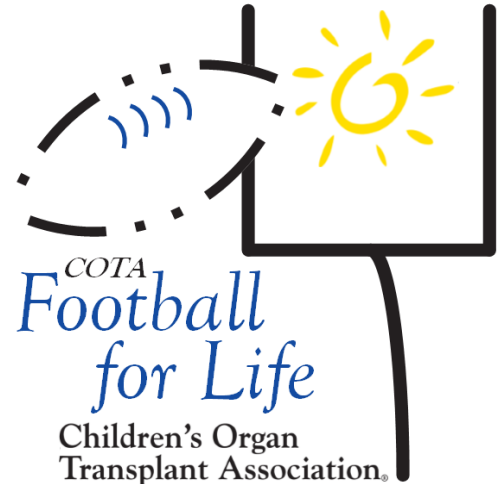


## COTA Football for Life *Getting Started*

A football game-day fundraiser is a fun and entertaining event. You will attract football fans who never miss a game as well as those who simply want to spend time with friends while supporting this important cause. This guide will assist you as you plan your event – keep in mind that it is important to have something for everyone!

It is important that all of your participants know they are attending a game day event that will make a life-saving difference for a COTA family. To help remind your supporters of the importance, provide all your volunteers with basic information about the patient's transplant journey. You will also want to have photos of your patient posted in the registration area. If possible, invite the COTA family to speak at the event.



### ***Select a Location***

The first step is to determine what location would work best for your fundraising event. It may make the most sense to hold a COTA Football for Life Game Day fundraiser in a local restaurant/sports bar that houses multiple television screens and draws sports fans from throughout the community. However, you could also incorporate screens and sports fans into your own backyard or family room as a more personal way to reach out to friends who want to gather for the big game.

### ***Determine the Date***

The next step is to determine the date for your event. Check game schedules to determine which “big game” to plan the fundraiser around. Keep in mind that bigger games may lead to busier venues. **Do not set a date before checking with the venue.**

### ***Enlist Volunteers***

One of the keys to a successful COTA Football for Life event is to recruit enough volunteers. You will need help promoting the fundraiser, soliciting giveaways and prizes, assisting with a silent auction, helping with the snacks and/or meal, etc. Make a list of those areas in which you need assistance and ask volunteers to select those where they feel most comfortable serving.

Make sure you provide adequate communication with your volunteers so there are no surprises on the day of the event. Host regular meetings and share updates by email. All volunteers will appreciate hearing progress updates, and you will find that many volunteers will have great ideas to share as plans are developed! If volunteers feel they are part of the process, they will commit themselves to the success of the event.

### ***Plan the Budget***

A COTA Football for Life event may require fundraising expenses. If you will be requesting funds to pay expenses, you will need to complete the [COTA Budget Worksheet](#), which outlines anticipated expenses and expected revenue. Submit the Budget Worksheet to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org). Once approved, COTA will be able to pay fundraising expenses from funds raised by the event. COTA will work together with you to keep your expenses as low as possible in an effort to maximize the proceeds from the event.

### ***Consider Fun Activities on Game Day***

Your supporters understand they are attending a game day fundraiser, so they will expect activities that provide additional fun, friendly competition and additional revenue for your COTA community campaign. Solicit prizes for these opportunities from local businesses to provide an extra incentive for participation and remember to announce winners after the game. Remember, these in-kind donations are tax deductible and can be receipted with [COTA Gift in Kind Forms](#), which can be ordered at no cost via the [Order Supplies](#) tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.

Consider these creative activities that can help you capitalize on the fun of watching your favorite team score while raising funds for transplant-related expenses:

