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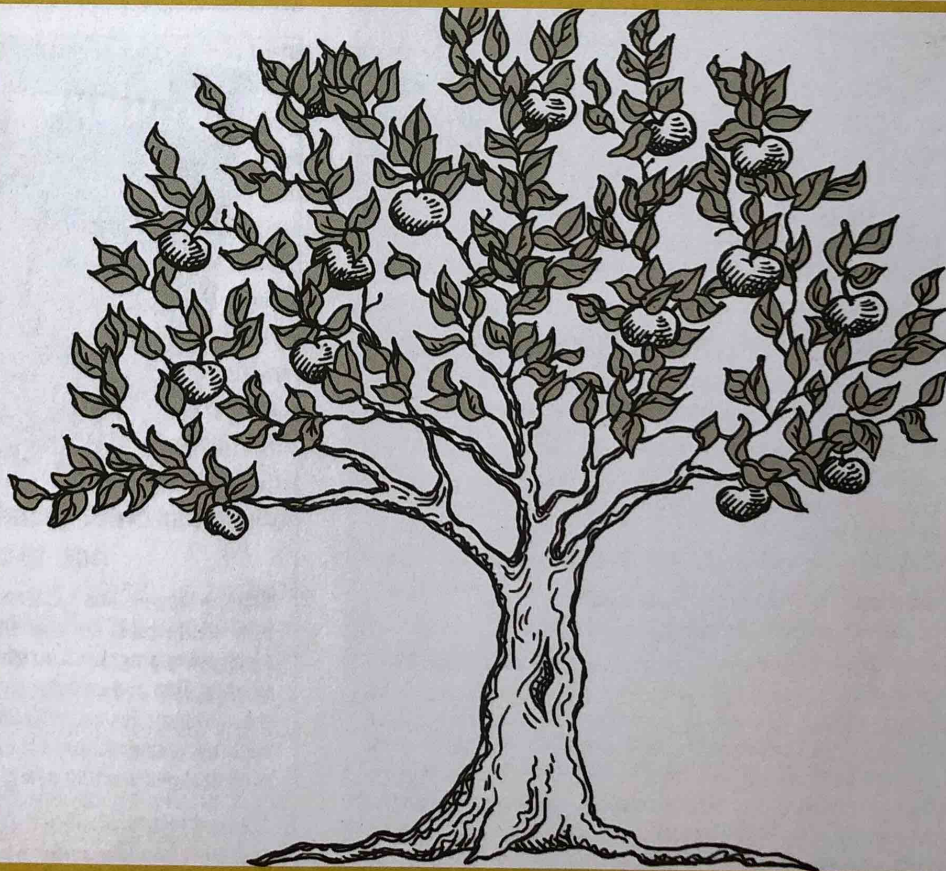
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Diversity into
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Donor Program**

**Raising Money for
Progressive Arts and
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**One Organization's
On-line Donation
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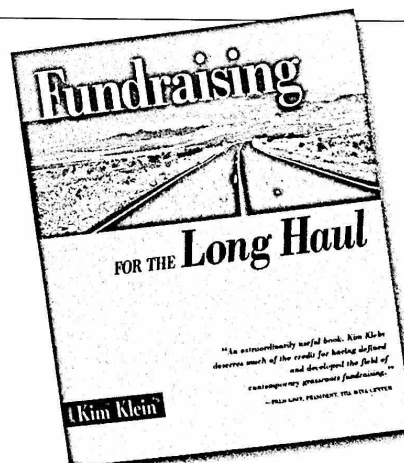
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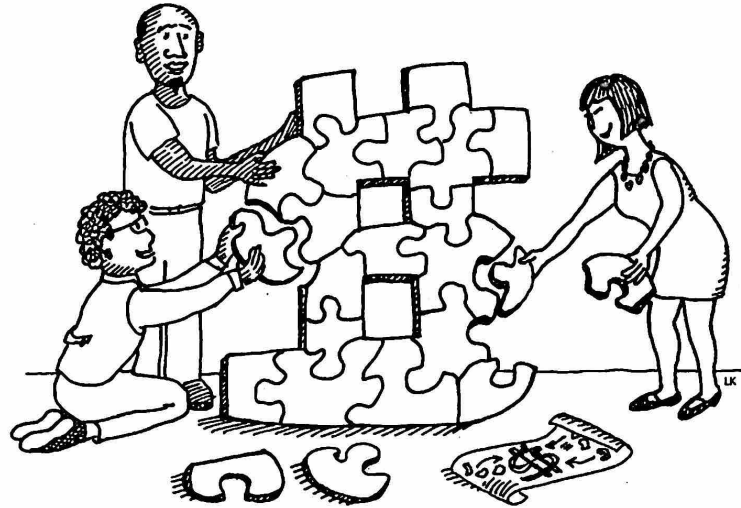
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Building Cultural Diversity into Fundraising

by Kim Klein

Many years ago, when I was living in Brooklyn, NY, I was asked to do a fundraising training for an interesting coalition that had formed in the wake of a beating of a Korean merchant. The alleged attackers were Haitians who were responding to the merchant's accusation that he had caught a Haitian woman shoplifting. Whatever was true specifically about that incident never became known, but in the days that followed the attack there was a great deal of anger and hostility vented verbally and physically. Korean merchants operating in primarily Caribbean neighborhoods were accused of price gouging, of never hiring local people to work in their stores, and of controlling businesses in neighborhoods they did not live in. In turn, merchants accused the neighborhood residents of thievery, vandalism, and being unwilling to work.

