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Ask & Receive

Raising Funds and Friends for Campus Ministry

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December, 2010

THE ASK: CONSIDERING POTENTIAL DONORS

The identification and cultivation of potential donors for your campus ministry is a significant and ongoing concern. Usually a number of issues are involved in this consideration. The annual appeal may seem less effective. The number of actual donors may be fewer and their checks smaller, due in part to a tough economy as people make hard choices about which cause they continue to support. The budget may call for increased giving if current programs are to continue or necessary repairs to the building are to happen before the roof falls in. Professional and support staff salaries keep increasing. There are a lot of reasons to not be complacent about the current list of contributors and to seek ways to build a stronger, more generous donor base.

The cliché among professional fund raisers is referred to as “Moves Management.” It centers around the process of moving donors up the ladder of giving, from smaller “keep in touch” gifts to levels that are increasingly challenging and sacrificial. It seeks to “stretch” donors from where they have been sitting in comfortable giving patterns to a place where they have to make a choice about which cause to support and at what financial level. We have all received those phone calls that say, “You supported us last year with a \$25.00 gift, could you consider a gift of \$50.00 this year?” That’s Moves Management. It may feel like a nudge or a stronger push, but the intention is to get you to increase your gift. Some would suggest that the purpose of fund raising at this base level is to “get the gift, repeat the gift, and increase the gift.”

As you think about potential donors for your ministry, here are some things to consider:

- ◆ Who are your most frequent donors?
- ◆ At what level or range are their gifts?
- ◆ Have these gifts increased over the past few years? If so, are there reasons?
- ◆ How involved are these donors? Do you have a special relationship with them?
- ◆ How often do you communicate with them and in what ways?
- ◆ What would it take to ask them to increase their gift next time or make several smaller gifts on a regular basis?

Know that while you are evaluating your donors, they are evaluating your ministry as well. Donors look for:

- ◆ Evidence of good stewardship
- ◆ Evidence of careful planning
- ◆ Evidence of broader support
- ◆ Consistent, persuasive communication
- ◆ Urgency, yet low pressure
- ◆ Values that match their own
- ◆ Invitation to share in the ministry beyond writing a check

Your best potential larger donors will come from the core of those who have given consistently over the years. They will need to have a deeper relationship with your ministry. You will want to communicate with them differently and more frequently. If you move into a capital campaign, you can expect that these good donors might consider a gift 10 to 20 times the size of their annual contributions but it may take several visits to get them there. Thank them promptly and sincerely for what they have done and help them find ways to continue.

“As donor expectations for transparency, accountability, and measurable impact increase, we find ourselves presented with new challenges and new opportunities in donor communications.”

Kay Sprinkel Grace

COMMUNICATE APPRECIATION

This is the time of year when holiday gifts are thoughtfully planned and lavishly given. While the giving of the gift is a special joy, the way in which a gift is received and the giver is thanked enhances and deepens the relationship. Gifts that are appropriately given endear the giver and the receiver to one another and strengthen the bond between them.

While on a different level, perhaps, gifts to campus ministry accomplish the same purposes. They are given thoughtfully and the expectation is that they are duly appreciated. In fact, most donors expect to be treated like “Aunt Martha and Uncle Harry.” By that I mean that if they are dear to your heart (and you dear to theirs), they will want to hear from you frequently—more than a once-a-year newsletter or solicitation letter. They will want to relate to your ministry on a personal level. They will want to know how they can help. They will want to celebrate your progress and share your joys. And when they give you a gift to help you along, they will expect to be thanked as soon as possible in a way that truly appreciates their thoughtfulness.

Communication with your donors is part of good stewardship. You take care of the gifts, but you also take care of the givers. Keeping them knowledgeably in touch is a responsibility you assume at the point that you cash their check. They give to your organization with the expectation that their donation will connect you both at a deeper level.

Kay Sprinkel Grace suggests ten things that donors want to hear when they make a gift to your organization.¹

1. Whatever the message, frame it in gratitude
2. Mirror the donor’s values in your messages
3. Convey progress towards a shared vision
4. Communicate good news, even if out of cycle with regular communications
5. Communicate bad news, too
6. Let them know how they can help
7. Tell them how important they are
8. Let them know how their support attracted the support of others
9. Be sure they hear from a beneficiary of their giving at least once a year
10. Let them know that they are your investors and stakeholders

Essentially, donors expect to be informed of the vitality of the organization in honest, straight-forward ways. They want to hear what’s happening, or what’s going to happen, and that is consistent with the mission and the overall vision. They don’t want it fluffed up or glossed over. If there are struggles, they want to know about it; perhaps they can help. If there are things to celebrate, they want to cheer you on. Don’t invite them to a party that has already happened. Tell them how they can be part of what’s happening now.