- **Team Spirit Contest**  
Ask for a contribution for fans to enter a contest where participants are judged on their team attire. Award prizes for the best, gaudiest and most original team spirit displayed. Offer face painting for a donation to boost each attendee's overall 'look' and net additional COTA contributions.
- **Team Wristbands**  
Offer campaign wristbands as a premium for a donation to the crowd gathered for the game. The wristband may not 'match' their team colors, but it does demonstrate they are on the same team -- cheering for a COTA transplant family.
- **Trivia**  
Host a sports trivia contest at half time of the big game. Participants make a contribution to enter and a prize is offered to the winning group.
- **Game Stat Giveaways**  
Establish a list of game progression statistics and offer fans a chance to make a contribution of any amount to put their name into a drawing for a chance to win when their team wins. Include game highlights such as longest field goal, score after first quarter, half time score, first touchdown scored by which player/team, etc.
- **Treats and Eats**  
In a sports bar/restaurant setting, arrange for a percentage of food and beverage sales to be donated to the COTA campaign. Also consider having a bake sale during your COTA Football for Life event.
- **A Fan and a High Bidder**  
Soliciting auction items can also add to your COTA Football for Life fundraising revenue. And, the items do not have to be sports-related. For instance, spa packages and food certificates make great gifts for a game day fan to take home.

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**Note:** *To serve alcohol at any COTA activity, alcohol must be served and/or sold ONLY under a liquor license and liability insurance held by someone else, AND their personnel must serve the alcohol. If you are hosting a game day party at someone's home—rather than a venue with a liquor license and liability insurance—featuring non-alcoholic refreshments is the best way to ensure fun and safety for all.*

#### ***Promote, Promote, Promote***

Once you have confirmed the location, selected the date, submitted the Budget Worksheet (if needed) and recruited volunteers, the most critical step in planning your COTA Football for Life event is promotion.

Flyers will be important tools in promoting your event. Ask volunteers to distribute flyers within the community. Send a flyer and/or press release about the event to your local newspaper, Chamber of Commerce, radio stations and television stations and ask them to help publicize and promote the event. If hosting your event at a local restaurant/sports bar, remember to provide several flyers to them to promote the event.

Add the COTA Football for Life fundraiser as an Event on the COTA campaign website. Use social media, like Facebook and Instagram, to amplify your promotional efforts by directing interested parties to the website for additional information and registration. Consider setting up a [COTA Event Thermometer](#) to accept online registrations. Remember, when using a COTA Event Thermometer 100% of funds raised go to the COTA campaign.

**Remember to send all promotional materials for the COTA Football for Life event to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org) for approval.**

#### ***The Day of the Event***

Have volunteers arrive early to ensure registration tables are set up and everything is ready for a successful event. Recruit enough volunteers so the process runs smoothly. You may want to set up tablets or laptops for last-minute attendees. Consider using a [Square Credit Card Reader](#), which allows you to accept debit and credit card payments via your cell phone or tablet and direct those contributions to your COTA community campaign. If your team would like to utilize a Square Reader for an upcoming event, please contact [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org).

#### ***Say Thank You***

Always thank your volunteers, participants and donors. While participants can be thanked at the event, you will want to put one or two people in charge of writing and sending thank you notes to additional volunteers and donors after the COTA Football for Life event. COTA can provide thank you cards and envelopes at no cost. To request these items, simply visit the Order Supplies tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.

## Coin Collection

Coin Boxes can be used by COTA community campaigns to build awareness and raise funds. Request Coin Boxes at no cost from COTA and place them throughout the venue. If hosting the COTA Football for Life event at a sports bar/restaurant, the display of COTA Coin Boxes is a public way to show that the business cares about the community.

Here are some tips:

1. Order COTA Coin Boxes and labels by visiting the [Order Supplies](#) tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.
  - a. COTA will provide a label to attach to the Coin Box with the patient's name and photo, COTA campaign information, and the COTA website URL and QR code. If the family did not provide COTA with a patient photo, the Coin Box label will have the COTA sun logo instead. Please email a photo to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org) so we can update the Coin Box label.
2. Display COTA Coin Boxes prominently in multiple locations in the venue, such as on counters beside cash registers staffed with employees. If hosting the COTA Football for Life event in someone's home, COTA Coin Boxes might be placed beside tables holding prizes and auction items.
3. Train all COTA fundraising volunteers and sports bar/restaurant employees to ask every participant and/or customer to donate change. Donations go to the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) in honor of your local patient to assist with transplant-related expenses.
4. Cash collected from the COTA Coin Boxes should be converted to a money order or cashier's check made payable to the Children's Organ Transplant Association or COTA with "in honor of *Patient First / Last Name*" written in the memo line. Mail proceeds to COTA with a note indicating funds are from the Coin Boxes fundraiser. The fee for the money order may be taken from the proceeds. Look for a bank or credit union with a coin counter to count the coins. Do not use the *Coinstar* coin counters as they charge a fee.



