

Rural Fundraising: Success Stories for CASA/GAL Programs

2006 Edition

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Publisher, *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*

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The National CASA Association Mission Statement

The National CASA Association, together with its state and local members, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

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For additional useful information on fundraising, please visit the website of Grassroots Fundraising: grassrootsfundraising.org.

—Kim Klein

Editor's Note: Kim Klein is internationally known as a fundraising trainer, consultant and publisher of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. She is also the author of *Fundraising for Social Change*. National CASA is grateful to Kim for her willingness to share her expertise regarding rural fundraising with the CASA/GAL network.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Rural Fundraising: Success Stories for CASA/GAL Programs!* This guide is designed to help CASA/GAL organizations in rural communities raise money more effectively and describes successful and easy-to-imitate strategies. It also encourages you to help each other by sharing your experiences.

We put this project together because little has been written about fundraising in rural communities, particularly the challenges and opportunities that are very different from more urban areas. However, even without much help being available, rural communities are engaged in a great deal of fundraising. From small efforts to buy a few books for a library to funding multi-million-dollar hospitals—and from one-time-only preservation efforts to ongoing community needs—tremendous creativity is going into the design of fundraising programs and strategies. These stories deserve to be told, and they will be helpful to other rural groups as they create their own stories.

The collection is in two parts: an introductory essay I've called, appropriately enough, "Raising Money in Rural Communities." This essay describes basic principles of rural fundraising, with some how-to's and pointers.

The second part of the manual contains 15 examples of successful rural fundraising efforts, from direct mail to events to capital campaigns to earned income and more. Each example is described in some detail, and the majority are accompanied by sample materials. Most of the examples are not from CASA/GAL programs but can be easily adapted to them.

Editor's Note: There are a number of other examples of successful rural CASA fundraising strategies on casanet.org. Particularly helpful is the Resource Development Smart Library at ncasaa.smartlibrary.info. From this link, click on "Special Events," then "CASA Know How." Some of these excellent ideas come from rural CASA programs including those in Miles City, MT; Lynchburg, VA; Rutherford County, TN; Wilson County, TN; and Pleasanton, TX.

Finally, the collection ends with a blank template for *you* to fill in and submit every time you use a fundraising strategy from which you think others could learn. Helping each other, sharing information and advice, and working together are hallmarks of rural living; they are habits that attract people to rural communities and keep them there. The National CASA Association hopes this culture of sharing will extend to helping each other raise money for our important CASA work as well as for other nonprofits in communities with CASA/GAL programs.

How to Use This Collection

Many people will want to start by reading the essay and then working their way through the examples, but you can easily jump right into the examples or just read the essay and come back to the examples later. If you don't want to read all the examples, look for key words in the chapter titles to find special events, direct mail, capital campaigns and other strategies. This

cross-section of examples from all over the country includes everything from the funky to the ultra-sophisticated—and from raising small amounts of money using all volunteers to strategies requiring more knowledge and the help of staff or consultants.

This collection is designed to grow and respond to users. If you use one of the examples in the manual, let everyone know how well you did by completing and submitting the story template on page 82. What improvements did you make? What didn't work for you? Remember, we learn as much or more from mistakes as from successes, so don't hesitate to share a few caveats.

Raising Money in Rural Communities

By Kim Klein

A longstanding belief in fundraising is that it is much harder to raise money in rural communities than in urban or suburban settings and that you probably won't be able to raise the money you need. This belief has some logic: there are fewer people in these communities, which means fewer people to ask; and although those people have fewer nonprofits to choose from, there are still basic services that must be supported. A rural community has the same need for a clinic or schools or a library as an urban area but has fewer people from whom to raise the money or provide the needed tax revenue. Nevertheless, as the examples in this guide show, it is not only possible to raise money in rural communities, it is sometimes possible to raise large amounts of money.

Imagination and hard work are the key elements. But there are also seven factors that must be taken into account in doing nonprofit work in a rural community, each of which is considered here.

1. Everything takes longer.

There are two ways in which things take longer: the obvious time involved in getting from one place to another when great distances can separate homes or towns and the less quantifiable but equally important rural hospitality, which tends to be more extensive than that of city dwellers. For example, suppose you decide to visit a major donor on his or her ranch. You make an appointment, then drive one to three hours to the ranch. Once there, you do not chat briefly, ask for the gift and leave in 45 minutes, as you might in a city. The graciousness often customary in rural areas may lead your host or hostess to give you a tour of the ranch, invite you to stay for lunch or dinner and perhaps encourage you to spend the night. This graciousness is wonderful but time-consuming, and you disregard it at the cost of the relationship with the donor.

2. The necessities of ranch or farm life can limit a donor's availability.

There will be times, such as planting, harvesting, lambing or calving, when contact with donors will be limited because people are working almost around the clock. Then when none of those things are going on, the weather may make driving conditions so hazardous that volunteers cannot get to meetings, people cannot attend special events, and prospects cannot be visited.

3. Fundraising costs are higher.

The city dweller's idyllic notion that everything is inexpensive or free in a rural area is false. Almost all supplies and equipment have to be shipped in, adding freight to their cost; lack of competition among businesses can add another layer of cost. Consultants to help repair your computer or handle your bookkeeping needs are fewer and may be more expensive. Although

office space may be less expensive than in a city, there may not be any available. The distances between people and places make driving costs high, and there is rarely adequate public transportation.

4. Logistics are complicated.

If you wish to print a newsletter, mail appeal or flier in bulk, you may have to send it to the nearest city. If you need something sent or received quickly, there may be no overnight mail service from or to your community. FAX machines and email have helped to solve this problem to some extent, and the world of virtual communication is changing rural life a lot. However, in communities where electricity often goes out in storms and few cell phones can get a signal, these 21st-century conveniences may not always solve the problem.

5. Relationships are often complicated.

In rural areas, people often have known each other for many years; sometimes families have known each other for generations. The same people are often involved in more than one organization. One CASA group coordinator was puzzled that her two most reliable volunteers were reluctant to ask local businesses to take out ads in their ad book until she realized that all the business owners were close relatives of these volunteers, and that these same volunteers had asked these same businesses (sometimes over the dinner table) for an ad earlier in the year.

In rural areas, people depend on each other for help in hard times or for assistance in emergencies. This makes them cautious about doing anything that might cause offense—including fundraising assertively or asking people for money directly. Rural people do not wish to seem pushy in their requests to a neighbor partly because they know that if they have a medical emergency in the middle of winter and can't get their car started, they may need to call that person—they don't want to have offended them.

6. The pace of life is not necessarily slower or the people more reflective than in a city.

Rural communities have been seeing a lot of things change in how they operate, and nonprofits working there must be able to adapt quickly. Many locally owned businesses have been forced to close as superstores like Wal-Mart have opened nearby or as competition from web-based stores has lured customers with cheaper prices. Whole downtowns have been abandoned in favor of malls. Many family farms have been bought up and put out of business by agribusiness concerns, and suburbs and ex-urbs have replaced farmland altogether in many places.

7. Not everyone has equal loyalty to the area.

Not all rural communities consist entirely of people who have lived in the same place all their lives and make their living from farming or ranching. Though this is a common situation, and these people usually have deep and abiding loyalty to their area, other circumstances often bring people to rural communities who do not develop such loyalty. For example, some rural areas have grown into retirement communities, with many of the people living there not from the region and with little loyalty to it. Some of them do have money and, being retired, they may also have time to volunteer. Many will eventually develop a sense of belonging through these activities.

Other rural communities, such as those within a few hours of major cities, are bedroom communities for commuters who work in those cities. The increasingly common use of computers and modems for business enables other people to live in rural communities hours from their workplace and still carry on their business, going to a city only as needed. Their loyalty to their local community may depend on whether they are raising a family there and how strongly they wish to be accepted and involved. “Back-to-the-land” small farmers, vintners in boutique wineries, owners of bed-and-breakfast inns and the staff of retreat centers are some of the many types of people that can make up or contribute to rural communities. The finances and values of these people are extremely varied, but many of these people have a deep and abiding loyalty to their community and want to fit in and help make it a better place.

There are also many rural communities where people make their living from mining or timbering (many of these people are now unemployed). Others work on other people’s farms or ranches, in some instances as sharecroppers. There are rural communities primarily built around a college or a prison. There are many rural communities whose population varies seasonally with “part-timers,” tourists or people who own cabins or timeshares at resorts. Many towns in very popular areas will see 15,000 people on a weekend who don’t live there. Tourists are the main economy in many communities, meaning also that “locals” are often engaged in service provision for tourist destinations. Increasingly, there are rural communities where the majority of the population are non-English-speaking immigrants or refugees from Mexico, Latin America, Cambodia and other countries. All of this adds layers of complexity to any rural fundraising effort.

You Can Raise The Money You Need

The first step in fundraising in a rural community is to reflect on what kind of rural community you are. How big is your permanent population, and what do most of those people do for a living? What other nonprofits are you competing with? If you have a part-time population, who are they—weekenders, tourists, students, farm workers? What is their giving potential, and how might you capture their gifts?

The second step—or more accurately, a simultaneous step—is to set a goal. How much do you need to raise? People have told me, “We can’t raise millions of dollars here in Green Valley like you can in a city.” If you don’t need millions of dollars, then it doesn’t matter that you can’t raise it. It may be that you can’t raise what you need, and there are some solutions for that, but first, know your need.

Many people believe that it’s just not possible to raise substantial amounts of money in rural communities. This is not true. First, there are people in every community who have the means and will understand the need for larger gifts.

Here’s an example. There are a number of communities called “colonias” that span the borders between Texas, New Mexico and Mexico. These communities often lack running water or electricity. Their community facilities—schools, roads and local government—are poor or nonexistent. The people in these communities tend to work in factories or farms nearby. Many people have lived in these communities for years. Raising money for nonprofit work is not easy in a place where so many people have so little, but some organizations have done well. In addition to setting up food booths and collecting small amounts of money from residents, these

groups have identified a few people who care about the community and who can afford to give more. In one instance, a staff person of an organization working with teenagers identified a small farmer who they thought could give \$100. When they asked him for that amount, he misunderstood the question. “Yes, I can give that every month,” he said. He has been helpful in identifying other people who can also give substantial monthly or yearly contributions. Further illustrating the relationship between fundraising and organizing, he has helped several community groups petition local government for roads, sewage systems and public schools. He has helped people understand that since they pay taxes, they have the right to services that taxes are meant to provide.

Second, even relatively small communities can raise large amounts for a variety of big projects over time. In a town of 2,000 people in northern California, for example, the Friends of the Library decided to expand their public library. To do so, they needed to raise \$35,000. Everyone involved in the nonprofit part of the community agreed that such an amount would drain the community and make other large fundraising drives impossible. Nonetheless, with the support of many in the community, the Friends of the Library decided to proceed because the library would be so well used. Soon after they raised the \$35,000, the community center in town decided they desperately needed a new space and set out to raise \$750,000 to build a new community hall. They raised it, but now the common wisdom of the community was that there certainly was no more capital money in the community. Two years went by; the health clinic needed to modernize and expand and had no choice but to launch a capital campaign. This fundraising effort was also successful.

Each of these fundraising drives took place over a number of years and used several different strategies in their campaigns: special events, major donor solicitations and direct mail. They all took a lot of hard work and the volunteer efforts of dozens of people. To be sure, this community has a number of wealthy retirees, and many of them had made significant gifts to these campaigns. But the entire community participated, and some money was even raised from tourists. A poorer town with no tourism would need to raise this kind of money from government or foundation grants but still would need to be open to the idea that a few people in their community could make significant gifts, and the rest of the community could give significantly with a number of smaller gifts.

The lesson here is that in any community, but more obviously in a rural community, fundraising is not a zero-sum game. There is always more money, and it is not diminished or used up by big campaigns. Organizations in rural communities will want to time their campaigns—for two organizations to run a capital campaign at the same time will rarely be as successful as running them sequentially. The need has to be well established, and the community has to agree with the goal of the campaign; but it must be remembered that money grows back and produces more money.

There are three populations from whom an organization can raise money: locals, part-timers and people in nearby towns and cities. Let’s begin with the last group.

If you are located near cities with populations of 10,000 or more—*where there is not another CASA/GAL program*—focus attention on raising money in those towns and cities, where the financial base is strongest. Form support groups with people living in the town or city. These can be formed by contacting existing donors in those communities and asking them to host a

small party for you, or by contacting sympathetic churches, synagogues, service clubs and the like—or sometimes even by getting an article in the local paper. Hold special events in these larger towns, and use direct mail and your website to recruit donors there. If local people have contacts in these nearby towns and cities, use those contacts to introduce your local needs to this population and to cultivate potential major donors.

