

# The Otesha Project

## Fabulous Fundraising Guide

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### Table of Contents

Fabulous Fundraising Guide .....	1
<b>PART 1: PRE-RIDE SAFETY CHECK .....</b>	<b>2</b>
The Art of Re-conceptualizing Fundraising .....	2
Why We've Got to Ask You for Cash .....	3
Where Does the Money Go? .....	3
The Bursary Program .....	4
<b>PART 2: SEAT ADJUSTMENT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Ten Key Fundraising Guidelines .....	6
Pre-Ride Ethics .....	8
Representing The Otesha Project .....	9
<b>PART 3: THE RIDE .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Receiving Donations 101 .....	10
Otesha Donation Card .....	10
Receiving credit card donations .....	10
Receiving cash .....	10
Receiving cheques .....	10
Tax receipts .....	11
Refunding Donations .....	11
The Super Smooth Timeline .....	11
What if I can't raise the full amount by the deadline? .....	13
5 Approaches to Fundraising Glory .....	13
#1 The straight-up ask .....	13
#2 Selling The Otesha Book .....	14
#3 Approaching local organizations, businesses and service groups .....	15
#4 Approaching companies and organizations outside of your community .....	15
#5 The Event Approach - a.k.a. the everything-else-catch-all-category .....	16
What Not to Do .....	17
<b>PART 4: THE DISMOUNT .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Frequently Asked Questions .....	18
Alumni success stories .....	19
Final Words .....	19
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
Appendix A: Sample Fundraising Plan .....	20
Appendix B: Email/Letter to Individual Potential Donors .....	21
Appendix C: Template Letter for Local Businesses, Service Clubs, Organizations .....	22
Appendix D: Thank You Letters for Donors .....	23
Appendix E: The Otesha Book Order Form .....	24

## PART 1: PRE-RIDE SAFETY CHECK

### *The Art of Re-conceptualizing Fundraising*

#### **Concept One: Fundraising builds community and brings people together**

Many, many people and organizations contribute to make a tour possible. Volunteers give their time and enthusiasm. Donors give moral support, money, food, and free accommodations. People open up their homes to receive tour members or cook beautiful meals for you. Generosity has been at the heart of Otesha tours since the beginning. When you volunteer your time to build a mobile sustainable community you are taking an extraordinary step. People sit up and take notice. Your commitment shines through. People you talk to will want to know how they can get involved...they just need to be asked.

#### **Concept Two: People want to give and often just need to be asked.**

All right, we'll be honest. Asking people for money might (might!) not be one of your favourite pastimes. But you've got to get over your money-asking fears right now. Here's why:

Remember, most people like putting some of their money towards things other than material purchases. A youth driven initiative like this bike tour is an especially attractive option because they know exactly what they're giving to – a group of cycling, educating, sustainably-living enthusiasts who are promoting positive social change. They won't have to worry that their donation will get lost in the administrative maze of some big organization. Once you realize all of this, and help others to realize it, you'll reach your fundraising target in no time.

What's more, lots of folks would give their left pancreas to go on tour (ok, I admit most people only have one pancreas, but that just proves how attractive the bike tours are), but other life commitments don't allow for it. They are happy to make sure your team starts connecting with communities across Canada!

#### **Concept Three: Fundraising builds your skills and personal network**

You've probably signed up for the tour in order to meet new people, see the world from another point of view, gain new hands on skills and fresh knowledge. Fundraising is the first opportunity to do all of these things.

This guide is designed to answer many of the common questions about getting started. Our Program staff are ready to act as your sounding board and brainstorm fundraising strategies with you. Our CanadaHelps online giving system makes it easy for people and organizations to donate to the tour. But the main ingredient is YOU. And as you go, you get more articulate and more confident. You can start with your own circle of family and friends, but you can go further – approach unions, community organizations, and businesses with values that match the purpose of the tour. Even when someone can't support you financially the conversation generates curiosity about what the tour is about and why you have decided to join it. Before you even get on your bike, you are strengthening relationships with people in your community and beyond! !

<Ahem>

Okay, so just in case the inspiration from this fundraising re-conceptualization isn't *quite* enough to get you going, the following pages are full of suggestions, approaches and key ideas to raising those funds.

## ***Why We've Got to Ask You for Cash***

Otesha has grown a lot since the 2003 inaugural cross-Canada bike tour and right now we're in a transitional phase. After several years of late-night grant writing, we got a wake-up call. We realized that if we want to keep our programs running well into the future we have to change our organization's fundraising strategy.

During the first years, Otesha was running on public and private grants. After a few years, it becomes very difficult (and stressful) to run an expanding organization solely on grants – mostly because Canadian funders support one-time projects, rather than developing organizations, and they have specific interests that limit our programs. That's why we designed a strategy for financial independence, security and sustainability over a five year transition period. In 2011, we dropped our training wheels and ran solely on presentation fees, keynote speaking, sales of The Otesha Book and tour member fundraising. After looking at many possible models of how to achieve this, it made sense to include tour member fundraising as part of our strategy. You have the capacity to reach a whole range of donors that Otesha would never have access to, and further spread the good word and work that Otesha stands for! Dividing the task of fundraising among all tour members (as opposed to just one or two people at Otesha's office in Ottawa) makes running the programs that much more successful and sustainable.

In 2013, Otesha entered another round of expansion, and we've invited other organizations to partner with us on certain tours. Partners and funders bring new relationships, new knowledge about sustainability and new financial resources.

Our goal is that **financial barriers will not prevent anyone from participating on a bike tour**. We've written this Fabulous Fundraising Guide (with the awesome help of Youth Challenge International, Canada World Youth, Global Exchange, Amizade and Taking it Global); we've got [bursaries](#) available, we've kept the minimum project contribution lower than other organizations doing similar work; and our staff are committed to making sure that money and access to gear are not the enemy!

