Volume 12
Number 2
April 1993
$4.20

Grassroots Fundraising Journal

In This Issue:

Writer's Guidelines

***The Grassroots Fundraising Journal** is happy to consider articles for publication. Please submit copy **typed, double-spaced** (no dot matrix print-outs, please). Please do not submit material in all capital letters.*

*Articles will be considered for publication during the nine months following submission. When an article is accepted, you will be notified in which issue of the **Journal** it will appear. The **Journal** provides three copies of published material to the author and pays $50 per article after publication.*

If you want unpublished articles returned, please provide a self-addressed envelope with adequate postage.

Subscription Inquiries

Write *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*, P.O. Box 11607, Berkeley, CA 94701.

Or call Robin Ferguson at (718) 768-3403.

Address all other inquiries to Nancy Adess, Editor, at (415) 663-8562.

Advertising Rates

Classified:

$.75 a word, minimum 10 words

Display:

(width precedes depth)

⅛ page, 3½″ × 2¼″	$ 50
¼ page, 3⅞″ × 4½″	$100
½ page, 3⅞″ × 9″	$200
½ page, 7¼″ × 5″	$200
Full page, 7½″ × 9¾″	$300

Deadlines:

February issue: December 1
April issue: February 1
June issue: April 1
August issue: June 1
October issue: August 1
December issue: October 1

Camera ready copy only. Full payment must accompany ad, unless other arrangements are made in advance.

In This Issue

The ***Grassroots Fundraising Journal*** is published six times a year: February, April, June, August, October, and December.
ISSN No. 0740-4832.

Founding Publishers
Kim Klein and Lisa Honig

Publisher and Editor
Kim Klein

Editor in Chief
Nancy Adess

General Manager
Robin Ferguson

Design
Robert Cooney

Typesetting
Archetype West

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.

Direct Mail:

Still a Winner

by Kim Klein

Acquiring donors through direct mail continues to be one of the best ways to bring a message about your group to large numbers of people at very little cost per person. The *Journal* has published a number of articles about direct mail and creating effective direct mail pieces (see sidebar). This series revisits the basic components of the direct mail package. In the last issue we explored the purpose of direct mail and ways to entice the recipient of your mail appeal to open the outside envelope. This article discusses the basic structure of the fundraising letter. In the June issue we will review effective reply devices.

The Fundraising Letter

Most people who are good at fundraising are also good writers. Since much of our work is done through

> *A fundraising letter catches attention and holds it just long enough for a person to decide to give.*

writing, a grasp of decent writing skills is essential. However, being a good writer will not automatically make you a good writer of direct mail letters, or indeed of many kinds of letters. The basic tenets of direct mail writing are not entirely the basic tenets of good writing. Before we explore how to write a fundraising letter, let's examine what the letter is and is not.

A fundraising letter is not literature. It is not designed to be lasting, or to be filed away, or to be read several times with new insights emerging from each reading. It is disposable, and it is part of a culture increasingly acclimated to disposable goods of all kinds—from diapers to cameras to contact lenses. The function of the fundraising letter, then, is to catch attention and hold it just long enough for a person to decide to give.

Keeping this in mind, whenever you sit down to write a letter (or, indeed, a grant proposal, which is basically a really long letter), first think for a minute about who you are writing to. Ask yourself these questions: Do the recipients of this letter read well? Do they like to read? Where will they receive the letter (i.e., home, office) and what are those environments like?

For example, imagine a person coming home from work, picking up the mail, figuring out what to make for dinner, making sure the kids are doing their homework, perhaps vacuuming or dusting while dinner cooks. How receptive will such a person be to your request? When will he or she even read your letter?

Think of the mood of the whole country. Working people are worried about losing their jobs, about paying their bills, about crime, health care, the declining quality of schools, pollution—to say nothing of the international scene with its daily pictures and articles about Bosnian detention camps, starving Somalians, murdered Peruvians, Haitian boat people, etc. How crucial or relevant is your message given what else is going on in people's lives and in the world?

On top of all this, your letter arrives with anywhere from one to six other fundraising letters. What will make yours the one that is read?

And finally, the recipient of a fundraising letter reads this letter on their own time, for free, as a volunteer. It is not their job to read the letter, and if the letter has its intended result, they will wind up paying money for having read the letter.

The Psychology of Letter-Reading

A fundraising letter has a very difficult job with no power whatsoever. Using letters to ask for money, whether on a mass scale or in one-to-one personal appeals requires reflecting on the psychology of letter-reading. Keep in mind three premises before you even begin to write:

1) Adults, when reading, watching TV or a movie, listening to a lecture, or even to a lesser extent listening to someone they care about, subconsciously go back and forth between two questions. The first question is, "So what?" If this question is answered satisfactorily, they move to the next question which is, "Now what?" This seesaw is a strong screening device for filtering out trivia, boring details, and rhetoric. (Until the most recent election, the cynicism and apathy of so many adults about the ability of electoral politics to create change reflects the neglect of these two simple questions by politicians and policy makers for many years.)

To be sure, what is trivial or boring to one person may be profound or life saving to another, so the answers to these questions will vary somewhat from person to person. However, details about when your organization was founded or the permutations of your organizational structure will not pass the "So what?" test, and the myriad problems that led to your current budget deficit will only bring on a fit of "Now what?" questioning. As you write your letter, imagine your reader asking at the end of each sentence, "So what? What does this have to do with me, my problems or the people I care about?" If the sentence stands up under that scrutiny, then read the next sentence while asking, "Now what?" Does this sentence offer a solution, provide more information, create confidence in the group?

