

PEER FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT

A Guide to Running Your Personal Cradle Fundraiser



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intro to The Cradle 1

Fundraising Ideas 2

For Individuals 2

For Businesses 3

Your Impact 4

Creating Your Page 5

Fundraising Tips 6

Templates & Materials 7

Peer-to-Peer In Action 10

About Us

Since opening our doors in 1923, The Cradle has worked to build and support families at every stage of life. Cradle services include options counseling for people experiencing unplanned pregnancies, pre- and post-adoption education for parents, an adoption-competent clinical therapy program, domestic and intercountry placement services and an on-site Nursery.

Our Mission

Building families through adoption.
Supporting families through life’s challenges.
Strengthening communities through education.

Our Vision

A world where every child thrives in a safe and loving family.

Our Programs

Expectant Parent Services

Our skilled counselors and social workers provide free, non-judgmental and confidential support to expectant and new parents navigating an unplanned pregnancy or adjusting to life with a newborn.

Education & Training

The Cradle hosts educational webinars and training workshops through our online learning platform, Adoption Learning Partners, whose courses on adoption and parenting are recommended by over 300 agencies nationwide.

Post-Adoption Support

Cradle counselors provide guidance and support to anyone touched by adoption at any stage of life through adoption-competent therapy, background reports and birth-relative search and connection services.

Adoption Services

The Cradle facilitates domestic, intercountry, special needs and agency-assisted adoption, and has been at the forefront of African American adoption and placements with LGBTQ+-identifying families.

Infant Care Services

The Cradle provides a secure, nurturing home and superb pediatric care for babies of all medical backgrounds while their parents take the time they need to contemplate adoption.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Want to fundraise for The Cradle and help support families but aren't sure where to start? Here are a few ideas to help get the ball rolling.

For Individuals & Groups

DONATE YOUR SPECIAL OCCASION: Do you have a birthday, wedding, graduation, baby shower or other celebration coming up? In lieu of gifts, ask your friends, family and colleagues to donate to The Cradle to mark your special day!

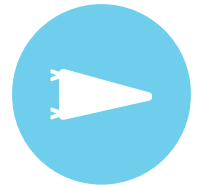
RUN A RACE: Participate in a 5K, marathon, triathlon or any organized race in support of The Cradle! Ask friends and family to make a flat donation or to donate for each mile you run — raising funds for The Cradle while promoting awareness of our mission (and staying healthy!) at the same time.

TRIVIA NIGHT: Host a trivia night with your friends or family, charge a small fee to participate and donate the proceeds to The Cradle! This can also work for other events like dinner parties or movie nights and is a great way to spend time with the people that matter to you while supporting a cause you believe in.

FUNDRAISE WITH A TWIST: Host one of the fundraisers above — or any of the classics like a bake sale or car wash — but up the ante by doing something silly every time you hit a fundraising milestone. For example, when you hit \$1,000, you'll wear a Halloween costume to work or class.

PARTICIPATE IN GIVING TUESDAY: Join us for Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving celebrated annually on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. **Visit our website** to create your own fundraising page, share your story, spread the word and even compete for the top spot on our fundraising leaderboard!

SPRING CLEANING: Been meaning to clean out your closet, but just haven't gotten around to it? Take unused clothes or household items and sell them online or through a garage sale. Then donate the proceeds to The Cradle, making a difference in your community while decluttering your space at the same time!



For Companies & Businesses



DONATE A PERCENTAGE OF PROCEEDS: Pick a specific time frame to donate a percentage of your proceeds to The Cradle! For example, if your business sells consumable or material products like food or clothes, you can donate a percentage of every sale; if you offer services like yoga or art classes, you can donate class fees. Create a marketing campaign to attract customers for a specific day, week or month you will be donating a percentage of your proceeds to charity!



CASUAL DAYS: An easy way to get your office to raise money for The Cradle is to incentivize donations. One way to do this is to host a “casual day” at the office. Once a month, employees who make a minimum donation can dress casual to the office! Other incentives could include pizza parties, raffle entries, gift cards and even time off.



MATCHING GIFTS: Through a corporate gift matching program, companies match financial donations made by their employees to qualified charities, doubling or even tripling their impact! Sixty-five percent of Fortune 500 companies offer matching gift programs, and 84% of donors report they would be more likely to donate if a match was offered by their employer.



WORKPLACE GIVING: Workplace giving programs enable employees to donate to charities like The Cradle directly from their paychecks through automatic payroll deductions. These deductions are usually small but can quickly add up, allowing your company to provide significant financial support to organizations like The Cradle over time.