In this welter of race and class dynamics, cultural misunderstanding, and frustration, a Korean minister and two Haitian neighborhood activists called a meeting to try to diffuse the anger and violence. A group formed and, several meetings later, I was asked to help develop a fundraising strategy.

The meeting I went to had about 25 people in attendance. The first part of the meeting was to review work that had been done by various committees, then the group was to break up into their committees. I would meet with the fundraising committee. Of the 25 people, eight were from

Haiti or Jamaica. Five were African Americans, seven were Korean, including three merchants, and the remaining five were white, of Italian or Irish descent. Thirteen of those present had been born in the United States, including four of the white people.

The strategy of the group was simple, even if its implementation wasn't: get people talking to each other. Through encouraging church exchanges, going into schools, and organizing town meetings, they hoped that a lot of frustration would naturally dissolve as people understood each other better. None of the organizers thought their work would actually solve the problems the community was having, but all felt it couldn't hurt.

The early part of the meeting proceeded smoothly and the chair called for the group to break into committees. He introduced me as a fundraising expert and asked the fundraising committee to meet in Room One down the hall. I walked down there and waited for the fundraising committee to join me.

I was taken aback when the only people who came to the meeting were the five white people. When I asked how the committees had been chosen, a woman responded that the chair had made assignments. She went on to say that since she had only been in America a few months (she was from Italy), she really knew nothing about fundraising and had never done anything like it in her country. She thought

she might have been better on the education committee, since she was a schoolteacher.

After some discussion of how much money needed to be raised (\$10,000), in what time period (over the next six months of the school year), for what (books, videos, and speaker fees), three other committee people chimed in that they had also never done any fundraising. I decided to find the coalition chair and suggest we reconvene the whole group and ask for volunteers for the fundraising committee.

To raise a small amount of money for a short-term project like this seemed a good opportunity to also use fundraising to further the goals of the group. I could envision some block parties, door-to-door canvassing inside some of the big apartment buildings, and possibly a raffle to involve merchants in donating prizes and in selling tickets.

The chair called the group back together and I explained what I had in mind and asked for volunteers. One person from the original committee raised her hand, followed by one Haitian, two African Americans and the chair, who was Korean. The chair then asked if anyone else wanted to switch committees. There was minimal shuffling — the original fundraising committee fanned out among education, relations with police, and church outreach.

We went back to meeting. I now had people on the committee who had done a lot of fundraising. My ideas were rejected in favor of two events, which ultimately raised more than \$13,000. The first was a barbecue contest. Those entering paid \$5 to bring their entry, which had to be enough to feed 30. People paid \$15 to eat. Given that barbecue is a favorite food of all the ethnic groups involved, it was a great event. People brought all kinds of food and set up booths. It was a multi-block party that lasted all afternoon and into the late evening. The second event was a second collection at a number of churches.

Although this group's situation was more dramatic than many because the group was so diverse to begin with, the tendency for people to see fundraising as the prerogative or talent or job of a certain group of people, usually defined by race, age, and class, is not uncommon. This organization defined it by race. Sometimes, people assume not that a certain group cannot do fundraising, but that there is a particular kind of fundraising they would be good at. People under 25 are often given the task of organizing a special event or selling a product to make money. Upper-class or wealthy people are always thought to be better at face-to-face solicitation, even though having money does not give anyone skill at raising it. Planned giving is often directed at older people, even though none of us knows when we are going to die, and some planned giving strategies can benefit a wider age margin than is often realized.

Why Diversity Matters in Fundraising

There are two reasons to pay attention to cultural diversity when planning for fundraising: First, the world, and the United States as one country in the world, is culturally diverse. Second, you will raise more money if you take the fact of this diversity into account.

Though it is nearly a cliché these days to say that the world is diverse, I see evidence every day of people's beliefs otherwise. I work almost entirely with organizations that are defined as "out of the mainstream." They are working on a broad span of issues, including environment, public education, health, rent control, peace, foreign policy, accessible mass transit, and so on. Why these issues are "out of the mainstream" has led many of us to ask, "Where is the main stream, anyway?"

The types of organizations I work with cover the gamut of rights and liberation struggles, including those for the poor, the physically or mentally challenged, gays and lesbians, seniors, youth, women, and people of color. Any sharp-eyed reader will have noticed something about this list, which is that it includes the majority of people. Most people in the world are people of color; in several states, including the one I live in (California), so-called minorities are the majority of the population. More than half the people in the world are women and the vast majority of people live in poverty. What we call the "Third World" would be more appropriately called "the majority world."