How crucial or relevant is your message?

2) People have very short attention spans, particularly for the written word. A person should be able to read every sentence in your letter in six to fifteen seconds. Each sentence must be informative or provocative enough to merit using up the next six to fifteen seconds to read the next sentence.

3) More than anything else, people love to read about themselves. This is partly because of #1, the so what—now what question. "What does this have to do with me?" is an underlying question. But it also reflects a desire to be treated personally. The reader of a fundraising letter wonders, "Do you know or care anything about me?" "Why do you think I would be interested in this?" "Will giving your group money make me happier or give me status, or relieve my guilt?" "Did you notice that I have helped before?" Therefore, the letter should refer to the reader at least twice as often and up to four times as often as it refers to the organization sending it. To do this requires drawing the reader into the cause by saying, "You may have read," "I'm sure you join me in feeling," "If you are like me, you care deeply about . . ." When writing to someone who is already a donor to solicit another gift or a renewal, use even more references to what they have done. "You helped us in the past." "Your gift of $50 meant a great deal last year." "I want you to know that we rely on people like you—you are the backbone of our organization."

Of course, in the case of a form letter, the person receiving it knows that it is not directed to him or her; but at a less conscious level, there is a belief that he or she is being addressed personally. The subconscious cannot tell fact from fantasy and believes everything to be real. (That's why dreams seem very real, and why affirmations work, or how you can make a child smarter or more graceful by telling her that she is that.)

Work with those three premises as you write your letter. Notice letters that you read, and try to figure out why you take the time to read them. Notice also what parts of letters you read, and why. As a consumer of fundraising letters, you are not so different from the people you will be writing to.

The Format of the Letter

People generally read fundraising letters in a specific order: the opening paragraph (or only the opening sentence if the paragraph is too long), the closing paragraph, and the postscript. Up to 60% of readers will decide whether or not to give based on these three sentences and will not read the rest of the letter. The remaining 40% of the people will skim the rest of the letter. Only a tiny handful will read the letter all the way through.

Given this pattern of letter-reading, you should spend most of your writing time on the sentences that are most read. Write the rest of the letter to make sense if skimmed.

Think about who you are writing to.

The Opening Paragraph

Use the opening paragraph to tell a story, either about someone your group has helped, or some situation your group has helped rectify, or about the reader of the letter. There is a saying in fundraising, "People buy with their heart first, and then their head." Programs and outcomes need to be described in "people" terms (or animal, if that is your constituency). This can be done without being condescending or melodramatic. The stories should be short and they should end with something about your organization. Here are some examples:

Someone the group worked with:

> Tony and her two children, five and eight, have been homeless for two years, moving in and out of shelters. Tony occasionally gets work, but is never able to save enough to pay the security deposit on an apartment or to afford child-care while she is at work. This week, because of Homes Now, Tony and her children will move into a two-bedroom home, and Monday morning she will start a full-time job. Her children will be cared for at our daycare program.

The paragraph ends here. The body of the letter goes on to explain the philosophy of this group and a description of their work, which includes helping people find and move into appropriate housing, job placement, job training and daycare.

A situation the group helped rectify:

To some people it looked like a vacant lot, full of weeds, old tires and paper trash. Kids play baseball there and sometimes families have picnics there, but when Dreck Development proposed a parking lot, few objected. After all, it is a poor neighborhood and a parking lot would be useful to the commuters who work in the Industrial Park a few blocks away. To Joe Camereno, the lot looked like a park. He called Inner City Greenspace and asked us how to go about protecting this vacant lot. Today it is Camareno Park. How did this come about?

Spend most of your writing time on the sentences that are most read.

The opening ends here. The rest of the letter lets people know how Inner City Greenspace can help them transform vacant lots, treeless streets, and abandoned buildings into more livable community spaces.

Where the reader of the letter is part of the story:

As a resident of Rio Del Vista, you were probably as shocked as I was to learn of the toxic waste dump proposed for Del Vista Lake last year. Working together, we were able to save the lake, but now the dump is proposed for Del Vista Canyon. We've got another fight on our hands.

The letter goes on to explain how and why this town must gear up and fight this dump battle again.

The Closing Paragraph

The last paragraph of the letter tells people what to do. It is specific and straightforward:

Send your gift of $25, $50, $75 or whatever you can afford. Use the enclosed envelope and do it today.

Or,

Don't delay in responding. Your gift will be put right to work. We need it as soon as you can get it to us. Thanks.

The P.S.

The postscript tries to bring people back into the letter by telling a story or offering an additional incentive for acting immediately.

A story:

An independent study showed that the quality of our schools has improved because of Community Concern. It also showed we have a long way to go. For the sake of the children, please make your donation today.

Incentives:

We have a donor who will give $1 for every dollar we are able to raise between now and Oct. 1.

or,

We will send you two free tickets to our dance May 1, if we hear from you by April 15.

The Rest of the Letter

The rest of the letter is used to tell more stories, provide back-up statistics, describe philosophy, and stress the need for money. The letter needs to be two to three pages long so that readers get the sense that you have enough to say, and that all of the information they might want is in the letter. This length also gives you room to make the letter easy to read, with wide margins and decent-size type and space between paragraphs.

The tiny percent of response that we can expect from a direct mail appeal shows how little power the appeal has. However, appeals do educate the public, raise consciousness and plant the seed that your organization deserves to be supported. By using mail carefully, you will not only gain new donors, you will also build a network of people who have heard of your organization and might support its work. ■

Articles on Direct Mail in the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal:*

"The Art and Science of Direct Mail Copywriting," by Richard Ensman, Jr. Part One, Vol. 6, No. 2; Part Two, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1987.