Next, try to discover ways to raise money from people who pass through the community, particularly tourists and visitors. Some communities mount events just to attract tourists. For example, many communities have county fairs or various kinds of festivals, such as the Garlic Festival in California, the Ramp Festival in Georgia and the Storyteller's Convention in North Carolina. These attract tourists who spend money to attend the event and also to buy things that are sold at the event.

If you live in a place where tourists come to see the natural beauty or to vacation (such as along the coasts or near national parks or monuments), consider developing products that tourists will buy. Local crafts and homemade jellies and jams are always appealing. Photography books and calendars, guides to the local sights and collections of stories of people who live in the community have all proved to be steady income streams for rural organizations.

If you live near a freeway or a frequently traveled road, set up a rest stop where truckers and tired drivers can buy coffee, doughnuts, fruit or other treats. This can be very lucrative in the cold winter months, particularly at night. It is also a community service that helps keep people from falling asleep at the wheel.

At the local level, focus on finding a few people locally who can give larger gifts. Every community has generous people, and a few of those will be able to give major gifts, if asked. Whenever possible, ask current donors for the names of other people who could give as well. People tend to be friends with people who not only share their values but are also in a similar economic situation. Someone who gives your group \$100 will know two or three other people who could give \$100 and one or two people who could give \$250. They in turn will know people who could give \$500.

You can also raise money from the community at large. Even in the poorest and most remote areas, churches, volunteer fire departments, rescue squads and service clubs are supported by local residents. Even the smallest, poorest towns in the Bible Belt, for example, support at least two churches. Even if they do not have paid clergy, the people manage to support a building.

Money can be raised locally through special events. This helps counter the reluctance rural people have for asking for money directly by providing a way to give something in return. Events such as raffles, auctions and bake sales can be good money-makers. Many times people from rural community groups simply stand with buckets at busy crossroads and ask drivers to drop in spare change. Three hours at a crossroads on a shopping day can bring in \$300 to \$500. Flea markets are also popular. It is often easier for rural people to donate items rather than cash, and people always seem willing to buy each other's castoffs. In Sitka, Alaska, there is a thrift shop run by volunteers called the White Elephant. Between purchases from locals and, in the summer months, tourists, the store averages \$100,000 in profit every year, which they donate to a variety of other nonprofits on the island. Often a prom dress or fancy suit will be sold two or three times before being retired to rags.

Strategies for Raising Money

Keeping in mind the seven factors described earlier, let's look at the most common fundraising strategies available to rural communities and how they are similar to and different from their urban counterparts.

Special Events

Everyone is familiar with the very large golf tournaments, award luncheons and black-tie dinner dances that raise \$100,000 or even \$1,000,000. They cost thousands of dollars to put on and take paid staff and dozens of volunteers working for months to be successful. Generally, a rural community can't pull off something like that. However, the special events of small nonprofits often form the basis of the social life of small towns and rural communities.

A rural organization can raise \$1,000, \$5,000 or even more with three or four months' lead time and a handful of volunteers. Start with an event that people would like to come to and might even travel into the nearest town for, and do your best to put it on in your community.

Take for example a dinner dance. The dance will be in the community center or the school gymnasium, which in many places can be used for free or a minimal fee. The food can be provided by members of your organization, but to make it more fun, turn it into a competition. Community cooks then pay a small fee to "enter" the food competition in various categories, such as main course, salad and dessert. Each is asked to bring enough food to feed 15 people. People coming to the event get a small sample of each entry and then vote on which they think is the best. They can then pay a fee for a larger portion of the courses that they liked. In reality, most will be full after the sampling, so the group will not run out of food. A cash bar serving smoothies, soft drinks or juice can provide extra income. (Be cautious about serving alcohol to people who have to drive home, and be sure to get permission to have alcohol if your event is in a publicly owned building and that you have adequate insurance.) Later, dance music can be provided by a local band that is trying to become more well known and so will perform for a small stipend or for free. Or music can be provided by a DJ who is a friend of one of the members. Marketing and advertising the event is done largely by word of mouth, radio public service announcements and posters hung in the post office and general store. Each board member is expected to sell ten tickets at \$10-25 each. This is generally not too hard. If your event is the only thing going on that Saturday night, getting 100 people to attend should be easily done. And at \$10-20 per person, plus many people paying on average \$10-15 more for extra food or drink, plus the entry fee of the food competitors who each pay \$5, an organization can easily gross \$3,000-5,000. If you have t-shirts or other items to sell, you can add a small income stream there with little effort. Expenses will include buying drinks to sell, printing nice-looking certificates or ribbons for the winners of the food contests and mailing thank you notes after the event to volunteers and participants. Of course, some drinks can be solicited as donations, and perhaps a member of the organization knows how to print the certificates from their home computer. Even with expenses as high as \$1,000, the group could still net \$2,000-4,000 from a "good time had by all." As the years pass, more and more people will want to enter the food contest, and more people will want to come.

A Chocolate Lovers Festival put on by an organization with a total budget of \$75,000 in a college town of 8,000 people—including students—was organized along the lines indicated

above. By the fifth year, it netted \$40,000! Eventually it attracted top chefs from restaurants in nearby towns in addition to lay people entering their favorite brownies or best hot chocolate.

The dinner dance is just one example of how malleable events are. Each aspect of the event should be conceived of as a separate component, and components can be added or subtracted according to the number of volunteers and amount of time available. A silent auction can be added to the dinner dance, or a live auction could replace the dance or be added to it. An afternoon barbecue at the beach could replace the dinner, and games could replace the dance. That kind of event would focus much more on families with young children. Tea and dessert followed by a lecture would appeal to a more academic or older crowd.

The secret to all of it is to do as much as possible for free or very low cost and to charge for as many things as you can without having people feel that they are being “nickel and dimed” to death. Advertising must be effective so that the maximum number of the right people are attracted to the event at minimum cost. Word of mouth is the cheapest and most effective advertising and marketing vehicle, and the organization’s board should talk up the event everywhere they go; but public service announcements (PSAs) on community TV and radio and articles in the weekly paper are important as well.

Raising Money by Mail

Soliciting donations by mail provides another avenue for rural groups. Of course, small organizations will not do the kind of sophisticated testing of packages and premiums that require 5,000 and 10,000 names just for the test, but very focused list acquisition can bring in impressive returns. For example, a large organization tests a mailing to 2,000 people and gets a 1% response (considered good in direct mail terms). This yields them 20 new donors, who give an average of \$40 each, for a gross of \$800. The organization will probably spend \$.50 per person mailed to, which means they will spend \$1,000 to raise \$800—or \$10 to acquire one donor. They will make this money back over the next couple of years as these donors renew and give extra gifts. Direct mail experts would say that is a very respectable outcome.

Most rural groups don’t have that many people and are not able to front money like that. They can still do direct mail another way. They get their board members to bring in 10 to 15 names each and send out 200 letters first class, with personal notes from the board members on each letter. They spend more on postage but nothing on list acquisition. They may even use a rubber stamp for the return address on the return envelope, and they hand-address the carrier envelope. So they also spend \$.50 each on these letters, but their total expense is \$100. This highly personalized approach brings a 10% response, or 20 new donors who each give \$40, for a gross of \$800. The difference between this group and the larger group is that the rural group walks away with \$700 income from the first mailing. The other difference is that 10 board members spent one or two hours each getting the mailing out. The secret here is to find a source of names of prospects. Board members’ friends are good but finite. People who use the service the group provides or who come to the group’s events may provide dozens or even hundreds of potential prospects. As is true with big direct mail appeals, not every appeal will be successful.

The long-term success of a mail program is in the quality and consistency of renewals and extra appeals. Once a donor has been acquired, that donor must be kept informed about the doings of the organization and the worthiness of the projects their money is being used for. And that

donor must be asked both to repeat their gift and to give extra gifts during the year. Ultimately, that donor should be asked to increase their gift.

It is critical that every step in any fundraising strategy be written down so that a new person can easily figure out what to do and so that knowledge is retained even if there is staff or volunteer turnover. Everything should be as systematized as possible.

For a mail appeal program to be effective, the organization must invest in a good database and keep it up to date. There are many free or inexpensive databases for nonprofits that are easy to use (for an analysis of the most common databases, go to techsoup.org or to grassrootsfundraising.org and look for their database comparison charts). Make sure you are able to deliver what you promise: if you promised a quarterly newsletter, you will have to send a newsletter four times a year. Above all, follow the adage, “Thank before you bank!”

Personal Solicitation

Personal face-to-face solicitation is the most effective strategy for all organizations, big or small, rural or urban. Your rural organization may not have a lot of name recognition outside your immediate community, and you may not have famous people on your board. But your board members and volunteers have integrity; and donors give \$500 or \$1,000 because their friend, Terry, is on the board and says that the group does good work.

Personal solicitation is both the easiest and the hardest strategy for almost anyone. It is the easiest because volunteers just have to talk to their friends, who are, presumably, easy to find and comfortable to talk with. There is no real cost involved, except for the time of the volunteer and perhaps the cost of taking a friend out for coffee or lunch, and the meeting can be set at the convenience of the volunteer and his or her friend. It is the hardest because it requires asking for money and running the risk of rejection or of offending the friend. Because you will see your friend often, you don’t want to do anything that will harm the relationship. Your request may be more low-key than in a more urban culture. Instead of saying, “Will you help with \$500?” and waiting for a response right then, say, “I’d love it if you gave in the \$500 range. Take some time and think about it.” Follow-up will be important, but giving the prospect some room to turn you down without having to tell you no directly will help preserve your relationship.

In Conclusion

Whatever strategy you choose from those outlined above, you can’t assume that the people who made it possible know you appreciate them for their help. Make the time to thank donors, volunteers, colleagues and anyone else who supported your project. It’s not only the right thing to do, it’s the best public relations available. Thank people in person. Hand write a brief note. Make a quick phone call. You know yourself how good you feel when someone thanks you.

When all is said and done, the essence of rural fundraising is the essence of all fundraising: building relationships. Successful fundraising of any kind requires ingenuity, commitment to the cause, love of people, common sense, a willingness to ask for money and an understanding and deep appreciation of human nature—especially of the natural desire of all humans to be appreciated.

1. Strategy: Teen Dances

Baker County CASA, Inc.

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The Community

Baker County's 16,700 residents are in 13 communities spread across more than 3,000 square miles. The rural community is mostly agricultural and forest service land, with the main economy being forest management through federal agencies. A well known museum for the Oregon Trail brings in tourists during the summer months. The closest college or large chain store is 45 miles away from Baker City. Baker County has very low per capita income and very high rates of unemployment and child abuse.

The Strategy

Baker County CASA's executive director emailed 9 board members and 19 volunteers with what we needed in donations (chips, candy, door prizes, etc.). The volunteers and board members brought everything by noon the day of the dance so they could see what they had. (At the second dance, there were so many door prizes that everyone went home with something.) A local business donates the soft drinks. Board members and volunteers are also asked to chaperone.

The local Elks Club and a hotel donate space for these events. Several other businesses asked to help with the teen dances after they saw the positive press everyone received for helping to give the kids something positive to do.

When this idea was first presented to our board, some board members were very much against it. They feared liability issues, behavior problems, etc. After the first one, they have completely changed their minds and are huge supporters of holding the dances. Baker County CASA is having a great time with this project as it is easy and fun. At the second dance, 10 people ended up chaperoning because they heard the first one was so much fun!

Expenses and Income

The first dance cost \$100; we raised \$350. The second one cost nothing, as everything was donated, and we raised \$500 at the dance. Three additional donations came in through the mail from people who read about the event in the paper, for an additional \$800. There is now a sponsor who wants us to hold at least four dances a year. The charge is \$5 at the door.

Lessons Learned

After the first dance, our executive director wrote a letter to the editor about how well it went and how well behaved the youth were (they usually get a bad rap). A few days before the second dance was held, the paper did a front-page article about it, including all kinds of information about the CASA program. The school allows us to send flyers home with the kids, which has helped raised awareness about the CASA program; in all, the community's perspective on the youth has improved.

2. Strategy: Sponsoring a Marathon Runner

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thecenterforfamilydevelopment.org

The Community

CASA of the Center for Family Development is located in Shelbyville, Tennessee. We serve two rural counties in south-central Tennessee: Bedford and Coffee. The population is stable, totaling about 70,000 for the two counties together. There are about 150-200 children in state custody at any time, plus many others under court-ordered safety plans. Bedford is a small county with small industries; its biggest claim to fame is the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. Coffee County is the home of Arnold Engineering Development Center and Air Force Base. It has two small towns, Tullahoma and Manchester, that are different from and hotly competitive with each other. It is an understatement to say that each town and each county is very territorial. So we must give one-on-one attention to each community.