Even in cities and towns that are racially homogeneous, there are vast age spreads, there are cultural differences between neighborhoods, there are gay people and straight people, and so on. The point is obvious: to be a viable non-profit with more than a handful of members requires attracting people of all types because that's how the world is. For many of us, understanding this fact requires a shift in what we think, often involuntarily, is the norm.

For example, a board member of a group I am working with recently announced, "We have recruited four new board members — one is a woman and one is Asian." Another board member said, "What are the other two, chopped liver?" This remark made people realize how we often think of people — albeit unconsciously: the norm is white, straight and male, and everyone is defined against that norm. As another board member pointed out, "You probably wouldn't announce that you had four new board members and two were white men." Assumptions about what is the norm are pervasive in our society. School curricula talk about "authors" and "Black authors." A newspaper recently announced a conference for journalists, with a special panel by "disabled journalists."

Shifting our core assumptions about the world will not

only put us in closer touch with reality, it will also enable us to raise more money! If the majority of us are actually demographically members of various "minority" groups, then we will want to tailor our message accordingly. The evidence about who gives away money follows closely the pattern of who makes up the majority of people. It helps to know that, of the three non-government sources of funding — individuals, foundations and corporations — individuals give away the lion's share of charitable dollars. For all the time that the fundraising field has been keeping records, which is now more than 60 years, 85–90% of money given away each year is given by individuals. Only about 10–12% of funding comes from foundations and corporations, and of course, the source of most foundation assets is the accumulated wealth of an individual or family.

Who are the individuals giving away money — in 1999, more than \$190 billion? Most of us. Seven out of ten adults give away money. When we look closely at who these people are, we see that last year, as in most years, about 83% of donors were from households with incomes of less than \$59,000. These donors are fairly evenly divided by education, with a little more than one-third of them (37%) being high school graduates, 22% having some college education, and 25% being college graduates. The remaining 15% have less than a high school education. Most donors were employed full-time (54%), though some worked part-time (11%), and about one-third were unemployed. Slightly more women than men made contributions, and all races were represented as givers. (These statistics are taken from *Giving USA*, published by the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel and *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, Vol. 2, published by the Independent Sector.)

Planning with Diversity

Here are some examples of what fundraising looks like in organizations that plan around the diversity present in their board, staff, volunteers, and constituents.

- An Oakland group organizing on issues of police accountability, lead paint in schools, and toxic dumping — all issues affecting poor neighborhoods in the city — has a fundraising dinner every year. The members of the organization make the food and people pay \$15 to attend. Because the membership is quite multi-cultural, the food always includes barbecued ribs, potato salad, roasted chicken, egg rolls, tamales, rice and beans, lasagna, and several kinds of dessert. The group puts together an adbook for the dinner and sells ads not only to merchants in the neighborhoods in which they work, but also to other nonprofits, unions, and a wide circle of friends who have started coming to the dinner because of the food. With 200 to 300 people attending the dinner, plus the proceeds from the adbook, this group

nets from \$5,000 to \$10,000 from the dinner annually. More than 50 people work on the dinner every year.

- A program for battered women in a rural community started a major donor program by creating categories of donors based on what people had in common. When someone became a major donor with a minimum gift of \$100, they were invited to join one or more of various clubs. The clubs included Local Merchants, Vacation Homeowners, Hikers, Gardeners, Retirees, Fisher People, High School Jocks, and Odd Ducks. The latter was a self-identified group of writers, artists, musicians and other people who felt that they didn't fit in anywhere. Only three people were needed to start a club, and each club member got a certificate produced by computer graphics program one of the Odd Ducks owned. There were no other benefits for being part of these clubs, except a certain camaraderie. Sometimes the organization invited people from all the clubs to get-togethers. Of course the money from these major donations was important to the group, but so was the feeling that all kinds of people are committed to stopping violence against women.

- An environmental organization working in very-low-income and primarily immigrant neighborhoods had a lot of trouble getting their membership drive off the ground. Membership dues were set at \$15. They were able to raise money from a large number of people, but they raised almost no money from the neighborhoods they served. Thinking that the dues were too high, they lowered them to \$10 and later to \$5. Neither move helped generate more local membership. Finally, they brought two current members onto the membership committee; they explained that people didn't need membership dues to be lower, but they needed a way to pay them without having to use a check, since few had checking accounts. The organization set up a system where one of the members who owns a store agreed to take in the contributions and give receipts every Saturday. People brought cash and got a membership card and a receipt. Most people paid \$15, and soon a high percentage of those living in the neighborhoods had joined.

- A health clinic focusing on primary care and family planning and delivering more than half of their service to uninsured people does an annual phone-a-thon to their lapsed donors and to a list of people they think would be interested in their work. One year, the teenage daughter of a board member showed up to volunteer and ended up being the highest income-generator of the evening. When the coordinator asked what her secret was, she explained that she and her friends have raised so much money to be able to do the things they want to do — including going to Cuba on a student exchange, taking the school choir to a competition in New York City, and her Sunday School class to

Greece—that she feels very comfortable asking for money. The coordinator asked if she would come to the second night of the phone-a-thon and bring some friends. She and six friends came the next night and raised more money than this phone-a-thon had ever raised before.