## ***Where Does the Money Go?***

To keep you and your donors in the loop, here is a brief summary of where your fundraising money goes (along with the contributions of the Otesha donor network and performance honoraria). As volunteers, you and your donors need to feel confident that resources are used for maximum impact, so read on!

**A two month Performing and Cycling Tour typically visits 25 communities and interacts with at least 3500 students through performances and workshops.** In order to make the magic happen, Otesha staff recruit and prepare tour members, book the itinerary, gather and ship the group gear (trailers, kitchen, first aid, mobile bike shop) to the Training Week site. Alumni provide volunteer muscle in the kitchen and as trainers/resource people to your team. We are able to keep on-tour costs low by relying on many in-kind donations of food and accommodation en route. And then, the volunteer power of you and your teammates bring it all to fruition!

**A Pedal to Plate Tour is nine days long,** and is supported by a staff and volunteer team that rides with the volunteers. Rather than present theatre or workshops, the goal of the tour is to strengthen local food networks by connecting “eaters” to “producers” and exploring how the food system works, together.

Since a bike tour is the product of countless volunteer hours, the efforts of the Olumni community, in-kind donations from hosts and supporters and the combined heavy-lifting of the staff, it's a challenge to break down the numbers for a single tour. However, we've estimated costs below for the purposes of transparency:

### Estimated Tour Expenses for 15 Team Members

Expense	Performing and Cycling Tour (2 months)	Pedal to Plate Tour (9 days)
Six months of outreach, support to tour members, fundraising, booking, on-road tour support and ongoing work with Olumni (staff salaries and office overhead)	37,514	13,220
Bursary Program	2,000	1,000
Training Week	5,797	NA
Food on tour	4,992	972
Emergency accommodation	300	300
Emergency transportation	300	1,000 (support vehicle)
Phones	360	120
Ferries/bridge fees (varies on route)	200	NA
Misc tour expenses	200	100
Group gear and shipping	1,074	855
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,437</b>	<b>17,567</b>

### Estimated Tour Revenue for 15 Team Members

Revenue source	Performing and Cycling Tour (2 mos.)	Pedal to Plate Tour (9 days)
Team member fundraising	35,250	13,500
Otesha donor network and grants	12,567	4,067
Performance honoraria	4,500	NA
In-kind donations from hosts and volunteers	Countless!	Over the top!
<b>Total</b>	<b>52,317</b>	<b>17,567</b>

For any tour, the contributions of our donor network or an organizational partner make up the difference between tour members fundraising and tour costs. If you want to know more about how Otesha rolls, check out our [Annual Reports](#).

## *The Bursary Program*

Sometimes you can be the best fundraiser in the world, but it seems the world isn't working with you! Your family and friends aren't able to contribute, your community is small or the people around you are struggling financially.

The Otesha Project is committed to making its tours accessible to all. Therefore we offer [bursaries](#) based on financial need to assist applicants who are unable to raise their project contribution.

This money is drawn from funds raised our network of generous donors and partners. Often donations will trickle in even after the tour is over. If you find that you are unable to raise the minimum contribution, [apply for a bursary](#), and we will assess your situation. Our goal is that money should not be an obstacle to participation as a volunteer tour member.

Please note that bursary recipients are responsible for fundraising the difference between the amount of the bursary and the minimum project contribution.

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## PART 2: SEAT ADJUSTMENT

### *Ten Key Fundraising Guidelines*

#### *Re-conceptualization*

Go back to Part 1 and reread the section titled, *The Art of Re-conceptualizing Fundraising*. But if you really don't want to do that, then remember this: by asking people to donate you're not bothering them, you're giving them an opportunity to spend their money on something amazingly important for building a better future! Think of it this way: you are inviting them to join you in doing something great. They may not be able to ride alongside you, but they can participate in another way. They can decline or accept, but it's nice to be invited.

#### *Honesty and clarity*

Always be up front with people about what you're raising money for. You should be able to answer all of these questions clearly and concisely: What is an Otesha bike tour? What is Otesha and what does it do? What are you hoping to gain from this experience? Why are you doing this?

For those tours that involve another organization partnering with Otesha, make sure you can also answer questions about the partner organization: what they do and what they stand for.

#### **History of The Otesha Project**

- Founded in 2002 by Jocelyn Land-Murphy and Jessica Lax after taking part in a field course in Kenya, where they were struck by the disparities between their privileges and the scarcity experienced in the Kenyan village
- The founders realized that the way they lived in Canada had an impact on their neighbours as well as people around the globe, and concluded that if their actions could create a negative impact, then they also had the power to create a positive one both at home and abroad.
- The Otesha Project means "A Reason to Dream" in Swahili, and it was conceived as a way to bring a message of hope and empowerment back home to Canada. The founders embarked on a 6 month, coast to coast cycling and presenting tour of Canada on their bicycles. They never imagined that many years later, Otesha would be a national charity with cycling tours happening year after year, and thousands of audience members being reached

#### **What is The Otesha Project**

- Youth led national charity that uses theatre, hands on workshops and educational cycling tours to address issues of environmental sustainability and social justice
- Based on the idea that every individual's actions have the power to change the world – that small actions do matter
- Our **Vision** is to see sustainable consumption and respect for human rights enter the mainstream of Canadian culture. The project is founded on the idea that every individual has the power to make choices that affect that world. The idea that step by step, choice by choice, we can build a more equitable and sustainable future by building relationships and community, making conscious lifestyle choices and reducing consumption.
- Our **Mission** is to mobilize and equip Canadians to create local and global change through their individual and collective choices.