The Strategy

Our fundraiser was basically a new twist on a direct mail campaign. The Country Music Marathon is a large, annual event held in Nashville, Tennessee on the last Saturday in April. The husband of one of our board members had the dream of running in the marathon. When he went into training, we mailed letters to individuals in our Bedford County database asking them to sponsor him on behalf of the Center for Family Development (see the Letter to Potential Sponsors under “Tools” below). We have not done this fundraiser in Coffee County yet.

We wanted to accomplish a few things in addition to raising money with this event. First, we wanted to expand our Bedford County mailing list. Second, we wanted to increase our board members’ involvement. Two board members came in and actually entered their personal mailing list into our database. The names were coded so we could tell where the prospects came from. We enclosed a personal cover letter from board members (see the Board Cover Letter below under “Tools”). We also increased community awareness when a front-page article with full-color photo appeared in the *Shelbyville Times-Gazette*.

Expenses and Income

We didn't have much of a budget. We sent about 200 letters with first-class postage at \$.37 each, which amounted to \$74. We used regular stamps instead of our postage meter so it would look more personal. The return address was the personal address of the person signing the letter. We used plain paper and printed it in house. The biggest advantage was the reply sheet. Paper Direct sent us the wrong paper one time and told us to keep it. Therefore, we had nice paper with a certificate layout that tore off at the bottom of the sheet. That's why the bottom of the second page of the letter to potential sponsors is laid out the way it is.

Almost \$5,000 came in from that mailing. There were several civic club speeches scheduled at the time, so we took extra letters to the events and brought in even more money. After the marathon, we held an appreciation dinner for the runner and for our staff and board members. It was the easiest fundraiser we have ever done.

Lessons Learned

The most fun thing was watching the money come in; the most gratifying was the commitment on the part of our marathon runner to train and run his first marathon on behalf of the Center. Reading his letter to potential sponsors, you can see that this was very much a mission of his heart.

The most frustrating thing was building the database, sorting it and so on. But it is absolutely necessary to pay attention to your database to keep it up to date.

Changes Made or Planned

We are going to do this project again next year in all of our counties. The fact that our communities are 50 to 75 miles from the actual marathon didn't seem to make a difference. You can go on the countrymusicmarathon.com website and sort the runners/participants by zip code. So by searching the website, we know who the runners are from each of our counties. We plan to contact runners after the first of the year to see if they are willing to have people sponsor their run to support CASA of the Center for Family Development. Then we'll expand our letter campaign to include the new runners.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

We would advise other rural organizations to do this type of fundraiser. It is a low-cost, low-work investment with good return on money. It's a great way to involve board members in a way that is easy for them to ask for money from their friends.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for examples of letters that you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event: 1. Board Cover Letter and 2. Letter to Potential Sponsors.

Board Cover Letter

Cindy Day

P. O. Box 933
Shelbyville, TN 37160

March 18, 2005

Dear Friends:

As Board Chairman of The Center for Family Development, I want to share with you something exciting that is happening to benefit the children and families in our community.

The enclosed letter is from a friend of The Center for Family Development, David Brown. Some of you may know him as the Pharmacist at Renegar Drugs. He is going to be running the half-marathon in the **Country Music Marathon on April 30, 2005 to raise money and awareness for children in our community.**

Please take a few minutes to read David's letter and consider offering your support to The Center for Family Development. The enclosed reply card and envelope are there for your convenience.

As David says, running a marathon is a huge challenge, but it doesn't compare to the challenges our children and families face every day.

Sincerely,

Cindy Day
Board Chairman

Letter to Potential Sponsors

David and Ranea Brown

114 Riverbend Road
Shelbyville, TN 37160

March 18, 2005

Hello friends. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a special kid.

My name is Andrew.** When I was 4 years old, I couldn't hear or talk or even use the potty. I still wore diapers like a baby. My little baby brother, Justin,** had been in the hospital really sick. He couldn't breathe good. My parents weren't taking care of us like they should. We were put in a foster home. I got a CASA Volunteer and I got 2 hearing aids really quick. This nice lady taught me how to hear and how to talk. My CASA Volunteer comes to see me all the time. I love him - he's my extra Papa. I started going to school. Then my little brother Daniel** was born, and he came to live with us in our foster home too. I saw my mommy and daddy, but they still couldn't take care of us. Now, I'm 7 years old and doing good in school. My brothers are good too. We have been ADOPTED and my foster family is now my real family. I love my new family and my new name.

**The names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

It's hard to imagine in our community that kids like Andrew are being neglected and abused every day. Every child deserves to live in an atmosphere where he or she feels safe and loved. I'm running the Country Music Half-Marathon on April 30 to raise money and awareness for children in our community like Andrew who are helped every day by The Center for Family Development.

The Center for Family Development provides kids like Andrew with hope. Please take a moment to read about the Center for Family Development and its services on the following page. We as a community have an opportunity to make a difference in the life of a child by supporting the work done by the Center.

I hope you'll join me in supporting The Center for Family Development by making a donation. Thirteen miles will be a huge challenge for someone who has never run more than two miles, but my challenge is small compared to the every day challenges faced by many children in our community.

Your support is truly appreciated.

Sincerely,



David Brown, Pharm.D.
Renegar Drugs

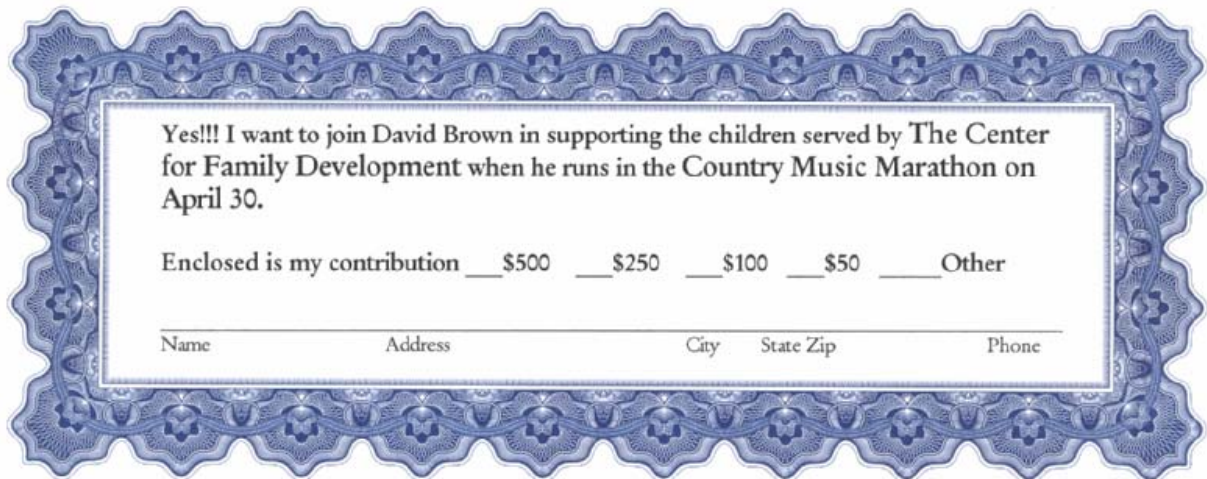
The Center for Family Development has been established to support and nurture children and families. The Center for Family Development is licensed by the state of Tennessee to be a Child Abuse Prevention Agency and Child Placement Agency. The Healthy Families program has received the Certificate of Credential from Prevent Child Abuse America for demonstrating the best practices in home visitation. CASA has received the Certificate of Compliance for adhering to the National Standards of Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Healthy Families is a child abuse prevention program. The Healthy Families staff works tirelessly to provide emotional support and information to families who struggle with everyday demands. Parents learn the joys and mysteries of their new baby as the baby grows and develops.

When a child has been abused, a CASA Volunteer steps in to advocate in Juvenile Court for the child until a safe, permanent home is established. With CASA, the child's voice is heard loud and clear.

There is more need for the services of The Center for Family Development than I ever imagined right here in our own community. Healthy Families serves 100 families with weekly home visitation all of the time. There are 100 children in foster care who have been abused or neglected all of the time. There is no shortage of need, but there is a big shortage of money for The Center for Family Development to provide services to these children and families who desperately need our help.

**Make a difference in the life of a child.
Make a donation to The Center for Family Development.**



Yes!!! I want to join David Brown in supporting the children served by The Center for Family Development when he runs in the Country Music Marathon on April 30.

Enclosed is my contribution ___\$500 ___\$250 ___\$100 ___\$50 ___Other

Name Address City State Zip Phone

3. Strategy: Direct Mail Campaigns Based on Phantom Events

CASA of Kosciusko County

Submitted By

Sally M. Mahnken
Executive Director
CASA of Kosciusko County
Warsaw, IN
casa@kcgov.com

The Community

Our communities are made up of large rural/farming areas, several international orthopedic companies and other sizable industries. These significant corporate headquarters give the area a highly intellectual basis, which has resulted in several cultural centers. There is also a small religious college. While there are a considerable number of very wealthy families, there is also a great deal of poverty in the area.

The largest town in the area has approximately 18,000 people; the total county population is about 70,000. The nearest big city is Chicago, about two hours away. With the state's largest natural lake in our area, plus several other lakes, the population increases significantly in the summer.

The Strategy

Several years ago at a National CASA conference in Portland, a program reported on their phantom events strategy. Building on what we learned there, we have promoted a No-Show Benefit Tea, a No-Show Flower Show, a No-Show 10th Anniversary Party, a No-Show Saint Paddy's Day Party and a No-Show Picnic. There are many other ideas that would also work for this simple direct mail campaign.

These are the steps we took:

- Ask board members to give names and addresses of at least 25 people they believe will make a donation to the CASA program (family, neighbors, friends, fellow employees, people in church groups, club/organization members—e.g., Kiwanis, Optimist, sororities, judge and attorney groups). Also send an invitation to all past donors, and be sure to send invitations to board members and CASA volunteers as well.
- Have the invitation professionally printed on high-quality paper—no copy machine.

- Hand-address the envelopes.
- List your board of directors on the invitation. If potential donors are unfamiliar with the CASA program, they are more likely to send money because they know someone personally—or at least recognize the name of someone associated with the program.
- Send to individuals—not businesses, organizations or corporations.
- Be creative and have fun—many ideas would work for a no-show event.

Expenses and Income

We had a very small budget (printing and postage). The first year, our net profit was \$1,600. The most we have earned on this strategy is \$2,950, and it has slowly been going down year by year. The No-Show Picnic of 2004 netted \$2,020. We decided to try another direct mailing concept for 2005. (See the editor’s note under “Lessons Learned.”)

Lessons Learned

It was an easy, inexpensive moneymaker. It can be put together in a very short period of time, and money begins to come in quickly. In addition to raising funds, we chose this strategy as a way to keep our name in the public view.

This strategy will run its course after four or five years. We have decided to let this idea sit for two or three years before trying again. Although many thought it was a novel idea, it does need a break.

Editor’s Note: This is a strategy used by many CASA/GAL programs, a significant number of which make \$15,000-20,000 with no-go events. A number of these events have been successful for 10 years or more without taking a break.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

We absolutely recommend this strategy to other rural organizations. It is quick, easy money.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for examples of materials you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event:

1. No-Show Flower Show Invitation
2. No-Show Flower Show Response Device and Incentive
3. No-Show Summer Picnic Invitation
4. No-Show Summer Picnic Response Device and Incentive

No-Show Flower Show Invitation

"Regrettably, we must levy an extra door charge if someone actually attempts to show up somewhere for this event."

Proceeds will fund CASA's current and future programs supported by you and others who share belief in its goals.

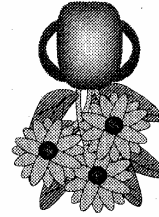
Donation Rates
 NOVICE: \$10
 GREEN THUMB: \$25
 MASTER GARDENER: \$50
 BEST OF (NO) SHOW: \$100

Time: Whenever you like.
Location: Your place (not ours).
Dress: As you like it.

CASA volunteers are Court Appointed Special Advocates for children. Specially trained for this important community service, CASA volunteers are appointed by a judge to speak up for abused or neglected children as appointed officers of the court.

CASA of Kosciusko County, Inc. Board of Directors

Phyllis Benka
 Rebecca Coleman
 Anne Dorgan
 Syd Ellis
 Garry England
 Jeanine Knowles
 Wayne Schope
 Georgia Tenney
 Marilyn Williams
 Peter Albertson, Emeritus
 Willie Nine, Emeritus
 Ginger Smith, Emeritus



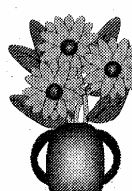
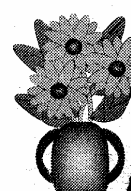
Good for you! Great for the children! Many, many thanks!!