At the COTA Football for Life event, your fundraising team may also opt to create coin collection receptacles such as:

- Empty plastic coffee containers
- Glass jars
- Water cooler jugs

Consider asking local artists/celebrities to design or decorate containers as part of a COTA Football for Life event. Then the public can vote (with coins) on their favorite design!

## COTA Paper Icons

Paper Icons can be used by COTA community campaigns to build awareness and raise funds. Request icons at no cost from COTA and make them available to supporters for a contribution of \$1. If hosting the COTA Football for Life event at a sports bar/restaurant, the display of COTA Paper Icons is a public way to show that the business cares about the community. Take time to plan your icon fundraising effort to maximize results.

Here are some tips:

1. Order COTA Paper Icons by visiting the [Order Supplies](#) tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.
2. Train all COTA fundraising volunteers and sports bar/restaurant employees to ask every participant and/or customer to donate \$1 for an icon. Donations go to the Children's Organ Transplant Association (COTA) in honor of your local patient to assist with transplant-related expenses.
3. Ask supporters to sign their icon and then display them prominently in multiple locations in the venue. Hanging them from the ceiling on string is one idea to consider, or possibly using tape to affix them to walls is another. If hosting the COTA Football for Life event in someone's home, you will want to confirm display options with the homeowner.
4. Cash collected from the COTA Paper Icons should be converted to a money order or cashier's check made payable to the Children's Organ Transplant Association or COTA with "in honor of *Patient First / Last Name*" written in the memo line. Mail proceeds to COTA with a note indicating funds are from the Coin Boxes fundraiser. The fee for the money order may be taken from the proceeds. Look for a bank or credit union with a coin counter to count the coins. Do not use the *Coinstar* coin counters as they charge a fee.





## Bake Sale

Watching a big football game and eating snack foods go hand-in-hand. Consider selling game-day treats to fans at a bake sale during the game.

Here are some classic bake sale tips to maximize fundraising proceeds:

### ***In-Kind Donations***

Put out the word about the COTA fundraiser and ask for baked goods to be donated. Make sure you are clear about where and when you will receive donations. Consider asking a professional baker to create and donate themed goodies -- like lung-shaped cookies -- for the bake sale. Remember to receipt these in-kind donations with a [COTA Gift In Kind Donation Form](#).



### ***Plan the Budget***

A food sale may require fundraising expenses. If you will be requesting funds to pay expenses, you will need to complete the [COTA Budget Worksheet](#), which outlines anticipated expenses and expected revenue. Submit the Budget Worksheet to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org). Once approved, COTA will be able to pay fundraising expenses out of funds raised.

### ***Enlist Volunteers***

A bake sale is not a one-person show; there is a job for everyone. You need several committed volunteers including bakers, sign makers, donation solicitors and salespeople. Create a list of 'who is doing what' to ensure your bake sale is organized and offers a variety of nicely displayed and tempting items.

### ***Sale Supplies***

To ensure your sale prep and actual sale run smoothly, gather the following supplies:

- Plastic gloves to use for safe food handling if volunteers will touch any of the items being offered.
- One or more folding tables. You may want a few chairs, as well, but always encourage your sales crew to stand to greet customers.
- A tablecloth, cover or white plastic, which looks neat, clean and inviting.
- Cash box and start-up funds. On average, ones, fives and quarters will be most needed. Price your baked goods in \$1 or 25¢ increments to keep change-making simple for your volunteers.
- Trash bin with liner and a few extra trash bags.

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- Use big signs or banners so your sales table is easy to see and the reason for the sale (*raising funds in honor of transplant-needy families*) is clear.
- Plates – all sizes for single or family-sized servings.
- Napkins. Some customers will want to munch on their purchase as they walk away.
- Plastic wrap and storage bags.
- Price stickers and labels. Be sure to not only label with item ingredients or type of item, but also include your COTA campaign website link.

