



# CHAMPIONS FOR YOUTH

## Fundraiser Toolkit



**BE PART OF THE LEGACY.  
FUND THE FUTURE.**

[charity.centuryclubsd.org/realitychangers](http://charity.centuryclubsd.org/realitychangers)

## Thank you for signing up to raise funds for Reality Changers.

In 2026, Reality Changers will celebrate 25 years of preparing first-generation students for college and beyond. **That milestone belongs to you!** You are helping youth to achieve their goals & become first-generation college graduates. Please refer to this toolkit for ideas, resources, sample content, and more to help you reach your fundraising goal!

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# YOUR IMPACT

For more than two decades, Reality Changers has helped more than 3,900 first-generation students break barriers to college and create lasting change for their families and communities. Every graduate joins a growing legacy of leaders who lift the next generation.

Your fundraising keeps that legacy alive. By supporting tutoring, mentorship, college readiness, and career programs, you are creating future for San Diego youth who will go on to graduate college and build stronger communities.

## Hear From Our Participants



**Genemo ('11)** - *Founder, Food Culture Company*

"If you go through Reality Changers, you're a different person at the end. They show students what it is to achieve higher education. My college education gave me a professional edge. I know how to find resources, how to network, how to make a business plan."



**Ricky ('18)** - *Software Engineer*

"[Reality Changers] got my brain going," he explains, "before Reality Changers, I didn't really understand, like, what a university even was."



**Hashima ('24)** - *second year at UC San Diego*

"My journey from the day I came to the United States and my success story remind me of a quote that says '*the only permission you need is your own.*' If I hadn't given myself permission to join Reality Changers in high school, I wouldn't be attending such a wonderful university."





# ABOUT CHAMPIONS FOR YOUTH

Reality Changers has been selected as one of four San Diego youth charities to participate in Champions for Youth, a program administered by fellow 501(c)(3) nonprofit, The Century Club of San Diego.

## Things to Know

- Your fundraising page has already been set up to participate in Champions for Youth!
- **Reality Changers will receive 100%** of all funds raised.
- **Donations will be matched!** Every donation helps Reality Changers to earn additional funds from the \$235,000 Champions for Youth bonus pool. Donations must be at least \$10 to count for match.
- 100% of every donation is **tax-deductible**.
- Donors will see “**Century Club of San Diego**” on their receipts and credit card statements.



# SETTING YOUR GOAL

If you are not sure how much money you'd like to try and raise, here are some good questions to ask yourself:

- **Have you ever done fundraising in the past? What was the goal? Was it successful? If you didn't reach your goal, could you have done something differently?**
- **How much can your network give? If a friend of yours asked you to donate to a worthy organization right now, how much money would you donate? Could you get 10 people to give that much to you? What about 20 people?**
- **Can you challenge yourself with a goal that is a little bit of a stretch? The Reality Changers fundraising team likes to set ambitious but realistic goals that take a little bit of extra work to achieve.**





# YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

## 1 Set up your fundraising page.

Your contacts want to give because they support YOU! Add your photo and your personal story to your fundraising page. Visit [RealityChangers.org/peer-fundraising](https://RealityChangers.org/peer-fundraising) for instructions on how to set up and customize your fundraising page.

### What makes a good story?

Let everyone know why Reality Changer is important to you. Here are some guiding questions:

- Why are you fundraising?
- What inspires you about Reality Changers?
- Why do you think Reality Changers is important?
- How did graduating from college affect your life?

# YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

## 2 Identify your Circle of Influence.

Make a list of your potential supporters and decide the best method to get ahold of each person (email, phone call, text, in-person, etc.). Try to identify 2-4 people for each of the following categories:

- Your closest friends
- Members of organizations
- Your relatives
- People you do business with
- Most successful people you know
- Your neighbors
- Professionals you know
- Business owners you know
- Associates through work - *Your employer may match charitable donations - check with your HR department. If your workplace offers employer gift matching, be sure to include co-workers on your contact list. Every gift will be worth double!*

## 3 Designate gift sizes.

Determine a suggested donation amount for each of your contacts. You know your circle of influence better than anyone and understand that different people are able to give different amounts.