"Federal Policy and Nonprofit Postal Rates," by Nonprofit Mailers Federation, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1987.

"Trading Mailing Lists," by Kim Klein. Vol. 8, No. 6, 1989.

Book Review: *Revolution in the Mailbox* by Mal Warwick. Vol. 9, No. 1, 1990.

"Twenty-Six Ideas for Multiple Appeals," by Kim Klein. Vol. 9, No. 3, 1990.

"Fundraising Appeals: Case Studies." Vol. 9, No. 4 and Vol. 9, No. 5, 1990.

"Direct Mail: The Basics," by Ken Dawson. Part One, Vol. 9, No. 5; Part Two, Vol. 9, No. 6, 1990.

"The Future of Direct Mail," by Kim Klein, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1991.

"Ten Keys to Selecting a Mailing List," by Lin Grensing. Vol. 11, No. 1, 1992.

"Building a Donor Base," by Kim Klein. Vol. 11, No. 2, 1992.

Workplace donations in 1992 were the equivalent of 41% of total foundation grantmaking.

Getting Your Share of Workplace Giving

by Beth Daley and Robert Bothwell

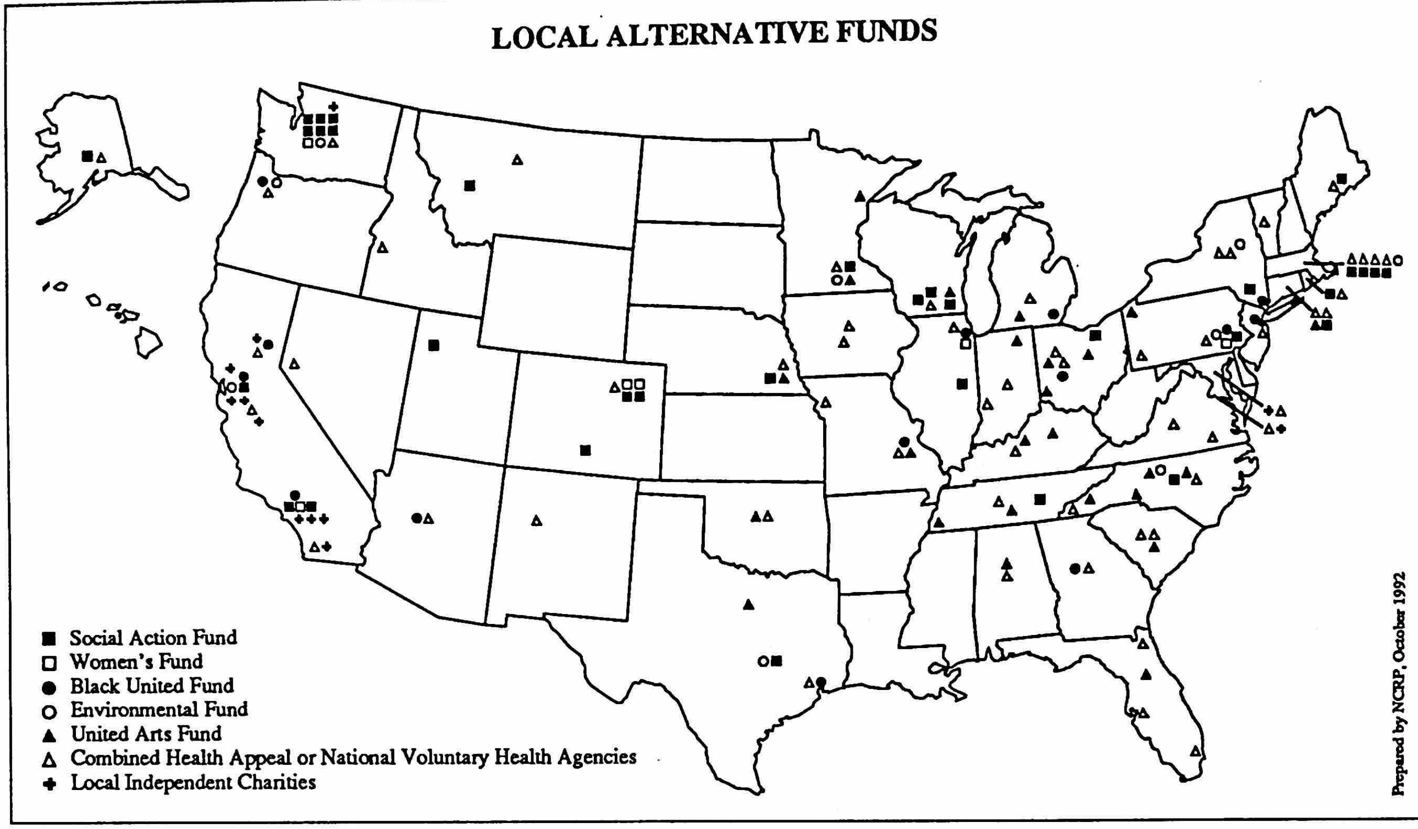
Which would be easier: Asking someone to give you $500 or asking them to give you $10 a week? Clearly the latter. That ease of asking is a key reason that workplace fundraising is being seen by more and more organizations as a new source of revenues.

Here's how it works. Once a year (usually in the fall) employers invite charities into the workplace to solicit their employees for payroll-deduction contributions. An employee who makes such a contribution will authorize her or his payroll office to deduct a certain amount of money from each paycheck to be sent to one or more charities.