- ◆ Because of your commitment to comfort and no fuss, you sensibly stayed home, smelled the flowers . . . and relaxed.
- ◆ No one had to worry about the sun, insects or poison ivy ...
- ◆ No one had to arrange the perfect bouquet ...
- ◆ No one spent long hours digging in the dirt ...

Thank you for . . .
not showing.

You are cordially invited
 to take part in
**A NO-SHOW FLOWER SHOW
 FOR
 CASA of Kosciusko County**

Mindful of the busy lives caring people lead,
 the CASA Board of Directors
 invites you
 to Forget-Me-Not the children,
 stay at home,
 smell the flowers,
 and just relax.

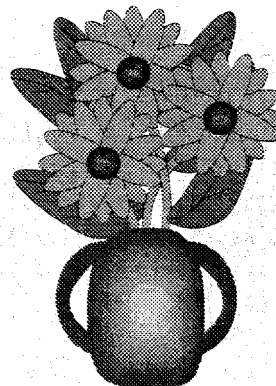
No-Show Flower Show Response Device and Incentive

NAME _____

accepts your invitation to join in the CASA NO-SHOW FLOWER SHOW.

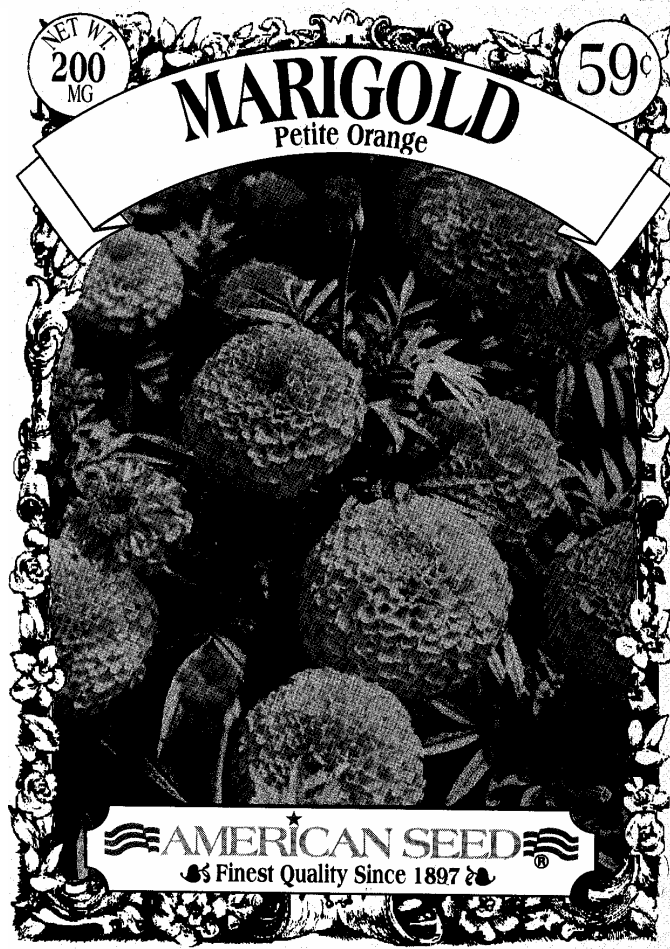
Enclosed is my gift:

- _____ NOVICE
_____ GREEN THUMB
_____ MASTER GARDENER
_____ BEST OF (NO) SHOW



*Thank you for being a friend of CASA of Kosciusko County, Inc.,
a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.*

Please make checks payable to: CASA of Kosciusko County, Inc.



No-Show Summer Picnic Invitation

Time: Whenever the weather is warm
 Location: Under your favorite oak tree
 Dress: Casual (shirt and shoes not required)

Picnic Fees

Brown Bag Lunch \$ 10
 Wine and Cheese for 2 \$ 25
 Big Bucket of Fried Chicken \$ 50
 The Whole "Sha-Bang" \$100

Picnic proceeds will help CASA
 to fund current and future programs
 for the youngest picnickers
 in our community, our children.

Just think, since this is a
 "No-Show" picnic, no one has to:

- Buy the sun screen
- Pack the blanket
- Stock the cooler
- Round up the kids & toys
- Find the swimsuits
- Clean out the vehicle
- Swat flies and ants!



Regrettably, a fine will be assessed if
 anyone actually tries to show up
 for this picnic.

CASA of Kosciusko County
 provides advocacy
 services for
 abused/neglected and at-risk
 children in
 Kosciusko County.

CASA of Kosciusko County
 Board of Directors

Jody Burns	Rebecca Coleman
Syd Ellis	Martha Firestone
Earle Hanlin	Faye Jagger
Laura Kaufman	Jeanine Knowles
Ed Likens	Kevin Marose
Elaine Piper	Paul Pegues
Steve Possel	Christianna Smith
Georgia Tenney	

Sally M. Mahnken, Executive Director
 Amy L. Drake, Assistant Director

You are cordially invited
 to attend
 CASA of Kosciusko County's



No - Show
 Summer Picnic

Mindful of the busy lives, caring people
 lead, the CASA Board of Directors invites
 you to . . .

stay at home,
 (Picture it as you) Arrive at the park
 (Pretend to) Set up the picnic area
 (Imagine as you) chase down the kids

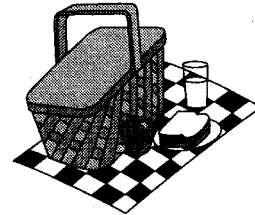
No-Show Summer Picnic Response Device and Incentive

NAME _____

accepts your invitation to join in the CASA No-Show Summer Picnic.

Enclosed is my gift:

- _____ Brown Bag Lunch \$ 10.00
- _____ Wine and Cheese for Two \$ 25.00
- _____ Big Bucket of Chicken \$ 50.00
- _____ The Whole Sha-Bang \$100.00



*Thank you for being a friend of CASA of Kosciusko County, Inc.,
a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are tax deductible.*

Please make checks payable to: CASA of Kosciusko County, Inc.



4. Strategy: Appalachian Culture Night

Academic Boosters Club

Submitted By

Donna Morgan
Academic Boosters Club
Irvine, KY
morgand@bera.edu

The Community

Estill County lies in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in eastern Kentucky. The county is home to about 15,200 people and has two main towns: Irvine, the county seat, and Ravenna, adjacent to Irvine. The population of Irvine is approximately 2,730.

The county has had an agricultural economy, but that is changing as tobacco farming becomes a practice of the past. The CSX Railroad has a rail yard in Ravenna that also influences the local economy. Irvine is home to Marcum Wallace Hospital, which has enjoyed some expansion lately. The Daniel Boone National Forest covers many acres of the county, and tourism has become a focus of community development efforts. In addition to the natural beauty of the area, the tourism industry promotes the local arts, crafts, music and culture of the residents.

Estill County is an economically distressed region. The median household income in the county is \$23,318, and more than a quarter of the population lives below poverty. Only 58.5% of people over age 25 have a high school diploma. Despite the obstacles facing our community, we have successfully raised funds for our middle school and high school academic teams through a group of parents known as the Academic Boosters Club. Academic teams are organized by subject area and grade level; the students on the academic teams compete against those of other schools.

The Strategy

The Academic Boosters Club (ABC) held an Appalachian Culture Night that included a speaker, a soup-bean dinner and a silent auction. We sold tickets to the dinner throughout the community at \$7 per person; approximately 40 people attended. Preparing for the event required a lot of volunteer hours from parents in addition to selling tickets.

Most of the volunteer hours were spent setting up the room and cooking. The Estill County Middle School allowed us to use their cafeteria. But the long tables with affixed seats weren't amenable to our needs, so we had to move those out and put in round tables. We decorated each table with a tablecloth and centerpiece to give the dinner a more formal atmosphere.

In the cafeteria kitchen, a group of mothers and fathers spent the day cooking beans and cornbread. The beans were donated by a grocery store, and parents donated bags of corn meal.

The only food we purchased was the onions and relish for dressing up the beans and several gallons of iced tea. Each family with an academic team member was asked to bring a dessert that would serve five or six people. Table service was turned over to our excited middle school team members, who served bowls of beans and baskets of cornbread. After the main meal was over, the students rolled out the dessert cart from which diners could choose from a wide variety of sweets.

During dessert, several academic team children took the stage to explain the various activities of the academic teams and to thank the people for supporting these activities. Then our special speaker shared his perspective on Appalachian culture. We had partnered with the Kiwanis Club to sponsor our speaker, Loyal Jones, an Appalachian author, humorist and the former director of the Appalachian Center at Berea College. The Kiwanis paid Mr. Jones's fee and in return was offered some free tickets to the dinner. However, the Kiwanis members chose to pay to attend the event. The Kiwanis Club often schedules speakers for their monthly meetings, so this was an audience we could easily ask to attend our event.

Throughout the festivities, we called attention to the silent auction that was set up in the back of the room. The silent auction was staffed by members of the high school academic team. Individuals and local businesses donated items for the auction, including a car care basket, an antique vase, basketball tickets for a University of Kentucky game and an Appalachian alarm clock (a bantam rooster). Toward the end of the night, the silent auction was announced as ready to close and people were encouraged to make their last-minute bids. The UK tickets were the hot item, and our emcee had a lot of fun encouraging the competition for these.

Our goal was to raise enough money to cover expenses related to the academic teams. These expenses include equipment, learning materials, hotel rooms at competitions and food at competitions. We also wanted to educate people about the academic teams and get the teams the kind of respect in the community that many sports teams enjoy. (Our academic teams are actually some of the winningest teams in the school system.) Finally, we wanted to promote respect and understanding of Appalachian culture.

Expenses and Income

This was the first year the Academic Boosters Club did this type of fundraiser. Our main goal was to get as much donated as possible so that we could clear as many dollars as possible. Now that we have a better idea of how much can be raised, we will plan a clearer budget for the event.

ABC spent approximately \$200 on food items, paper bowls, plastic cutlery and table decorations. Most of the other supplies were donated. Between the tickets sold for the dinner and the funds raised through the silent auction, the Academic Boosters Club raised around \$1,000 with this event.

Lessons Learned

Waiting tables was fun for the academic team children. Offering an event that was different from the usual candy sales or fruit sales was rewarding. The silent auction and the fun competition were also enjoyable. It was good to be able to socialize and hear a good speaker as well.

The most challenging thing was the amount of work required on the day of the event. A few parents spent the evening before and the entire next day at school preparing the food and the room. (The event was held on a Saturday evening.)

Changes Made or Planned

The Academic Boosters Club most likely will do another event like this. We may handle ticket sales differently next time by giving students a limited number of tickets and tracking the sales more carefully. We will also improve publicity to attract a bigger crowd. Last year's event was so enjoyable that we figure there will be repeat attendees. This year, the menu may be beef stew or chili instead of soup beans, which not everyone liked and which some commented was not enough for the \$7 price. We may also look at having local Appalachian musicians or storytellers serve as speakers next time.

This year, some ABC members would like to set up separate committees for food, decorating, ticket sales, silent auction and programming so that the work is spread out a little more.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

If you have a base of volunteers, particularly school-age children, this is a good fundraising event. Put those youngsters to work and teach them about fundraising! Let the volunteers in your organization know in advance how much of a time commitment the event will be on the day of the event.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for examples of materials that you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event:

1. Event Flyer
2. Press Release
3. Event Tickets
4. Silent Bidding Sheet

Event Flyer



Appalachian Culture Night

with Appalachian author,
humorist and storyteller

Loyal Jones

Saturday, January 8, 2005, 6:00 pm
at the Estill County Middle School Cafeteria

Enjoy a traditional dinner of soup beans, corn bread, relishes and dessert. Explore our silent auction for good deals on arts and crafts items, baked goods and much, much more.

Admission is \$7.00 per person.

Proceeds benefit the Estill County Middle School and High School Academic Teams.

For more information or to purchase a ticket, contact:

Y'all Come!

Press Release

Contact: Donna Morgan: morgand@berea.edu January 3, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Academic Teams Host Appalachian Culture Night and Silent Auction

On Saturday, January 8, 2005, at 6:00 pm, the Estill County Middle and High School Academic Teams will host an Appalachian Culture Night at the Estill County Middle School cafeteria. We invite you to enjoy a tasty dinner of soup beans, ham, cornbread and a variety of homemade desserts, while enjoying the company of friends. Loyal Jones, Appalachian humorist and author, will provide the evening's entertainment. During the dinner, you will have the opportunity to participate in a silent auction with items that include:

- ✓ Wrought iron candle holder and candle produced by Jeff Farmer, Berea blacksmith
- ✓ Car care basket (oil changes, donated by Cornett Automotive and various car care items)
- ✓ Family fun basket (games, movie, popcorn and candy)
- ✓ Anchor Hocking hobnail glass vase, produced 1941-1946
- ✓ One-year subscription to *Appalachian Heritage* literary magazine
- ✓ Tickets to UK-Florida game
- ✓ Craft item donated by Berea College crafts
- ✓ Homemade goodies basket (homemade pickles, salsa, candy and other goodies)
- ✓ Smells-so-good basket (candles, lotions and other great smelling items)
- ✓ Turtle table lamp (night light) with green glass shell
- ✓ Hand decorated cake

Tickets are \$7.00 per person and will be available at the door. Proceeds benefit the middle school/high school academic teams and will be used to purchase materials and supplies for all team members and will assist the teams with expenses associated with attending state competition in March. Hope to see you there!