What Have We Learned?

Are these stories about diversity? Yes and no. They are actually a lot about common sense, which I believe is fundamental to building a diverse fundraising base. Based on these and other stories, I suggest the following template for working with cultural diversity in raising money.

1. Remember there are two groups of people to consider in using cultural diversity in fundraising: those you work with to raise money and those you raise money from. There is clearly an interrelationship here—the more diverse the group that raises the money, the more diverse the donor base will be; and the more diverse the donor base, the more people you will be able to ask to help you raise the money.

2. Be careful about your assumptions. After 22 years in fundraising, I can testify that there are two kinds of people: havers and givers. As I said above, 70% of adults are givers. Givers give and havers have. Some poor people are havers: What little they have, they hang on to. Some rich people are havers, and the fact that they have more than they can spend in several lifetimes doesn't cause them to give any of it away. Givers come in all types. Some are more generous than others, but one cannot predict generosity based on age, education, income, gender, or any other variable. If you make it a habit to look at every person who comes through your organization as a giver, and then as a person who might be willing to help raise money, you will never overlook any possible helpers or gifts. Of course, you may be wrong, but far better to be wrong because you thought the person might give when he or she wasn't going to than to lose a gift because you assumed the person couldn't give.

3. Figure out what people like to do and feel comfortable doing, then use those talents in fundraising. Few people of any cultural background feel comfortable "raising money," which they imagine is asking people in person for donations. As in the Oakland group, most people love to eat and some people love to cook. Put those together and you have the basis of an event. It can be helpful to create a list of activities that are needed for fundraising and ask people to check off what they are willing to do. Items would include making phone calls, cooking for a crowd, going door-to-door in your own neighborhood/in a neighborhood where you don't know anyone, addressing envelopes, writing fundraising letters, and so on. Sometimes people are not sure what they are good at or are embarrassed to volunteer for big tasks, even if they think they could do them. You may

need to let people know that you have confidence in their ability to do a specific task, or even ask them directly if they are willing to do something you think they could do. Sometimes people assume that to be a fundraiser you have to be well educated or comfortable around affluence or a salesperson. Of course, these things are helpful, but not required.

4. Don't rush to conclusions in solving problems. The group that kept lowering its dues because it thought the membership fee was too high did not allow for any other issue to be the barrier. The real problem in this group was that no neighborhood people were on the membership committee, so the committee members were trying to figure out what to do for a group of people they knew only slightly. Once they invited people from the neighborhood they were organizing in onto the committee, the problem became clear.

5. Keep careful records of what people do well, and use those in future planning. The young people that were so successful in the phone-a-thon ought to be invited onto the major gifts committee. Their comfort in asking for money will be useful in many ways. People grow out of some strategies and into others. Many people start their fundraising efforts doing special events; as they become more comfortable with events, they are willing to go to other strategies. As you keep records, think about what a person has learned from a particular strategy and how that might be helpful in another strategy. For example, creating a script for a phone-a-thon requires some of the same skills as writing a press release or making a pitch at a house party.

6. Educate your volunteer force about who really gives away money and what is true about charities. I have seen many people burst into applause and laugh with relief when they learn that most money given away in the U.S. comes from individuals and that most of those people are of middle-class, working-class, and poor backgrounds. The news media give the impression that most giving is from corporations, wealthy people, and foundations. Grassroots groups in particular waste precious time trying to break into those worlds, trying to meet people whom they only imagine exist. When they find out that in fact most money is given away by most people, they are thrilled. They already know all the people they need to know to raise all the money they need to raise.

7. Think long term. Who is going to run the development office in five years? Ten years? Help the young people in your organization to see development as a career; if they show interest, help them get experience and knowledge. There are degree programs at several universities for people wishing to make the nonprofit sector their career. Unfortunately, these programs are not well advertised, and the idea of a nonprofit career is still not one to be found at job fairs and career-day expositions. We need to change that.

Rewards In and Beyond Our Time

Building a fundraising base that reflects the diversity of the organization and the community requires a constant and unflinching commitment. There are struggles involved. There are bound to be misunderstandings, resentments, and confrontations. Sadly, in our society people do not fluidly cross race or age lines, women and men rarely work together as equal partners, and class remains a primary barrier.

Sometimes groups make a commitment to honoring diversity in its programs and its fundraising in response to a demand from funders, or because it's something the group thinks it "should" do, even if it would rather not. Commitments made in order to get funding or to relieve guilt will not last long and the results will not be satisfying. At the same time, if a group makes a sincere commitment to incorporate diversity into its fundraising program, it cannot expect immediate results. The work required may be long and sometimes tedious, with the feeling of going in circles as often as making true progress.

