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Ask & Receive

Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

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October, 2010

ASK: THE ANNUAL FUND

The annual fund is the cornerstone of everything you do to raise funds and friends for your campus ministry. The annual fund must be solidly in place before next stages like capital campaigns or endowments can be built. Sometimes the annual fund is often referred to as the “sustaining” fund, because it literally sustains your budget from one year to the next. It is through this regular, ongoing appeal that your “universe of donors” gets to know your mission and begins to feel connected to it.

Sustaining fund appeals keep the doors open and the welcome mat out. Fund raising is not about money; it's about relationships. It's through the annual or sustaining fund that vitally important relationships are established, nurtured, and strengthened. Like regular correspondence with family and friends, the sustaining fund seeks to maintain close contact with your most faithful donors and invite them to continue to support your ministry.

In campus ministry the sustaining fund mailing list typically consists of a wide range of names and addresses, probably collected over many years of contact with a large variety of people. On a typical sustaining fund mailing list will be:

- ◆ Alums who were former students active in the ministry
- ◆ Faculty and staff
- ◆ Parents of students
- ◆ Members of local congregations who have expressed interest
- ◆ Former board and staff members
- ◆ Denominational leadership, area pastors, and key lay leaders
- ◆ Other “friends” who have supported your ministry over the years

The basic principle in the fund raising world for operating a sustaining fund is simple: get the gift, repeat the gift, and increase the gift, (sometimes called “moves management,” although this is a rather impersonal, mechanistic term). The sustaining fund seeks to open the door for new contributors, invite those who have given to do so again, and ask those who have consistently been generous to be even more so. Later, as you put in place your capital or endowment campaign, it will be from this group of consistent, supportive givers that your most significant large gifts will come. These friendly givers are your best cheerleaders and supporters; the sustaining fund builds on these essential relationships.

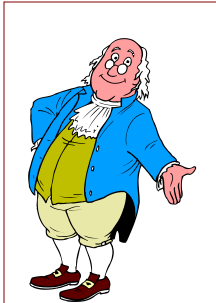
Consider a special newsletter sent to these key donors twice a year, or a special event to which they are invited on a regular basis. One appeal letter or newsletter sent once a year will not do the trick, especially if it is poorly crafted and impersonal. Since fund raising is essentially relational, you will need to find creative ways to keep in touch throughout the year. Pick up the phone. Send photos. Invite feedback. Involve students. Make connections as personal as possible.

You will also need to make decisions about using giving clubs, pledge cards, direct deposit contributions, return envelopes, online giving, phonathons, and the all-important thank you responses.

Be sure that the cover letter to your appeal (and you need a letter in addition to your newsletter) is crisply and carefully written. Decide on the most appropriate person to sign the letter: staff, board president, someone of stature in the community, or a well-known alum.

Most organizations try to get their annual appeal letter out prior to Thanksgiving. If your timing is off, you might consider a spring appeal. Don't despair; plan forward. Ask early and often.

RECEIVE: DONOR STEWARSHIP



"Apply to all those whom you know will give you something; next to those whom you are uncertain whether they will give you anything or not, and show them the list of those who have given; and lastly, do not neglect those who you are sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken."

Benjamin Franklin

Stewardship of donors is important talk these days in fund raising circles. Someone has finally noticed that it's as important to take care of the donors as it is to steward their gifts. Since much of the emphasis in larger campaigns is on the will of the donor, it makes sense to involve them as much as possible every step of the way. Also, when you find yourself in between campaigns, it's a very good time to reach out to your best donors and keep the relationship with your ministry alive and strong.

The analogy usually is "keeping in touch with Aunt Martha and Uncle Harry." If you want them to care about you and know what's going on in your life, you will want be in touch more often than once a year at Christmas time. You'll write them notes, send them pictures, call them occasionally, and invite them to visit on important occasions. And, if this doesn't sound too crass, you will spend more time doing that if you're going to ask Aunt Martha and Uncle Harry for a rather large favor. They love you and they just need to hear from you often and know that you care about them. That's donor stewardship.