### ***Product Ideas***

Make sure you have enough food items to make it worth a shopper's time. Consider these perennial best sellers:

- Breads – pumpkin, banana or other 'sweet' varieties
- Cakes – pound, carrot and any variety of coffee cake recipe
- Cupcakes
- Muffins – all flavors
- Cookies – add creatively decorated sugar cookies to favorites like chocolate chip
- Bars and brownies
- Pies – fruit pies work best. Consider offering single serving pie slices.
- Yeast breads and rolls – very popular as most people do not bake bread
- *ANYTHING* chocolate

You do not need to limit your items to baked goods. Consider adding munchies such as:

- Snack mixes
- Caramel corn or popcorn balls
- Jars of homemade salsa and bags of chips

If planning your COTA Football for Life event and bake sale around a holiday, encourage your volunteer bakers to cut bars and cookies in holiday-themed shapes. Make your items and packaging look as attractive as possible. Never throw away a plate of broken cookies. Break them up into even smaller pieces, line a basket with a napkin and offer samples to your customers (or those thinking about buying). These extras can help to make a sale.

**Important reminder:** Avoid perishable items such as cream pies, custards or bars that require refrigeration.

### ***Details***

You have probably heard the saying, "It's all in the details." That is very true, especially when serving or selling food in public venues. Make sure you have a COTA committee member working on these important pieces of your bake sale fundraiser.

- **Permits.** Bake sales are typically exempt from local food handling permit rules, but please call your county health department to make certain.
- **Ingredient Labels.** Alert your customers to ingredients that may cause allergic reactions or that have a special benefit. The best time to gather this information is when bakers

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drop off their goods. Make sure to check their recipes because your sales force may not know what is in a certain cake or cookies. Place a label on items that contain nuts or are low fat, sugar free, gluten free or dairy free.

- **Pricing.** The key is to keep things affordable. This is quite easy if all products are donated. Try to offer a range of serving sizes and price points accordingly. Offer items in small groups (one to three cookies) and in larger groups (a dozen cookies). A visit to the bakery department in a grocery store or local bakery can help you determine basic pricing.
- **Packaging.** You may want to pre-package all items so you will not need to touch any of the food at the sale site. Or you may want to allow customers to pick and choose from a variety of items and then sell the items either by the piece, the plate or the pound. Choose the method that will work best for your group and for the venue.

If you have questions about hosting a bake sale alongside your COTA Bowling for Life event, please contact [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org). Remember to send all promotional materials for the bake sale to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org) for approval.



## COTA Auction

### *Another Fundraising Layer for the Football Event*

Auctions are a popular, and successful, way to raise funds. However, before the host or auctioneer can say “Going, going, gone!” ... please remember to plan, plan, plan. There are two major forms of auctions, and in both types of auctions, the highest bidder wins.

**Live Auctions** feature an auctioneer who calls for, and takes, bids on items. Live auctions encourage bidders to have a lively and entertaining exchange as they bid against each other.

**Silent Auctions** utilize bid sheets and offer a chance for event attendees to place their own bids while challenging other bidders using written bids taken during a pre-determined time period. *This tends to work best for COTA Football for Life events.*



#### **Here is how to coordinate an auction fundraiser:**

1. Contact local businesses and ask them to donate items for the auction. You need a wide range of items in order to have something that appeals to everyone. In exchange for their generosity, provide the business with a [COTA Gift In Kind Form](#) (available to order at no cost on the [Order Supplies](#) tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org) and promote the businesses at the auction by including their names on display boards or on a banner at the venue. You can also use the public address system to announce the businesses' names periodically throughout the evening. Friends and family can also donate auction items, such as crafted goods, and should be receipted with a COTA Gift In Kind Form.

***Tip: It is important to create and maintain a 'sellers' market' and avoid creating a 'buyers' market.'*** To do this, estimate the number of unique bidders you will have attending your event. One couple or one individual attendee equals one buying unit. A good balance is to have one silent auction item for every one to three buying units. A higher ratio of bidders to items will increase yields, but the lack of items will reduce total income. A lower ratio of bidders to items will reduce the yield, meaning items will likely sell under their potential value.