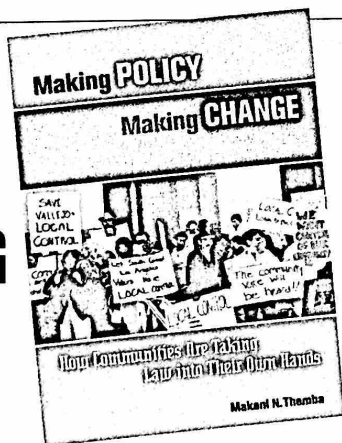
Groups that have made this commitment and keep working on building diversity into their organization and into their fundraising, however, do find that they can raise more money. Along the way, they form friendships and alliances that extend even outside of the work and, most important, they see how rich and complex life can be.

Reinhold Niebuhr, the great Protestant theologian, says, "Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime, therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final favor of love, which is forgiveness." **GR**

This article was originally published, in slightly different form, by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. Kim Klein is co-publisher of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal

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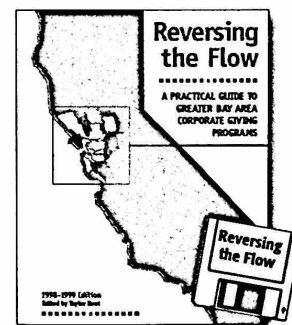
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Techniques



Developing a Monthly Donor Program

By Harvey McKinnon

In this article we will look at why an organization should start a monthly donor program and what is required for such a program to be successful. In subsequent issues of the *Journal*, we will discuss how to set up a monthly donor program and how to market it.

Nobody knows how much money North American charities raise through monthly pledge or sustainer programs, but we do know three important things about them:

1. Monthly donor plans are one of the best ways to reduce donor attrition and to upgrade an individual's giving level. In the next decade charities will increasingly look toward monthly donor programs to increase their income.

2. Monthly giving programs have considerable appeal for both younger and older donors because they are easy and convenient, and because they allow people who are not earning much money or who are living on a fixed income to become major donors by spreading a larger gift over the course of a year.

3. Monthly donors are far more likely to leave bequests or consider other forms of planned gifts than are occasional or even reliable annual donors.

Be the First to Ask

You want your organization to be one of the first a donor makes a monthly commitment to for a very simple reason: most philanthropically minded individuals will give gifts to four to ten charities a year, but they will rarely join more than two to four as a monthly donor. And they will not necessarily choose their favorite causes as a sustaining donor. They will often join pledge programs based on who asks them first.

When a donor joins a monthly donor club, there are consequences. The donor may start reducing their single-gift donations to other nonprofits — perhaps yours! — because they have committed a greater share of their charitable funds through monthly donor programs.

Here's an example to help illustrate my point.

A donor, Ms. Cindy Williams, has regularly given a total of \$1,000 a year to ten charities, or \$100 each. That's her limit. She is successfully recruited by two of those charities into \$25/month donor program. This means that, combined, she will give them \$600 (or 60% of her annual giving), leaving only \$400 for the other eight charities. If Cindy splits the remaining money evenly, the nonprofits will see their donations decline to a \$50 gift each. This is a 50% reduction.

Cindy may even decide to give \$100 to four nonprofits and stop giving to four others. Or she could choose a combination of these approaches. Whatever decisions she makes, the clear winners are the nonprofits who invited her to join a monthly program. They each upgraded Cindy's annual giving by 300%. Even if a nonprofit continues to receive an annual \$100 donation from Cindy, it has lost because she's not likely to join a third at \$25 a month. Also, Cindy's annual giving to the other nonprofits is far more likely to lapse than her giving through a monthly donor program.

Multiply this scenario by hundreds or thousands of individuals, and you see the potential loss to your donor income if you are not chosen to receive your donors' pledges.

That's why you need to approach your donors first and soon. Donors have told me they often have joined organizations even when the organizations are not at the top of their list of priorities, but they continue to give because they have "made a commitment."

Myths to Overcome

Despite the logic of a monthly donor program, many nonprofits are reluctant to launch them. Too often, the organizations fall prey to the mythology that has grown up around monthly giving. There are at least seven widespread myths.

1. **It won't work with our donor base.** A few years ago a large European charity spent a lot of money mailing an invitation package to their entire list with what, in hindsight, was obviously the wrong monthly donor proposition. The program they were offering was too complicated and they didn't spell out the benefits to the donor. It bombed. The organization concluded that its donors wouldn't respond to a monthly donor giving program. Now, just two years later, after developing the proper proposition and a good ask, they make more than 60% of their income from monthly donors — and the proportion grows every month.

2. **Our donors are too old.** I have a large nonprofit client in the U.S. with 30% of their donor base made up of members who are 65 or older. The organization's monthly pledge program shows that 29% are members 65 or over — the same proportion. Seniors are just as likely to pledge as any other donors. I have other clients with seniors as monthly donors in a greater proportion than that segment in the donor file.

3. **Our donors are not committed enough.** If this is the case,

you have problems that cannot be solved by any kind of fundraising program alone. However, my experience is that any organization can make a significant amount of money from a monthly pledge program. You won't know until you try it.