## **Bike Tours**

- Travel from community to community to learn about and promote sustainability and human rights
- Strive to build meaningful relationships and live as a mobile sustainable community, addressing injustice through collective action.
- Perform a play and/or deliver workshops on social justice issues to empower and inspire audience members to get informed and take action for a more equitable and sustainable world

Make sure you're as informed as possible about our programming. If you've made it to the fundraising guide, it means that you've probably got some pretty compelling reasons for joining up. Write 'em down and practice saying them out loud. It might seem bizarre or overly public relations-y but it will aid your efforts immensely. (See the FAQ in the "Dismount" section for some sample answers.)

### *Diversify*

Don't expect to get all your money from one approach (we discuss a few different ones below) and especially not from one source.

### *Time management*

However long you think it will take to raise the money, it will take longer. There could be a lag of a few months between when you start getting the word out and when you actually have some money. Make a plan and stick to it. Start now.

### *The plan*

Bet you thought that we already covered this in *Time Management*, but it's important enough to get some more attention. When making your plan, make sure to read through the whole Fabulous Fundraising Guide, and then chart out all the approaches you're going to take (remember: diversify!) and draw up a master list of all the people and organizations you're going to ask (your treasure map!). See the sample plan in Appendix A.

### *Proofread everything*

There is nothing that will hurt your fundraising efforts more than a poorly written letter full of spelling mistakes. Get someone else to read through everything you're going to send out.

### *Fundraising as an exchange*

At all times, frame your asking as an exchange: "If you donate to me, you'll be supporting such a great cause <insert lavish praise for Otesha and Otesha partners' programs here> and I'll keep you updated with emails, postcards, pictures, a final report and/or presentation, etc." Encourage them to [sign up for Otesha's monthly e-newsletter](#) or your team's weekly journal to keep them abreast of the great stuff you and your team are doing!

Or you can think of each dollar as a 'unit of change.' That means you can tell your donors that every dollar and fifty cents donated equals 1 kilometre that you will cycle on the tour (each tour is around 1,500 km and you're fundraising \$2,350), or that each dollar equals one student that you are going to reach (each tour reaches around 2,000 young people).

### *Thank yous*

Showing your appreciation to your donors through kindly worded thank you cards or other means is essential. All the other great stuff you're going to hook up your donors with – email updates and postcards en route, etc. – will ensure that fuzzy appreciation feeling as well. It will also increase the likelihood that the next time you want to fundraise for something, they'll be happy to help you out.

### *Learning experience*

Think of the fundraising process as a way to gain valuable communication, public speaking and organizational skills. These will be an asset to pretty much any job or activity that you're going to want to do in the future!

### *Nuggets of wisdom*

If at any point during the fundraising process you're feeling a bit lost, then read through these old chestnuts of fundraising lore:

- There are three major principles to fundraising: persistence, persistence, persistence.
- Be serious, be professional.
- It will not just happen on its own.
- The more you ask, the more you'll get. If you don't ask, you won't get anything. 'Nuff said.
- Let your passion and confidence in what you're doing shine through all your fundraising efforts and you'll inspire people to help you.

## ***Pre-Ride Ethics***

Here at Otesha, we're pretty big on walking our talk. That means we go out of our way to ensure that all our programs, office purchases, resources, funding, etc., are as in-line with our values of sustainability and social justice as possible. Otesha t-shirts? We buy them second hand, flip them inside out, and print our design on them. Otesha's fundraising? We've been very selective about where our money comes from: private foundations, the federal government, provincial government and companies whose practices align with our values. We've avoided a number of corporate grants because their policies and industries conflicted with the kind of society we're trying to build.

The point is to keep our actions consistent with our values. Now, no one is going to analyse your funding sources, and if you're really psyched about going on a bike tour then it's unlikely that you were about to send off donation cards to Esso, Shell and McDonald's. That said, throughout the fundraising process keep in mind that your goal isn't to do *anything* to get money – rather to get it in as respectful a way as possible. If you have any ethical concerns, queries or questions about an event you're planning or anything at all, just give us a ring.

And now just a bit more on what is likely to be the toughest route from an ethical perspective: the corporate one. Though we'll discuss the practical pros and cons to this approach in the next section, here are some questions that might help you decide if this will be a corporate donation that you can feel good about:

- What are the company's operations? Are they attempting to employ 'best practices' in their field?
- Do your research. Do the company's operations directly conflict with your own personal beliefs and what you feel is ethical corporate behaviour?
- Has the company committed any serious wrongdoings in the past, such as violating human rights or causing an environmental disaster? (check out <http://www.greenamerica.org/programs/responsible shopper/> to look up corporations' environmental and social impacts)
- Consider the degrees of separation: is this company a smaller subsidiary of a larger one?
- What will be expected of you as a result of taking the funding in terms of logos, presentations, press releases, pictures, etc.?

### ***Representing The Otesha Project***

It is key for liability purposes that you promote any fundraising event you may hold as being “in support of my participation in an Otesha bike tour”, and *not* as an “Otesha event.” Charitable status is a slippery commodity, and one we’d like to hang on to. Questions? Call us at (613) 237 – 6065.

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## PART 3: THE RIDE

### *Receiving Donations 101*

Before we talk about different approaches to getting donations, here are some essentials you should know when it comes to receiving money.

#### Otesha Donation Card

Whenever you solicit someone for a donation, whether in person or through the mail, please print out and give them two copies of the Otesha [Donations Card](#). One copy is for them to keep as a record (like a receipt – but it’s not a tax receipt!), and the other they should mail to us along with their donation (**remember to never mail cash** – see “Receiving cash” below). Using the Donation card makes the tax-receipt process easier for us. It will also allow us to issue tax receipts for any cash donations that you receive.

