

2019-2020 Fall Fundraising Drive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Why do we have this Fall Fundraising Drive?

Our PTSA is an organization that is completely operated and funded by students' parents and matching corporate donations. Limited public funds support core curriculum and district wide projects, but don't cover the school specific enrichment programs that we want students to experience. All the PTSA funding depends on donations from each and every parent and corporate matching every year. 100% of the donations to PTSA stay in Somerset and support numerous school-wide academic, extracurricular and social programs.

What is Fall Fundraising Drive?

The Fall fund raising drive is our one primary fundraising event for the year. Instead of asking our busy parents and students to buy or sell cookie dough, wrapping paper, or raffle tickets, we ask you to donate directly to the Somerset PTSA to help raise money efficiently, so you can focus our time and energy to what matters most to our student's education.

What is the PTSA fundraising goal this year?

Our goal is to have 100% participation! Whether you give \$10 or \$10,000, every dollar helps to fully fund next year's budget. Our suggested donation this year is \$200 per student. Our projected amount of expenses budgeted for the 2018-2019 school year is **over** \$200,000 . We hope to raise \$100,000 during the annual Fall Fundraising Drive. We then expect revenues from the biannual auction, corporate matches and other minor fundraising efforts to pay for the rest of the budget. Please help support our students by donating to our fundraiser and also please check to see if your company has a matching program. (See FAQ below about company matching programs.)

What does my donation pay for?

From budgeting perspective, the PTSA spends over \$350 near \$400 on each student. The PTSA funds a wide variety of programs for Somerset Elementary including grants for hiring six instructional aids, covering Curriculum Enhancement activities such as field trips, in-house activities, guest speakers, etc., purchasing supplies and equipment, supporting Enrichment Programs, Clubs and Community Events... and much more! Remember that at Somerset we don't nickel and dime you by asking for payments for each individual field trip or activity, except for the transportation due to liability insurance issue. Every student benefit from rich variety of the programs. Please click [the Fall Fundraising Drive](#) main page for details. For a complete PTSA budget report, please contact the Treasurer, or attend one of the General Membership PTSA meetings that take place throughout the school year.

Is my donation tax deductible?

Yes! Somerset Elementary PTSA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, so your donations are tax deductible.

What are the challenges we have?

Although the auction has been historically financially successful (net profit is \$137K in 2017), but the bulk of the proceeds have been donated by a very small percentage of Somerset's families. Due to the significant demographic change, number of bidders, average spending per bidder, and top

donation amounts are all slowly decreasing year after year. Auction itself is no longer able to generate enough revenue to fully fund PTSA's programs and services. The Fall Fundraising Drive is meant to broaden the donating base and involvement of more families. Additionally, not all families are interested or able to attend the auction, and we want to provide those families a means to contribute to the PTSA. Finally, it takes a lot of work to put on the scale of auctions we have had in the recent past. We need to diversify our fundraising mechanisms to match our volunteer resources as well.

Why everyone's participation is so critical?

Our data showed that in Fall Fundraising Drive in the recent couple of years, around 60% enrolled students, donated to the PTSA. In 2018/2019, received donation was about \$50K less than actual spending. Thanks to previous Somerset parents' generosity, PTSA had some savings in the account to pay for the deficit. Our goal is to make break even before we use up those savings. If you haven't got a chance to contribute to PTSA by making donations before because we could've done a better job to reach out to the parents, have parents informed on the PTSA financial situation and raise the awareness about our causes and efforts, please start to donate this year. Your participation is very important to help us to make a smooth transition from single and bigger traditional fundraising method to multiple but smaller fundraisings.

What if we don't reach our goal?

If we don't reach our fundraising goals through the Fall Fundraising Drive, the Walkathon, and much smaller scaled spring fundraising, we will have to make some very difficult decisions to cut from areas in the budget. It will be so sad to see some wonderful programs loved by students for years have to go.

What if we raise more than the asked amount, where will extra money go?

If funds are raised beyond our goal, then Somerset PTSA will work with staff and parents to provide recommendations on how best to put the funds to good use.

My child is in the 5th grade. Why should I still donate to this drive?

In Fall Fundraising Drive, we are donating to the current school year 2019/2020. Your child will directly benefit from the donation. Our school community has always operated on a "pay it forward" philosophy that has worked with much success. We were excited to see many 5th grade parents went to this year's auction and donated a lot to the PTSA even though their children will not get any direct benefits from their donation. Especially if your child has been at Somerset for the past 6 years, we hope that you will consider this your parting gift of gratitude for the experience your family has had at this amazing school. All children's early years at Somerset were supported by generous donations of families that have come before us. Every dollar counts and your contribution is always highly appreciated.

Do you take Employer Matching donations?

Absolutely! We rely on getting as many matched donations as possible. Company matches are a huge deal for Somerset fundraisers! If your company offers a charitable matching program, please submit the request at your place of employment so that we can receive the match. If you aren't sure if your company has a matching program, ask your human resource department, or you can also check at <https://www.matchinggifts.com/unh/>. This handy website has an extensive database of local companies. Here are just a few of the local companies that have charitable matching programs:

Alaska Airlines	Home Depot	Safeco
Boeing	Microsoft	Starbucks
Costco	Nintendo	Symetra Financial
Expedia	Nordstrom	Tableau Software
FedEx	REI	Wells Fargo

What can I do if I have questions and suggestions on budgeting priorities?

The Somerset PTSA welcomes all comments, suggestions, and questions. All families are welcome to attend any of the PTSA General Meetings (listed on the Somerset PTSA website Calendar, <http://somersetptsa.org>). If you have additional questions or feedback, please email somersetptsa@gmail.com. Our volunteers will respond to your questions at their earliest convenience.

Why do I need to support the PTSA?

For many years, Somerset Elementary School remains one of the highest ranked elementary school in the State. However, the State funding of K-12 education is never sufficient to reach education goal set by school and expectation from parents. The excellence of Somerset Elementary School depends on a super strong partnership between parents, community, and business. Decades of such consistent and deep involvement generates amazing outcomes that could only be envied by many other public schools in the *Bellevue School District*.

Much of the programs and services offered that differentiates our school from others is sponsored either in whole or in part by the Somerset PTSA. Being a non-profit organization, our budget solely relies on the donations of families, corporate matches and various grants/sponsorships. The Somerset PTSA advocates for a nurturing, friendly, educational and healthy environment for all of our children. 'Children First' is the goal of the Somerset PTSA!

Your donations, big or small, will be 100% directly invested to our Somerset Super Stars. You not only donate, but also invest in our children's future.

How do you donate?

You can drop off your donation check to the PTSA mailbox which is located in the front office of the Somerset Elementary School. Or mail it to

Somerset PTSA
 Attn: Fall Fundraising Drive
 14100 Somerset Blvd SE
 Bellevue, WA 98006

Or you can donate online at [Here](#). Whatever works for you, we will make it work.