed items, virtual coffee with a prominent person within your organization, etc.) People are more likely to support and bid if it's for a good cause, so variety is key.

How to do it:

- **Collect auction items** by putting out a call for items, services and virtual experiences
- **Decide on the optimal time** to hold the event (consider known project deadlines, other company initiatives, popular vacation time)
- **Promote the silent auction** by email, your company's staff newsletter/intranet, as well as social media, if appropriate
- **Use silent auction site to conduct your auction**, such as 32auctions or other similar tools, to take care of most of the work. It will accept bids, let supporters know when they've been outbid, and accept payment when the auction has closed. It also offers great tips and tricks on how to successfully run an online auction!
- **Your team distributes items** to winners and follows up with the payments
- **Send thank-you messages** with final achievement result and ask for final donation if appropriate

Talent Show

Think your co-workers are a super talented bunch just waiting for their moment to shine? Host a virtual talent show and ask them to record and upload a 2-3 minute video of themselves showcasing their talent (think singing, playing an instrument, doing a magic trick, juggling fruit or body contorting into a pretzel!). Encourage people to vote for their favourite act by donating, where every donation is a vote towards selecting a winner. The act with the highest dollar amount raised wins! To raise even more money, consider asking for a registration fee from all the contestants, or asking executive leadership to sponsor a contestant, and have it count towards their total money raised.

How to do it:

- **Pick a start and end date** for the contestants to register and submit their talent video
- **Assign the duration of the event** – an appropriate length of time you know will keep everyone engaged and inspired to support the cause
- **Use free, reliable platforms** to upload contestant videos such as YouTube, TikTok or Google Drive
- **Choose the prize the winner gets**, such as being featured in your next all staff/team e-mail, getting an extra vacation day, lunch with an executive, or simply all the bragging rights
- **Encourage contestants to reach out** to coworkers, friends and family and ask for support
- **Use appropriate ways to communicate** updates and activities throughout the event and encourage more votes/donations, e.g. intranet, Facebook for workplace, email
- **Send thank-you messages** to the contestants and participants sharing results, photos and links to the videos

Trivia Night

Miss going to trivia night at your favourite local establishment? Create your own virtual trivia night for your colleagues and raise funds for United Way! Play against your colleagues in real time by inviting them to join you virtually via a preferred platform to tackle questions across a range of topics and themes – competing for the ultimate Trivia Master bragging rights.

How to do it:

- **Select a date and time** for your virtual Trivia Night (we recommend a 2-hour timeframe)
- **Determine how you want to facilitate** the trivia game:
 1. Using an existing app like QuizUP where participants compete against each other during seven rounds of timed, multiple-choice questions of various topics from their mobile device
 2. Using an app like Kahoot! to create your own trivia questions and have participants play from their mobile device or web browser
- **Go old-school by creating your own trivia questions** and facilitating the game live over a video conferencing platform of your choice (like Zoom) and manually keeping score
- **Tip:** You can create a PowerPoint deck with your questions and share your screen with participants.
- **Use a platform like Microsoft Teams, Webex or Zoom** to bring everyone together while playing
- **Promote your virtual Trivia Night** across your organization and ask for support by email and your staff newsletter/intraweb
- **Ask for a minimum donation** to participate and have participants register by email or through a registration platform
- **Choose the prize the winner(s) gets**, such as being featured in your next all staff/team e-mail, getting an extra vacation day or simply all the bragging rights!
- **1-2 days out from event day, send your virtual Trivia Night access link** to all registered guests with detailed instructions on how to access the trivia game (app download instructions) and rules for the game
- **After the Trivia Night, send a thank you** to guests and promote the

Virtual Bake Off

Is your office full of talented bakers (or wannabe bakers) who would normally eat up (!) the chance to bake for your staff potluck or charity bake sale? Don't let those talents go to waste! Host a virtual bake off with your colleagues to see who has the top baking skills.

Using a pre-determined list of ingredients (or only ingredients and equipment you're likely to find in your cupboard), have participants record and upload a video of themselves baking their treat of choice and share an image of their baked masterpiece. Encourage people to vote for their favourite baked good by donating, where every donation is a vote towards selecting a winner. The baker with the highest dollar amount raised wins! To raise even more money for community, consider hosting 2-3 Live Baking Masterclasses in the lead up to the bake off and charge a registration fee. Each class will show people how to create different desserts and sweet treats. Baking hopefuls can learn from a seasoned baker on your staff team and work on their skills before competition day.

How to do it:

- **Pick a start and end date** for the contestants to register and submit their baking video
- **Assign the duration of the event** – an appropriate length of time you know will keep everyone engaged and inspired to support the cause Use free, reliable platforms to upload contestant videos such as YouTube or Google Drive
- **Choose the prize the winner gets**, such as being featured in your next all staff/team e-mail, getting an extra vacation day or simply all the bragging rights!
- **Encourage participants to reach out** to coworkers, friends and family and ask for support
- **Use appropriate ways to communicate progress** throughout the event and encourage more votes/donations
- **After the event, send a thank you to contestants and participants**, share the results, photos, links to videos and make an ask for any final donations, if appropriate



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