#####

Event Tickets

\$7.00 ADMIT ONE

Appalachian Culture Night
Featuring Loyal Jones

January 8, 2005, 6:00 pm
Estill County Middle School Cafeteria

Dinner/Speaker/Silent Auction
Proceeds benefit ECMS/ECHS Academic Teams

\$7.00 ADMIT ONE

Appalachian Culture Night
Featuring Loyal Jones

January 8, 2005, 6:00 pm
Estill County Middle School Cafeteria

Dinner/Speaker/Silent Auction
Proceeds benefit ECMS/ECHS Academic Teams

\$7.00 ADMIT ONE

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Dinner/Speaker/Silent Auction
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\$7.00 ADMIT ONE

Appalachian Culture Night
Featuring Loyal Jones

January 8, 2005, 6:00 pm
Estill County Middle School Cafeteria

Dinner/Speaker/Silent Auction
Proceeds benefit ECMS/ECHS Academic Teams

Silent Bidding Sheet

Estill County Middle School and High School Academic Team

Silent Auction Bid Sheet

Item: _____

Donated by: _____

Approx. retail value: _____ Minimum bid: _____

Please print name and contact phone number

Amount Bid

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

THANK YOU!

5. Strategies: Tours, Outings, Workshops, Planned Giving, Speaker Honoraria

American River Conservancy

Submitted By

Kyleen Cornell
American River Conservancy
P.O. Box 562
Coloma, CA 95613
(530) 621-1224
arconservancy.org
kyleen@arconservancy.org

The Community

The American River Conservancy (ARC) is a 16-year-old land trust nestled against the Sierra Nevada mountains in California. ARC is located in the town of Coloma (a state historic park), population 170, and serves a county of 168,000. Placerville is the nearest “big city,” with 10,000 people, but many people commute to Auburn (one hour away) or even Sacramento (an hour and a half away).

Coloma and the surrounding area is a community in transition from logging and ranching to tourism and encroaching housing development sprawl. The American River draws thousands of people who raft, hike, fish, pan for gold and spend tourist dollars during the spring and summer. The old-guard politicians and press are conservative and generally anti-anything vaguely environmental, but newcomer retirees and urban refugees share the values of the local alternative community to protect the natural beauty of the area.

Strategies

1. *Sell donated recreation tours and outings.*

Tourism and recreation are businesses that have a vested interest in our mission to preserve and protect the river and watershed, so every spring ARC solicits spring rafting trip donations from about a dozen local rafting trip outfitters. We negotiate the number of spaces, available dates and whether they are full or partial donations of each registration fee. We usually sell them a bit below the going rate and give priority access to members through print and e-newsletters, then to everyone via our website and flyers. We take the registrations and payment, then make the reservations with the rafting companies.

ARC acknowledges all the rafting companies with a letter, in our newsletter, on our website and at our annual member party. We offer to send one of our naturalists to the spring rafting guide training sessions to provide information on the geology, plants and animals of the river area and to teach the guides how they can be ambassadors for the land trust by telling people about ARC's successes, the need to preserve the river and the land and how their rafting customers can get involved and help the organization. ARC has a pizza and beer party for all the rafting guides and owners at the end of the season. Some of the donated trips are used as grand prizes for raffles at ARC's stewardship activities (like Coastal Cleanup Day).

ARC's goal is to raise \$5,000 from this strategy. In addition, there are these non-monetary goals:

- Increase awareness of the importance of preserving riparian habitat and the success of ARC's land trust among local and visiting rafters and guides.
- Add names of interested people to ARC's membership and mailing lists.
- Provide a donor cultivation/recognition opportunity.

Expenses and Income

The program, managed by paid staff, costs less than \$1,000 a year. It brings in about \$5,000, for a net income of about \$4,000.

Lessons Learned

ARC reserves at least one or two of the trips for our major donors and prospects. Each raft has a land trust staff or board member aboard who acts as naturalist and ambassador. The invitations are personal, the event is free, and we have lunch on a beautiful beach that has been protected in perpetuity by the organization. The most fun has been presenting a framed picture to one of ARC's large donors of his spectacular spill into the river.

As for negatives, trying to sell rafting tickets on eBay is very frustrating. And the program can eat up a lot of staff time; it would be useful to have a volunteer trained to run it.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Tourism and recreation are often thriving businesses in rural areas. Who in your community is providing hot air balloon rides, guided fishing trips, ski resort packages, antique shop tours, llama treks or "plein air" painting workshops? See if you can work with them in ways similar to this strategy.

Sample Tool

See the following page for an Adventure Flyer you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event.

Adventure Flyer

*Raft the South Fork with ARC
– only \$90 per person!*

2004 River Partners
with the
American River Conservancy



The American River Conservancy is once again offering whitewater adventures through our River Partners benefit program. Local outfitters have donated over 100 raft trips on the American River to support the Conservancy. In 2004, the River Partners program will help us reach our fundraising goal for the American River Trail Campaign.

So get out on the river this summer! Booking your whitewater adventure through the Conservancy assures you a professional, worry-free run – with the added benefit of knowing that your dollars are going to help preserve the very landscape that is giving you such a thrilling adventure and such vibrant memories.

River Partners who have donated South Fork trips include:

Action Whitewater Adventures
Adventure Connection
All Outdoors Adventures
American River Recreation
American Whitewater Expeditions
EarthTrek Expeditions
Mariah Wilderness Expeditions
Motherlode River Center
River Runners, Inc.
W.E.T. River Trips

All trips are **\$90.00 per person.**
To book your American River raft adventure,
please call the American River Conservancy at
(530) 621-1224.



AMERICAN RIVER CONSERVANCY

2. *Time solicitations to your rural economy.*

We make sure we provide donation opportunities to our supporters when they are flush with cash, such as after the wine grape and apple harvests in the fall or at the beginning of the rafting season in the spring when everyone has high hopes for a lot of business. Also, if it is a good “growing” or “rafting” season, this is a great time to ask for in-kind donations for our auction or fundraising events, both large and small. For instance, we have an annual festival type of event where we serve food. All of the produce that goes into the dishes served is donated by the local growers. Generous gift certificates are also plentiful from the same agricultural groups and rafting outfitters for the auction portion of the event. We plan this event during the height of rafting season and hold it at a place along the river, which ensures a turnout of more than 500 people each year.

We also coordinate our programs to a heavier load in late spring through early summer and then again in late fall through early winter. Many of our community members take long vacations in the summer time (usually the month of August), so we have a lighter offering focusing on things that attract those who are still here during that time. Also, we have found that when school resumes in the early fall, the seasonal visitors, raft guides, etc. go back to school/home and there is lighter attendance at our programs during that time.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Areas with distinct seasonal up-ticks in economic activity can look to either local businesses, individual owners or workers for support. If you have out-of-town owners or residents who stay only part of the year, coordinate with their schedules. You might look for cues from the schedule for tourists, well known festivals, bonuses or stock issued by a large employer, funders who must encumber funds before a deadline or holiday sales. Closely read the business pages of your newspaper, consider joining the Chamber of Commerce, and recruit local business people onto your board or advisory committees.

3. *Provide education to the rural community, draw on the expertise of your volunteers and staff, and charge for guided hikes and unique workshops/lectures.*

We host at least six to eight programs per month year-round, including at least one nature hike, two to three workshops (such as gourd-making, basket-weaving, working with raku clay firing and learning herbal remedies) and one or two lectures (such as mercury contamination, birds of Belize and Native American history). We publicize these programs through local and regional media in their event calendars as well as in flyers posted by volunteers. We also advertise through our newsletter and e-newsletter to our members and supporters.

In addition to our financial goal, we use this technique to:

- Draw new audiences and supporters to our organization.
- Increase memberships through personal solicitation by trip leaders or staff.
- Increase involvement and sense of community among our members.

Expenses and Income

All programs are coordinated by paid staff but almost always led by volunteer program leaders. So the direct cost is \$1,000, with net income of about \$4,000.

Lessons Learned

People who don't necessarily know ARC will come to a program and then be so thrilled with us that they become members and volunteer for our projects. It's not always easy to gauge what programs will work at different times of the year. For example, sometimes a workshop that has a waiting list in the spring will have no signups at all in the fall.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

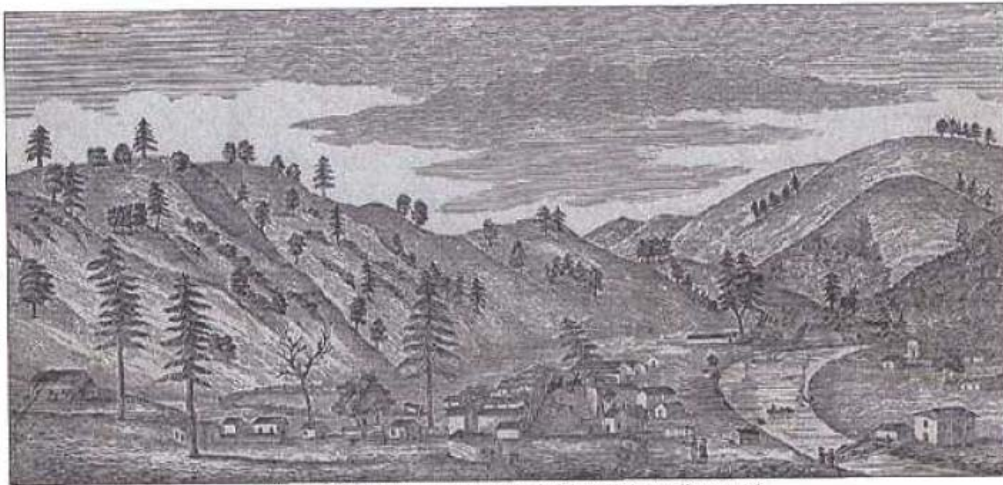
Bring workshops and hikes to community centers, libraries and meeting rooms where you would like to increase support, e.g. new, higher-end neighborhoods.

Really know the demographics of your community members and price your programs accordingly. We keep our monthly nature hikes free and charge up to \$65 for some of our workshops. There are usually many people who are on a limited income who regularly attend our free programs and thus stay connected with us. So the bottom line is don't price yourself out of the "market." And on the contrary, don't undercharge for high-end programs (like raku mask making) that attract attendees who can afford them.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for three sample flyers and an e-newsletter you can modify for use in carrying out a similar program.

American River Conservancy
presents



View of Coloma, the place where the first gold was discovered.

The Gold Rush and the Nisenan Maidu

Special Guest Presentation by
Naida West

Wednesday, May 7, 2003
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

The Gold Rush was a major event in California history. You hear about what the 49ers had to endure, the hardships they had to overcome. But you don't normally hear much about the impact of the Gold Rush on the Nisenan Maidu who were living here for many generations before gold was discovered.

Naida West, famed author of *River of Red Gold* and *Eye of the Bear*, will present a different perspective of the Gold Rush history and frank discussion of how the Nisenan Maidu were affected by this historic event.

Registration Required
Please call 530-621-1224

The American River Conservancy is the only private, non-profit organization protecting open space in El Dorado County. We provide environmental education services and land stewardship opportunities to serve our community. For more information on ARC, please contact us at : 530-621-1224, visit our Nature Center at 8913 Hwy. 49 or at our website at www.arconservancy.org

Digital Camera Workshop



Saturday, July 23
7:30 am—4:30 pm

So you've got a digital camera and you don't know how to use it, how to get the pictures out and how to get the best print you can! Well, you're probably not alone. This is the workshop for you! Marcus Christian will show you how to use your digital camera and its various features. This will include an early morning walk where you'll be given specific assignments to try with your camera so bring good walking shoes. In the second half of the workshop, Marcus will cover software to manipulate your photos using Adobe Photoshop CS, Elements and freeware such as Picassa and Irfanview. \$15 Members; \$20 Non-members

***Reservations are required for this program.
Call (530) 621-1224 to register.***



The American River Conservancy is a private non-profit organization of community volunteers and professionals dedicated to the protection of native fisheries, vanishing plant and animal communities, scenic vistas, cultural heritage and recreational lands within the American and Cosumnes River watersheds. For more information on ARC, please contact us at: (530) 621-1224, visit our Nature Center at 348 Hwy. 49 in Coloma, or our website at www.arconservancy.org.