Here are some ideas about how to build stronger relationships with your core donors:

- ◆ Hand write your thank you letter or call on the phone immediately after receiving the gift
- ◆ Invite donors to your campus center for worship or a big event
- ◆ Keep them on your regular mailing list. If you send a newsletter, put it in an envelope and send it first class.

- ◆ Send them cards or photos on important dates in their lives
- ◆ Occasionally send them a copy of an interesting article that pertains to your ministry, especially if you wrote it
- ◆ Create a special recognition club for your top donors, but be careful not to be too exclusive
- ◆ Always use first class postage (better, commemorative stamps) for all their mail and have someone with good writing style address the envelope. Don't send mail with an address label to top donors
- ◆ Regularly review the giving histories of your top donors. Know as much as you can about other organizations they give to and what their special interests might be
- ◆ Invite major donors to serve on your board—if they have the skills you need. Perhaps an honorary or advisory board would be a better match for some.
- ◆ Involve major donors in visitation to other potential major donors.
- ◆ Call or write donors and ask for their advice, perhaps using a survey or opinion poll.

Don't be afraid to let donors know if you have a real emergency. They're family and they will want to know if you have urgent needs. It's OK to ask for an add-on gift to their current pledge if they are particularly close to your ministry. Help them understand what it takes to keep your ministry going.

Maybe the best way to think into this is to put Aunt Martha's hat on for yourself. Think about the organizations you support. What has kept you close? What do you like to know and how do you like to be treated? How could that organization personalize their relationship with you more in a way that would make you feel closer and more committed? Is there anything you wouldn't want to know? How would you like to be asked for your next gift?

A NURTURING EXAMPLE

For a number of years "Delores" contributed faithfully to the annual fund. Her contributions were not large, usually in the \$25 range. It was more a "stay in contact" connection than a sense that the gift was going to keep the ministry on solid ground. She was promptly thanked each time and her gifts carefully recorded. One year, out of the blue, "Delores" sent a gift of \$5,000, in memory of her husband and son, who both had died within the year, and in gratitude for the ministry that she felt connected to over the years. Although she didn't want public notice, the board chair and campus pastor called on her in person to thank her. She later made another significant gift to the endowment fund.

VOICES AND VENUES

A PERSPECTIVE ON MAKING THE ASK

Lamont Koerner

Something that began to catch my attention in conversations with alumni was their response to questions about personal values and investment. I found that when I asked a person about their highest values, what matters most to them, they nearly always responded with something like family, friends, faith, and community. The specific order of things would of course differ from person to person but, for the most part, the top three were the same.

When asked about their highest goal or what achievement would mean the most to them, again nearly everyone responded with some version of wanting to know that they had made a difference – for their children, their community or the world.

However, when I asked these same people where they were investing the majority of their resources, their time, energy, and money, the most frequent responses were work/retirement (success/security), house/home, or achieving/maintaining a certain lifestyle.

There was an obvious disconnect. How could so many people so often claim a set of values that just as

often did not match the way they were investing the most important resources of their lives? Moreover, the more obvious the disparity between their stated values and their actual lifestyle, the less likely these people were to be philanthropic. Ruminations about how to address this issue led me to the realization that I was often guilty of the same sort of disconnection.

Shortly after this, in a conversation with a fundraising colleague from a local seminary, I was given a tip that led me to the single most helpful book on fundraising I have ever read. *The Soul of Money* by Lynne Twist, an activist and fund-raiser for many years with The Hunger Project, transformed my understanding of my own relationship with money and gave me a new perspective and comfort in speaking with others about it. Though she does not say it, I could not help but see in her work the basis for what can be a powerful motivation for philanthropy among people of faith. Philanthropy, as an act of love and kindness toward humanity, is linked to our understanding of God.

