

Crowdfunding, from Allison Cruse

I think that the seeds for my fundraising campaign were actually planted awhile before I applied for LifeWays and officially created my Indiegogo campaign. I began talking with friends and family about the program and about my hopes for all of the amazing opportunities we could bring to children and families in our community. I talked with the parents of little ones who have been a part of our co-op efforts for many years, and new parents who were concerned about childcare/education opportunities in our town. Several people suggested raising funds and using community support to help pay for the costs of the program. It seemed like there was definite interest and support, so I applied for the Boulder LifeWays training and started looking into crowdfunding options.

I chose Indiegogo as the platform for my campaign and spent several days working on my campaign page. You can find it at <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/waldorf-inspired-early-childhood-teacher-training#/story>. I knew that I wanted the page to tell a personal story of who I was, giving readers a glimpse into our life. I also wanted to provide detailed information about where the funds would be going, the LifeWays model of early childhood care, and what I hoped to do with training here in my community. I made sure to include several pictures so that readers could better connect with the project. I also decided to add handcrafted perks as thank you gifts for contributions, mostly of homemade toys like playsilks, little gnomes and branch blocks.

Indiegogo personal campaigns run for a maximum of 60 days. Once the page was live, my husband I both shared it on Facebook and in what seemed like no time at all friends and family were sharing it as well. I think I ended up with 381 Facebook shares! I ended up raising \$5,550 (101% of my goal) in two months, with most contributions coming in at the beginning and towards the end of the campaign.

Most of my funders were friends, family and community members who were interested in the project. I was blown away by the support, and not just the financial contributions. I shed many a joyful tear in gratitude for these gifts from so many people, and thought of them often during my first week of training in May. I plan to send out regular emails to update everyone on how my training is going, what I'm learning and what I am already implementing in my work with little ones. I highly recommend using this tool to help fund LifeWays training.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I am happy to chat about my experience, and hope that it can help others find success with funding this training and making more LifeWays dreams come true!

Allison Cruse is the owner of Rainbow Valley Playgarden, a home childcare program in Alamosa, CO.