The workplace provides several advantages for fundraising: employees are concentrated geographically (making it easier to reach a large number of people personally in a short time), some workers volunteer to perform the solicitation, and payroll deduction enables individuals to maximize their gifts by spreading out contributions over a 12-month period.

An estimated $3.2 billion was pledged at the workplace by the end of 1992 in payroll deduction contributions and corporate gifts, mostly to United Ways. Workplace donations in 1992 were the equivalent of 41% of total foundation grantmaking.

But $310 million of that total was raised by non-United Way charities, particularly those addressing issues of health, social action, gays and lesbians, the arts, international affairs, minorities, women, the environ-



By 1992, there were 156 local alternative funds and eight national funds.

ment and others. This was more than six times the $56 million collected in 1982. The National Committee of Responsive Philanthropy projects that by the year 2000, non-United Way charities will raise $1 billion annually.

Alternative funds are the engine driving forward the growth of workplace contributions to non-United Way charities. Alternative funds are usually umbrellas of charities organized to raise money in the workplace, although some operate like community foundations, raising money to be distributed in grants. Currently there are 156 local alternative funds (*see map*) and eight national funds.

Some alternative funds are issue- or constituency-specific. Examples include Black United Funds and environmental funds. Other alternative funds have member agencies or grantees working on a broad range of issues but often committed to similar values, such as social change.

How Can Your Organization Raise Money in the Workplace?

Back to "Go": Consider United Way. Let's return to United Ways. Any health or human service nonprofit can become a member agency of United Way. An average of 1.5 new member agencies per year are admitted to each United Way. That's some tough competition. But United Ways also give special funding to non-member agencies.

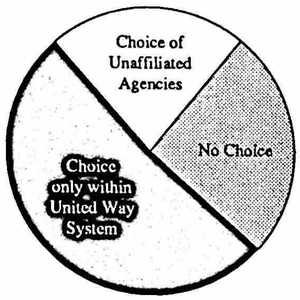
Seeking United Way funding or membership is not unlike seeking foundation funding. Important factors in the process include personal contact through meetings, completing membership applications with the needs and requirements of the United Way in mind, and being persistent in following up on your application.

When all is said and done, however, becoming a member of United Way is difficult. There are other ways of obtaining payroll deduction revenues. But be advised: there is no Easy Street to securing workplace contributions.

United Way Donor Choice and Donor Option Programs. Currently about $110 million of the $310 million raised by non-United Way charities comes from Donor Choice/Donor Option programs within United Way campaigns. In 1990, 26% of United Ways across the country allowed employees to contribute to non-United Way agencies.

If the United Way in your community has a Donor Choice program, workers usually make donations to your organization by writing in your organization's name on special "Donor Choice cards" that accompany the official payroll deduction pledge cards during a United Way campaign. Approach the largest recipients of Donor Choice in your community for advice; find out how much they receive and how they seek these monies.

United Way and Donor Choice



26% of United Ways offer choice of unaffiliated agencies, while 52% offer choice only within the United Way system.

Source: United Way America research, 1990.

With few exceptions, during the United Way campaign your organization's name will not be listed or mentioned in any materials distributed, presentations to employees or solicitations between employees. Your organization is, in essence, a write-in candidate. And you can expect about the same number of "votes" as a write-in candidate would receive—not many.

In addition, you may be prohibited by United Way from advertising during the campaign. Without advertising, payroll contributions should be dismissed as a serious source of revenues. Organizations that do advertise get back $10 for every $1 they spend in costs (brochures, handouts, advertisements) over and above staff salaries.

Despite the obstacles in Donor Choice programs, some non-United Way charities receive $5000 or more annually, a few over $20,000; most receive under $500.

If your community has no Donor Choice/Donor Option program, take heart. Non-United Way organizations in several communities have successfully organized to ask for Donor Choice programs to be implemented.

More options for unaffiliated charities. Your organization is called "unaffiliated" if it is not a member of an alternative fund or a United Way. If you are unaffiliated, few businesses allow you to participate in their charity drives beyond Donor Choice programs. However, some government charity drives allow unaffiliated charities to be listed on brochures, to receive pledges on the same pledge form as United Ways, and to participate in presentations to employees.

First and foremost is the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the federal government's $205 million-a-year charity drive—the largest workplace campaign in the country, involving over four million workers. After a 12-year battle, Congress passed legislation in 1987 making it possible for any nonprofit with reasonable standards of financial accountability to become eligible for participation in the CFC.

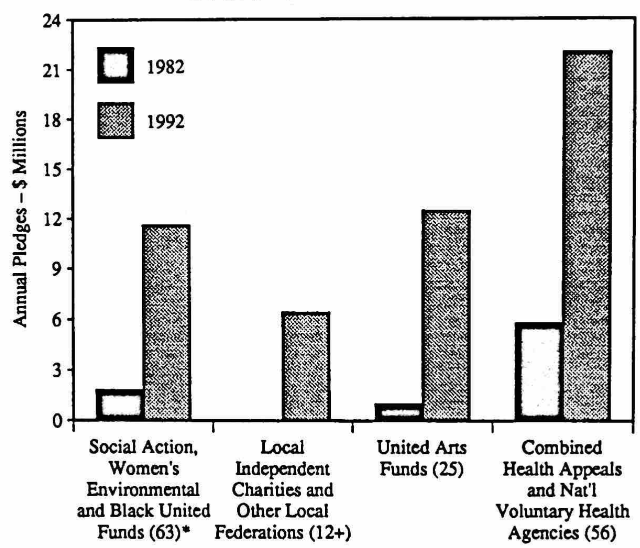
Eligibility rules, published annually in the *Federal Register,* can be obtained for free or nominal cost from the Office of Personnel Management, the branch of the federal government responsible for administering the CFC, based in Washington, D.C. A CFC technical assistance packet, including the rules, is available for $20.00 from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

Second, around 20 state government charity drives are open to single, unaffiliated charities. Some local government charity campaigns are similarly open.