The “Aunt Marthas and Uncle Harrys” in our circles are those who have a personal “stake” in the outcome of our ministry—alums, parents, university staff, church members—the list is endless. They “invest” in our ministries and they will want to know how their investment is playing out. They will come to view their participation in a more serious way than just sending a check. They want to build a relationship. A “contributor” is finished when the check is in the mail, but an “investor” seeks an ongoing relationship beyond the gift. Help these good supporters to see how to increase their investment in the faithful ministry that we do on their behalf.

¹Kay Sprinkel Grace, “Ten Things You Should Always Communicate to Your Donors,” *Contributions*, January-February, 2006, pp. 7-8, 17.

FUND RAISING/BOARD DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS ANNOUNCED

The Ecumenical Campus Ministry Team is pleased to announce the dates and venues of the fund raising seminars planned for 2011. These seminars are open to all campus ministry leadership, including staff, board members, denominational representatives, and student leaders. There is no cost for the seminars, except for the cost of travel to the location. Contact the coordinators listed below for more up to date information. Currently there are several seminars scheduled.

- ♦ **January 15, 2011 in Columbus, Ohio.**
Jacob's Porch, Ohio State University
Coordinator: Jay Gamelin jay@jacobsporch.com
- ♦ **January 22, 2011 in Charlotte, North Carolina**
United Campus Ministry, University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Coordinator: Stephen Cheney steve@campus-ministry.org
- ♦ **February 26, 2011 in Houston, Texas**
Location to be determined
Coordinator: Brad Fuerst pastor@lcmhouston.org
- ♦ **March 5, 2011 in Palo Alto, California**
Episcopal/Lutheran Campus Ministry, Stanford University
Coordinator: Greg Schaefer prgreg@stanford.edu
- ♦ **March 19, 2011 in University Park, Pennsylvania**
Pasquerilla Spiritual Center, Penn State University
Coordinator: Alicia Anderson ara2@psu.edu
- ♦ **May 14, 2011 in Chicago, Illinois**
Brent House, University of Chicago
Coordinator: Stacy Alan stacyalan@brenthouse.org

As time and budget permit, more seminars or smaller consultations may be offered in other locations across the country. For more information contact your denominational representative to the ECMT or Galen Hora, who serves as seminar leader and consultant, at Galen.Hora@elca.org

Fund raising is "a person with a cause asking a person of concern to share in responding to a human or social need."

Henry Russo

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

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

There will also be "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

“The future isn’t what it used to be? *Carpe Diem* isn’t good enough. Not in today’s world. *Sieze the Day* won’t do it. For institutions and trustees, in order to keep pace, the credo must be: *Seize the Future.*”
 Jerry Panas, Finders Keepers

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Certainly not every campus ministry board or committee is large enough to support or necessitate the appointment of an additional “development” committee. At the point when a capital campaign or endowment emphasis is on the horizon, however, while the work of the board goes on, special experience and focused tasks may well require the addition of a development committee to ensure the success of this new important venture.

The development committee is usually made up of individuals who have been through this before with other organizations. They know the process and can provide oversight for developing the case statement and working with a consultant on the feasibility study. Most important, they are not afraid to talk about money and stewardship.

The committee generally is assigned the following responsibilities:

- ◆ General oversight of the financial well being of the ministry, particularly relating to future needs and visions.
- ◆ Establishment of an annual/sustaining fund that will supplement the contributions of regional and churchwide offices.
- ◆ When the time is right, establishment of an endowment or capital campaign for campus ministry.
- ◆ Provision for planned gift opportunities that may attract sizeable contributions from persons who wish to leave a lifetime expression of support for campus ministry.
- ◆ Oversight of the management of ministry generated resources through a mutually agreed upon and fiscally responsible investment source.

In order to accomplish the above responsibilities the committee should:

1. Work with the board and staff to determine the long-range, strategic vision of the ministry.
2. Provide for the keeping of accurate records relating to fundraising, including mailing lists, contributions and thank you responses.
3. Publish communications and interpretative materials for fund raising purpose.
4. Nurture relationships with donors and potential contributors.
5. Make contacts with donor prospects as appropriate.
6. Direct staff in their work to support the fund raising efforts.
7. Be among the first to contribute to the ministry.
8. Secure and train new members for the committee as needed.

The responsibilities of the development committee are significant in their depth and breadth. The selection of the chairperson is critical and needs to be done before any of the work of the committee proceeds. This person needs to be selected carefully based on both their skills and their respectability in the community. They should be given responsibility to enlist others to serve with them.

The board needs to be in close communication with the committee and from time to time evaluate its work and effectiveness. Those who give time and energy to this committee will likely serve for a short period of time, perhaps two years, but they need to know that their expertise and commitment are highly valued and appreciated. If they are supported and encouraged, their contributions will greatly affect the well-being of the ministry for years to come.