



## BEST PRACTICES

# Get Grilling:

*Weekly IGA Cookouts Raise Nearly \$35,000 Annually for Local Charities*

*by Joe Jester*



**Joe Jester**

**Brookville IGA**  
**Brookville, IN**

**Department:** Whole store

**Difficulty:** Medium

**“** In 2018 alone, we helped **49 different organizations** and raised **\$34,600** by holding cookouts on Friday and Saturday each week. **”**

## | Strategy

In 2013, we began holding weekly cookouts at the store in an effort to raise money for local charities and organizations. We found out along the way that this was a great opportunity for us to convey the Hometown Proud message by not only raising money, but also connecting with our customers in a very personal way.

Every weekend from April to October, we host the cookouts outside near the front lawn, serving cheeseburgers, hot dogs, ribeye, chicken, and smoked pork chops. The events are so popular that we serve one sandwich every 15 seconds!

The proceeds support a variety of local organizations, including Girl Scouts, the public library, high school cheerleaders, Eastern Star, 4-H Club, Band Boosters, Masonic Lodge, the volunteer fire department, Lion's Club, United Way, Boy Scouts, Kiwanis Club, and more.

In 2018 alone, we helped 49 different organizations and raised \$34,600 by holding cookouts on Friday and Saturday each week.



# | *Why it works:*



## **FOR OUR** *Shoppers*

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### **ENJOY GOOD FOOD**

Our shoppers get to taste new flavors with an experienced grill master working the grill.

### **GAIN A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

At the cookouts, we see different people talking and getting along—Republicans talking to Democrats, defense lawyers sitting with prosecutors, neighbors visiting, etc.

### **HAVE FUN WHILE HELPING A GOOD CAUSE**

Our shoppers enjoy a good time with great food and get to support local charities and organizations at the same time.

## *Pricing*

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We split the gross proceeds, which cover the cost of food. For example, the \$34,600 we raised in 2018 is 50 percent of the gross plus 100 percent of the tips. 50 percent of the revenue covers everything except labor, which involves the set up, tear down, and grilling.

## **FOR OUR** *Store*

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### **INCREASE OUR CUSTOMER COUNT**

The cookouts bring more customers to the store.

### **PAY THE STORE FOR THE PRODUCT**

We use food from our store for the cookouts, so the store gets paid for the product.

### **SERVE THE COMMUNITY**

These cookouts provide great satisfaction in knowing that we have done everything for the community that does everything they can for us.



## BY THE **Numbers**

**52**

DAYS OF COOKOUTS

**100%**

OF TIPS DONATED  
TO CHARITY

**\$184,300**

TOTAL RAISED FOR CHARITY  
2013-2018

## **Tactics** \_\_\_\_\_

The nonprofits request a cookout in January and February of each year and I choose from the requests. We post the schedule in-store and on our Facebook page, and sometimes the local paper will write a story about the event. The event gains a lot of traction through word-of-mouth—a sandwich is served every 15 seconds—so there's no need to do additional advertising.

## **Pro Tips** \_\_\_\_\_

### **BE COMMITTED**

Ensure you have enough time to properly organize and host enough events for the charities that need them.

### **INVEST IN A GRILL MASTER**

You must have a great grill master who controls the quality. The non-profit supported that day should provide the other helpers.

### **KEEP PRICES AFFORDABLE**

We charge \$2 for burgers, \$1 for hot dogs, and \$3 for the ribeye, chicken, and smoked pork chops.

### **ADVERTISE THE FIRST EVENT**

Get off to a strong start by advertising the first event, and then word-of-mouth should keep the rest popular. We have found that attendance generally gets better every year due to word-of-mouth.