Joining an Alternative Fund: Safety in Numbers

Unfortunately, because single, unaffiliated charities rarely cooperate to help shape employee charity drives, United Ways usually organize charity drives in ways that result in far more money flowing to United Ways and their member agencies than to other charities.

10-YEAR GROWTH: WORKPLACE CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL ALTERNATIVE FUNDS



*( ) Number of active funds Fall 1992. Prepared by NCRP, October 1992

However, across the United States charities have banded together into umbrellas known as alternative funds. If United Way isn't for you, then investigate joining a local or national alternative fund. There are 164 alternative funds, 156 of which are local.

Each fund is organized somewhat differently with membership committees, board chairs and fund directors holding varying degrees of power and influence within a particular fund. Nevertheless, these funds do accept new members and one must approach the process of seeking membership in a political way as was advised earlier in seeking United Way membership. This doesn't mean Democrats and Republicans here—just people politics and local community politics.

One of the most important things to learn from a fund are its expectations for a member organization. Some Combined Health Appeals (CHAs) work in partnership with United Ways. Their members' primary responsibility is simply to participate in the usual board of directors and committee meetings.

But other CHAs, social action funds, women's funds and environmental funds work very differently. Their member agencies not only meet the normal board/committee meeting obligations, they also bear the full burden of seeking access to new employers (a very demanding, ongoing task) and of planning and orchestrating the actual solicitation of employees in workplaces (this task is also demanding). This requires commitment and solid work for most alternative funds.

Black United Funds usually operate on a very different basis than other alternative funds. They are not federations; they have no member agencies. There is, however, plenty of work, just like at the other alternative funds.

In a broad sense, United Way does it for you, but alternative funds do it for themselves. This is a critical difference when one considers joining United Way or an alternative fund. Those who are part of alternative funds generally feel more as if they are masters of their own fates.

When None of the Prior Options Are For You, What Can You Do?

As should be clear thus far, obtaining payroll deduction contributions isn't a piece of cake; yet no form of fundraising is. It all involves research, planning, much work, follow up and persistence. But the options described so far are less demanding than what is about to be suggested.

When none of the prior options are suitable or available, a group can still obtain payroll deduction contributions by organizing its own alternative fund. Those who have ever organized anything know already that this option will not be easy. Nevertheless, those who've done it now look back with great pride on their role in creating new community institutions that raise money for their favorite causes.

Moreover, because employee contributions to non-United Way charities are currently growing 5 to 6 times

Organizations Providing Technical Assistance to Begin Alternative Funds:

Environmental funds:
Environmental Support Center
Jim Abernathy, Executive Director
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 340
Washington, DC 20009
202-329-7813

Black United Funds:
National Black United Fund
Bill Merritt, President
50 Park Ave., #958
Newark, NJ 07102
201-643-5122

Combined Health Appeals:
CHA of America
Wade Wright, Vice President, Public Information
1745 Old Spring House Land, Suite 413
Atlanta, GA 30338
404-936-0362

United arts funds:
American Council for the Arts
Amy Segal, Director, Coalition of United Arts Funds
1285 Avenue of the Americas, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10019
212-245-4510

All other types of funds:
National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy (NCRP)
Kevin Ronnie, Director of Field Operations
2001 S Street, NW, Suite 620
Washington, DC 20009
202-387-9177

faster than United Ways, the future looks bright.

What are the top considerations before undertaking the organization of a new alternative fund? Alternative funds usually gain access to government employees before they turn to private corporations. So, a fundamental consideration is the size of the base of government employees in your community—at all levels. A minimum base of 25,000 government workers is essential for the success of starting most alternative funds.

However, arts funds and some Combined Health Appeals, because of the high-powered business people they attract to their boards, can start accessing corporate charity drives immediately. Therefore, one could organize an arts fund or CHA in communities with as few as 25,000 total employees, regardless of how many government employees there are.

Groups in communities that meet these base criteria are faced with an organizer's challenge. They must identify a solid core of seven or more individuals to function as a sponsoring committee, representing up to 15 organizations. Each person must routinely spend 10 hours per month in organizing the new fund. Is there a spiritual leader (or two) in the potential group—someone who has the vision, who will attend every meeting, rally the troops, coordinate with outside groups? Without this energetic visionary, the effort is doomed from the start.

You will need seed money to hire part-time staff to assist or lead the committee. Office space, telephone and postage are also needed. In all, $4,000 to $30,000 will be required for the first year, depending on free resources available, staff salaries required and the local standard of living.

These challenges are formidable on their own. Yet the one factor that makes organizing an alternative fund even tougher is that most funds are federations. Rather than simply raising money and hiring staff, as one would do initiating any nonprofit organization, one also has to persuade already existing organizations to define a common goal and work towards it. This is like organizing a campaign to change public policy, or sometimes like organizing an election campaign for public office.

Of course, for some organizations this coalition building is a routine fact of their lives. Organizing a new alternative fund would be simply another variation of what they've already done. But for others, coalition building—getting people with diverse skills and diverse-size egos working in harness—is a genuine challenge.

If the challenge is appealing, then see the accompanying boxes for sources of further information about organizing a local alternative fund. ◘

Beth Daley is Assistant Director and Robert Bothwell is Executive Director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy.

