

**SUMMER SOLSTICE**

**PLAY-A-THON**

Prescribed by  
PROJECT  
**sunshine**

**THE OFFICIAL FUNDRAISER  
TOOLKIT**

**All the tools and resources you need get started on your  
FUNdraising efforts for Project Sunshine!**



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## Welcome to Play-A-Thon!

As a participant in Project Sunshine’s 2026 Summer Solstice Play-A-Thon, you join a powerful, grassroots fundraising community working together to deliver the healing power of play to children and families facing medical challenges. You, the Sunshine Squad, bring light to cloudy days of stress and fear by fueling programs proven to spark joy, connection, and hope.

The Sunshine Squad connects you to thousands across the world who have used their interests, talents, and passions to raise awareness and funds in support of the 1.3 million children in the U.S who are hospitalized annually, and 15 million children living with chronic illness. These children experience stress and isolation as they navigate appointments, procedures, and missed school days. As their medical needs take center stage, and their interactions become centered around their conditions, these kids lose out on play – a key part of reaching developmental milestones, processing feelings, relieving stress, connecting with others, and just being a kid! That’s why Project Sunshine delivers free, research-backed play programs to over 265,000 children at 550+ medical facilities every year.

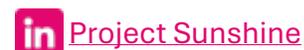
Thank you for helping to spread much-needed joy in hospitals, medical facilities, clinics, and homes where children receive care across the world.

### Let’s play!

#### HOW TO USE YOUR OFFICIAL FUNDRAISING TOOLKIT

This toolkit is your one-stop shop for every step of the awareness and fundraising process. Whether you’ve been fundraising for Project Sunshine for years, or just joined the team, you’ll find all the resources and guidance you need to be successful.

Be sure to check out our blog and social media to stay up to date on all things Project Sunshine and get inspiration from your Sunshine Squad kin and tag us in your posts!



If you have any questions or need support, you can reach Anna Costantini, Development Manager, at [acostantini@projectsunshine.org](mailto:acostantini@projectsunshine.org).



## YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE

We are thrilled to partner with DonorDrive as our fundraising platform for Summer Solstice Play-A-Thon 2026. Your personal fundraising page will allow you to share your connection to Project Sunshine and collect online donations towards your fundraising goal.

### Setting Up Your Fundraising Page

1. Click [here](#) to register.
2. Select “Register Now!”
3. Create an account.
4. Decide if you are fundraising on your own or creating a team. Under “Role,” select the option that aligns with your preference.
  - a. If you are joining a team that already exists, you can select “Join a Team” and use the search function to find them.
5. Set your fundraising goal and provide all the required contact information to create your page.
6. Verify your email address using the code sent to the email you used to set up your account. The email will come from [donations@projectsunshine.org](mailto:donations@projectsunshine.org).
7. Customize your page. You can add your own language and photos to share your story and why you think Project Sunshine’s mission is so important. Be creative and show off your personality!
  - a. Pro-tip: You can even create a custom link to make your page easier to remember and find.
8. Save your page link! Copy and paste it to somewhere that you can return to anytime you’d like to send it to a member of your community.

### Making the Most of Your Fundraising Page

**Story-Sharing:** Make your page stand out by adding your photos and your own story. Giving the “why” behind your efforts to support Project Sunshine will encourage your network to donate in support of you!



**Exciting Incentives:** Use the “Incentives” section to add fun donation motivators to your page. Be as silly and wild as you’d like here! You can post photos and videos of you completing the challenges to your fundraising page. Here are some suggestions from our team:

- \$100: For every person to donate \$100, I’ll eat a bright yellow Lemonhead candy while saying a sunny tongue twister: "We surely shall see the sun shine soon."
- \$250 donation: For the first person to donate \$250, I’ll take a pie to the face!
- \$500 donation: For the first person to donate \$500, I’ll lip sync and dance to “Walking on Sunshine!”
- \$1,000 donation: For the first person to donate \$1,000, I’ll spray paint my hair yellow for a day so I can be a walking ray of sunshine!

**Custom Milestones:** Use the “Add a milestone” feature to add markers along the way that motivate your community and allow you to celebrate exciting progress towards your goal! You can add creative, playful names for each milestone you choose.