#### Receiving credit card donations

The only way for people to make donations with their credit card is online through your Canada Helps Personal Giving Page. You will receive email instructions on how to use this site when you confirm that you are going on tour. We’ve set up an arrangement with [Canadahelps.org](http://Canadahelps.org), a charitable foundation that lets you do web-based fundraising for free. If/when you’re sending out an email asking for support, you can include the link to your online Personal Giving Page (which we set up for you and sent to you by email) and anyone can donate to your fund via credit card.

#### Receiving cash

**\*\*\*Sending cash in the mail is a recipe for disaster\*\*\***

Whenever possible, encourage your sponsors to donate by cheque or by credit card online. If someone can only give you cash, you can either go to Canada Post or purchase a money order, or you can take the cash and write out a cheque to “The Otesha Project” from your personal account, with your name in the memo line. Get the donor(s) to fill out a [Donation Card](#). When you submit your personal cheque and Donation Cards, please note who the donor(s) were, and we will mail them a tax receipt. We’ll say it again (in screaming caps!):

DO NOT SEND CASH IN THE MAIL.

#### Receiving cheques

All cheques from donors should be made out to “The Otesha Project” with your name in the memo line. If we receive a cheque without a name on the memo line, we will have no way of knowing that it should be applied to your project contribution, so the odds are that it won't be. **Once again: this is easily avoided by getting people to write your name on the memo line.** People can either mail the cheques directly to us at The Otesha Project, Heartwood House, 404 McArthur Ave, Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8, or they can give them to you. At the end of every month (or more frequently if you wish) you should mail us all cheques (and Canada Post money orders if you have any).

## Tax receipts

The Otesha Project is a registered Canadian charity and our charitable number is 85723 3803 RR0001. Tax receipts are issued either by The Otesha Project staff in Ottawa or by [Canadahelps.org](http://Canadahelps.org) (for online donations to your Personal Giving Page). In general, all monetary donations from Canadians made towards your project contribution are eligible for a tax receipt, provided the donation is:

- submitted to the Otesha office in Ottawa
- \$20 or more
- inclusive of the donor's full name, billing address (either on the cheque or on the Donation Card) and email address (for CanadaHelps online donations)
- not from you (although donations from family members of volunteers are eligible for a tax receipt)
- not for the sale of an item (to be eligible for a tax receipt, your sponsor may not benefit from the donation – this applies to selling The Otesha Book as a fundraiser, which would not be eligible for a tax receipt)
- online donations through CanadaHelps will be given a tax receipt electronically

Tax receipts can be issued for donations of goods: what are called "in-kind" donations. You can acquire in-kind donations to assist you in your fundraising (to use as door prizes, etc.) but we cannot apply these donations towards your project contribution. A receipt with the estimated value of the in-kind donation must be submitted to the Otesha office (including the donor's name and address, the date of the donation, a description of the item donated, and an estimate of the item's worth). The Otesha Project would then issue a tax receipt to this donor for their in-kind donation.

Unfortunately, tax receipts cannot be given for donated services and/or goods that will not be donated back to Otesha at the end of your time as a Tour Member.

Note: While tax receipts are issued from the office in Ottawa, you will be responsible for sending thank you cards to all your donors.

## Refunding Donations

A donation to The Otesha Project is a donation to a charitable organization and towards an Otesha Program (e.g., Cycling and Performing Tour; Nine Day Tour, etc.). We cannot refund donations once they have been submitted. If you are unable to go on tour because of health, family, or other pressing personal reasons, we cannot refund the project contribution. However, we will hold those funds for you for one year – you can apply to go on tour the next season and put the money towards that tour. If you are dismissed as a volunteer because of a violation of the [Program Rules & Guidelines Agreement](#), the money already raised will not be refunded nor will it be available in the next season.

## *The Super Smooth Timeline*

This timeline is a guide to help you have a stress-free fundraising experience. It's also helpful for the office to process donations on a regular basis, rather than just before the tour starts. The timeline will vary for each tour member (e.g., if you register at the last minute, or if you are paying the full amount all at once), but should serve as a guideline for most participants. Please note that you will be busy in the month leading up to tour (getting gear ready, communicating with fellow tour members, researching the communities you will be visiting, reviewing the play script) so it's best to complete your fundraising early.

### Performing and Cycling Tours

The minimum project contribution for a Performing and Cycling Tour is \$2350.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fundraising Income</b>	<b>Running Total received by Otesha Office</b>	<b>Left to fundraise</b>
Application Fee	\$25	\$25	\$2325
Upon acceptance to a tour	\$250 (deposit to confirm your place on tour)	\$275	\$2075
Three months prior to the tour	\$975	\$1225	\$1125
Two months prior to the tour	\$775	\$2000	\$350
One month prior to the tour (Fundraising Deadline)	\$350	\$2350	\$0 (Congratulations!)

### Pedal to Plate Tour

The minimum project contribution for a nine-day Pedal to Plate Tour is \$975.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Fundraising Income</b>	<b>Running Total received by Otesha Office</b>	<b>Left to fundraise</b>
Application Fee	\$25	\$25	\$950
Upon acceptance to a tour	\$250 (deposit to confirm your place on tour)	\$275	\$700
Three months prior to the tour	\$375	\$650	\$325
Two months prior to the tour	\$200	\$850	\$125
One month prior to the tour (Fundraising Deadline)	\$125	\$975	\$0 (Congratulations!)

