

Painless Fundraising = FREE MONEY for Schools!

What is Painless Fundraising?

Many corporations (and several independent stores) offer money to schools from customers' everyday shopping. These corporate/school rebate programs are called Painless Fundraising, or "no sell" fundraisers--they do not involve selling particular products to raise money.

Some examples are Giant's A+ School Rewards, eScrip (this includes Safeway's rebate, plus rebates from online purchases and restaurants), and Target's Take Charge of Education. These programs generally require people to register their grocery loyalty cards and/or credit/debit cards at specific Web sites, then select schools to benefit from their purchases. Box Tops for Education involves collecting special coupons printed on different products and mailing them in (only K-8 schools can enroll in this program). Two independent grocery stores, Snider's and Chevy Chase Supermarket, offer money to schools from tallied store receipts. Schools can promote these programs to their school communities and to other families, coworkers and neighbors. Painless fundraising allows a person's regular shopping to earn money for schools, at no additional cost to the customer. Each program has certain requirements, deadlines and payment schedules. eScrip, Target and Box Tops are national programs.

Getting Started

Everyone buys groceries, and several grocery stores offer money to schools! Many online purchases and restaurants can bring rebates to schools too. Find out how to make these funds help your school or PTA! It's easy, and can be fun, and you can raise a lot of money without having to ask your families to buy things that they really don't want or need!

Two area grocery chains, Giant and Safeway, have school rebate programs. Both happen when customers register their Giant or Safeway cards on Web sites and choose up to three schools to receive money when they shop. The programs must have coordinators to encourage people to register their cards, or to register their cards for them. Giant advertises its rebate program, but schools must encourage families to register their cards EVERY school year! The eScrip company (not Safeway) operates Safeway's school program--schools must tell shoppers how to sign up for it. Volunteers promote these programs to their communities to make them successful.

Plan your painless fundraising campaign early, BEFORE the new school year. Try to find several volunteers to help with these programs, or maybe one person to handle them all. If you do not know who currently is listed with eScrip as your school's eScrip coordinator and is being sent information about the program, your school may not have had anyone running this program for some time! Get started on eScrip as soon as possible. Coordinators need to have their school's password to view their eScrip database, and all parts of eScrip operate all year long.

Important Web Sites and Phone Numbers:

Giant A+: www.giantfood.com/aplus A+ School Rewards hotline: 1-877-ASK-APLUS
eScrip: www.escrip.com (where supporters can register themselves or update their accounts)
www.groups.escrip.com (the group page for coordinators)
eScrip Customer Support: 1-800-700-5655 for coordinators OR supporters to reach eScrip
Safeway Customer Service: 1-877-SAFEWAY for shoppers to obtain their forgotten Safeway card numbers or to correct any information in their Safeway accounts
www.backtoschools.escrip.com (10% promotion site to redeem codes or card numbers)
10% promotion recorded message: 1-877-561-8048 (updated during these promotions with critical deadline details)
www.escrip.rewardsnetwork.com (to find restaurants that participate in eScrip)
Electronic Scrip (eScrip) Facebook page to share ideas with other coordinators
Box Tops: www.btfe.com Also see the Box Tops for Education Facebook page for more tips

Collect Grocery Numbers on PTA Membership Forms and Flyers!

Below is suggested wording that PTAs can add to their Membership Forms to collect people's grocery numbers when they join your PTA. Coordinators then can register PTA members for Giant A+ and eScrip by entering these numbers along with some other info from the membership forms. PTAs should not collect people's credit/debit card numbers—instead, inform people how to add those cards to their eScrip accounts (in My eScrip). Be sure that the coordinator can obtain PTA membership information quickly to maximize your earnings!

Your grocery shopping can help <name of school>! Here are two easy ways:

Giant A+ School Rewards: The PTA will register your BonusCards for Giant's 2011-12 school program for <name of school>. You **MUST** register your cards **EVERY** school year. If you want your Giant shopping to support up to two other schools, list them below.

