

How to Host a Successful TABLE Food Drive

Hosting a food drive is a great way to educate children about the importance of giving back to their community. Food drives can also be a fun way to bring children together as they work toward a common goal. Here is a collection of ideas and tips that will help you every step of the way and ensure your food drive is fun and successful!

Planning Ahead:

As with any event, it's important that you take the necessary time to plan for your food drive. Here are some things to consider during your planning stages to ensure it's a success!

- **Check TABLE's current food needs** – TABLE has a list of the food items they take, which can be found [here](#). You can also call to see if TABLE has any current specific food needs. You should also let your group know that checks made out to TABLE are tax deductible.
- **Set a Goal** – By establishing a goal, you and those giving can measure how close you are to achieving your goal throughout the food drive. It can be a goal for number of items collected, weight of items donated, an individual goal, or a "number of kids served" goal. Some examples of goals could be 150 items collected, 100 pounds donated, 3 cans per person or a feeding 10 kids. Another good tip to help you achieve your goal is to create a contest for the kids participating in your drive.
- **Delegate the Work and Pick a Contact Person** – To make the event successful delegation is important. Pick a contact person to help lead in all the coordination efforts, but make sure to have enough people to help so no one gets overwhelmed.
- **Get the Word Out** – It's important to spread the word about your food drive so that you can be as successful as possible! Some good ideas for publicizing your event are sending information about the food drive in a weekly newsletter, sending out or putting up flyers, and creating a Facebook event.

Picking a Theme:

A fun or meaningful theme can help boost involvement and motivation. A few examples are listed below but feel free to come up with your own.

- **Trick or Feed** – Focused around Halloween, a Trick or Feed theme will definitely excite your participants. Feel free to focus on any aspect of the Halloween holiday to fit what you think your participants would be most excited about.
- **Food from the Heart** – A Valentine Day’s themed food drive is sure to be an exciting one. This is good timing for a food drive as well since TABLE tends to receive less food donations during February.
- **Back to School** – Focus your food drive around coming back to school. You can even use the slogan “Hunger didn’t take a summer vacation” or something similar.
- **Meat the Need** – Plan a drive focused around collecting high protein items. This includes tuna and other canned meats, beans, peanut butter and canned pasta.
- **Souper Bowl** – This drive will take place around the Super Bowl (or it can be a general football themed drive). A fun idea would be to focus on collecting just soup or other canned items.
- **March Madness** – Similar to the “Souper Bowl” idea, this food drive can take place during basketball March Madness. You can set up collection bins decorated for a particular team and children can choose each day which team they want to support by ‘dunking’ their food into that bin.
- **Give Thanks Drive** – A fun Thanksgiving themed drive will be great for getting participation. People love giving back this time of year and your drive will encourage people to do just that.
- **One Can, Two Can, Who Can? You Can!** – Perfect for any time of the year, this food drive is focused around the classic Dr. Seuss book. It will have tons of fun colors for promotional materials and is fun for all those involved.

Collecting the Food:

After ironing out all the preparation and theming details, it’s time to get down to logistics.

- **Pick a Collection Schedule** - You can execute a food drive in several different ways, from a single drop off location to multiple sites, and from a single day to hosting it over the course of a week. Determine which method is most effective for your group and makes the most sense for the people you want to participate. Make sure to clearly communicate the details for drop off and clearly label the locations.
- **Picking the Location for your Drive** – The location of your drive is vital to the success of it. Try to pick a heavy traffic area where many people will see the drive. This will help you attract even more participants to your drive than you reached with your promotional materials. You can also create themed collection bins that will catch people’s attention.
- **Schedule Shifts** – Make sure to coordinate volunteers to work shifts throughout the duration of the food drive. Their role is to keep an eye on the collection boxes and to answer any questions that people might have. Also, in the case of a school food drive, children may be asked to leave their items in the classrooms so these volunteers may need to collect the food and gather it in one central location each day.
- **Provide a Fact Sheet** – It’s a good idea to have information about TABLE and childhood hunger available for those who are donating and those who pass by. Here is a [flyer](#) that shows how our Weekend Meal Backpack Program works.

Wrapping Up Your Food Drive:

Once you have successfully executed your food drive there are still a few things that need to be done. Check below for our tips on wrapping things up.

- **Deliver the Food** - Schedule a time for one or several people to bring the food collection to TABLE. Make sure to check TABLE's hours or call before bringing donations by.
- **Thank Your Participants** - Sincerely thank whoever participated in the food drive, and let them know if your goal was achieved.