## What if I can't raise the full amount by the deadline?

You are responsible for submitting the full minimum contribution by the deadline. The deadline exists in order to allow Otesha staff to process funds and more importantly, so that staff and volunteer tour members can set fundraising aside to concentrate on getting ready for the tour itself. If you anticipate not reaching your goal, you should

1. Inform Otesha staff 1 week prior to the deadline and propose a plan that includes a) what actions you will take to raise the funds and b) a new proposed deadline not later than one week before the tour start date. The Fundraising Guide is full of suggestions to amplify your plans, and staff are available by email or phone to brainstorm new fundraising strategies with you.
2. Otesha staff will respond to your proposal with confirmation of new deadline or questions/suggestions aimed at improving your plan.
3. You can apply for a bursary. Priority is given to those applicants whose communities face financial need and poverty over applicants who have simply run out of time.
4. You should have a "plan B" ready if you fall short of the minimum project contribution. Ask a family member for a short term loan or be ready to use your savings. You may not begin the tour without the full project contribution in place.

## 5 Approaches to Fundraising Glory

### #1 The straight-up ask

- Put together a lengthy list of email addresses as well as any 'traditional' addresses for the unwired – aim for 100, if not more!
- If this seems crazy, remember that 100 people giving you an average of \$20 each is two thousand dollars right there.
- Go beyond your comfort level and get addresses from a wide variety of people: extended family; good friends; distant friends; friends of friends; fellow students/coworkers; neighbours; housemates; friends and colleagues of parents/guardians; parents/guardians of friends; past and/or present employers, teachers, professors, dentist and doctor; gym class instructors; your neighbourhood baker or butcher; past and present pets; people you know through sports teams, and community and religious groups; and so on – **the worst thing that they can do is say no.**
- If you have willing friends, get them to write up a similar list to the one above – addresses included. This is a great way to expand your network even further. Just remember to tell your friend to **send a primer email** to their contacts, letting them know that a friend of theirs will be sending them an email/letter.
- Write an email/letter that outlines what you're doing – an Otesha bike tour – and why you're doing it. Also:
  - Make it personal, relatively informal and relevant to the recipients.
  - Make sure it's clear and concise.
  - Include examples of concrete things that you'll be doing on the tour and/or a story or anecdote that resulted in your applying for a bike tour.
  - Though it might make you uncomfortable, providing people with your desired minimum donation (e.g. \$20) will probably result in higher donations. Just make it clear that *any* donation will be very, very welcome. You can also change your desired minimum donation depending on whom you're sending it to. If you're contributing some of your money – or you've already secured money from another source – make sure to mention that.

- If you're looking for non-monetary donations – bike/camping gear – then include those as well (though remember that we cannot issue tax receipts for in-kind donations that you are going to keep).
- You might want to have 2 or 3 (slightly) different versions of this email/letter depending on both how well you know the people you're sending it to, and, as mentioned above, what minimum donation you're asking for
- See a sample letter in Appendix C. **Don't forget** to include in the email/letter how people can donate to you and how they will get a tax receipt. This is detailed above, but just to re-iterate:
  - Online: include the link to your [Canadahelps.org](http://Canadahelps.org) Personal Online Giving Page (set up for you by the Otesha office) – CanadaHelps will send them the tax receipt.
  - Cheque or Money Order: the donor can either mail the donation to the Otesha office in Ottawa (404 McArthur Ave, Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8), or hand it to you. Cheques and money orders must be made out to The Otesha Project, with your name on the memo line. Otesha will mail the tax receipt to them so long as it meets the requirements detailed above.
- If you give someone a printed donation request letter (either by mail or in person), you can also print off and attach the fancy-dancy [Donation Card](#), which makes tracking and processing donations easy as pie.
- Follow-up phone calls are optional. Sometimes they can serve as a welcome reminder to someone who has been meaning to donate but keeps forgetting
- Follow-up e-mails are highly recommended. From our experience, the second e-mail will generate more donations than the first. Take this opportunity to update your potential donors about your fundraising goal (e.g., you've collected \$900 so far).
- Singing telegrams are okay too.
- Last note: remember when sending mass e-mails to use the Bcc option if you are concerned about others preferring that their e-mail addresses be confidential.

## #2 Selling The Otesha Book

The Otesha Book focuses on ways that our everyday actions and consumer choices can have a positive impact on the environment. The contents may speak to the purpose of your tour and you may find that selling it is a great way to raise issues that are important to you while at the same time fundraising your tour contribution. It can feel more comfortable than asking for money straight up, as this way your donor gets something very tangible in return. Here's how to do it:

- [Order ten books](#) at \$10 each. We will send them to you by mule, hang-glider or Canada Post.
- Bring a copy of the book around with you wherever you go (parties, school, family functions, etc.), accompanied by the book order form (which can be found in Appendix E).
- A good strategy is to approach educators and suggest the book as a resource for their students. They may be able to order a full class set of books!
- Show people just how great the book is, take their details using the order form, collect their cash or cheques, and get a copy to them. Note: the sale of the book is not eligible for a tax receipt.
- Once you've reimbursed yourself for the \$10/book cost, send in the difference via your Personal Giving Page or send a cheque to the office.
- First ten books gone in a flash? You can order another batch (most efficient and cost-saving) or mail us a book order form with the cheques and/or money orders (converted from the cash) at the end of every month, and your supporters will receive their books by mail (however, this is less efficient and cost-saving).
- For every book that you sell (assuming that you sell them for \$20 each, though you could charge more), \$7.50 goes towards the printing of the book, \$2.50 goes towards the postage, and \$10 goes

towards your project contribution. **Sell 235 books, and you've exceeded your fundraising goal!**