PRO BONO SERVICES: If your company can donate professional services like graphic design support, legal advice, financial services, etc., it means more of our budget can go directly toward our mission of uplifting children and families. Pair this with incentives like the ones listed above to facilitate your employees’ generosity!

YOUR IMPACT

The amounts listed below are examples of what your generous efforts will provide to infants, parents and families in our community. Include them on your fundraising page and in your outreach to help people understand the real impact of their support!

\$25 - Provides one day's worth of diapers for all the babies in our Nursery

\$500 - Certifies all Cradle nurses in infant CPR for one year

\$100 - Provides one hearing test for an at-risk baby in our Nursery

\$1,000 - Keeps our 24/7 expectant parent helpline running on evenings and weekends for four months

\$125 - Offsets the cost of one expectant parent counseling session

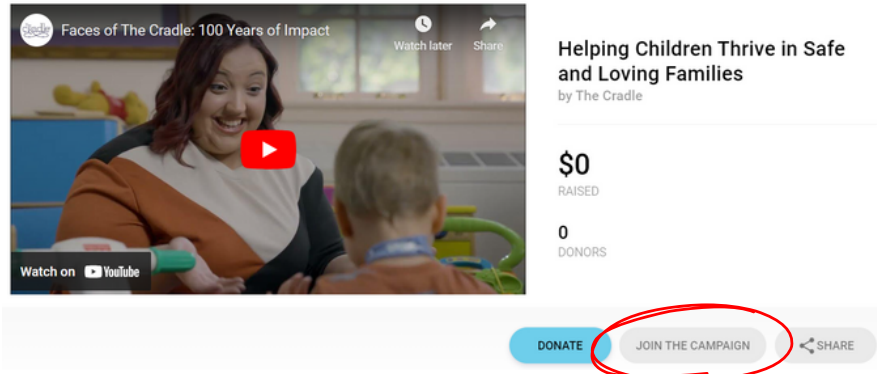
\$2,000 - Pays for special needs assessments for 10 at-risk infants



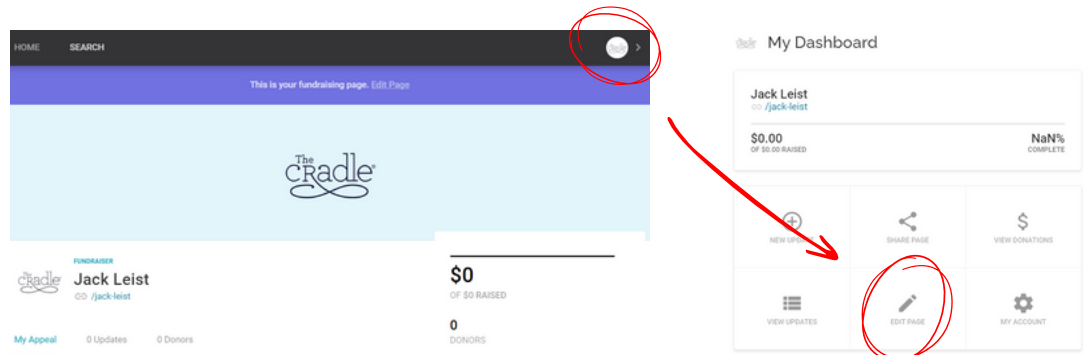
A family attends The Cradle's 100th Birthday Bash

CREATING YOUR PAGE

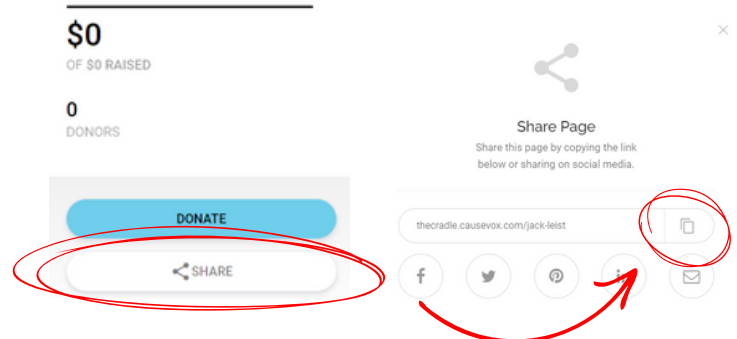
STEP 1: To sign up, go to The Cradle’s fundraising page [here](#). Click the “Join The Campaign” button and follow the instructions to create your account and basic fundraising profile.



STEP 2: Once you’re signed up, it’s time to personalize! From your home page, click your profile icon in the top-right corner. This will open your dashboard panel. Click “Edit Page” to customize your page with a personal story, a fundraising goal, photos and videos, and more. Remember, when it comes to fundraising, the more personal the better!