**Donation Tracking:** Your fundraising page provides details on all the gifts made to your page, including your fundraising total, donor names, donation amounts and dates, and comments left by donors. This is a great place to help you track your progress and know who to thank for their donation!



## OUTREACH TEMPLATES

### Email Template

Dear [RECIPIENT NAME],

This summer, I'm proud to be spreading sunshine to pediatric patients and families in need. As a participant in Project Sunshine's Play-A-Thon, I'm raising funds to deliver free play programs to children with medical needs, dispelling fear and anxiety by bringing joy, connection, and laughter to their healthcare journeys.

In the U.S alone, 1.3 million children are hospitalized annually, and 15 million children aged 6 - 17 live with chronic illness. These children experience stress and isolation as they navigate appointments, procedures, and missed school days. As their medical needs take center stage, and their interactions become centered around their conditions, these kids lose out on play – a key part of reaching developmental milestones, processing feelings, relieving stress, connecting with others, and just being a kid! That's why Project Sunshine delivers free, research-backed play programs to over 265,000 children at 550+ medical facilities every year.

To support Project Sunshine's critical programs, I am [YOUR PLANS TO PLAY THIS JUNE] and asking my community to make donations. Your gift will brighten difficult times for pediatric patients across the country. I've set a goal of [YOUR FUNDRAISING GOAL], and your support would mean the world to me and to the families we support. You can donate to my fundraising page here: [YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE LINK]. To discuss other means of donating and ways to get involved, please reach out to Anna Costantini, Development Manager, at [acostantini@projectsunshine.org](mailto:acostantini@projectsunshine.org).

Thank you for your generous support.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

### Social Media Post Templates *(Coming Soon!)*

Project Sunshine will share pre-designed graphics made just for the Sunshine Squad! Stay tuned for updates. *Make sure you tag @ProjectSunshine in all your posts so we can see and share your content!*



## PLAY-A-THON: HOW WILL YOU PLAY?

There are three simple ways for you to have a profound impact in support of Project Sunshine during Play-a-Thon.

1. **Post your Play.** Project Sunshine wants you to help spread the word on why play is so important. Crafting gone wild, boardgame domination, trick shot awesomeness all help us have fun and burn off stress. Tag us [@projectsunshine](#) and use the [#playforprojectsunshine](#) to raise awareness.
2. **Play and FUNdraise.** Ask your friends and family to support your PLAY. Shoot hoops, play boardgames, have a slime party or dance-off in the living room - just let them know you are playing for a cause, and Project Sunshine will provide a step-by-step guide to get you started.
3. **Rally Your People to Play.** Invite your coaches, yoga/dance teachers, favorite karaoke performers, Mahjong/D&D group, and cornhole buddies to set up a community playdate, class or tournament for the cause. Play is best when shared.

If you are overwhelmed by the million ways to play, use the following questions to inspire and guide you as you decide how you'll play this June.

- Do I prefer to play on my own, or with a group?
- Do I want to pick one day to play all day, or would I like to sprinkle play throughout the month?
- What types of play are my favorite? What new types of play would I like to try?  
Consider ...
  - **Sports and exercise:** basketball, soccer, swimming, rock climbing, Pilates, yoga, spike ball
  - **Outdoor fun:** Nerf guns, scooters and bikes, kites, tag, Marco Polo, Capture the Flag, swings and slides at the park
  - **Music and dance:** try a new instrument, learn a dance routine
  - **Arts and crafts:** sidewalk chalk, painting, coloring, sketching, slime-making, knitting, crocheting, quilting
  - **Video games:** use your computer or favorite gaming console
  - **Toys:** Legos, puzzles, action figures and dolls, magnetic tiles, blocks, Rubix cubes, drones



- Board games and cards
- Arcade games
- Theatre and pretend play
- Science experiments
- Would I like to host a play-themed fundraising event? If so, see more below!