Giant card number (12 digits): _____ <your school> ___ School 2 ___ School 3

Safeway's school rebate: The PTA will register your Safeway cards with eScrip for <name of school>, or renew your existing eScrip account (if you signed up for this program before, you **MUST** renew each school year so Safeway continues to pay). First call 1-877-SAFEWAY if you don't know your Safeway card number, then we can register your card. If you want your Safeway shopping to support up to two other schools, list them below.

Safeway card number (11 digits): _____ <your school> ___ School 2 ___ School 3

Also have separate flyers available at your school or to pass out to anyone throughout the year. People can fill out these forms for you to register their cards. Here's an example:

Safeway and Giant Have Money for Schools!

Your Safeway shopping can earn money for <name of school> all year long. Just go to www.escrip.com to register your Safeway card, or fill out the form below and we'll register you for our school. If you already had registered your card with eScrip, be sure to **RENEW** your account at the eScrip site so Safeway continues to pay. Go into My eScrip to make any changes in your eScrip record.

Your Giant shopping can earn money for <name of school> for 5 ½ months of the school year. Giant shoppers must register their BonusCards **EVERY** school year. Register for Giant's program at www.giantfood.com/aplus, or fill out the form below and we'll register you for our school.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Safeway Club Card number (11 digits): _____

Don't know your card number? Call 1-877-SAFEWAY (any day of the week) to get it!

Giant BonusCard number (12 digits): _____

If you want to support two or three schools in addition to <name of school>, add them here:

School 2: _____ School 3: _____



Giant's A+ School Rewards (Formerly A+ BonusBucks)

At the beginning of each school year, all schools **MUST** “re-register” for the A+ program at www.giantfood.com/aplus to confirm that they want to participate in that year’s cycle again. Giant mails information to every school about A+ in August, along with the school’s A+ password. Save your school’s password—it remains the same every year! The coordinator should go to that Web site, click on “Re-Register Your School” and enter the coordinator area with the school’s Giant password to verify the info that Giant has for your school. Check the names of the A+ coordinator and the school principal, your school’s address and grade levels, and an estimated school enrollment, and make any updates, then enter this information. Once you do this simple step, your school is all set for the new school year, and Giant shoppers and coordinators will be able to register BonusCards online for that school year’s A+ cycle.

The A+ program runs for about 5 ½ months of each school year, from early October to mid-March. Giant shoppers **MUST** register their BonusCards for the A+ program **EACH** school year—all previous year card signups have been deleted from the system. People can choose up to three schools to benefit from their shopping. A coordinator can register up to 20 BonusCards at one time, to support their school, in the coordinator section of the A+ site. If families want to support more than one school, individually register their cards on Giant’s A+ site, not in the multiple card signup area. While Giant runs its A+ program, stores no longer have postcards for the company to register shoppers’ BonusCards, and they may not advertise the program throughout the cycle. Shoppers or school coordinators must register BonusCards online, or by calling the hotline number, 1-877-ASK-APLUS. Cards registered by the end of a month will receive school credit for **ALL** purchases these customers made that month! Remember this monthly deadline and try to get cards registered before the end of each month in the A+ cycle so your school earns more.

Friends or relatives who patronize Stop and Shop grocery stores in New England, New York, New Jersey and Delaware can register their Stop and Shop cards at www.stopandshop.com/aplus and select schools in our area too—Stop and Shop and Giant Food are the same company!

Giant does not allow coordinators to see who has registered for their schools. However, anyone can view the total number of registered cards for any participating school and the total amount earned. If shoppers want to support two or three schools, they should choose all schools when they register. If they later decide to update their school selections that school year, they must add **ALL** their school choices again; updates to their schools override their prior choices. The A+ site shows how much money schools have earned, with monthly updates made a few days after each month during the cycle. Giant pays schools before the end of the school year. The check is written to schools, not to PTAs; the school principal determines how this funding is used. Sometimes PTAs will work with their principals to decide how to use this money.

