

## **How to do a Supermarket, Store or Shopping Mall Charity Collection**

**By Carole Carrick**

Before you think of doing a charity collection please consider whether you are up to it physically. Even though the majority of the time you are sitting and therefore you'd think this not strenuous, it can be very draining.

You have the added pressure of having to speak and thank those people who kindly donate to your cause, talk to some who will undoubtedly be interested in what you are doing and more importantly you'll have a good deal of people who will either have ME themselves, have a relative or friend or know someone in their street or workplace. This all takes energy to be able to relate, advise or just empathise with these people. Added to that there are the lights, noises, smells and general hubbub of crowds of people which can be a real assault to the senses, especially if you are mostly housebound normally.

Now then ... I am not trying to put you off with the above ... but if you've decided that yes, you could cope with all that even just for a couple of hours then here we go ... it's not difficult ... the hard part of deciding to do it is over!

### **1. Do a little research**

Give some thought to where would be a good place to collect in your area. It might be a local supermarket or store or you may have a shopping mall right on your doorstep. There's even the railway station or main shopping street in your town to consider.

Those two are a bit trickier to organise and I can advise on those if anyone would like to attempt them ... but a lot more people are needed for this venture as two folk in such crowded places, especially train stations, can be just lost in the hustle and bustle and you end up doing quite badly.

I personally favour the supermarket collections, as more often than not you'll be placed at the entrance/exit lobby area. This benefits the fund-raiser because people see you on entering the store and sometimes donate right there and then but more often they make a mental note to save a few coins for when they are leaving. They can't avoid seeing you really, as they are funnelled right towards you. Of course it's always their choice to donate and by being polite and friendly towards everyone is the best way to achieve good results.

I try to avoid staring people full in the face as they are walking towards the exit - I believe they find it off putting and can sometimes feel pressured into making a donation. This is NOT what you want. Most people, especially here in the UK, have an ingrained passion for donating to charities and causes, so if they want to donate that's great, if they don't then that's fine too ... at least they will hopefully have seen your poster and a little seed of thought has been planted, which helps raise awareness. Of course, there will be a good amount of people who just don't even notice you ... they are there to shop after all and with all the supermarket banners, advertisements and posters all over the store ... one more little charity stall isn't going to puncture their overloaded consciousness.

So, you've chosen which stores or supermarkets you want to ask permission to collect in. Give them a ring or pop by the Customer Information desk when you are in store and ask them:

- a) Who you should address a letter requesting a charity collection to in their store?
- b) Their full address and postcode.

Most stores have a dedicated Charity Champion or co-ordinator. Sometimes the store will have their own dedicated charity that year and be unable to help, but finding this out from the offset is best and saves you a whole load of wasted effort.

## **2. Organise a list of supermarket names and addresses**

Make a list of the names and addresses of the supermarkets you wish to apply to. Keep this information in a folder along with all application letters, thank you letters, posters and any important information you may need when you reapply to do another collection.

## **3. Contact Invest in ME**

Contact Invest in ME as you need to obtain their permission to act in their name. Invest in ME have been incredibly supportive and posted a vast amount of posters, stickers, ID tags, leaflets, Lost Voices book, business cards, fridge magnets etc. to help promote awareness and offer information to the people who may stop by your stall and wish to know more.

If you have your own collection boxes then great! If not, then Invest in ME can provide them for you. You will also need charity labels for the boxes - speak to Invest in ME about this. They can give you all the advice you need on this. If you wish to purchase your own collection boxes these can also be bought fairly cheap on eBay.

You will also need Invest in ME's bank details so you can bank any money raised. This must include the bank's name, sort code and IiME's account number. If you plan on doing regular collections then a paying in book can be organised to enable quicker transactions at the bank. To transfer payment directly to the Invest in ME bank account:

Bank: Lloyds TSB Eastleigh

Sorting code: 30-92-94

Account number: 02252685

For bank transfer from outside the UK:

IBAN: GB63 Loyd 3092 9402 2526 85

BIC/SWIFT: LOYDGB21209

There are several ways to contact Invest in ME:

EMAIL: [info@investinme.org](mailto:info@investinme.org)

ADDRESS: Invest in ME

PO Box 561

Eastleigh

SO50 0GQ

Hampshire

UK

PHONE:- 02380 251719 or 07759 349743                      FAX: - 02380 000040

or by an on-line form: <http://www.investinme.org/contact.htm>

Either Kathleen or Pia will get back to you and help you.

**Important:** They can also issue you with accompanying letters giving their permission for you to collect in their name. Include in your email/letter to Invest in ME, your list of names and contact details of the stores you wish to approach so they can provide a covering letter addressed to each one for you to include with your request.

#### **4. Contact the Supermarket or Store**

Here is a sample letter:

Address

Postcode

Telephone/contact number

Date

Dear XXX,

I live near XXX(town) and have had ME for XXX years now. Public perception and also medical opinion of this neuro-immune disorder is still confused, therefore to raise greater awareness and also to help raise funds towards biomedical research, may I request that I be able to do a charity collection in your XXX store sometime in the next three months.

Any and all money raised would go directly to Invest in ME, a national charity run purely by volunteers, family and sufferers of ME. Their aim is to build a Centre of Excellence where science can at last pin down the cause and hopefully a cure for this disabling and devastating illness, a place where those with ME will be able to go for treatment.

I enclose a letter from Kathleen McCall, Chairman of Invest in ME, stating their support of me collecting in their name.

I do hope you can help us to make the Treatment Centre a reality.