2. Display all auction items on tables neatly and spread them out so they are easily viewed. For silent auctions, place a bid sheet that includes a description of the item, minimum bid, and the required bidding increments in front of the item.
  - Set-up auction tables.

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- Design attention-getting packaging of live or silent auction items.
  - Customize and print bid sheets with item descriptions or a note card with each live auction item described for the auctioneer to read as the bidding begins. Silent Auction bid sheet templates can be found in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.
  - For silent auctions, provide a pen for each bid sheet.
  - Use receipts/note cards to record each winning bidder's name and bid amount. Present this to the buyer to give to the cashier when making the purchase, and then to the volunteer who will help the buyer find the purchased item.
3. Assign volunteers to work at each of the item tables to answer questions or to hold up the item as the auctioneer is ready to start the bidding. Depending on the value of the items, volunteers may also need to be stationed around various items for security purposes.  
**Tip:** *COTA suggests keeping gift certificates in a safe place and simply placing a copy of the certificate on the display table. The buyer can receive the actual gift certificate from the cashier at check out.*
4. Designate a time during the event that live bidding will start or silent auction bidding will end. Generally, silent bidding goes on for a couple of hours. Have the auctioneer announce when the live auction starts or have volunteers make several announcements about when silent auction bidding ends to help build excitement and participation.
5. Gather all bid sheets when the silent auction closes. During a live auction, have at least one volunteer noting who the highest bidders were and the amounts of the winning bids. Hand the winning bidder a receipt. Keep the table volunteers at their stations so the winners can give them their receipts (once marked 'paid') to claim their items.
6. Set up a checkout line for people to pay for their items. The 'winners' of the auction items may pay for the item by [cash, check or credit card](#). Have a laptop or tablet with the COTA campaign website available so that guests may make the gift online and receive a receipt by email; using a [COTA Event Thermometer](#) will allow you to confirm amounts paid for each item. You might also incorporate the use of [Square credit card readers](#) to speed up checkout. (*Remember ... only the amount of the gift greater than fair market value of the auction item may be tax deductible. Contributors should consult tax advisors for more information.*) Mark their receipt as 'paid' so they can take it back to the table to claim their merchandise. Be sure to have plenty of volunteers working checkout!

Always thank your volunteers and donors. COTA can provide thank you cards and envelopes at no cost. To request these items, simply visit the Order Supplies tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.

## Tips for Live or Silent Auctions

A Live or Silent Auction can be an important component of a fundraising event for your COTA community campaign. As you plan for all aspects of the event, you will want to consider how best to maximize event proceeds. In many cases an auction can be a profitable addition.

As items are contributed to your COTA live or silent auction, think about the anticipated number of guests at the event and plan the number of auction baskets accordingly. If you have too many auction items, available bidders' dollars may be spread too thin, thus limiting the amount raised by the event.

Many COTA teams have discovered that assembling baskets comprised of several smaller items can produce more income from an auction. Connecting items to develop a theme for a given basket can produce a much-desired item at your event. Consider themed auction baskets that will allow you to combine several items into one larger and more profitable auction item.

- **Family Fun** – Gift certificates to movies, arcades, miniature golf, bowling, sporting good stores or others combined with dinner at a family friendly restaurant ...
- **Pamper Yourself** – Certificates for a day at the spa, pedicures, haircuts, cosmetics, lotions and potions ...
- **Get Away** – Overnight certificates to a resort or hotel in the area, winners can use it themselves or treat out-of-town guests. Add some chocolate mints for their pillow and a classic novel, a bottle of champagne and bubble bath ...
- **Good Taste** – A sampling of ethnic, gourmet, regional, sweets, or other cooking ingredients. Throw in a cookbook and some cooking utensils ...
- **Pet Supplies** – Gift certificates to local pet stores, treats, toys, a collar, a leash, bowls ...
- **Sports Enthusiast** – Game tickets or certificates for lessons or the 'latest' in equipment. Add items like a water bottle, duffle bag or binoculars to complete the package ...
- **Celebrate the Season** – Is it time to garden or shovel snow, picnic or make a pot of chili? Include items to help the bidder celebrate the time of year: potted plants and gardening tools, checkered cloth and tableware, ice melt and scraper, or ingredients to prepare a seasonal meal ...