Giant can provide a store employee for Back-to-School Nights or other school events, which gives more visibility to this program and encourages more people to register. Contact your local Giant store manager to make arrangements. You must provide signup forms to use at your event.



eScrip (Rebates from Safeway, Restaurants and Online Purchases)

The eScrip company in California (www.escrip.com) has run Safeway's school rebate program in the "Safeway East" area (MD/VA/DC/DE) since school year 2002-03. To see if your school is enrolled in this program, go to www.groups.escrip.com Search for the school by name, zip code or city, and then click on the group's name. If the page says, "Your group is enrolled and active," that school's deposit account has been set up so the school can receive payment.

eScrip pays monthly by direct deposit to the financial account specified during enrollment. eScrip, however, can pay either to schools, PTAs, booster clubs or foundations. If your PTA will be managing and promoting this program, eScrip payment can be changed to go to the PTA's bank account (of course, first discuss this with your principal!). eScrip earnings then become PTA income--your members determine how this money is used!

The Coordinator Toolkit on eScrip's group home page describes all funding opportunities, and can be accessed without a password. Within this section, you also can find several short training videos that cover specific topics. Coordinators need their organization (group) eScrip password to get into their eScrip site, where they can see who currently is signed up for their school and who needs an annual Safeway renewal. eScrip registrations ROLL OVER into each school year; people stay registered for the school(s) that they first had selected unless they change the schools they want to support! If your school or PTA cannot locate your group's eScrip password that was sent when the school got enrolled, contact eScrip's Customer Support, 1-800-700-5655. eScrip may email the password to the person who's listed as your school's coordinator, who then can give it to the new coordinator. You may, however, need to obtain your group password by writing a letter to eScrip, on school letterhead and signed by your principal.

With your group password, update the coordinator contact for your eScrip group. Coordinators receive important program information from eScrip via email. When coordinators sign in to their eScrip sites, they can view two types of reports. The Supporter List shows who is registered for their school; the Monthly Statement report has detailed financial statements for 13 months. Coordinators can go into the My Assistant area of the site to see who needs to renew for Safeway's rebate, view (or add/update) supporters' email addresses, and see who has registered grocery and/or credit/debit cards. Coordinators must promote the eScrip program to encourage people to register or to update their accounts. They also are responsible for the archive of supporters who already had registered for their school.

Coordinators can register people who want to support only their school by using the Power Registration section on the group home page. If people want to support two or three schools, register them instead at www.escrip.com where you can designate more than one school.



Shoppers who do not know their Safeway card number first must call Safeway's Customer Service (1-877-SAFEWAY); Safeway will look up their card account and tell them their card number. Coordinators cannot call Safeway to obtain someone else's card number. Once you have a person's Safeway number, along with his name, address, phone number and email, you can register him for eScrip so his Safeway shopping begins earning money for schools.

Safeway's school program runs all year long! Shoppers' school rebates begin from the day their Safeway cards are registered with eScrip. People can register for this program at ANY time of the year. Coordinators should promote the many parts of eScrip throughout the year, using e-lists, newsletters, flyers, bulletin boards, etc. People can register their cards with eScrip only one time;

eScrip signups stay in eScrip's database and ROLL OVER into each school year. People remain listed for the same school(s) they initially had selected unless they change their school designations. Supporters can go into their accounts, in the My eScrip part of the site, to see how much their shopping has earned for their school(s) or to update anything in their accounts (change their school selections, add more grocery/credit/debit cards, change their address, etc.). Coordinators often will need to inform people HOW they can make any changes.



Annual Safeway Renewal: People who already have registered their Safeway cards must RENEW their eScrip accounts each fall so Safeway continues to pay. The annual renewal grace period is from August 1-October 31, when they can renew with no lapse in their Safeway contributions. If a working email address is in people's eScrip records, AND if they have not opted out from receiving eScrip emails, eScrip will email them several reminders to renew. People must renew each year BEFORE NOVEMBER 1 for no lapse in their Safeway contributions; renewing after that date will re-start their Safeway rebate, but no back credit can be given. Coordinators should watch the Safeway Renewal area of their sites to see who needs to renew. They also can trigger a pre-written renewal message, which will be sent to all who need a renewal if they have working emails in their accounts AND if they did not opt out from eScrip communications. Remind people to renew during the grace period by posting messages on school e-lists and newsletters. The number of people who need to renew will decrease, but not everyone who's on your supporter list will see these renewal reminders. To reach more unrenewed people on your list (including those who have chosen not to receive messages from eScrip), coordinators can send out ONE renewal message that they compose, putting all unrenewed people's emails into the BCC message field; this message also can tell supporters how they can go into My eScrip to make any changes in their accounts. If people's emails have changed, the message will bounce back to the sender. You then can try to find those people's correct emails, update their eScrip email and send out the message to them again. For people with no emails in their accounts, coordinators can alert them about renewing by calling them. No later than October 31, coordinators should renew any remaining unrenewed accounts so the contributions will continue. Renewals can happen after this date, but there will be a lapse in Safeway payment after October 31 until the day they renew.