4. We tested and it didn't work. A decade ago, at a Canadian Direct Marketing Association meeting, the manager of major Canadian nonprofit stood up and said, "Personalization doesn't work. We tried it." I thought he was one candle short of a chandelier and under questioning he revealed the details of his so-called personalization test. He simply addressed a donor as "Mrs. McDonald" versus "Dear Friend," rather than testing copy variations based on Mrs. MacDonald's giving history. Obviously he was unaware that effective personalization involves far more than simply inserting a donor's name here and there: it requires using information about the donor that will lend a personal touch to the letter. Yet he was willing to pontificate publicly about the test. Worse, he abandoned his donor base to "Dear Friend" letters for who knows how long. This story is far too common. People who do not know how or what to test believe, based on faulty research, that something does or doesn't work. When you test, you've got to do it properly.

5. It's too much work. I always wonder how having more money can be more work for a nonprofit than having less. Of course, there is some work in getting pledged money by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT), where money is taken directly from a donor's bank account, or by credit card. You can reduce the amount of work involved by contracting those tasks out to a service bureau. You could also decide to offer donors only the option of sending a check, or only of paying through EFT or credit card, to reduce staff time and costs.

You could get a consultant to develop the strategy and the creative work. Then your only extra work will be spending the actual income.

6. We don't know how to do it. Re-read previous paragraph.

7. It's a small amount of money. I worked with a medium-sized Australian nonprofit that went from no monthly donors to 11,512 in 11 years, for an annual value of \$3,492,381 and the program is still growing rapidly. This is in a country of 20 million people. Foster Parents Plan of Canada, which is based on monthly donors, raises close to \$34,000,000 annually in a country of 30 million people.

Planning for Success

The success of your program will be based on many factors: the product, the offer, the benefits to the donor, the media you use, your budget, and the copy or pitch. Your program will work if well done and it will bomb if you do it badly.

Ask yourself the questions in the box below, and jot down your responses to get an overview of what you know and don't know about your plans for a monthly donor program. Your responses to these questions will give you a sense of how much planning you will need to initiate a program.

Remember, however, that even without being "completely" ready, you can start a program and increase your income and long-term stability. **GF**

Harvey McKinnon is a fundraising consultant who works with nonprofits in the US and Canada. He offers Journal readers a 15% discount on his book, Hidden Gold: How Monthly Giving Will Build Donor Loyalty, Boost Your Organization's Income, and Increase Financial Stability (regularly \$39.95 + shipping). To order, call 800/815-8565.

PLANNING FOR A MONTHLY DONOR PROGRAM

1. Is the maximization of long-term income one of your organizational goals?
2. What methods will you use to recruit monthly donors? Mail, phone, television, door-to-door, volunteers, special events?
3. Are you going to give individuals a choice of making a single gift in addition to a monthly commitment?
4. What is your marketing proposition? What do you offer a prospect?
5. What list segments of your donor file will you approach to invite to join your club?
6. Is there a staff person or dedicated volunteer who can devote time to this program?
7. Do you have the ability to manage a pledge program with your current software, or can you afford software that integrates pledge information?
8. Do you have a commitment to continue the program once it's started?
9. Do you have a compelling reason for people to join a monthly program?
10. Do you have committed donors who would join a program if given the opportunity?
11. Have you considered other methods to build a program in addition to direct mail and telemarketing?
12. Do you have the staff to create and direct the program or do you need outside assistance? What are the costs if you need outside help?
13. Will you offer monthly reminders? If so, will you do the work of sending them in-house?
14. Will you offer credit cards as a payment option?
15. Will you offer Electronic Funds Transfer?
16. What benefits will you give to donors?
17. Is there organizational support for the program?
18. What overall resources do you have to devote to the program – financial, technical, and human?
19. Do similar organizations have monthly giving clubs? Have you researched their programs and promotions?
20. Have you done a survey of your supporters that would help you to tailor a monthly giving proposition to them?

Raising Money

for Progressive Arts & Culture Organizations

By Kim Klein

I generally avoid discussions about what kind of issues are harder to raise money for than others because they go nowhere and they are usually started by people who feel sorry for themselves. What makes it harder or easier to raise money for an organization will depend on a host of factors besides the issue the organization is addressing. Location, age, being a program of a much larger group, whether the people involved have fundraising experience or not—these factors can all work for you or against you. Nevertheless, there are challenges in being a progressive arts and culture organization that will drive the most optimistic person to the self-pity well from time to time. In this article we will look at what some of those challenges are and how to turn them to your advantage.

The first challenge is defining what a progressive arts and culture organization is. I believe it is an organization with one or more of the following attributes:

- It provides a venue and encouragement for the artistic expression of people outside the mainstream: prisoners, gang members, people with disabilities, students (especially in poor school districts), and the like. The artistic expression can be through music, literature, theater, dance, film, the visual arts, or various combinations of these.
- It promotes the art and culture of groups or types of people who are usually not represented in the mainstream or are represented inaccurately.
- It explores or seeks to expand the boundaries of art with experimental expression.
- It uses the arts to promote political analysis, through street theater, some kinds of graffiti, murals, political posters, or other artistic means.
- It brings artists and musicians into venues where people generally don't have access to art, such as prisons, mental

hospitals, nursing homes, and homeless shelters. This can be done to entertain, politicize, educate, or empower.