Recommended reading from the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy:

Charity in the Workplace, 1992; Fall, 1992. 40 pp. $15

Combined Federal Campaign Technical Assistance Packet; 1992. 79 pp. $20

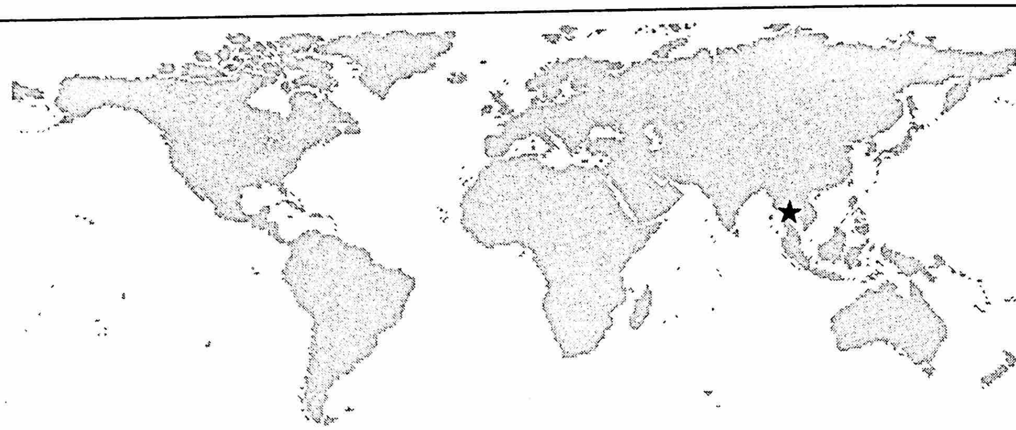
The National Directory of Alternative Funds; 1993. $5

On the Effects of Different Types of Workplace Campaigns on Employees Total Giving and Giving to United Way; 1988. 15 pp. $15

United Way's Donor Choice: Who Benefits?; Winter, 1992. 20 pp. $15

Workplace Fund Raising: A Primer for Individual Charities; 1993. 28 pp. $20

All publications are ½ price to *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* subscribers.



KIM KLEIN: REPORT FROM THE ROAD

January 10, 1993. Stephanie and I have now been working and travelling in Asia for nearly three months. This report covers our experiences in Indonesia and Thailand.

If money were no object, I would love to have an international gathering of small NGOs (non-governmental organizations, as nonprofits are called outside the US), regardless of the issue they work on. The goal of the meeting would simply be for people to talk with one another and get rejuvenated by the amazing work being done all over the world by tiny organizations. Of course, if money were no object, I wouldn't have a job and there wouldn't be small struggling grassroots groups, so my description will just have to do for now.

Indonesia

In Indonesia we conducted a three-day workshop in a small mountain town called Kahirang, outside of Yogyakarta on the island of Java. About sixty people attended, representing thirty to forty organizations. NGOs are divided into two types in Java—those that do social service and those that do advocacy, organizing or any development work. The social service groups tend to be older and more mainstream. Like other NGOs, they are funded privately and are not part of the government. These social service groups do important and sometimes potentially controversial work—helping single mothers and pregnant teenagers, caring for and advocating for the disabled, running orphanages, clinics and hospitals. But by identifying only as "service" groups, they are not considered to be NGOs by the Indonesian government; as a result they enjoy an easier time doing their work and avoid the problems of NGOs in this country (read on).

The term NGO in Indonesia is only applied to social change groups. This is because the government of Indonesia is opposed to the existence of NGOs, feeling that they promote instability and anti-government feelings. NGO work is closely monitored by the government. Every meeting has to be reported to the authorities and a member of the police force has to be invited. In addition, a "spy" from the government may also be present. In the case of our workshop, a policeman was invited and his way paid (also a stipulation of the law). The NGO gives the police the money to come to the meeting; sometimes they just keep the money, as in our case, where there was no uniformed presence. As you might imagine, the presence of police at every meeting has a chilling effect on discussion. We had been warned not to say anything radical and not to criticize any government (our own, theirs, or any other) or any government policy or procedure. Indonesia's government fears communism with a fervor reminiscent of the '50s in the United States and sees NGOs as the breeding ground for a communist movement.

This affects fundraising in many ways. Getting the word out about your group—through written materials, reports, press releases—has to be done in a kind of doublespeak, read-between-the-lines style. In addition, it is almost impossible to get a charity tax status, so there is no tax incentive for giving. All gifts have to be reported and gifts over a certain amount (which some people said was $1500, but we could not get clarification on this) incur a tax on the *giver* in addition to whatever income tax they may have already paid. Except for the police presence, the secrecy and code names for groups and fear many people feel being associated with the NGOs reminded me of the problems gay and lesbian groups have often faced in the United States. Of course, I wouldn't say that to this crowd for fear of getting our hosts in trouble.

So what are these subversive, nefarious and dangerous groups doing? Many are setting up economic development projects so that people can sell handicrafts, woven materials and other cultural items. Some assist villagers to get clean running water by digging wells or to get poultry, dairy and other agricultural projects up and running. Adult literacy, school drop-out prevention and day care centers form a part of many people's work.

Many of these groups do have other motives than simply helping villages or individual artisans. They help with union organizing, for example, and they teach people to read so they can understand their land rights and other legal rights. Providing income for women through economic development projects gives women more choices about leaving abusive husbands, having fewer children, or not getting married at all.