### **#3 Approaching local organizations, businesses and service groups**

- Begin by making a list of all the organizations, businesses and service groups that you want to approach: community centers, local small businesses, places of worship, local unions, student organizations at your school, etc. Service clubs can include the Rotary Club, social and ecological justice and action groups, the Kinsmen, the Kinette Club, Kiwanis Clubs, Optimists, and Lions Clubs. If applicable, your city's Chamber of Commerce should have a list of local, civic groups as well.
- You should visit all of these places in person, armed with letters. We've included a sample letter in Appendix C to get you going. Here are a couple of extra helpful letter writing hints that should be used in conjunction with the tips from approach #1 above:
- Explain how you see donations as an exchange (remember the ten key fundraising guidelines in Part 2), which is why you can offer the following things in return:
  - Giving them a [certificate](#) to put up so that everyone will know that they donate money to cool initiatives
  - If applicable, you can offer to give a presentation either before or after or both(!) to the members of the organization about the bike tour itself and the issues that underlie it.
- Tailor the letter to the recipient, especially with service groups. If they're really into youth, talk more about the youth component of Otesha's work; if they're a cycling coalition or bike shop, focus on the cycling component of your tour.
- Include your contact details, and instructions on how to donate.
- If possible, arrange a time to meet with the relevant manager or director, or to meet with all the organizations' participants – i.e., making a presentation at a weekly meeting. It's always better to explain yourself than to simply leave a letter. And, on this subject, some meeting tips:
  - Be professional, whatever that means to the organization you're meeting with.
  - If you don't know the answer to a question, don't panic and invent an answer. Just tell the person that you'll find out and get back to them as soon as possible. And then actually find out and get back to them!
  - Don't pressure anyone. Some people will say yes and some will say no. Leave them with any relevant information – like a letter on Otesha letterhead.
  - If you have a personal connection – i.e. you always go to this store or community center, or if your parents are part of the service group – then emphasize that.
  - Remember that if it doesn't seem like a monetary donation is in the cards, maybe you can get something for a silent auction, which we'll discuss in the fifth approach – *Events* – below.

### **#4 Approaching companies and organizations outside of your community**

Aside from the ethical issues discussed in part 2 above, seeking corporate donations can be difficult for other reasons as well. Often they don't give donations to individuals, and often demand a lot of brand-exposure in return. From our experience it's a much better use of your time to focus on businesses and organizations that are in your local community. Being able to walk in and introduce yourself is exponentially more productive than mailing a letter that might simply sit unopened on a desk. However, on the off chance that you happen to have a personal connection at a company that doesn't compromise

your ethical guidelines – then by all means pursue it. If you’ve got any concerns about this, just let us know. We’d love to talk it through with you.

## **#5 The Event Approach - a.k.a. the everything-else-catch-all-category**

**Remember: Please ensure you promote any fundraising event you hold as being “in support of my participation in an Otesha (and partner organization, if applicable) bike tour”, and not as an “Otesha event.” Charitable status is a slippery commodity and one we’d like to hang on to. Thanks!**

When designing an event, make sure the amount you expect to get out of it is worth the time and money you’re going to put into it. If you make \$500 from one event, that’s great. But if you had to spend \$200 and a month straight planning it, then maybe it wasn’t the best idea. Simplicity and efficiency (not necessarily in the invisible-hand, free-market way) are key. When planning an event, remember to:

- Discuss your event with friends, family members, well-wishers and other supporters. This will help you define exactly what you want to do and help you to determine how feasible the event is.
- Get others involved. If your event is big, try sharing the work with other participants – or caring friends and family – and hold the event together.
- Know your goals for the event. Determine realistic goals for the turnout and what you want to accomplish from the event.
- Make a budget. Take the time to consider what, if any, your expenses will be and what your income from the event will be. Knowing what amount you think you’ll net from the event will help you to determine the feasibility of the event.
- Plan ahead. Make a list of all of the things you have to do to prepare for the event. Set these items in order of priority and mark the day that you will do it on a calendar. Revisit this list many times.
- Invite everyone you know and everyone from Otesha. Word of mouth advertising – through the email list you compiled in approach #1 or through e-listserves – is probably the most effective way to promote an event. If you’re into the whole competitive thing, you could also, for example, hold a competition among your friends with prizes –baked goods? – for whomever sold the most tickets.
- And now a lengthy list of ideas and examples of ways to bring in some fundraising cash. Remember that it’s okay to ask for seemingly exorbitant prices for this stuff, since they know that it’s for a great cause
  - **Photo sale.** Create a simple website or photo display to show off your gorgeous photographs of beautiful people and places that you or your friends have taken. Sell enlargements to everyone you know. Blow them up all at once for cheaper enlargement costs. Ask your friends and family to place orders, and make sure they’re completed in time for any relevant gift-giving season.
  - **Bake sales.**
  - **Homemade craft/art sales.** Necklaces, bracelets, picture frames, homemade soaps, paper, or greeting cards, etc.
  - **Otesha Book sales.** See #4 above and Appendix E for the Book Order Form.
  - **Selling fair trade goods.** Contact the fair trade folks at [Camino](#) about direct fundraising.
  - **Recipe Book.** Gather your favourite recipes and those of your friends and family. Turn them into a funky and creative recipe book or zine that you can sell.
  - **Silent auction.** Seek donations from local businesses, basements, closets and your own creativity. Set up at an event that you’ve decided to hold, set a minimum price and let the bidding begin.