Check:

Do the gift sizes you proposed for each contact add up to your goal? If not, you may need to ask for more or ask more people.



# YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

## 4 Choose your timeline.

Plan when you are going to ask each person for support. Remember that most people will need a few reminders!

Most Reality Changers fundraising pages have between 1 and 4 donations per week. The highest achieving fundraisers have around 10 donations per week.

As we all know, some people just work better with a deadline. Champion for Youth ends on 2/1/26, but you can give yourself some wiggle room by sharing an earlier date with your contacts. You can say something like, “I’m hoping to reach my goal by the end of the year.”

*Be sure to reference the “Campaign Timeline” on page X for additional dates to consider when creating your fundraising timeline.*

## 5 Ask people individually.

When you’re ready, begin reaching out to your network and sharing the link to your fundraising page. (See page 12 for some sample language you can use). Personal meetings and phone calls are best. After that, individualized emails and texts always have a better response rate than a generic message sent to a large group. If you don’t receive a response from a contact, be sure to follow up and remind them.

If you are asking co-workers and your workplace matches charitable donations, be sure to tell people what they need to do in order to get their gift matched.

# YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

## 6 Post to social media.

Share your fundraising page on social media. Tag your contacts to encourage them to give!

*Please note - posting social media alone will not help you reach your fundraising goal. The most successful fundraisers will also reach out to each of their contacts individually.*

## 7 Follow up.

If you haven't heard back from someone you asked, be sure to follow up. We all get busy and need reminders from time-to-time!

## 8 Provide updates.

Your friends and family want to help you reach your fundraising goal. Be sure to let your donors know how things are going and to share general updates on social media.

Example milestones to celebrate:

- 10 donors
- Halfway to your goal
- 75% of the way to your goal
- Only \$100 to go
- You reached your goal!

Tip:

People who haven't given yet (and some who have) will be excited to help you meet your goal by your deadline. As you get close, begin sharing how much you have left to raise and/or how much time is left before the deadline.

# YOUR FUNDRAISING PLAN

## 9 Thank your donors.

Thanking your donors is one of the most important things you can do as a fundraiser. For each donor, consider how they might want to be thanked. Some people might like a personal phone call or email, while others would prefer a quick text. If they are active on social media, consider tagging them in a thank you post or video... their followers might also see it and make a gift to your page!





# OVERCOMING “ASKING ANXIETY”

Three tips on how to feel more comfortable asking for donations...

## Help Your Contacts Help You

While it may seem like you are asking people to just give you money, what you are really doing is giving your friends, family, and colleagues a chance to get involved in your project. Your network cares about you and they want to help you reach your goals. When you discuss Champions for Youth with them, talk about how excited you are and how you need everyone's help to meet the goal you've set for yourself.

## Share the Impact

Remember that fundraising for Reality Changers is not asking someone to give money to you, it's asking them to invest in someone else's future. Let your network know how their gift makes a difference. The Reality Changers blog and social media feeds have great student stories you can share!

## Provide Social Proof

Thank your donors publicly. A great way to do this is by naming them on social media or thanking them in front of others.

Psychologically, people don't like to go out on a limb and be the only ones doing something. By recognizing your current donors, you are showing potential new donors that they won't be alone. When they give, they'll be part of a generous community!

# TIMELINE

## Now

You can start fundraising as soon as your page is set up! Get the momentum started by asking a few close contacts before you share your page widely.

## Nov 30 - Dec 2

Giving Tuesday is on 12/2. This is a global day of giving that comes after Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Many people will be making donations around this date!

## Dec 3 - Dec 28

Follow up with your initial contacts, share your page on social media, and update people about your progress toward your goal.

## Dec 29 - Dec 31

It's always helpful to remind people to give at the end of the year. Here is some suggested language: *"Give by the end of the year to include your donation on your 2025 taxes!"*

## Jan 1 - Jan 25

This is the last phase of the campaign. Reality Changers will be working hard to try and reach first place in the Champions For Youth race - which includes *both* total amount raised *and* total individual donors. Remember, every gift above \$10 counts!