The main fundraising technique that these groups will be able to use is personal face-to-face solicitation of trusted friends. Expanding that circle of trusted people will be how they build their donor base. At the moment, these groups are very dependent on overseas funders such as Oxfam, CUSO, Bread for the World and the like. Many foreign governments also provide funding. All of these sources are facing their own financial difficulties and run risks of being asked to leave Indonesia for their funding choices. Major panic had gone through the NGO community just before we arrived because the Dutch government had been asked to leave and cease funding due to their support of a legal service program (like Legal Aid in the United States). This left several organizations with greatly reduced funding.

Many changes in the legal structure of NGOs and the government's attitude toward them will have to take place in Indonesia before full-scale grassroots fundraising can really occur.

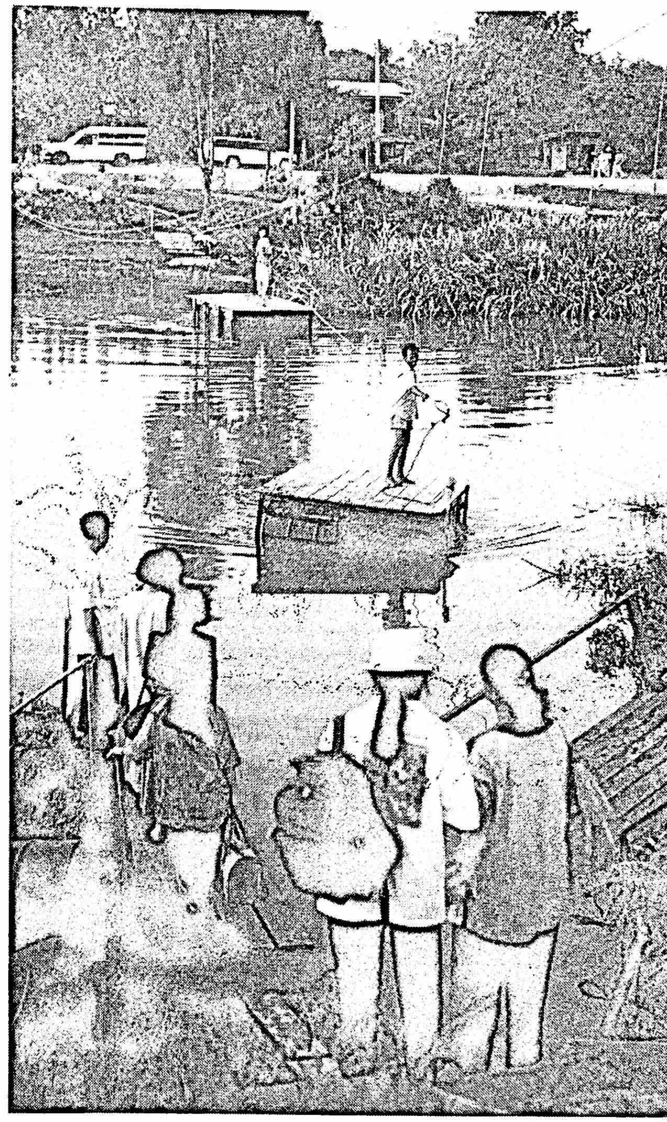
Thailand

The situation in Thailand for NGOs is much easier than in Indonesia. Our three-day workshop in Thailand was held in a lovely, rustic monastery outside Bangkok. To get there we took a bus that let us off on a dirt road next to a wide canal, which we had to cross on a raft. The raft was a few boards nailed onto two oil drums. You pulled yourself across the water by heaving on a rope strung across the canal. In this way, groups of four and five, with luggage, ferried across.

Once there, Stephanie and I shared a small hut on stilts, whose furnishings were limited to two mats on the floor and a mosquito net. The bathhouse, about a five-minute walk away, was communal. A long trough of water in a cement-floored room, equipped with buckets, was the "shower." Eastern toilets and no toilet paper completed the facility.

Our workshop was held beneath a building supported by stilts. This open-air atmosphere was very nice and allowed us constant exposure to the beautiful rural setting. Several dogs that roam the grounds seemed to enjoy sitting in our class. Every so often they would fight, forcing a brief class recess while someone threw water on them and got them calmed down.

Thirty people representing about twenty groups attended this workshop. The class was very enthusiastic and eager. We had a wonderful time and felt certain that these groups will be able to implement many of the fundraising ideas we presented. Many had already used small mail appeals and special events and some had even received large gifts.



An unusual way to get to a fundraising workshop, Bangkok, Thailand, December 1992.

Most of these groups work on environmental issues or economic development in rural villages. One of the more interesting groups was "North Net," a network of six NGOs working in small rural villages in northern Thailand. One of their projects is an effort to stop a lignite mine (a form of coal) at a site where a village has existed for over 200 years. The mining company has government permission to move the villagers but they don't want to move. The mining company "owns" the land the village sits on because they bought it from the government. The villagers do not have legal title to the land, since up to now villages have assumed ownership by virtue of possession. But the government says it owns all land not owned by an individual and can sell it if it so desires.

North Net is unclear how they will proceed to save this village, but they have already saved another village from having the forest surrounding it—on which they depend for wood, grazing, water and so forth—clear cut by a logging company. The key ingredient, says the North Net organizer who attended the workshop, is to get the villagers to stand together and stick by each other. If the villagers refuse to leave, so that they would have to be picked up bodily and taken away, she thinks the government will revoke the land title rather than risk the outcry that would follow.