- **Dinner party.** Get musically-inclined friends to play. Again, charge a cover for entry depending on whom you're inviting (\$5-30), serve a meal and set up stuff to sell.
- **Host a theme night.** Rent a favourite series of movies (oh yeah, *Back to the Future* marathon) or a couple of documentaries. Charge a cover and provide some snacks. Like popcorn.
- **Host a concert or a coffeehouse.** For something as ambitious as this it might be good to coordinate with other people.
- **Garage sale.** Get out all your junk and then go around to your friends, family and neighbours with this hot offer: "I'll remove your garbage from your basement, garage and/or closet, and then I'll sell it. Whatever I don't sell, I'll figure out how best to dispose of it." You could also contact local companies for donations.
- **The electronic garage sale – eBay.** eBay is a great resource for getting rid of used, unwanted items and receiving cash in return.
- **Part-time work and odd jobs.** Could include pet or house sitting, house cleaning snow removal or lawn-cutting, hair-cutting, landscaping, etc.
- **Street performances.** Miming, busking, clowning or any skills that are worth performing. Really fast typing doesn't count.
- **Jellybean counting contest.** Hmm... 318?
- Organize "**bicycle valet parking**" at any big events going on. This will not only provide you with funds but will also promote bicycle use. Offer to lock up bikes (or keep 'em safe some other way) and then bring them around for people when they come out of the event. If you choose an event where lots of cyclists tend to show up, and charge a few dollars each, you could make some decent money pretty easily.
- **Tabling – wherever and at whatever.** Tabling with donation box at religious or community centres, fairs, farmer's markets, etc. Make sure to stand in front of, never behind, your table. Set up an attractive eye-catching display or some stunt to get attention. A bike in various states of overhaul? The pretty Otesha book?
- **Bike wash and tune-ups.** With the help of some bike mechanic friends, local bike co-op volunteers, or former Otesha tour members, set up a bike maintenance booth on campus, at a festival or farmers market. Ask for donations in exchange for "bike lovin'." Set up table with Otesha books and other info.
- **Clothing swap.** Invite all your friends (and all their friends!), ask everyone to bring clothes they are willing to part with. Arrange for lots of space for display, consider having models do a fashion show. Guests can then sort through the items, and select the ones they want. Charge a set price for all items (\$1-5).

## What Not to Do

There's only one event that sometimes gets tossed around in fundraising circles that we'd advise against: raffles. Often the time that it takes to, first, round up sellable-items, and, second, sell a lot of tickets, is not worth the amount of money you'll raise. Raffles also often require a government license that you should look into if you choose this option. On the other hand, if you happen to be some kind of raffle sage – then raffle away!

As you plan, also note that Otesha is not in a position to offer our name or organizational status to acquire a liquor license.

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## **PART 4: THE DISMOUNT**

### ***Frequently Asked Questions***

#### **What is Otesha?**

Otesha is a charitable, youth-run organization. Otesha was founded by Jessica Lax and Jocelyn Land-Murphy in 2002 to mobilize youth to create local and global change through relationship building and collective action. Otesha believes that there are alternatives to a culture of overconsumption, and that each one of us has opportunities to have positive impacts on our communities and neighbours every single day.

#### **What is a Cycling and Performing Tour?**

It is a life-altering opportunity for youth to empower themselves, and thousands of others, to be the change they want to see in the world. So far there have been more than 33 of these self-propelled, adventures. Bike tours bring together a diverse group of talented youth to give inspiring Otesha theatre performances and/or workshops across the country. Each team consists of about 15 young people, who work collectively, – sharing all responsibilities, making decisions together, engaging in mutual learning about sustainability and other social justice issues. All the while spreading infectious, joyful hope for a better future!

#### **What is the Pedal to Plate Tour?**

A nine day adventure exploring a local food system by visiting farms and organizations that seek to better the system. Farmers benefit from the exposure to their products and tour members make direct connections with the people who produce your food.

#### **Where does the money I fundraise go?**

One hundred percent of your project contribution goes towards the costs of running bike tours, including food to feed the cyclists, staff time to organize the tour and administration for the organization to keep the program running.

#### **What happens if I raise more money than the project contribution?**

Any money raised that exceeds the project contribution will be put towards Otesha's future programming.

## ***Alumni success stories***

‘Most of my fundraising happened through the generous contributions of family and friends. I supplemented this with sales of antique bottles (donated by a family friend), hand-made cards, and working at a craft sale.’

‘A local organization gave me \$300 from a karma yoga class, which is amazing, but I think it was a lucky break! I held a bake sale at McGill with another participant, which was very successful (we sold \$260 worth of baked goods), and also a dinner party. Most of my donations were small ones from friends and family.’

‘I collected money from my neighbours, and beer bottles from a variety of restaurants in Ottawa; my friends played some music for me in the market (I had an Otesha sign!); and held a garage sale.’

‘I planned a fundraising show with bands and free homemade food. We made \$250 from the event. I planned a fundraising buffet dinner with entertainment from local a singer/songwriter at a local restaurant. I made \$280 from this event. I put together a fundraising raffle with donated prizes from local businesses and MEC. I made \$200 from this. I held a bake sale at my university at a table that I set up with information about what I was doing and sold homemade baked goods (muffins with bike tire icing on them) and vegan cookies, as well as the raffle tickets. I made about \$120 from this.’

‘I organized a pub night with silent auction of gifts donated from local organizations. I printed greeting cards with my "environmentally inspired" artwork. I organized a Valentine's choco-gram (fair trade and organic of course!) activity at work and sold notebooks made with recycled paper with artwork on the front. I also got outfitted by one bike shop for free and got a free tune-up from another!’

## **Final Words**

Hopefully, this guide has been helpful in putting your fundraising efforts into high gear. Let your confidence and passion for your upcoming bike tour shine through to all those you talk to. Good luck out there. Stay positive. And be in touch!