STEP 3: All that’s left to do is share! Click the “Share” button to share directly to social media or copy and paste the url into your posts, emails and texts.



Fundraising Tips

Set a fundraising goal. Setting a specific goal will both galvanize your network to give and help you track your fundraising progress. Feel free to start with a modest goal and then increase it as you receive more donations!

Make a seed donation. To jumpstart your campaign and show people you're serious about hitting your goal, be the first one to donate. This will help set the bar and encourage others to join you.

Personalize your fundraising page. The more you personalize your fundraising page, the more likely visitors are to donate. Add photos, graphics and a story to give your campaign a personal touch. If you really want to go all-out, film a personal video explaining what The Cradle means to you, which is shown to boost donations by 150%!

Talk about the WHY. Tell your network why The Cradle matters to you. Do you have a direct connection to adoption? Are you fundraising in honor of someone? Including this information will make friends and family even more inspired to give!

Acknowledge gifts. Did you know that 44% of donors are motivated to give again after a prompt acknowledgement of their gift? Send a message to those who donate or tag them on social media to say thank you!

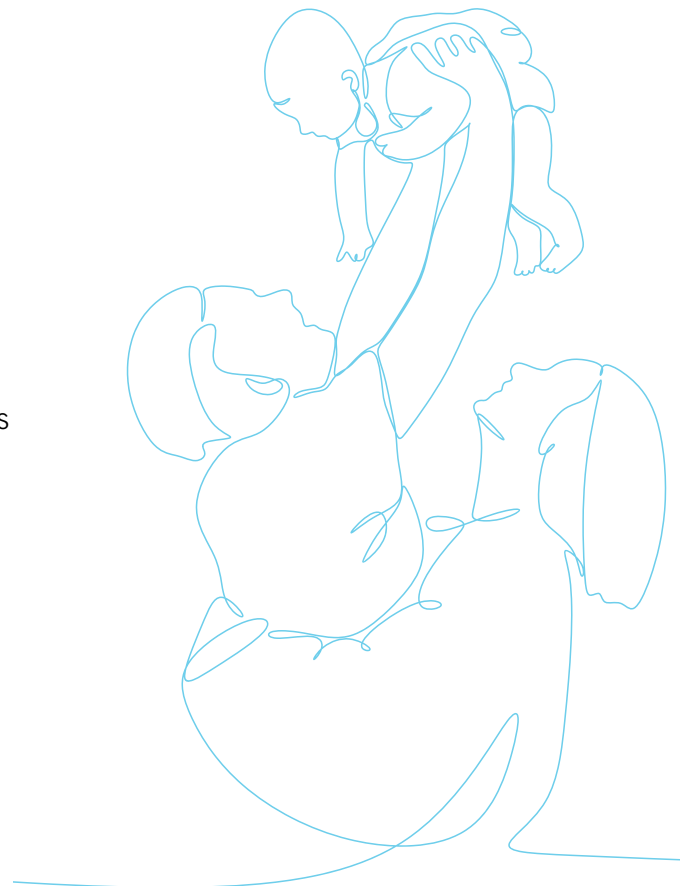
Social Media Tips

Keep it short. Concise posts resonate best, so get to the point quickly.

Opt for visuals. Make your posts stand out by including engaging images or videos.

Recommend sharing. Expand your reach by making it easy for friends and family to share your post.

Create a hashtag. This will help your audience easily find and share your posts.



Outreach Template #1

Campaign Launch

EMAIL

Dear **[Name]**,

This year, one of my goals is to actively support organizations in our community whose missions I align with. That's why I'm raising money for The Cradle — a nonprofit that, since 1923, has placed more than 16,000 babies in adoptive homes and supported thousands of families through education, options counseling and therapy.

My goal is to raise **[X]**, and I invite you to help me get there! To raise money and awareness, I'm **[explain fundraising project]**. Every donation, big or small, makes a difference!

To learn more about The Cradle, you can visit their website **[here]**. If you decide to support my fundraising efforts, please donate using my personal fundraising page:

[Insert link to fundraising page]

Thank you so much for your time!

X (fka Twitter)

Hi friends — I'm excited to be raising funds for @CradleAdoption, an organization near and dear to me and my family. Please consider making a gift to help every child reach their full potential: **[short link]**

FACEBOOK

Hi everyone,

I'm raising money for The Cradle, an amazing organization that helps children and families thrive through adoption, counseling and education. For every \$100 raised, I will **[explain fundraising challenge]**!