Have you considered adding a mystery item? Just like a child who wants to shake each holiday gift to try and guess what is inside, having your event attendees bidding on auction items they cannot actually see will be sure to spark curiosity (and perhaps competition) between bidders at a fundraising auction. Using creative wrapping and packaging to fool your participants/bidders adds to the fun of shaking boxes, guessing the contents, bidding, buying and unwrapping. Have event volunteers make sure there is no peaking in the corners of wrapping or tearing of paper. Keep in mind that it is fine to have one or two gag boxes, but most items should have value. As each box goes to the highest bidder, have the winner unwrap the box in front of the rest of your bidders so they can all share in the fun of discovering the prize.

## **COTA Rummage Sale in the Bowling Center Parking Lot**

### ***Turning Trash into Transplant Treasure***

Ever wonder why some rummage sales are crowded with customers while others have very few? It is often not just a matter of chance. Get people shopping (*and raising funds in honor of transplant-needy families*) with these fundraising planning tips.

#### ***Date***

When researching a date for your COTA Bowling for Life event with a rummage sale, determine if your community has a big garage sale weekend. You might be able to capitalize on shoppers who are attending other sales in the area. In addition, research other activities in the area and decide whether any competing activities would help or hurt your attendance. For instance, a festival might draw people (and prospective customers) to your community or it may keep locals from attending because they are focused on the festival. Always remember to ask your volunteers what the best date is for them.

#### ***In-Kind Donations***

Put out the word about the COTA rummage sale fundraiser and ask for items to be donated. Make sure you are clear about where and when you will receive donations. Provide a [COTA Gift In Kind Form](#) to those who give items, and remember that you will include a description of the donation; it is the responsibility of the contributor to record the Fair Market Value of their donation(s). Your sale is not a junkyard; discard or turn away donations of broken, stained or incomplete items.

#### ***Sale Supplies***

Gather the materials (and the volunteers) you will need to make your COTA fundraising rummage sale successful:

- Petty cash (a \$100 cash box should include one roll each of quarters, dimes and nickels; \$28 in ones; \$25 in fives; and \$30 in tens) in a cash box
- Pens, markers, stickers, labels, rubber bands and safety pins
- Flyers and/or poster board
- Tables
- Coat racks (to hang donated clothing items)
- Portable heaters or fans (if the weather forecasts high or low temperatures)
- Shopping bags, boxes and newspaper (for packaging breakables)
- Extension cords, power strips and batteries of all sizes (*Demonstrate an item works for the buyer but remove the batteries before sale as they may cost more than the merchandise.*)

#### ***Variety and Volume***

Larger rummage sales are always more appealing than smaller ones. Make sure you have enough items to make it worth a shopper's time. Consider these categories to help in the collecting and sorting of desirable merchandise:



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- Kids' Toys
- Kids' Clothing
- Women's Clothing
- Men's Clothing
- Sporting Goods
- Books, Music and Movies
- Housewares
- Furniture
- Electronics
- Best of Show  
(*designer labels, collectibles, antiques, etc.*)



**Note:** Clothing can be tricky at a rummage sale. While most people can most easily find clothes to donate to your sale, many shoppers may not be interested in used apparel. Sizing, condition and season all definitely impact the ability to sell clothes. Some clothes are fine as long as they are neatly arranged on tables by type, e.g. women's, men's or seasonal. However, baby and children's clothing in great condition will definitely sell. Create quick clothing racks by using two ladders with a pole between them. The steps and rungs of the ladders also make good display places for hats or shoes.

### **Pricing**

Before the COTA rummage sale fundraiser, organize items and price everything clearly. A good rule of thumb for pricing is 10% of the original cost. Keep all items priced in increments of 25¢. If you think it should sell for less, put it in a 'free' bin or a 'treasure chest' for kids.

Leaving items unpriced will almost always cost you sales since many customers are shy or in a hurry and will not ask you for the price. A 'Make an Offer' sale might be a good option, but be aware that rummage sales vary greatly in pricing and many shoppers will not know what you consider reasonable, especially since all sales are going to charity. If shoppers are uncomfortable with suggesting a price, they may simply walk away from the purchase.