## Feb 1

The campaign ends on 2/1. Your page will be closed and can no longer accept donations after this date.

# SAMPLE LANGUAGE: PERSONAL ASKS

## Send an Email

Dear [NAME],

Please join me in donating to Reality Changers, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prepare youth to become first-generation college graduates and agents of change in their communities. All donations will be matched!

I have set a goal to raise [\$AMOUNT] by [DATE].

Donation link: [LINK TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE]

For almost 25 years, Reality Changers has helped students from under-resourced communities break cycles of poverty through education. Today, their alumni are teachers, engineers, business owners, and community leaders, each one a living legacy of community support.

A college degrees change lives. First-generation graduates earn significantly more and are more likely to mentor the next generation.

Your gift to Reality Changers supports free tutoring, mentorship, college application help, and career advising for youth building a better future.

Thank you for helping to change lives!

With gratitude,  
[YOUR NAME]

PS - Many workplaces match charitable donations made by their employees. Check with your HR department to see if they can match your donation to Reality Changers!



# SAMPLE LANGUAGE: PERSONAL ASKS

## Send a Text

Hi! I am raising funds to help high school students and I am reaching out to ask for your support. Please join me in donating to Reality Changers.

I have set a goal to raise [\$AMOUNT] by [DATE].

Donation link: [LINK TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE]

Your gift to Reality Changers will support free tutoring, mentorship, college application support, and career advising for youth working to become first-generation college graduates. Together, we can create a legacy of college success and fund the future for San Diego youth.

Thanks for your consideration!



# SAMPLE LANGUAGE: SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit [RealityChangers.org/peer-fundraising](https://RealityChangers.org/peer-fundraising) to download graphics for your social media posts. Remember to tag Reality Changers in your posts.

**Facebook:** Reality Changers

**LinkedIn:** Reality Changers

**Instagram:** @RealityChangersOrg

**TikTok:** @RealityChangersOrg

## Make a Post

If you know me, you know that I believe that everyone deserves equal access to opportunity.

I am currently fundraising for Reality Changers, an incredible organization that helps youth to become the first in their families to graduate from college. Access to college makes a huge difference for students' future success. On average, in San Diego County, a bachelor's degree increases a persons' annual earnings by 125%.

I have set a goal to raise [\$AMOUNT] by [DATE]. Please help me reach my goal!

Your gift to Reality Changers supports free tutoring, mentorship, college application support, and career advising for youth working to become first-generation college graduates.

Together, we can create a legacy of college success and fund the future for San Diego youth.

Donate: [LINK TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE]



# SAMPLE LANGUAGE

## Say Thank You

Dear [DONOR NAME],

Thank you for donating to Reality Changers through my fundraising page! Your gift will help youth to reach college, graduate, and become agents of change in their communities.

Your support keeps our legacy of college success growing and helps fund the future for San Diego youth. Check back soon to see my progress toward my goal!

Thanks,  
[YOUR NAME]

*P.S. - I'm only \$[AMOUNT] away from my goal. Would you mind sharing my fundraising page with your friends and family to help me get there? Here's the link: [LINK TO YOUR FUNDRAISING PAGE]*



# OFFLINE DONATIONS

Your donors do not have to give online.

To make a credit card donation over the phone, donors can call Development Manager, Carmelina Herrera, at 619-516-2221.

To pay by check, please have donors make their check out to "The Century Club of San Diego". Address: 9404 Genesee Ave., Suite 310, La Jolla, CA 92037. Please include "Reality Changers" in the memo line.

To donate through a Donor Advised Fund, donors can contact their Donor Advised Fund advisor and direct them to mail a check payable to "The Century Club of San Diego". Address: 9404 Genesee Ave., Suite 310, La Jolla, CA 92037. Please include "Reality Changers" in the memo line.

*Please let us know if you expect an offline donation to come in, so that we can be sure to credit it to your fundraising page. Be sure to assure your donors that 100% of their gift will go to Reality Changers.*