Flyer #3



Guatemala

An Immersion in Culture



Slideshow/Lecture

Thursday
July 14
6:30 pm–8 pm



At the American River Nature Center

American River Conservancy member Lisa Poser is back from spending several exciting months in Guatemala, learning their language and experiencing their culture. With each e-mail, Lisa brought Guatemala and its people to our computer screens — allowing us to live vicariously through her adventurous spirit. She is now back in Coloma for the summer and ready to share her experiences with everyone. Join us at the American River Nature Center to hear about her exciting adventures.

Free to Members; \$3 Non-members.

Reservations are required for this program.
Call (530) 621-1224 to register.



The American River Conservancy is a private non-profit organization of community volunteers and professionals dedicated to the protection of native fisheries, vanishing plant and animal communities, scenic vistas, cultural heritage and recreational lands within the American and Cosumnes River watersheds. For more information on ARC, please contact us at: (530) 621-1224, visit our Nature Center at 348 Hwy. 49 in Coloma, or our website at www.arconservancy.org.



August 11, 2005

ARC e-Streams

Can you believe that we are past mid-summer already and will be heading into a new school year soon? This month's eStreams is packed full of education programs for all ages. We hope to see you at one of them!

ARC Autumn 2005 Wishlist:

Small Carpet Squares

Rocks for our Native Plant Garden

Colored Pencils

Subscription to Ecological Applications Journal

Subscription to High Country News

ARC Membership in SERCAL

For more wishlist info call (530) 621-1224

Education Update

The American River Nature Center is offering a new program this fall- Home School Thursdays!

We invite home school children and their parents to join us for these specially designed school programs.

Thursday, September 29

Amazing Adaptations

Recommended age-7-11

An audience participation skit by the students reveals critical needs of all animals. Students work together in small groups to create mini-habitats. Includes exploration of the Nature Center and a visit with George, the Tiger Salamander.

Programs fulfill science requirements.

Programs take place from 9:30-11:00 in the morning at the Nature Center in Coloma.

\$8 per child, free for adults.

Please pay at least 1 week before program.

Call to register (530) 621-1224; space is limited!

Please remember that all programs require reservations unless otherwise noted. Call (530) 621-1224 or email dtach@arconservancy.org to register.

AUGUST PROGRAMS:

Kids' Discovery Days - Stampin' with Spuds

Sunday, August 14, 10 am– 11:30 am

Kids will make their own stamps out of potatoes and use them to make note cards. We'll also have other things from our natural surroundings that they can use to decorate their cards. All materials will be provided. Age range: 5—10 years old. Maximum 15 kids.

Raku Workshop

Part I: August 21 - 10 am–4 pm

Part II: August 28 - 10 am–4 pm

This unique two-day workshop is taught by raku clay artists Eric and Paula Peach who have cultivated raku clay sculpture. In the first session, participants will sculpt clay objects (masks, ocarinas, drums or other) of their design, using slab, pinch and coil clay construction techniques. Plaster slump forms will be available to aid the construction process. In Part II, participants will explore raku glazing and firing techniques. Raku is a Japanese style of glazing that produces bright metallic colors and soft crackle glaze effects. \$50 Members; \$55 Non-members

SEPTEMBER PROGRAMS:

Hiking 'n Haiku

Saturday, September 3 - 9 am–12 noon

Get away from the hustle and bustle of the Labor Day weekend by joining Jessi Martin for a Japanese cultural weekend. Jessi will lead this leisurely walk to enjoy the natural environment. She will share her knowledge of haiku and guide and inspire you to share your thoughts in the form of haiku poetry. Previous experience is not required. Come and enjoy this special connection to our natural world. Bring a pad of paper and writing utensil.

Nature Center Yard Cleanup and Potluck

Saturday, September 24 - 9 am–1 pm

Auuggghhh! Blackberries, vinca, sweet peas and star thistle! They're at the Nature Center and we want to get rid of them to prepare for some native plantings. It's much more fun to pull weeds when there's a bunch of people working together. Bring your gloves and tools to help us beautify the Nature Center yard. This will also be a GREAT opportunity to just get together, shoot the breeze and party! So bring a potluck dish and come on down for the fun—even if you can't do the weed pulling!

Visit the American River Conservancy Nature Center located at 348 Hwy 49 in Coloma

Nature Center Hours are: Wed - Sun, 12 - 4 pm

or Visit ARC on the web at www.arconservancy.org

You are receiving this email from the American River Conservancy because you subscribed on our website or are a member. To ensure that you continue to receive emails from us, add arc@arconservancy.org to your address book today. To no longer receive our emails, click to [unsubscribe](#) and include UNSUBSCRIBE in your subject line.

American River Conservancy | 348 Hwy 49 | PO Box 562 | Coloma | CA | 95613 | (530) 621-1224

4. *Promote the organization with local financial advisors and estate attorneys as a worthy recipient of a bequest, life insurance policy or other planned gift.*

We knew it would be easier to reach the handful of financial advisors and estate attorneys in our area than to reach the general population (few of whom really want to talk about dying). We made a list of financial advisors and estate attorneys in our area and identified who of our board or staff knew them. We then created an information packet for the advisor/attorney as well as handouts they could give their clients. A “talking points” script was used in training the people who would make the visits. This was especially important for our organization because land trusts can offer many tax benefits to donors.

We put all the advisors and attorneys on the newsletter mailing list. If they were supportive, we asked them to become members, knowing it would carry more weight if they were able to tell their clients they believed in our organization enough to make a gift.

One of our supporters who is a leading financial advisor gave a presentation on planned giving to our board members. We have also scheduled him to come back to a planned giving breakfast next spring for our Legacy Circle (planned giving club) members.

Our goals for this strategy are to build awareness and credibility among community leaders and take a small, doable step toward developing a comprehensive planned giving program.

Expenses and Income

There is some expense in putting together the information packets and handouts. No income has been realized from this program yet.

Lessons Learned

We have watched our stereotypes of financial-type folks drop away as they showed great enthusiasm for our mission, appreciated the personal attention we gave them and, while making no promises, liked feeling their work could help a community-based nonprofit. Not all professionals were enthusiastic; some did not want to talk with us or keep any of our materials on file.

We need to make time to follow up regularly with these people to make sure they are aware of our stability and recent successes and to refresh their supply of brochures. As our area is growing fairly rapidly, new financial professionals will be entering the arena whom we will need to inform as well.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Thoughtful donors will go to your website to research your organization on their own time. Be sure to include information about planned giving opportunities, highlighting both the benefits for the donor and for your cause.

Sample Tool

See the following pages for a planned giving brochure you can modify for use in carrying out a similar program.

5. *Ask for a small honorarium for making a presentation.*

We've learned to ask for honorariums when groups ask us to make a presentation. Most groups actually do have a budget for speakers. We ask for the honorarium during the call when they book us. If they are a group we would like to reach, but they can't pay us, we sometimes choose to go anyway and then pass the hat. We always make more than \$100. We hand out literature and pass around a clipboard or collect business cards of folks who want to learn more about our work. Then we call them back within a week.

Making presentations is always good for increasing our visibility in our community, correcting misinformation among people who might not be our natural allies and adding names of interested people to our membership and mailing lists.

Expenses and Income

Expenses: None. Net income: \$100 per speaking engagement.

Lessons Learned

This strategy helps us focus our limited time on our key audiences; in cases where we do choose to reach out to others, it's good to be compensated for the effort.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Think carefully about how productive going on the speaker's circuit will be for you, especially if it involves driving very far. It's pretty easy to blow off half a workday talking to a bunch of people who aren't really very likely to make a donation.

Planned Giving Brochure

A Planned Gift to Ensure
Excellence in Land Protection,
Stewardship and Environmental
Education for years to come.

The Legacy Circle



Benefitting the
American River
Conservancy



 Yes I want to be a member of the Legacy Circle

 I want to find out more before I make my intent known please contact me:

Name

Address

.....

Phone



The Legacy Circle

A Planned Gift to Ensure Excellence in Land Protection, Stewardship and Environmental Education for years to come.

Your planned gift will ensure that the American River Conservancy continues its mission in years to come. It ensures that land will continue to be put in to protection, watersheds will be cleaned and monitored, sensitive species will have habitat in which to thrive and young children will continue to be taught the wonders of nature.

Planning your gift may be easier than you think. Be sure to put your wishes in writing in the form of a Will. Without a Will or living trust, your wishes may not be granted. You may want to talk with your family and loved ones about your wishes and let them know what the American River Conservancy means to you.

Your gift may come in many forms:

Over 80% of planned gifts nationwide come in the form of a bequest. A bequest is a simple statement in your Will or living trust bequeathing money or real property to the American River Conservancy. Please consult with your attorney for more information about this option.

If you are looking for tax relief as well as increased incomes for the rest of

your life, please talk with us and together we can work with your financial planner or community foundation about a Charitable Gift Annuity or Gift of Life Insurance. This option has many tax benefits and must be administered through a licensed entity.

Your IRA may, upon your death, be taxed by as much as 75%. This tax will be reduced to 0% if, upon your death, you leave your IRA to the American River Conservancy.

If you choose to give to the American River Conservancy in one of these ways, please inform us. We want to be aware of your intent and make you a part of our Legacy Circle. Membership into the Legacy Circle is voluntary. Legacy Circle benefits include all of the standard benefits of a Conservancy membership as well as the ability to attend our annual Legacy Circle brunch, where you will meet other people, like yourself, who have given a lasting gift. You'll also get to hear from a leading financial adviser about the latest tax topics.

The American River Conservancy has structured the Legacy Circle in such a way that all Conservancy supporters have access to membership. There is no minimum gift. We just need to be informed of your intent.



Benefitting the American River Conservancy

American River Conservancy
PO Box 1234567
Coloma, CA 95633

STAMP
AFFIX

6. Strategies: Community Engagement, Calendar, Art Auction

Churchill Animal Protection Society

Submitted By

Jennifer Williamson
Board President
Churchill Animal Protection Society
Churchill County, Nevada
jwilliamson@premierchemicals.com

The Community

The population in Churchill County is around 30,000. It varies substantially only by the number of people stationed at the Navy base. The nearest big city is Reno, and the main industries are retail, dairy and farming. Churchill County is slowly growing and changing as folks from California and the like seek rural life.

Churchill Animal Protection Society (CAPS) is a nonprofit, no-kill animal shelter.

Strategies

CAPS's first event was a dunking booth at the local Cantaloupe Festival, which is the town's largest event of the year. Our staff asked bigwigs around town and on the Navy base to sit over the tank. We advertised as much as possible, putting flyers up around town and notices in the community section of the local newspapers.

CAPS also participated in the town's Farmer's Market each Tuesday from June through August to raise awareness of the shelter and to ask for donations.

Next, we invited the editor of the local newspaper to be on our board, which ultimately led to a regular weekly feature called CAPS Corner. CAPS staff use the feature to give information and advice about caring for pets in summer/winter; providing for pets when you become ill and can no longer care for them; telling folks what CAPS is up to; reaching out for help in special situations; and thanking local businesses or community members for help or donations.

CAPS staff and board are currently working on two events: a Happy Endings Calendar featuring prominent locals and their rescued pets. A local photographer donated her time for the photos, and a local printer is printing the calendars at cost. CAPS is also preparing for an art auction at which more than 60 artists from around the world will donate either commissioned portraits (of the donor's pet), original work or prints. The art auction has received a tremendous response

from Australia, Canada, Germany, England and Sweden as well as all over the United States. Both of these fundraisers are designed to build CAPS's budget to expand hours and staff. Combined, these fundraisers ultimately took in over \$11,000, which after expenses will be close to \$9,500 net.

We consider all fundraising to be an excuse to get the word out about the services we offer, including a low-income spay/neuter program called CAPS SNAPs. For \$10, you can have your dog or cat spayed/neutered if you make less than \$25,000 a year and live in Churchill County.

The strategies fulfilled different goals. The dunk tank at the Cantaloupe Festival was a great way to let folks know that CAPS exists and gets them to stop in and find out about the services we provide. The Farmer's Market was more of a meet-and-greet event. The calendar is a way to show that even folks who can afford to get a high-priced dog would rather give a perfectly good dog another chance. The auction is simply to help CAPS raise big money towards becoming more self-sufficient and able to expand our hours and staff.

Expenses and Income

CAPS does not have a budget for events. Board members assess whether or not they have the people power to do an event; if they do, they go forward. In deciding whether or not to participate in an event again, CAPS compares the amount of time invested to what was earned. This year we are not participating in the Cantaloupe Festival; even though we made \$1,600, it was a huge investment of staff, board member and volunteer hours.