### COMMUNITY PLAY GUIDE

Rallying your community can really put the FUN in fundraising! Below are simple steps to put together a low cost gathering and provide a memorable experience that encourages donations for Project Sunshine:

1. **Decide what type of event you will host, or rally your community to set up.** Think about what you love to do: do you have a hobby you're particularly good at? A game you're really passionate about? A favorite way to unwind and be creative? Explore what most interests you to help determine what your event will be. Pilates instructors can host donation-based classes, golf enthusiasts can organize golf tournaments, crochet lovers can hold a crochet auction or activity night. Any play people are passionate about can become a fundraiser!
2. **Reach out to your community.** Once you have decided which coach, team, league, studio, friends, etc. that you'd like to rally for a Play-a-Thon event, share your idea with them. Show them our [website](#), let them know why you're participating in Play-a-Thon, and how you think they could get engaged.

*If you're helping the community member(s) you've rallied to plan event logistics, or hosting an event yourself, continue with the following steps:*

3. **Set a date and location.** Set the location and time, then begin planning backwards to organize your process.
4. **Form a team.** Many hands make light work! Even if it's just a two-person team, having support can make all the difference as you plan your event. Meet regularly with your event team to discuss needs, next steps, and responsibilities.



5. **Establish goals.** At your first team meeting, make a schedule with your planning and fundraising goals. Then, assign tasks and deadlines to team members. Examples include (but are not limited to): make an invitation in Canva to distribute one month prior to the event, reach out to local businesses to provide in-kind donations, create a list of materials required for the day of the event.
6. **Seek sponsorships and support.** The best way to lower your costs is through sponsorships from local businesses and large corporations. Think about who you know in your community who may be willing to help, and consider what businesses may be connected to your event type or Project Sunshine's mission. For example, if you are hosting a volleyball tournament, a local sporting goods store may sponsor. If you know someone who owns a restaurant, see if they can provide food and beverage.
7. **Spread the word.** Get the word out about your event. Whether you're posting on social media, putting flyers in local businesses, or hosting an invite-only gathering, schedule the timing for your outreach. If possible, send a save-the-date three months prior, then official invitations one month prior.
8. **Follow-ups and thank yous.** It is essential to recognize and express gratitude to everyone who made your event a success. Send a thank you note to everyone who donated and attended, providing an update on your fundraising total.

### Top tips:

- Find friends with specialties that can help you in ways other than providing a monetary donation. Do you know a caterer, a yoga instructor, a graphic designer? Ask them to provide their services to your event, allowing you to cut costs and promote a fun experience. Additionally, ask local businesses to provide in-kind donations of products and services in exchange for advertising their support on your event materials.
- Create an experience! The more fun your event sounds, the more attendees you will get. The more fun your event is, the more people will willing to give (and return year after year). Play-A-Thon is the perfect opportunity to get creative. Pick a type of play that interests you, and plan your entertaining event around it!



## FUNDRAISING FAQs

### Are donations made to my fundraising page tax-deductible?

Project Sunshine is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization. Donations made directly to Project Sunshine are tax-deductible within the guidelines of U.S. law. All donors who make their gift online using your official Play-A-Thon fundraising page (in DonorDrive) will receive an automated digital receipt.

### What if a donor wants to give, but not through my online page?

Project Sunshine accepts many ways to give, including: checks, wire transfers, donor advised funds, stocks and mutual funds, and cryptocurrency.

Donors interested in sending a check should make it payable to “Project Sunshine” with “Sunshine Squad, *Your Name*” in the memo line. Checks must be mailed to the Project Sunshine headquarters: 211 E. 43<sup>rd</sup> St., Suite 401, New York, NY 10017.

Donors interested in giving by any other means are asked to contact Anna Costantini, Development Manager, at [acostantini@projectsunshine.org](mailto:acostantini@projectsunshine.org).

The Project Sunshine team will credit your fundraising page with any gifts received offline.

### Can a donor write a check directly to me?

Project Sunshine can only issue tax receipts for donations made directly to our organization. If the check is written out to you, we will be unable to issue a receipt. We encourage you to ask your donors to make checks payable to Project Sunshine with your name in the memo.

## HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Reach out to Anna Costantini, Development Manager, at [acostantini@projectsunshine.org](mailto:acostantini@projectsunshine.org).