Organizations that fit these descriptions have trouble raising money for a variety of reasons, chief among them their own failure to claim their importance. The saddest statements come from board members who say, "It's not like we save lives or really change things. I enjoy it, but sometimes it seems fluffy compared to other kinds of issues." A slight upgrade is the attempt to justify working in the arts like this: "When kids learn to read music, their math scores go up. Kids that get to act in plays will often learn to read better." Others see arts as a marketing mechanism: "Having people act out their experiences with landlords/the welfare office/the police helps them feel more powerful and makes organizing easier."

All of these justifications miss the message that arts and culture groups need to put forward: "Art is central to any kind of decent society. In the kind of society we are working toward, art will be accessible to everyone, whether as audience or creator or both." The fact that arts can be shown to raise test scores or improve self-esteem or bring people together in a unified movement is ancillary to the central tenet that art, in itself, by itself, is important. The fact that art can be used in a variety of settings and with almost any kind of people speaks to its extraordinary flexibility and the universality of its language.

The second difficulty arts and culture groups face is the image of arts as either the elitist purview of wealthy socialites or boring, stodgy and irrelevant. Large mainstream arts groups and the media have unwittingly collaborated to promote this image. For example, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, in an article about the opening of the last symphony season, spent three columns on the food and dress of

members of the audience and one paragraph on the music. A literature teacher in a poor high school invited the curator of a large art museum to share slides of great art with his sophomore class. The curator talked for 40 minutes and showed ten slides. When the lights came up, all but one student was asleep. As the curator left, he told the teacher, "I didn't expect these students to be so well behaved."

Changing the Picture

Between low self-image and vapid public image, it is no wonder that many arts and culture organizations have trouble raising money. What are the solutions? Here are six approaches to consider.

1. Veteran organizer Gary Delgado often counsels organizations to "reframe the debate." Ask the questions that you want to answer and answer them. For example, a group that teaches writing and theater to high school drop-outs and young homeless people compiled a list of the 100 greatest authors of the last two centuries. Rather than include the usual canon, they chose those authors they thought had something to say to their constituency. Then they asked each school in their district to compare this list to what their school was teaching. The list generated the media's interest, and the local paper published it as part of a story about the group. This organization had reframed the debate and provided its own answers.

2. Assume everyone who comes into your sphere is a potential donor. I have seen performance groups with one mailing list for people who attend performances but who have never been otherwise asked for money and a much smaller list of people who give money. If the organization has been supported by foundations, they may not have a list of donors at all. People who come to a performance, even if the performance is free, should be asked for money at intermission. They should be asked to sign up for the mailing list. Within a month of signing up on the mailing list, they should be asked for money by mail. If the performance is for children, they should be sent home with an appeal. Once people have given, they should be asked to give again, then to give more, and then to give even more in a systematic and respectful way. Having an organized fundraising program is a big boost to actually raising money.

3. Practice cross-promotion. Small arts and culture groups should form alliances with each other so that a person can buy a season ticket that gives them admission to several different performances — music, theater, a lecture, a film. Every organization should have their own Web site but be linked to all similar groups and perhaps even share a secured area for receiving donations. Buy a full-page ad in the Sunday paper and advertise several different kinds of artistic and cultural experiences. This saves money and also

begins the process of presenting a different definition of what the public generally thinks of as art.

4. Work with other organizations to promote the idea that new and emerging artists and cutting-edge art deserve government funding. This is a strategy with a long-term pay-off, but is possibly the most important one. Taxpayers (which is almost everyone) need to understand more about how taxes work, how they should work, and what tax money goes to. For the arts to thrive and be accessible to the population at large will require subsidies from the government. The attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts in recent years and the failure of the public to defend this important cultural promoter reflect in part the lack of organizing arts and culture groups have done on issues of taxation. That the public can be organized around taxes is evident in right-wing organizing that convinces people that paying for a bloated military is good and paying for welfare is bad.

5. Work to help progressive foundations see the role that art and culture play in organizing and social justice work, so that arts and culture cease to be a sideline of other funding and become a full-fledged program. Progressive foundations can be helpful in promoting an overall agenda for arts and culture groups to more mainstream foundations that fund large, traditional arts organizations in part because they don't see enough examples of other kinds of art groups.

6. Build a broad base of individual donors who will carry your message and your definition of art and culture into the community at large. By redefining what is meant by art and culture, you will begin to attract donors from all walks of life, and your donor base will reflect the kind of audience you are trying to create.