You can donate here: **[link]**

TEXT

[Name], have you heard of The Cradle? I'm raising funds to support their work for children in need of a home and families growing through adoption. If you're interested, please give here: **[short link]**

Outreach Template #2

Midway Update

EMAIL

Dear **[Name]**,

I've got great news — I'm halfway to reaching my personal fundraising goal of \$**[X]**!

All the money I raise goes directly to The Cradle, a 101-year-old nonprofit working to build families, nurture babies in need and strengthen communities across IL. **[personal connection to The Cradle]**

Will you help move the needle forward with a gift? Every donation makes a difference and means the world to me!

You can visit my personal fundraising page to hear my story and make a donation:

[Insert link to fundraising page]

Thank you!

X (fka Twitter)

UPDATE: I'm officially halfway to my personal fundraising goal for @CradleAdoption! Please consider donating, and remember: I'm **[describe fundraising incentive]** at \$**[X]**! **[shortlink]**

FACEBOOK

Hi everyone, we're officially HALFWAY THERE!

Only \$**[X]** more to go to meet my personal fundraising goal for The Cradle! Please consider making a gift to support Chicagoland children and families and help me cross the finish line!

You can donate here: **[link]**

TEXT

[Name], guess what? I'm halfway to hitting my fundraising goal for The Cradle! It would mean the world to me you visited my personal fundraising page and help me hit my goal: **[short link]**

Outreach Template #3

Goal Reached/Thank You

EMAIL

Dear **[Name]**,

WE DID IT!

You helped me hit my goal of raising \$**[X]** for The Cradle!

I can't thank you enough. Thanks to you, a child will grow up in a safe, loving and well-supported family.

I hope you feel good about your contribution, because I sure appreciate it. I'm so grateful to have a **[relationship]** like you who's willing to jump in and make a difference.

Until next time!

X (fka Twitter)

We did it! I just hit my fundraising goal for @CradleAdoption, and every donation will help make a positive change in a child's life. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU!

FACEBOOK

WE DID IT!

A massive thank you to everyone for helping me reach my fundraising goal of \$**[X]** for The Cradle! Your support means the world to me and will make a real difference in the lives of children and families across Chicago.

From the bottom of my heart: thank you.

TEXT

[Name], I just reached my fundraising goal of \$**[X]** for The Cradle! Thank you SO MUCH for pitching in. I hope you're proud that you helped change a child's life!

“I wanted to give back to the organization that gave to me.”

Jala And The “Phoenix Phund for Phamilies”

Jala’s peer fundraising journey began one year after she adopted her daughter, Phoenix, from The Cradle. “As an African American single woman, I never thought I would be able to adopt a child,” she recalls. “The Cradle was the only agency at the time that would even consider me.”

She was also deeply grateful for the Nursery, which helped Phoenix have a strong start in life. “By hosting a fundraiser, I wanted to give back to the organization that gave to me.”

Armed only with text and email in the pre-social media age, Jala raised an astounding \$10,000 in support of The Cradle’s programs! Her passion for the work was infectious, which made the money come easy. But she was just getting started.

A few years later, inspiration struck again. Jala’s 50th birthday was approaching, and she wanted to do something special. “I thought to myself: What’s the biggest gift I’ve ever received? My daughter, of course. That’s when I decided to host the second fundraiser.”

This time, she had more tools at her disposal. Embracing the power of social media, Jala and Phoenix hosted a Facebook livestream to announce their campaign.

“It was important to involve Phoenix and bring her story to life,” says Jala. “Everybody loves a fairytale.” As the fundraiser progressed, the two continued to post regular updates and reminders across all of Jala’s social media accounts.

The Cradle was there to provide support every step of the way. “The Cradle showed up for me and was highly receptive and grateful. They made it easy with the personal fundraising page, which I wrote and they built for me.” Jala also added a unique incentive to her campaign: all donors would receive an invitation to her 50th birthday party, which also served as the fundraiser’s deadline.

The end result? An incredible \$20,000 raised for The Cradle! With two incredibly successful campaigns under her belt, Jala shares her hard-earned wisdom for aspiring peer fundraisers:



The Moore family, including Jala (top-center) and Phoenix (center)

Jala’s Tips

1. **Utilize social media** to publicly recognize and thank donors. Announcing donations is also a good time to gently reengage your audience.
2. **Make the fundraiser time-bound**, typically no more than 60 days, and culminate in an event.
3. **Provide an incentive**, which, in Jala’s case, was an invitation to her birthday party.
4. **Use photos and videos** to really bring your story to life.
5. **Quantify donation amounts** to communicate each gift’s impact (see page 4).

THANK YOU!

Contact

If you have ever questions about The Cradle or peer-to-peer fundraising, please don't hesitate to reach out.



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The
CRADLE®