Koerner is a former campus pastor at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, worked for Macalester College as a major gifts officer, and now serves as a parish pastor in Forest Lake, Minnesota

“Fund-raising is hard work, but I also believe fund-raising is sacred work. It offers a powerful and privileged opportunity to be in intimate conversations with another person about the nature of his or her highest commitments and values. . . .In philanthropic interactions, we can return to the soul of money: money as a carrier of our intentions, money as energy, money as a currency of love, commitment, and service, money as an opportunity to nourish those things we care most about.”

The Soul of Money by Lynne Twist

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

Ask & Receive is a newsletter designed to supplement the Fund Raising Initiative of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team. It presents a series of ideas and resources on a monthly basis to address the challenges of fund raising and board development, focused on the particular context of campus ministry. Each issue deals with an aspect of fund raising, such as the annual appeal, visiting donors, or tuning up the board.

There is also a “Voices and Venues” section, helping us encounter the people and places where good fund raising practices are being lived out. Readers are invited to contribute to this section by sending information and ideas for inclusion. *Ask & Receive* is published on behalf of the Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team at 2481 Como Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55108. The editor is Galen Hora. Phone: 651.649.0454 ext. 228 E-mail: Galen.Hora@elca.org

“Some might say that fundraising is the chief responsibility, even the *raison d'être*, of a board. I disagree. Fundraising by the board may be critical to a given organization, but it is more important that the organization be *worth raising funds for*.”
 John Carver, Boards That Make a Difference

BUILDING BETTER BOARDS FOR CAMPUS MINISTRY

A lot is written in current literature about board development, not all of it in agreement. It seems to be one of those transitional times between a management style that has worked well in the past and one that seems more attuned to today's governance needs. Smaller, more efficient boards seem to be “in.” Long-term strategic planning is giving way to short-term outcome management, triggered perhaps by the impossibility of seeing down the road for more than two years for any organization. Boards, and their purpose, are undergoing significant change.

Simply put, boards have three classic responsibilities or “duties.” The Duty of Obedience asks that the board be faithful to the organization's mission. The Duty of Care asks that board members be active participants in the management of the agency, including financial accountability. The Duty of Loyalty asks that board members give undivided allegiance to the organization, regardless of personal differences.

More specifically, effective boards, including campus ministry boards or steering committees, take responsibility for:

- ✦ Setting policy and maintaining the operational aspects of the ministry, including the filing of reports, keeping records, evaluation and visioning for the future,
- ✦ Making financial contributions to support the ministry, according to ability, beyond the contribution of time they serve.

- ✦ Electing, guiding and supporting professional staff, including provision of adequate salary and benefits, and continuing education,
- ✦ Maintaining and improving facilities for ministry, and
- ✦ Interpreting to congregations and synods the vision and effectiveness of the ministry they

The National Center for Nonprofit Boards offers the following list of board responsibilities from a secular perspective.

1. Determine the organization's mission and purposes
2. Select the chief executive/staff
3. Support the chief executive/staff and assess their performance.
4. Ensure effective organizational planning
5. Ensure adequate resources
6. Manage resources effectively
7. Determine, monitor and strengthen the organization's programs and services
8. Enhance the organization's public standing
9. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability
10. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance.

Boards serve the important function of being caretakers and overseers of the ministry. The board exists to guarantee that the core values of the organization remain intact and that programs are driven and evaluated by these values. A ministry without a good board is like a bicycle without wheels.

TRAINING SEMINARS BEING PLANNED

Training seminars for fund raising and board development are in the final planning stages. Initially there will be six seminars offered in different geographical areas of the country. The first event will likely be in January 2011, with others offered during the remainder of the academic year through the end of June.

Campus ministries in the respective areas will be receiving invitations soon. Other ministries from across the country may attend as well. Each ministry is responsible for their own travel, meals, and overnight accommodations if necessary. There is no registration fee for these initial events. Each seminar will last five to six hours. Both campus pastors/ministers and board members are encouraged to attend.

The Rev. Galen Hora, longtime ELCA campus pastor and churchwide staff person will serve as trainer for the seminars. For more information you can e-mail Galen.Hora@elca.org or call 651/649-0454 ext. 228