

Closing the gap with everyday purchases!

Scrip (gift cards) is a great way to earn fundraising credits. With a little planning and forethought you can help close the gap when you purchase items that you would have bought anyway. Jeff and MaryLynn Fosdick are masters at using scrip. Last year they put together this 'case study' which describes their approach. Read through it and come up with a year-round plan that works for you!

Thanks Jeff and MaryLynn!

John Eggenberger

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John,



I reviewed our scrip orders for the past two years and found that we earned \$616 towards our \$900 fundraising requirement in '07-'08 and we have earned \$614 so far this year. When you add the scrip to what we contribute to the auction we go over the \$900 fundraising requirement. I believe we could earn the full \$900 using scrip if we really focused on it by using more of the 2% to 6% scrip vendors and if we purchased all of our gas using scrip.

I try to focus our scrip orders on vendors that give 7% or higher and I don't drive out of my way to use scrip for gas and I don't pay a higher gas price. I only use scrip for gas if the gas station is convenient and it has the lowest price.

For the past two years we have averaged earning the following (per year):

Hotels	\$200 or 33%
Restaurants	\$200 or 33%
Shopping	\$100 or 17%
Gas & other	\$100 or 17%
Total	\$600

Here is our approach:

- I focus on vendors who give 7% and higher
 - Hotels –
 - We earn \$200+ just from hotel stays from two family vacations each year. We use Marriott 12% for our trip to Naples, Florida and we use Best Western 12% for our trip to Mackinac (St. Ignace) each year.
 - Restaurants –
 - For fine dining we use the Main street Restaurants scrip which is good at several nice Ann Arbor restaurants (Gratzi, Real Seafood, Carson's Bistro etc.) and it earns 12%.
 - For family dining we use (primarily) –
 - O'Charley's 13% (in Belleville)
 - Applebee's 8%
 - Denny's 7% - kid's eat free on Tuesday and Saturday
 - Qdoba 7% - kid's eat free on Sunday
 - Panera Bread 9%
 - Ruby Tuesday 8%
 - Red Robin 9%
 - Olive Garden / Red Lobster 9%
 - Max & Erma's 13%
 - For fast food –
 - We try not to eat much fast food and this typically only earns 4%, but I do keep a supply on hand for road trips. I keep a variety on hand (Wendy's, Burger King,

Arby's 8%, Panera Bread 9%, Subway), so if we have to stop we can use scrip rather than cash.

- Shopping –
 - JCPenney 5% and Kohl's 4% both allow you to pay your credit card bill with scrip. We therefore, use our department credit card to make a purchase and then use scrip to pay the bill. Since you have the 25 day grace period to pay your bill you don't have to purchase scrip in advance.
 - Lowe's or Home Depot and Sears – I keep about \$100 of scrip on hand and then I try to plan any larger purchases in advance.
 - GNC 8%
- Gas -
 - I use the Marathon \$250 scrip card which pays 4% (the smaller cards only pay 3%) and I like to use the marathon station right by HVCS at the corner of Clark and Prospect, which I have found to generally have the lowest gas price in the area (perhaps excluding the off-brand's of gas which I don't use). Again, I don't drive out of my way to find a Marathon station or pay a higher price just to use the scrip, since that would offsetting the benefit of using scrip in the first place. But since we are at the school quite often anyway the Marathon station at Clark and Prospect works well if you plan in advance and fill up when you are at the school anyway.
- Timing –

The key for us are the summer month's with our two vacation's. I make a large order in May for the entire summer so some planning is required. In May 2008 I purchased \$3,600 of scrip of which approximately \$2,000 was for the two hotels.

 - You also have to plan for the Christmas break where you can't purchase scrip for about one month.
 - Otherwise scrip is available almost every week.
 - I do maintain an Excel spreadsheet to track what I have purchased and how much I have earned.
 - It is easier to use scrip if you can afford to buy the scrip in advance and sit on it until you need it. If your cash flow is tight it takes more planning, but scrip is available almost every week, so you only need to plan about a week in advance and then wait to make your purchase until you receive the scrip. I would try to keep some scrip on hand for the stores you use most often so you can take advantage of sale prices or shop at JCPenney's or Kohl's where you can pay off your credit card with scrip.
 - We watch for scrip promotions where they offer better % discounts at times during the year. For example, I believe Main street Restaurants which is normally 12% was offer at 15% last year at one point.

I hope this helps you.
Regards,
Jeff Fosdick



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