## APPENDICES

### *Appendix A: Sample Fundraising Plan*

Riley Andrews  
 Performing and Cycling Tour  
 Tour date: Spring

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Amount Expected</b>	<b>Key dates, notes, etc.</b>
Letter/email writing to 200 people (45% yield)	\$900 (average of \$20 from 45 people)	Send out all emails/letters by January 20; ask them to make donations in lieu of birthday or Christmas presents.
Seek donations from local businesses	\$400 (average of \$100 from 4 companies)	Print off a letter. Spend 2 hours on a Sunday walking into stores. Make sure to follow up if a manager isn't available.
Seek donation from my Rotary Club	\$350	Submission deadline for letters is February 25. Get myself onto their weekly meeting agenda.
Hold a movie night.	\$200 (\$10 at the door from 20 people)	Let everyone know about it. Rent movies. Make popcorn. Schedule it for reading week – February 18.
Sell the Otesha Book	\$300 (30 books)	Fill out book order form by March 1. Have a sample on me at all times. If not sold by March 31, visit a few school libraries and independent book stores that might be willing to buy a few copies.
Sell some old stuff on ebay/kijiji.	\$200	Start collecting old stuff from my neighbours, families and friends immediately and then post 'em on the web!
	<b>Total: \$2,350</b>	

## ***Appendix B: Email/Letter to Individual Potential Donors***

Dear family, friends, teachers, classmates, muses, and dreamers,

I just got accepted into a program that I think will be my coolest endeavour yet: an Otesha cycling tour!

For those who haven't heard of it, the Otesha Project ([www.otesha.ca](http://www.otesha.ca)) mobilizes youth to create local and global change through their daily lives. They've delivered theatre-based performances and workshops to more than 165,000 Canadians that focus on the many ways our choices impact the world, and how we can make that impact more positive.

[Description of partner organization (if applicable)]

I'll be meeting up with about 15 other volunteers to bike the West Coast! Along the way we're stopping in about 25 communities, and will perform to more than 2,500 young people at schools and community venues about all the ways the choices we make can have a positive impact.

If you hadn't guessed by now, the reason I'm writing to you is not just to let you know about this really cool, outside the-box initiative that I'm going to be a part of. I'm writing to all of you in the hopes that you can help me in fundraising my \$2,350 project contribution.

I'm hoping for donations in the range of \$25, but anything at all will be very, very appreciated. All donations over \$20 are tax deductible, as Otesha is a registered charity. It'd be great if you could make your donations as soon as possible. I'm also in the market for a second-hand (small and light weight) tent and any bike accessories you might have lying around. Also, if you know of anyone else who might be interested in donating please let me know! And if you know of anyone who'd be keen to have a similar experience, tell them to check out Otesha's website, and consider applying.

You can donate (securely!) online with a credit card through the Canada Helps website: [INCLUDE THE DIRECT LINK TO YOUR DONATIONS PAGE]. It's really fast and easy. If you'd rather donate by cheque, that works too – make your cheque out to The Otesha Project, *put my name on the subject line*, make sure your full name and address is on the cheque, and mail them to: The Otesha Project, Heartwood House, 404 McArthur Ave, Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8.

I promise to keep in touch with all of you about the adventure I'm sure to have, and will be more than delighted to share pictures, stories and all the rest once the tour is over. If you are interested, I'll hold a slideshow presentation when I return so you can get a better of idea of what you helped support.

Thank you so much for reading this. Remember that a better world is possible!

Peace and bicycle grease,  
Riley

## ***Appendix C: Template Letter for Local Businesses, Service Clubs, Organizations***

Dear Ron Barclay and the rest of Cool-Hip-Cats Winnipeg,

I'm writing to you because I want to make a brief presentation at your February all-members meeting. I want to talk to your organization about the upcoming program I'm taking part in and how you can get involved.

As I reached the halfway point of my first year at York University, I began to make plans for the spring. I was eager to find some kind of employment or activity in our hometown of Winnipeg that would connect my environmental studies degree with something practical. I was hoping to find something that would let me work outside, and also, to do what I do best: meet and interact with people from the community.

Just last week, I finally found it! I was accepted to go on an Otesha performing and cycling tour. The Otesha Project ([www.otesha.ca](http://www.otesha.ca)) is a registered charity that works to mobilize youth to create local and global change through their daily choices. They've delivered performances and workshops to more than 165,000 Canadians that focus on the many ways our daily choices affect the world, and how we can make that impact more positive – from buying fair trade products to conserving water and promoting sustainable transportation.

I'm going to meet up with about 15 other volunteers in Vancouver, and, after training week, we're going to bike along the coast, up and over to Vancouver Island! Along the way we're planning on stopping in about 25 communities, and we'll be performing to more than 2,500 young people at schools and community venues.

To make this incredible opportunity a reality I am raising \$2,350, which will go directly towards the costs of the performing and cycling tour. I know your organization has a history of supporting youth environmental initiatives in the Winnipeg area. Any contribution would be very much appreciated. Every dollar you donate equals 500 meters that I will cycle on the tour, and one more student I will reach with a message of empowerment and environmental sustainability.

The benefits of Otesha's programs are several. As a tour member, I'll gain knowledge about sustainability, and learn leadership skills. The communities that Otesha visits receive bike tours very warmly, appreciating the energy and enthusiasm that our tour will surely bring. At a time when images of global poverty appear daily in local media, and scientists agree that climate change is happening, I hope that through Otesha I can be a force for positive change, and inspire others to want to 'be the change' as well.

I sincerely hope you will consider sponsoring me and I look forward to speaking with the committee on February 5. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (905) 555-1212 or email me at [riley\\_andrews@hooya.com](mailto:riley_andrews@hooya.com).

Thank you in advance for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Riley Andrews

## ***Appendix D: Thank You Letters for Donors***

Thanking your donors is as important as asking them! This is also a great chance for you to offer them ways to become more connected to Otesha.

Sample:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Murphy,

I would like to thank you very much for your donation of \$40 towards my Otesha cycling tour. With your support I have raised \$1,150 of my \$2,350 goal, and am feeling very encouraged! I thought you might be interested in staying updated on what Otesha is achieving with your help, so I would like to suggest you sign up for Otesha's monthly e-newsletter at: <http://www.otesha.ca/content/newsletter-sign-form>.

Once again, thank you for this contribution – you are a part of a very quickly growing and dedicated movement to create positive change in the world!

Peace and pedals,  
Riley