Best Wishes,

XXX

Along with your letter enclose the accompanying letter provided to you by Invest in ME or your chosen charity.

## **5. Wait and see!**

You'll undoubtedly have some success or failures with your requests. Out of the six letters I wrote recently I managed to get three collections. So I am pretty pleased with that.

On receipt of a successful application to collect in store you will have to arrange a date that is suitable for all parties involved ... yourself, your helpers if you have any and also the store themselves.

I can advise that a Friday is probably the best day to collect. Also try to keep to either the beginning of the month or the very end. Pay-Day makes people very happy donators!

Stores are normally quite busy on a Friday but perhaps your local store has a particular day where products are at reduced prices or they have items in store on special offer ... those are the days that draw extra customers so choose a day like that to do your collection.

## **6. Now you have a date ... lets get organised: Your Collection Day**

Make sure you have all your leaflets and information kept together. Dedicate a box or folder for this purpose. If you manage to collate a large quantity of literature for your stall (which you will likely do so after a while) then a small wheeled suitcase is a wonderful aid to storing and helping carry your 'stuff' to the supermarket.

Remember to take your letter from the supermarket confirming your collection. They may ask for this to ensure you are the person who requested the stall.

You'll need a cloth for the stall. A plain cloth always makes a stall look more presentable. You can use a single bedsheets for this.

The supermarket will provide you with a small table and chairs on request.

Some mini foldback/bulldog clips like these can come in really handy for attaching any posters to the sides of your table. You can find these very cheap on eBay or your local 'Pound Shop'.



Lay out your leaflets etc. so they are easily seen and try not to clutter the table too much. As people take leaflets, you can always restock the table afterwards.

Make sure you factor in rest periods for your collection. Even sitting at a stall can become very tiring so have a little walk around or pop back to your car and rest as much as you can.

Never leave the stall unattended though. This would be a perfect opportunity for anyone to take advantage of your collection tins or information. It does happen ... folk can be cruel.

Remember to take adequate bottled drinks or a flask ... keep hydrated and even take a packed lunch to see you through the day.

## 7. Photograph Opportunity

It's highly likely one of the staff members will come and ask how you are getting on and if there is anything you need during your collection. This is a perfect opportunity to ask for a photograph. Take a camera along with you just in case. A photograph can come in useful for raising awareness later on on a blog, website, in your local newspaper or on the thank you poster and letter you will send to the store explaining how much you have raised for your charity.



Morrison's



Asda



Sainsbury's

## 8. Counting and Banking the money raised

Once your collection is complete you will need to count the money. This can be quite a daunting task as there will hopefully be quite a lot of coins. The majority of people tend to put £1 or 50 pence coins into collection boxes but you will have a large amount of silver coins too. There are usually quite a few copper coins ... these are normally from children as they LOVE to place a coin in boxes.

You will need a number of plastic money bags which you can pick up free from your local bank.



You can place certain amounts in each bag:

£2 coins to the value of £20

£1 coins to the value of £20

50p coins to the value of £10

20p coins to the value of £10

10p coins to the value of £5

5p coins to the value of £5

2p coins to the value of £1

1p coins to the value of £1

NO MIXED COINS. This means you cannot put £1 coins and £2 coins in the same bag.

Once you get home, either same day or the next day (as it's not so good to keep a large amount of collected money hanging around uncounted at home) clear a space on a table and pour the whole of the money in one pile.

Separate all coins into the above amounts and bag them.

You can then easily add up how much there is in total by referring to the amounts each bag is meant to hold.

I always double check the amount being placed into each bag - mistakes are often made and it saves a little embarrassment later in the bank :)

You will undoubtedly have a surplus of all coins that you can't make up into the full amount meant for a bag. Place these into separate bags with a piece of paper inside to say how much is in there. This is more for your benefit rather than the cashiers ... it will help you add up the total better. Remember don't mix coins ... the banks get a bit annoyed at this.

Along with the bags from the bank you will need paying in forms. Something similar to this:



Remember to use some hand cleanser whilst you are counting money ... coins are dirty!!

Go to the bank with the money. Ask for the bank tellers assistance ... they are always pleased to help with filling in the paying-in form if you are unsure how to do it. The more you do this the easier it gets.

### **9. Thank you letter and poster for the supermarket noticeboard**

Now you need to let the Supermarket staff and customers know how much was made in their store. This not only a courtesy but an excellent opportunity to raise awareness again. You may want to use this sample letter or one of your own:

Address

Postcode

Date

Dear XXX,

Thank you for allowing me to collect in your XXX store today. I am happy to tell you we raised £XXX with generous donations from your customers. All the money raised is going directly to Invest in ME, a national registered charity run purely by volunteers, family and sufferers of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

We were also able to hand out a lot of informative literature to quite a number of your customers who expressed an interest and also told us that they either have ME or know someone who does. Today was above all else a wonderful way to raise awareness about this much misunderstood illness.

I enclose a printout which I hope you can place on your notice board thanking all your customers and staff for their kindness in donating to this very worthy cause.

May I also request a further collection date sometime next year? (OPTIONAL)

Thank You and Best Wishes,

XXX

Along with this do a poster saying thank you to all staff and customers with information on how much was raised, Invest in ME, the photograph you have and links to the Invest in ME website – [www.investinme.org](http://www.investinme.org) - and the Let's Do It For ME! Blog – [www.ldifme.org](http://www.ldifme.org)

### **10. Inform your charity of what you have raised and how the day went.**

Write a letter/email to Invest in ME explaining how the collection went and how much you raised and are banking for them.