The images of the starving artist alone in a garret apartment, or the waitress who is really a writer, or the not-of-this-world-hate-to-think-about-money musician, though arguably romantic, are ultimately harmful to a lasting integration of arts and culture into a progressive agenda and a democratic society. Art is not simply the expression of an individual, nor will many talented people be drawn to careers in the arts so long as suffering seems to be a requirement. The equation of arts organizations and wealthy people is equally harmful because so many people do not see themselves reflected in that section of society. Arts and culture groups must be proactive in putting forward an inclusive picture of themselves, both as artists and audience.

By using the principles of good organizing and good fundraising, most of which are the same, progressive arts and culture groups can raise the money they need and take their rightful place in the panoply of organizations that make up a progressive movement. **GF**

Kim Klein is co-publisher of the Grassroots Fundraising Journal.



One Organization's Online Donation Experience

By Kim Kupferman

Like most nonprofits, Planned Parenthood: Shasta-Diablo (PPSD) in northern California is researching the best ways to utilize the Internet for fundraising. We do not have our own Web site separate from the information about our affiliate on the national Planned Parenthood Federation of America site. Looking into different avenues of getting onto the Web, we found many sites at which users can get involved with nonprofit organizations. Some Web sites give a percentage of the money spent on purchases to a certain charity when shopping through their site. Other sites, called "donation portals," list thousands of nonprofits that people can donate to directly through the site. We have more experience with the latter.

One site to know about is Guidestar.org. Guidestar.org is a database that lists more than 620,000 nonprofit organizations. Most of the information on the charities is taken straight off the Form 990 and Annual Reports of each organization; very little other information is listed. It is a nice idea to be posted on this database so people can find out about your organization quickly and easily.

One of the sites powered by Guidestar.org is Helping.org, a donation portal that is sponsored by the AOL Foundation. Helping.org enables Internet users to donate to any one of the nonprofits listed on Guidestar.org with the click of a mouse. The information posted on Helping.org for the organization is the same as the information listed on Guidestar.org — the Form 990, Annual Reports and contact information (our Development Director).

However, we have not been happy with our dealings with Helping.org. First, the information is posted there without our permission or agreement. Yes, it is public knowledge, but knowledge that is being disseminated and used by a company that did not inform us of their intent to use our information to solicit donations on our behalf.

They are representing us without our written agreement.

Second, without ever having been told that Helping.org had received donations on our behalf, PPSD received a letter from them last April explaining that, since our organization had received donations through Helping.org, there were now enhancements available that could link directly to our donation page.

After some digging on our part, which included two very unhelpful e-mail responses from the manager of Helping.org, we discovered that a donation had indeed come in January from the check-processing company UniTEQ. UniTEQ is in the same building and suite as the United Way of the Bay Area, and the description of the donation was "121599 — Month EndPIN plan1963." There was a short note underneath and hidden on a third, inconspicuous panel on the check that indicated that the gift was from Helping.org. A phone operator at Helping.org said that a letter should have accompanied the first gift made to PPSD giving us information about who made the donation, etc. and how to access this information on Helping.org in the future. However, no letter accompanied the check that came to our office, and the April check was for a donation that was made in December. Only through the roundabout process just described did PPSD discover that this was a Helping.org donation six months later!

We now know there are many different donation portals floating out on the Web. Many list nonprofits without their knowledge and potentially create havoc with donor stewardship. These donor portals are not giving us the information we need in order to cultivate the best relationships with our donors — they give us the money (long after it was donated!), but not the names, addresses, or phone numbers of the people who made the donations. These donation portals appear not to know that development

personnel need to continue relationships with donors in order to create loyalties to organizations.

Some portals are aware of proper stewardship procedures in turning around donations to each organization. CharitableWay.com, for example, informed our Development Director that they have gotten the turnaround time down to 45 days, and will get us the donor information even earlier. They also acknowledge that this is not ideal and are working to trim this time further. In a development department, this is obviously a very important issue. To thank every gift within days of its being made is key to developing close relationships with donors.


CharitableWay.com is also partnering with National Charities Information Bureau to offer the NCIB Standards on giving wisely on CharitableWay.com's own Web site. These standards keep donors informed on national charities and their management.

Because of the problems that came up around these online giving companies, I asked the California Attorney General's office if they had any standards and regulations for donation portals. They told me that donation portals in California need to register as commercial fundraisers. When these portals register, they must comply with already established (non-Internet) standards that ensure proper handling of donations. However, the Attorney General cannot regulate the Internet easily because many Web sites are based outside of California and therefore outside of their jurisdiction.

Right now, PPSD's focus is on creating written agreements with selected Web sites and asking that we be removed from Web sites that do not comply with our requests. We expect the Web sites that list our information to continue good stewardship towards our current and prospective donors. **GFJ**

Kim Kupferman is Development Manager at Planned Parenthood: Shasta-Diablo and can be reached at Kim.Kupferman@ppfa.org.

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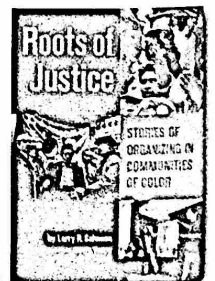
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