Lessons Learned

The best thing is that the principal folks involved are a lot of fun to be around. The most frustrating aspect is that there are not enough of them. It seems you never have enough volunteers.

Changes Made or Planned

We make changes following our assessment of the value of each event after it's over. We've dropped one event because of the amount of time and energy it took. Looking ahead to the upcoming auction—while we are getting an enormous response to requests for items to be donated, we will have to evaluate it based on attendance and income after the event. Considering the success of this auction so far, we are 99% certain we will do it again next year, bigger and better.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

CAPS advises all rural organizations to get out there in whatever way you can. Not everyone is going to jump on the bandwagon; it takes time. This organization has been in place for 20 years, but the founding members didn't succeed in getting our name out or recruiting adequate members/volunteers. There is no formula for success; you just have to try. Some of us have never done any of these types of things, so you just have to forge your own path. Originality gets peoples attention, so don't be afraid to experiment.

7. Strategy: Paper Airplane Contest

Community Child Care Council

Submitted By

Judy Edmonds
Community Child Care Council
Santa Rosa, CA
jedmonds@sonic.net

The Community

Community Child Care Council (4Cs) is located in Santa Rosa, California in the heart of the Sonoma Wine Country. Since wine tastings are a bit off-mission, the board and staff were looking for a family-friendly event to raise both visibility and money.

4Cs serves both rural and urban families, and child care providers are spread across many small communities in a county with 1500 square miles about an hour north of San Francisco. We rely on government for 98% of our funding and are venturing into community-based fundraising as a source of discretionary income.

The Strategy

Just Plane Fun! was a paper airplane contest held in a local gym on a Saturday in October. Organized by a committee of board members and volunteers and co-chaired by a staff person, it was three hours of noisy fun, creativity, competition and education. Invitations were 8-1/2" x 11" pastel paper folded in the shape of a paper airplane and mailed in 13" x 4-1/2" colored envelopes.

Admission was free the first year; the next year, \$5 was charged per family for 4Cs members and for child care providers, \$10 for general admission. Prizes were donated, and refreshments and T-shirts were sold. However, 80% of the money raised came from Supersonic, Ace and Co-Pilot Sponsors (\$2,500, \$1,000 and \$500). Sponsorship benefits were clearly outlined on a one-page sheet.

There were building stations stocked with free supplies and volunteers to help children and adults build paper airplanes. Engineer-types helping kids build airplanes gleefully slipped in physics lessons. Fifteen-minute contests were held on three "runways." Runways were dedicated to distance, flight duration and accuracy. Different heats were held for ages 4-7, 8-11, 12-15 and 16 and above. (We had to add the 16+ category the second year because so many "Big Kids" really, really wanted to play too.)

People could vote for their favorite decorated plane, watch the Sheriff's Department Search & Rescue Bloodhound Unit demonstration and get their paper airplane autographed by Captain

Robin, the local radio station traffic reporter. There were model airplane demonstrations, hugs from the local ice cream company mascot (Clo the Cow) and an awards ceremony at the end of the day where special prizes were given to the winners. Top prizes included flight lessons, a flight over the county and a private tour of the air traffic control tower. There were a multitude of modest prizes so that each contestant would walk away a winner. Volunteers staffed the registration booth, and staff posted an informational display about the Community Child Care Council.

There were monetary and non-monetary goals for this strategy.

Monetary goals: Year 1: \$2,000 Year 2: \$3,000-5,000

Non-monetary goals:

- Have a low-cost family activity that is fun and educational.
- Increase awareness of the agency among parents, educators and businesses.
- Involve the board and volunteers in community-based fundraising.
- Provide opportunities for business support.

Expenses and Income

Expenses: Expenses ran about 20% of the total income each year.

Income/net: Yr. 1: income \$2,500; net \$2,000. Yr. 2: income \$5,000; net \$4,000.

Lessons Learned

This was a unique event in our community and attracted many different types of people: families, who are always looking for a free/low-cost activity, artists, engineers, airplane enthusiasts and kids-at-heart. The most fun, of course, was watching and playing with the children. Throughout the following year, parents would call 4Cs saying their kids were working on their airplanes and asking us when we were going to hold the next contest.

There were some challenges. Especially the first year, this event took a lot of staff time to organize. The second year, a football game at the same time created a lot of noise in addition to high competition for parking spaces. Most frustrating was the fact that we had only enough energy to do one special event per year. By the fourth year, when we needed to bring in significantly more money, we reluctantly switched to an adult social fundraising event.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

There are many creative possibilities for additional activities—income-generating and not: demonstrations, celebrity guests, “in-flight” food sales and other competition categories. Try to keep it simple the first year, get your systems down, and move the project over to being mostly volunteer-driven the next year.

Think of other ways to make the most of the opportunity—have a booth to encourage memberships and collect email addresses for your e-newsletter; have an attractive display where people can learn (and talk to someone) about your organization.

Sponsorships are key if your goal is to raise money. Give your sponsors a visual reminder of their donation. 4Cs took a picture of the winner of each of our categories proudly holding their airplane next to that sponsor's sign. We put the photo into an airplane picture frame and sent it along with a thank-you note to each of the sponsors. Be sure to stay in contact with your sponsors if you'd like their support next year.

The first paper airplane contest in the country was started by *Scientific American* magazine in 1967. Take a ride on the internet to find lots of articles and advice on how others run their paper airplane contests, instructions on how to make paper airplanes and how teachers and parents can use making paper airplanes to teach about math, science, engineering, physics, origami, art and language. A good place to start is teacher.scholastic.com/paperairplane/.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for examples of materials that you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event:

1. Flyer
2. Invitation
3. Poster

Flyer

JUST PLANE FUN

Join us for a day of excitement at the 3rd annual Just Plane Fun!

Date: Saturday, October 12th

Location: Piner High School

Time: 1:00—4:00

1700 Fulton Road

Santa Rosa

Just Plane Fun is a paper airplane contest for the entire family.

Categories include distance, duration (how long the plane stays in the air), and accuracy. You can also decorate planes. Prizes for all entries!

Categories: ages 4-7, 8-11, 12-15, and Open (16 and older)

You can bring your own plane, or let our volunteers help you fold them.

Entrance fee is only \$10 for the entire family.

PRIZES!

REFRESHMENTS!

ENTERTAINMENT!

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP:

Prizes

We award hundreds of prizes every year and would appreciate donations from merchants or from the community. Always appreciated are: movie tickets, gift certificates, restaurant certificates, new games or toys, stuffed animals . . . JPF attracts children of all ages, so the sky's the limit!

Volunteering

We can use volunteers to help on the day of JPF, October 12th, or to be part of the steering committee that plans and coordinates the event.

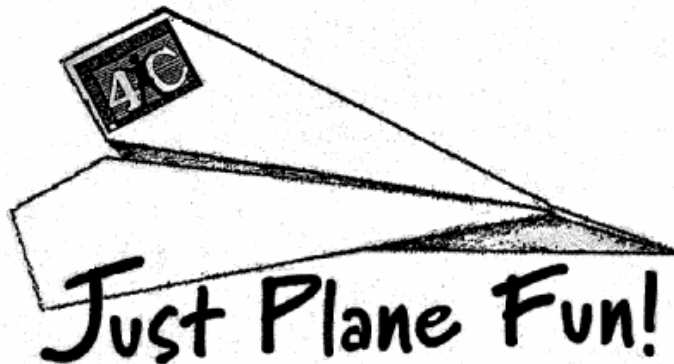
Sponsorships

Just Plane Fun is possible through the support of generous individuals and local businesses. Tax-deductible sponsorships range from \$100 to \$2,500, and include substantial advertising.

To find out more about Just Plane Fun—whether to attend, to volunteer, become a sponsor or to donate prizes—please call Judy Edmonds at 522-1413 ext 101 or e-mail her at jedmonds@sonoma4cs.org

Invitation

You're Invited to
Be Our Guest
For a day of



Saturday, October 14, 2000
1:00-4:00 PM
Santa Rosa High School Gymnasium

Paper airplane flying
competitions open to kids
4 to 104.

Use this paper airplane as admission for one family.

A response would be appreciated, please call Judy Edmonds at:
(707) 522-1413 ext. 101

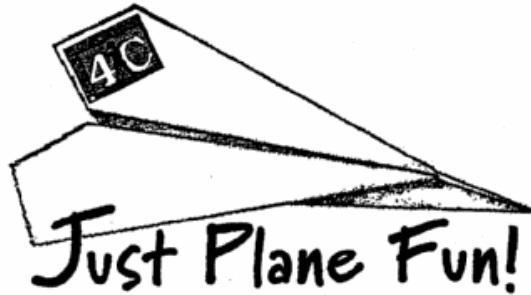
♥This fundraising event will benefit Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County♥
♥Main Office: *544-3077 *396 Tesconi Court *Santa Rosa CA 95401♥

Poster

Community Child Care Council (4Cs) Presents:

Refreshments!

Entertainment!
Prizes!



2nd Annual Paper Airplane Contest

Prizes in all age groups and categories.

Events: distance, accuracy,
duration, decoration

Dr. Pop Balloon Artist, Clown & Magician

Saturday, October 13, 2001

1-4pm

at

Piner High School

Only \$10 per family.

Special \$5 admission per family for
4Cs Members and Child Care Providers. *

Tickets on sale Sept. 21st at →



* Children must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information call: (707) 522-1413, ext.154

This fundraising event will benefit Community Child Care Council of
Sonoma County.



BIRKENSTOCK

Today's Best Variety



Clone Digital Print & Copy ★ Girl by Girl Scholarship Readiness ★ Sushi Hana
Charles M. Schulz Museum ★ The Codding Foundation ★ Ethan Izzarelli

8. Strategy: Christmas Wish List and Annual Appeal

Culbertson Memorial Hospital

Submitted By

Luan Phillips
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Culbertson Memorial Hospital
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cmhospital.com

The Community

Culbertson Memorial Hospital (CMH) is a 25-bed critical access hospital located in Rushville, population 3,300, in west-central Illinois. The nearest big city is the state capital, Springfield, 60 miles away on a two-lane highway. Rushville and the surrounding communities are mainly agricultural, with corn and soybeans the most commonly grown crops. The family-owned farm concept is still alive and well in the area, although large corporate farms are becoming more common.

The Rushville area has high unemployment and poverty rates. For the most part, the population is older and poorer than the state average. Neighboring communities are experiencing a large influx of Latino families, who are drawn to the area for employment at a local pork processing plant.

CMH is the only hospital in a three-county area. With nearly 200 people on its payroll, CMH is one of the largest employers in the county. Seven area physicians serve on CMH's medical staff, and specialists from larger communities hold outpatient clinics at the hospital on a regular basis. CMH owns and operates three medical clinics in neighboring towns and a 20-unit independent living facility for seniors.

The Strategy

Traditionally, CMH simply sent out annual appeal letters to donors who have shown a history of supporting the hospital. We usually chose one piece of medical equipment as the project for the year. However, last year we changed our tactics a bit. Instead of selecting one high-profile item, CMH put together a *Christmas Wish List* catalogue. The catalogue featured items needed in a variety of departments; not all were medical in nature. For instance, our Housekeeping Department had been wanting to convert to a new microfiber mopping system instead of the old string mop method, but the new system just would not fit into that department's modest budget. We offered it in our catalogue and received full funding for the new system. Needless to say, CMH's housekeepers were delighted.

The catalogue also featured a pick-up truck for the Maintenance Department. Although we haven't raised enough to buy a truck yet, we did receive enough to make a generous down payment on one. We were also able to buy a new crash cart defibrillator for the ER, a blood warmer for the anesthesia department, an arm ergometer for cardiac rehab, a sedimentation rate system for the clinical lab, a fancy weight system for the therapy services department, wheelchairs, geri-chairs and much more.

All in all, the *Wish List* raised more than \$50,000! We intend to use the catalogue again this year.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Tracking the gifts for each item is a bit of hassle but certainly worth it in the end.

It's important to keep the rural audience in mind when appealing to them for donations. Most of the time, rural people have a very traditionalist view of life. They work hard for their money and will give generously if they feel you're being honest and open with them and intend to use the money for something they truly believe in.

9. Strategy: Rummage Sale

Dance Palace

Submitted By

Jessica Walker
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The Community

The western part of Marin County is a community of about 15,000 year-round residents, with a booming weekender/tourist influx, especially in the summer. The town of Point Reyes has a population of about 1,500. West Marin is an hour north of San Francisco; the economy is primarily agriculture (ranching), tourism and a National Seashore that is a big tourist attraction. Point Reyes is a small town in the midst of lots of open space and cows.