Besides environmental concerns, several groups work on issues around prostitution. Thailand has over 200,000 child prostitutes. Many of these children (aged 7 to 15) are recruited from poor hill tribe villages. A brothel owner will give parents an "advance" on the services of their daughter. She leaves the village to work in a brothel and the first money she earns pays back the advance. After that, she is free to send money she earns home. Many families see this as their only way out of grinding poverty and thousands of prostitutes (children and adults) use their earnings to support their families. The NGOs working on this issue work on several fronts: education about the reality of prostitution, enforcement of laws against child prostitution, and providing work options to women wanting to get out of prostitution.

In both Indonesia and Thailand (one 80% Muslim and the other 90% Buddhist, respectively), the majority of individual giving goes to religion. As in the United States, where the most money given away by individuals goes to religion, people in our class from non-religious organizations found it difficult to believe that this pattern reflects who asks for money more than anything else, and that people give to religion out of habit more than from any other motive. The fact that seemed to generate hope in our classes was the United States study by the Independent Sector that showed that 94% of people in the United States who give to secular causes describe themselves as "religious or spiritual." People who give to religion will continue to give there, but may expand their giving to include other groups.

In my next report I will look at the universal dislike of asking for money that spans cultures and offer some possible causes and cures. That report will focus on our visit to India and Bangladesh. ◘

Back Issues

VOLUME NINE

Number 1 (February 1990): How to Do a Houseparty; The Technique of Soliciting Funds; Guidelines for Lobbying; State of the *Journal*; Profile of a Major Donor; Book Review.

Number 2 (April 1990): Moving Up to the Big Gift; Feeding the Hungry: Kentucky Harvest; Spring Cleaning; Hope Despite the Times; Book Review.

Number 3 (June 1990): Setting Up the Major Gift Meeting; The Zen of Grant Writing; 26 Ideas for Multiple Appeals.

Number 4 (August 1990): Early History of Women in U.S. Philanthropy; Beyond Board Bashing; Three Late Summer/Early Fall Fundraising Strategies; Fundraising Appeals.

Number 5 (October 1990): Black Women in U.S. Philanthropy; Direct Mail Fundraising; Time Management Tips; Fundraising Appeals; Publication Review.

Number 6 (December 1990): Raising Money for a Consortium; Direct Mail Fundraising, Part 2; Advisory Boards: No Miracle Solution; Philanthropy in 1989.

VOLUME TEN

Number 1 (February 1991): Identifying Prospects, Part 1; Protecting Volunteers; Ten Years of the *Journal*; Fundraising Appeals; Book Review.

Number 2 (April 1991): Identifying Prospects, Part 2; Inspirations in Fundraising; Holding on in Hard Times; The Effect of the Gulf War on Fundraising; Profile of a Major Donor; Book Review.

Number 3 (June 1991): Getting Ready for Planned Giving; The Future of Direct Mail; Book Review.

Number 4 (August, 1991): Getting Started in Planned Giving, Part One; Fundraising Events in a Small Town; Profile of a Major Donor; Fundraising Books for Religious Congregations.

Number 5 (October, 1991): Getting Started in Planned Giving, Part Two; How to Make Budget Cuts; Book Reviews.

Number 6 (December, 1991): Introducing Your Planned Giving Program; 10 Action Steps for Board Members; From Rags to Riches in Only Three Years; Pancakes for Profit.

VOLUME ELEVEN

Number 1 (February, 1992): Essential Ingredients in Planning Fundraising; 10 Keys to Selecting a Mailing List; Book Reviews; State of the Journal.

Number 2 (April, 1992): Building a Donor Base; How to Run a Multi-List Mailing Party; A Small Town Tackles a Big Project; Book Reviews.

Number 3 (June, 1992): The Thank-You Note; Building Multi-Racial Organizations; Underwriting; Profile of a Mentor: Hank Rosso.

Number 4 (August, 1992): Voluntary Fees for Service; Keeping Track of Information (Part 1); Child-Powered Fundraising; Why Good Fundraisers are Never Paid on Commission; Profile of a Major Donor.

Number 5 (October, 1992): 28 More (and Easier) Ways for Board Members to Raise $500; Some Straight Talk on Corporate Funding and Community Organizations; Everyone Wins at Our Fundraiser; Profile of a Major Donor; Report from the Road.

Number 6 (December, 1992): Budgeting for Fundraising; Corporate Philanthropy; Keeping Track of Information, Part 2; Gifts with Strings Attached; Book Review.

VOLUME TWELVE

Number 1 (February, 1993): But Will They Open the Envelope; Seeking Corporate Support; The Bowl-a-Thon; Profile of a Major Donor Couple; Report from the Road.

ORDER FORM

All back issues are $4.20 each.

Quantity	Volume & Number	Price	Total
	Getting Major Gifts	$10.00	
	The Board of Directors	$6.00	
	Annotated 9-Year Index	$4.00	
	Complete Set of Available Issues	$125.00	
	TOTAL ENCLOSED		

Send to:

Name ______________________

Address ______________________

City ______________________

State ____________ Zip ____________

Subscriptions

I want to subscribe:

☐ **New subscriber:** ☐ One Year ($25) ☐ Two Years ($48) ☐ Three Years ($70)

☐ **Renewal:** ☐ One Year ($25) ☐ Two Years ($48) ☐ Three Years ($70) (Canada & overseas add $7)

Change of address: enclose mailing label and write new address below:

Name ______________________ Organization ______________________

Address ____

(Please allow six weeks for processing new subscriptions.)

Make checks payable: ***Grassroots Fundraising Journal.*** Send to: P.O. Box 11607, Berkeley, Ca. 94701

Grassroots Fundraising Journal
P.O. Box 11607
Berkeley, CA 94701

Address Correction Requested

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oakland, CA
Permit No. 298