

Article By *Charles Silberman*.. Published on PE Central: 1/23/13.

Dear Charles,

I am in need of new equipment, but there is no money in the school budget. Any ideas on how I can get equipment on the cheap or paid for by others?

Broke

Dear Broke,

Below are some ideas on how to get equipment the way you are asking. Remember to ask your administration if they will refund if you buy things on your dime first. Sometimes, Principals have discretionary funds for these small purchases. Build up over time as well. A little bit over a long time equals a lot. Hope this helps

- Dollar store – I was able to do a field day on 60 dollars by purchasing what I needed at the local dollar store. Dollar stores have a wide assortment of products for a dollar. From sidewalk chalk to beach balls, bats, and other sports equipment, they have things that can help you out if you get creative. Moreover, some of the equipment I purchased for that field day, I still use in my daily teaching.
- Five and Below – There is a chain store called Five and Below. Everything is five dollars and below. I have seen and purchased several usable items for my teaching from there such as mini basketball and nets.
- Donors choose – I love <http://www.donorschoose.org>. I have obtained over \$1200 of equipment in the past year through this website. It works by matching donors with projects they want to contribute to. You simply post your ideas, give some information, and post what you want. People can donate towards it, and once it is fully funded, the equipment belongs to your school.
- Discount Chains – More and more super stores like Wal-Mart and Target are selling sporting goods for cheap. Check these or the equivalent in your area. Even grocery stores tend to carry some sports items these days. Also check online retailers. Even companies like <http://www.orientaltrading.com> have sports related items, that when bought in bulk, cost less.
- Grants - Grants are a great way to get funds for project-oriented material. Try a website called <http://www.grantwrangler.com>. You can search it for subject specific grants. In addition, see if your school or district has a healthy

school initiative that may have funds for equipment that the whole school can use towards the goal of the program. I have been able to secure \$400 in equipment through money from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation initiative in my county in the first five months of this school year alone.

- Parents/Teachers – These folks are probably your best assets. Send home a letter asking for what you need. Sometimes parents have equipment they no longer need or gets used, as do teachers who have children. Sometimes these adult's coach teams and can offer used equipment. Moreover, sometimes, they will purchase and provide what you are asking. Never hurts to ask. Always have administrator permission before doing this.
- Sports Organizations – Get in touch with local sports organizations and teams from the pros on down. You may find a program where sports teams visit your school and donate equipment. For example, on year I had the Washington Capitals at my school. They donated a brand new set of floor hockey equipment including nets, sticks, goalie pads, and pucks. I did the same thing with a local, grass roots soccer program for youth that resulted in a donation of over 30 soccer balls. In addition, you may find your local schools sport teams and youth leagues teams have equipment unused you may be looking for.

These are a handful of ideas that work. Try talking to fellow physical educators in your district for some more ideas. Best of luck!

Charles

To ask your question or comment, email me at [Charles.silberman@pgcps.org](mailto:Charles.silberman@pgcps.org), follow me on twitter (@ThePeGuy), or learn more about me at [charlessilberman.com](http://charlessilberman.com)