

After researching several crowdfunding sites, we think the best option for CdLS families who would like to raise money for 2018 Family Conference is to use [YouCaring](#). Unlike other crowdfunding platforms (like GoFundMe), YouCaring does NOT have a fee. So in other words, you can raise money for your child without having to worry about a large percentage getting taken out at the end!

Tips to a Successful Crowd Funding Campaign

- **Learn from great storytellers**

Before you tell your own story, it's a good idea to explore successful YouCaring fundraisers for examples of courageous storytelling. Take a look at [Finley's miracle surgery to get her dancing legs](#), [K9 for Alvin](#), [Save Dave](#), and [Building The Hospital of Hope](#).

As you experience these pages, ask yourself these questions:

- How do these stories work to create understanding and empathy?
- What can you learn from their approaches to storytelling?
- For each story, are there any specific aspects that made you feel strongly?
- What emotions do you want your own story to convey?

- **Get started**

Start with a sentence that introduces yourself and the “main characters” of your story. Give readers (potential donors) the most relevant information first. How do you define yourself in relation to your story, or to the beneficiary? Whether it was your role as a parent, an entrepreneur, an environmentalist, or a cancer survivor, what was it that led you to start this fundraiser? For now, keep this introductory information brief—you can always add more context if it becomes relevant later.

Example: My name is _____, and I've spent my life _____.

- **Define the essential pieces of your story**

Start by identifying the elements you need to tell your crowdfunding campaign story fully. Note which details you have, and which you may need to find or develop. Make a list of photos and videos that exist, and ones you could create. What details will make your story come alive?

Your story needs to answer basic questions any reader would have: who, what, where, when, why, and how. What will the funds be used for? How are you connected to the cause? How will the donations raise aid you or others? When it comes to fundraising, the *why* is particularly important—why does the recipient need this donation?

Other essential aspects of telling the story of your cause include an inspiring title; a clear goal; a deadline; and specific, compelling details. Together, they can paint a unique, personal, and compelling picture that inspires others to give.

Example: My life changed dramatically when _____.

- **Share your history**

If you've tried other solutions before crowdfunding, it may be a good idea to share what you've done so far. How have you or your loved ones attempted to overcome the challenge presented to you? What hurdles have you faced, and how have they changed you as a person? Take this opportunity to describe the effect of your struggle on your family, your local community, or society as a whole. Feel free to add more context now that readers have the basics.

For a good example of this stage of storytelling, take a look at the updates section in the [Help Save Matthew!](#) campaign. By highlighting the ups and downs of Matthew's tumultuous battle with cancer, his wife Katia helps potential donors invest emotionally in the outcome of his treatment.

Example: When _____ happened, we made a choice to _____. And then _____.

- **Emphasize the turning point**

What event led you to take action and start [crowdfunding](#)? Whether that moment took place in the boardroom, in a doctor's office, or at the kitchen table, summarize it in a sentence or two.

Example: It was at that point, when _____, that we realized that we needed help from our community.

- **Show why we should care**

This is the main question in the back of a potential donor's mind, and the most important question your story should answer. In books and movies, the audience cares about characters who want something badly, and have (challenging yet surmountable) trouble getting it. People often feel a connection to imperfect characters who are doing their best under extreme circumstances.

We often turn to crowdfunding after a tragedy, either our own or someone else's. In such situations, telling one's story requires courage and honesty. One fundraising story told with incredible courage was Riley Sandler's. Riley's parents conveyed her personality and spirit in the face of a great loss. It can be scary to broadcast your most vulnerable moments to the world, but your honesty allows people to form a human connection with you, and with the beneficiaries of your fundraiser.

- **Build the story of your fundraiser**

Beyond the overview, which parts of your story demand attention? What aspects will keep people reading—and motivate them to donate? Write your story with these elements highlighted, then add supporting details to connect the dots.

Once you've done this, step back and examine whether each part of your story works hard enough for your cause. How does each sentence, and each image, deepen interest in contributing? Does the flow of the narrative keep readers curious enough about what happens next that they'll read your entire story, then want to lend support?

- **Sharpen your story**

Take a few minutes to write down how you feel about your cause. What are the most accurate and heartfelt words you can use to describe the need for help? Then look at your fundraiser description—are those words clearly featured in your story? Look at your story from the perspective of potential donors.

- **Title your fundraiser**

It's hard to overstate how important the title of your fundraiser is. As with the title of a book or movie, it can draw people in or turn them away, before they know anything else. It's the first thing people see on social media, the headline of your fundraising page.

Waiting to come up with a title for your fundraiser after you've written your story can help you capture your campaign in one standout line or phrase. Also, when you tell your story first, you're more likely to see your fundraiser title as a story title.

Whether you're drawn to a humorous approach—[Jen's Tumor Eviction Fund](#)—or a more straightforward one—[Save Allison \(New Mother With Brain Cancer\)](#)—the title should include the name of the beneficiary (the main character of your story) and highlight the major challenge that person is facing.

Example: "Help _____ Knock Cancer Out!" or "Fund _____ 's Heart Surgery"

- **Get feedback and refine**

Read your story aloud to see how it sounds—to yourself and to others you trust. Does it sound like you're telling the story to a friend? Are there any moments where it feels stilted or dishonest? Which parts inspire readers to care enough to make a donation? Would you personally be inspired to share this story? (Check out our posts about [why sharing on social media matters](#) and [how to write on the different social media platforms](#).)

One option to consider is telling your story in sections with subheadings—just as this post has been presented. This approach can make it easier for people to understand and absorb information.

When you're happy with the results, look through your story a few more times, removing any errors. If you have someone in your life with strong editing or proofreading skills, ask him or her to review your story and make sure it's as good as it can be.

- **Write frequent updates**

If you view each donation as the beginning of someone caring, not the end, you can see the importance of posting updates. As you post updates, you bring donors into an unfolding story. And when potential donors see this, it inspires them to become part of the story as it unfolds.

We see a direct correlation between the frequency of updates and the volume of funds people raise. Update your donors often. In your updates, share good news as well as hardships, and do so as often as you might fill in a close friend. See this blog post for tips on [how to write a fundraising update](#).

- **Add photos and videos**

Not only do [photos](#) and [videos](#) make your story more personal, they also help other people share and tell your story. Include photos and video in each update you post for donors.

- **Remember, honesty wins**

Always be honest. Authenticity invites people to care enough to lend a hand. By telling your crowdfunding campaign story with clarity and heart, you inspire compassion. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable when you share details. Help people understand how much their donations help.