Coordinators--not the participating merchants—must advertise the eScrip program. Shoppers will not learn about eScrip at Safeway stores, since Safeway does not run this program. Most Safeway stores nationwide participate in eScrip, including Safeways in other parts of the U.S. that may operate under other names (Genuardi's, Dominick's and Vons are all part of Safeway). Let your families know to tell friends and relatives who shop at ANY Safeway-affiliate store about the eScrip program; they can register to benefit any schools!



Many RESTAURANTS are part of the eScrip program. Find participating restaurants at this site: www.escrip.rewardsnetwork.com (search by city or zip code). Sign up for the eScrip program, register a credit or debit card, and then pay at the restaurant with that card. People who already have signed up for the eScrip program can go into their eScrip accounts to register a credit/debit card. You can find participating restaurants in many areas, nationwide, so encourage other family members and friends to support your school throughout the year!



ONLINE PURCHASE rebates are another part of eScrip. There are two ways that these purchases can bring money to schools. The simplest way is for webmasters to install the “eScrip Online Mall” link on school and/or PTA Web sites. Instructions for doing this are in the toolkit on the eScrip group home page. People starting an online purchase by first clicking on a school’s eScrip Online Mall link will bring a rebate to that eScrip group, without needing to be signed up for the eScrip program, or without having a credit/debit card in their eScrip accounts. Over 1,000 online merchants participate, including travel/hotel sites. You can see this link on the bottom left side of Northwood High School’s home page: www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/northwoodhs



Safeway 10% Goes Back to Schools promotion. This MAJOR rebate at all Safeways, which happens one or more times during the year, can raise thousands of dollars within a limited timeframe. The promotion consists of two parts, the “shopping period” and the “redemption period.” The next 10% promotion shopping period runs from August 10-September 13, 2011. If shoppers’ Safeway cards already are registered with eScrip (and their accounts were renewed for the 2010-11 school year), their extra 10% rebate from buying certain participating products automatically credits to their designated schools. ALL other Safeway shoppers who buy these products during the 10% shopping period will receive a special redemption code on their Safeway receipts during the code redemption period. Schools collect receipt codes from Safeway shoppers, and then redeem them at the 10% redemption site (www.backtoschools.escrip.com) to benefit their schools. Coordinators also should encourage shoppers who get receipt codes to *register* their cards with eScrip so their Safeway shopping automatically supports schools all year! The 10% redemption site is open for several weeks after the shopping period, from mid-September to mid-October; either receipt codes OR Safeway card numbers can be entered at that site to bring in money. More info about the upcoming promotion will be posted on the 10% site. Coordinators can recruit others to help collect redemption codes and also promote the eScrip program. Often \$1,000 bonus awards are paid to the top-earning eScrip groups after these promotions end (several area groups have received these bonuses!). Try to build up your supporter database throughout the year, and make sure that everyone is renewed, so you have more folks’ 10% earnings automatically go to your school.



eScrip has a Facebook page to help coordinators network or seek guidance. All info can be read even without a Facebook account. Simply search for “Facebook” and “Electronic Scrip (eScrip).”

Interested in raising thousands of dollars for your PTA or school from painless fundraising, but have NO VOLUNTEERS to run the programs? I’ve coordinated these (and other!) fundraisers for ten years at four different schools, and can work with your school or PTA on a consulting basis.

For additional information, contact Carol Smalls at carols@sprintmail.com or 301-585-9682.