Sale items are donated. There are no expenses to cover; price everything to be sold.

At the cashier station, post a sign indicating that all items are sold 'As Is' with no returns or refunds.

### **Children**

With traffic in the common area, customers coming and going, and all the tables of merchandise, this is not a good place for children. Encourage volunteers to leave their children at home (or provide childcare) so they can focus on their responsibilities at the rummage sale.

While a child's presence at the sale may not be optimum, a poster or flyer about the COTA child you are fundraising in honor of should be part of the rummage sale. Create a colorful poster or

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display featuring a picture and description of the transplant journey and place it at an entry point and/or the check-out area. Consider handing out information about the COTA campaign to shoppers or possibly placing the flyer in each bag of purchased items. Always make sure to include the campaign website address on all flyers.

### ***Coin Boxes***

What if every rummage sale shopper dropped the change from each purchase in a COTA Coin Box sitting on the cashier's table? Think how those coins, and possibly bills, would add up! Make sure to place a coin box near the COTA display and also at the cashier's table. With this placement strategy, attendees who do not make a purchase can still donate. COTA can provide Coin Boxes at no cost. To request these items, simply visit the [Order Supplies](#) tab in the *For Volunteers* section of COTA.org.

### ***Signage and Publicity***

There is nothing more frustrating to shoppers than having to hunt for the sale. If your COTA rummage sale signage does not create impact, you will lose potential shoppers. Design signs that look good from several yards away, and most likely from a moving vehicle. Use materials such as large florescent-colored poster board and write in large/bold/black block lettering. A few key words such as location, date and time of the rummage sale are sufficient. Shoppers will learn more about the cause they are supporting when they are at the sale. Test the signs by stepping back at least 25 feet; if the words cannot be seen at that distance, the sign will not be effective.

Post the signs in places where there is good traffic, like at intersections a few blocks from the rummage sale site. Do not forget to retrieve all signs after the sale.

Start publicizing the rummage sale early. Use community bulletin boards, media, social media, emails and the COTA campaign website. The week before the sale, place signs promoting the sale date and time on lawns near the sale's location. On the actual sale day, place bold and simple directional signs leading bargain hunters to the sale.



Remember to send all promotional materials to [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org) for approval prior to printing or distribution.

### ***Volunteer Management Tips***

- **Take care of your volunteers.** Arrange for a volunteer committee to solicit donations of refreshments such as donuts, pizza, sub sandwiches, bottled beverages and coffee. Set up

an area where volunteers can take breaks. This helps keep volunteers happy and at the rummage sale venue for setup, for the sale, and for cleanup and teardown.

- **Meet regularly.** Even though a COTA rummage sale has fewer organizational details than some fundraisers, it is still important to have regularly scheduled planning meetings to organize and motivate volunteers. Make the last meeting a 'working meeting' that includes sorting and pricing. Consider offering a pizza lunch to thank volunteers while they sort and price.
- **Set up work shifts.** Organize all volunteers in advance of the sale. Schedule breaks. Also schedule shifts to set up before the rummage sale and to clean up after the sale.

### ***End-of-Sale Planning***

Two hours before the end of the rummage sale, mark everything down by half. One hour before closing, charge \$1 per bag of items. This price slashing will streamline cleanup and will minimize leftovers that will need to be hauled to another charity or to the dumpster.

Make prior arrangements for pickup of unsold merchandise. Contact the local Salvation Army, Goodwill, homeless shelter or resale store. They should pick up at no charge and are often grateful for the donation. Secure dumpster space for those items that did not sell and are not acceptable to other organizations.

### ***Sending Proceeds to COTA***

Most shoppers will pay for their rummage sale items with cash; remember all cash proceeds should be converted into a money order or cashier's check and mailed to COTA. Also consider using a [Square Credit Card Reader](#), which allows you to accept debit and credit card payments via your cell phone or tablet and direct those contributions to your COTA community campaign.



**For more ideas or for help implementing COTA Football for Life events that will work well for your fundraising volunteers, service group and your community, contact COTA at 800.366.2682 or [CampaignInfo@cota.org](mailto:CampaignInfo@cota.org).**