The Strategy

The Rummage Sale looks to capitalize on the “quirky local” and “curious tourist” over a holiday weekend at the end of the summer. There is a fairly large population (Latino and Caucasian alike) who struggle to live in this very expensive area, so bargain furniture, clothes and so on can be a big draw.

The Dance Palace bills the Rummage Sale as a fundraiser and advertises in the local paper, on our website and in our bulletin, newsletter, etc. We ask people to drop off their “quality rummage” between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on the Sunday and Monday before the holiday weekend of the sale.

The Dance Palace organizes the volunteers who staff the sale, which may be the most work for the organization but is well worth the effort.

Expenses and Income

The space is provided for free in the middle of town in the parking lot of the local general store. Major expenses, which came to less than \$50 total, were for some lemonade and a bit of publicity. Some years, we have had to rent a Dumpster and make a dump run (anywhere from \$50 to \$200 depending on the year).

The Dance Palace has been holding its annual Rummage Sale since 1994, bringing in \$1,300 to \$3,300.

Changes Made or Planned

This year, the Dance Palace allowed another local nonprofit—the radio station—to have a booth at the sale to sell their old records, CDs and books. The station paid the Dance Palace a flat fee (\$50) rather than a percentage of their profits. Allowing the station to have a booth at the

sale may have increased awareness and attendance, as they have a slightly different mailing list and publicity base.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

If you are going to do a rummage sale, keep these things in mind:

- Compare prices at local thrift stores.
- Reduce items to half price in the afternoon of the second day.
- Be sure to have plenty of change on hand.
- Organize lots of volunteers to staff the sale and help with set up and clean up.
- Have drinks for volunteers.
- Don't accept things that you will have to get rid of later, like mattresses, old computers, broken appliances and electrical stuff.
- Try to have someone knowledgeable about specific items/areas to help with pricing, e.g., books, antique house wares and tools.
- Be sure to just give things away for free in the last hour.

10.Strategy: Earned Income

Georgia FERRETS Inc.

Submitted By

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The Community

Scottsdale is an unincorporated community, population about 10,000, in DeKalb County, Georgia, about 8.5 miles outside of Atlanta. In 2000, the median household income was \$37,731.

The Strategy

Georgia FERRETS is a small organization of seven people primarily engaged in taking care of ferrets that are waiting to be adopted and in encouraging adoption. We needed an easy fundraiser that did not take us away from our primary mission.

We buy high-quality cheesecake from a company that specializes in making baked goods for sale by nonprofits (Debraann.com, which works only in Georgia and Florida and resells them at a slight profit). We have found this strategy to be a simple, straightforward, low-risk and predictable income stream, able to weather the vagaries of the economy, the war and competition with other organizations. Our main marketing strategy has been word-of-mouth—at churches, pet stores, veterinarian offices and through coworkers, family and friends.

Expenses and Income

Georgia FERRETS sells the cakes for \$17 (which is what a person would have paid in their local grocery store) and earns \$5.50 for each cake sold. We earned \$7,200 the first year with this simple strategy. We invested in two 27-cubic-foot freezers to store the cakes when they come in. Since the cakes are pre-ordered by customers, there is no waste and no risk of losing money. The profit is immediately available. We place orders every other month; the company encourages people to place their orders far in advance, as the cakes take 21 days to be delivered. Word-of-mouth is good advertising and promotes the business. Once a carrot cake was so well spoken of that it generated orders for 95 more!

Changes Made or Planned

We have expanded from just delivery to buying extra cheesecakes in case a person wants to buy one more when they get the one they ordered. We have discovered that when delivering to a business location, it is a good idea to have some extras so that other people can buy them on the spot for meetings or snacks.

11.Strategy: Selling Donated Items on eBay

Loving Paws Assistance Dogs

Submitted By

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The Community

Loving Paws Assistance Dogs is the only US program that focuses solely on raising and training dogs to help children with disabilities. Its volunteer puppy raisers, trainers and placement families are spread across the United States and even into Mexico. The office is located in Santa Rosa, California, but locally its visibility is overshadowed by another, much larger service-dog program. The worldwide web seems to be the “place” where the Loving Paws community gathers via email, a Yahoo discussion group and websites.

The Strategy

Although it’s important to support local businesses, rural supporters often shop on the internet, especially when there is no local retailer. One loyal puppy-raiser for Loving Paws is also an eBay seller, and for more than two years she has collected donated items from other volunteers, businesses and friends and put them up for sale on eBay auctions. She has paid the seller’s fee out of the goodness of her heart and donated the profits to Loving Paws.

There are more auction sites now, such as Yahoo, but eBay has made it easier for both buyers and sellers to donate, for nonprofits to sell items and for people to link from eBay to your agency webpage.

When a seller elects to donate 100% of their final sale price, eBay will also donate their “insertion” and “final value” fees. EBay Giving Works has contracted with MissionFish, a service of the Points of Light Foundation, to help verify listings of nonprofits, provide sellers with tax receipts and track donations.

Items listed by individual sellers registering with MissionFish.org will show a special ribbon icon, the donation percentage of the final sale price (or a minimum of \$10) and information about your nonprofit. If the seller chooses to donate less than 100%, eBay will charge \$3 for

MissionFish operations plus 2.9% for credit card fees. Purchases are not tax deductible, but donation of items for auction are deductible.

Or like our volunteer, sellers can skip MissionFish and just post on the item description page how much they will donate to your agency. Our volunteer maintains an online “store” and is convinced that showcasing her donations has increased her business.

Nonprofits can get a free organizational listing, run a special event auction online, list items that you produce or have received in-kind or open an eBay Store. EBay will donate their insertion and final value fees for nonprofit “Direct Sellers.” Even if you don’t have anything to sell right now, you should still register in case someone wants to support you.

Our financial goal was to raise \$500. In addition, we hoped to introduce our organization to more people by driving them to our website and to foster a sense of community among far-flung supporters.

Lessons Learned

It was fun cheering on our volunteer auctioneer. Volunteers are doing something they love and raising money for you, so they should get lots of support for their efforts.

Not getting enough stuff donated and not being able to convert buyers into mission-supporters was the most frustrating aspect of this strategy.

Expenses and Income

Expense depends on volume and whether an individual seller absorbs the fees (about \$15/month for an individual’s online store) or your nonprofit sells directly.

Income can be \$500-2,000 per year. With recent eBay policy changes, this concept provides much greater visibility, more options for sellers and buyers and opportunities for increased income.

Changes Made or Planned

We plan to develop a consistent message and system for soliciting, storing, evaluating and shipping auction items.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

- Although the whole world is watching the web, use your newsletter, e-newsletter, email and website to let your supporters know they can donate to you when they make a bid or post something to sell online.
- Keep this a volunteer-driven activity.
- If you have web-savvy supporters, consider other online programs, such as iGive.com or Amazon.com, where the buyer can designate your agency to receive a donation each time they make a purchase. Or expand your sales efforts to craigslist.org or some of the up-and-coming auction sites.

- Samples:
 - cgi3.ebay.com/ws/eBayISAPI.dll?ViewUserPage&userid=lpadogs
 - stores.ebay.com/Loving-Paws-Assistance-Dogs_W0QQssPageNameZl2QQtZkm

12. Strategies: Mad Tea Party and Mid-Summer Swing

North East Community Center

Submitted By

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The Community

Millerton, New York is a town of 3,000 people about two hours north of New York City; many NYC residents weekend or summer here. Unemployment is high, wages are low and child care is very hard to find.

The town is part of the “eastern corridor” of Dutchess County—the very-low-income part of the county, and Millerton is the poorest town. Several of the few existing large employers have closed in recent years, and the farm economy continues to decline. Yet in some ways, Millerton is more a part of neighboring Connecticut—the fairly well off towns of northwestern Litchfield County, CT are only minutes away. People in those towns are much more aware of us than people in far-flung parts of Dutchess County.

Most of the land is or was farmland and open space, with a network of towns ranging from 2,000 to 3,000 people scattered five to ten miles apart.

Strategies

North East Community Center (NECC) fundraises through a number of different means: annual appeal (one letter a year with one follow-up), grants of various kinds and a benefit. Last year, we put on a very successful benefit, the Mad Tea Party, and this year followed it up with one that was much less successful (the Mid-Summer Swing). Our event goals are to raise money from locals and weekenders, involve the business community and raise awareness generally about our programs.

The first year, a board member dreamed up the Mad Tea Party and chaired it. The Harney Tea Company is headquartered in neighboring, very wealthy, Connecticut, and NECC held the party at their factory, with factory tours part of the plan. The Alice in Wonderland theme ran across all PR materials (all done in-house by staff and volunteers). We also collaborated with a local art gallery, which showed and sold paintings at the event. There was a silent auction, and local restaurants donated food. We decorated the large, airplane-hangar-like empty second floor of the factory in fanciful ways.

The second year, this board member declined to chair. The people taking over had the attitude “we know how to do this, it’s easy.” We never came up with a compelling theme (the committee chose Mid-Summer Swing and had a swing dance). The location was a very pleasant local Victorian inn—but it didn’t have nearly the excitement factor of the Harney Tea Factory. NECC hired a very expensive 8-man jazz/swing band and paid them \$4,300, as opposed to the \$350 we spent on a little swing trio the previous year, and the music wasn’t very danceable. There were no other collaborations with other groups. The event was on a weekend that had a lot of competition (a local school had a major reunion of classes in a 10-year span; the chamber of commerce had had a swing dance two weeks previously that was priced lower and offered a full dinner as compared to NECC’s appetizer/dessert spread).

Attendance was perhaps 120, compared to 300 the previous year. Though for the most part items donated to the auction were comparable in number and quality, the bids were lower. We attracted our core supporters but not people coming just for the event itself as happened the previous year. An analysis later revealed that over 75% of auction proceeds came from board and staff members.

Expenses and Income

The first year, our fundraising goal was \$10,000; we actually netted \$27,000. The second year, our goal was \$15,000; we netted \$11,000 at the event plus a \$2,000 gift resulting from a follow-up visit with one new donor after the event.

Lessons Learned

In both cases, the actual party was fun. For our director, the second one was actually more fun because she was clearer on what she was supposed to be doing there (introducing herself to as many people as possible) so she felt more secure. Everyone at the Tea Party had a great time. The Swing was less festive because it was quieter overall.

In NECC’s area, the most successful groups pick one event and do it every year, then become known for it. Everyone knows that Women’s Support Services does the Trade Secrets plant show in May; Habitat for Humanity has their tag sale in August; the day care center does the house tour in September; and so on. We feel it’s important to become known in the same way so people will say, “Oh, NECC’s tea party is always a hoot, let’s make sure to go this year!” Having hit on the Tea Party, we are planning to stick with it now with a different variation each time.

The board did the vast quantity of the work in both cases, with dedication and commitment. The downside is that there were different leaders each year. The staff had to stand by and watch as the committee of the second year’s event was clearly not as creative as the first year’s committee—and as the board was making some questionable decisions. Staff functioned as support and had their own tasks, but their accumulated wisdom wasn’t always heeded.

13.Strategy: Capital Campaign

Northern Plains Resource Council

Submitted By

Erica Fulker
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The Community

Billings, Montana is a community of just over 90,000. Though it is the largest city in Montana, Billings has a rural feel in many ways and has long been known as a cowboy town. Many resident families still own neighboring farm or ranch operations. Billings is the shopping and medical hub for many rural people from the eastern half of Montana. There are numerous businesses that sell farm and ranch equipment and supplies as well as others that provide agricultural services. Billings has a large sugar beet factory, where beets are brought to be processed into sugar. There is also a livestock auction yard.

Billings's population is largely Caucasian, with small minority populations (about 3% to 5%) of Crow and Northern Cheyenne as well as Hispanics. It is a business-oriented community that is politically moderately conservative.

The Strategy

Northern Plains Resource Council is in the midst of a capital campaign. Over the years, our staff and programs have expanded, and we face a worsening space shortage. After 33 years of renting, Northern Plains has decided to purchase and remodel an old neighborhood grocery building located in an underdeveloped and highly visible part of Billings. Our building stands on the outskirts of downtown on a primary corridor running into downtown from an interstate highway. This is an older neighborhood that has been neglected for years in terms of city services and new development. It is our hope that locating an office in a building that has stood empty for several years will help revitalize the neighborhood.

We plan to renovate this building into a model of energy efficiency, using passive-solar design and recycled building materials. Our new headquarters will enable us to live and demonstrate our values—conservation, local economies and community building. Our new “Home on the Range” will be a permanent home for grassroots citizen action in our region.

Our comments about fundraising for this project are necessarily limited because this capital campaign is in progress now, and we have a significant amount of work to go.

A capital campaign is different from conventional fundraising in three important ways. First, capital campaigns usually seek to raise a very large amount of money. Second, only a tiny proportion of foundations support capital campaigns, so this source of funding is extremely

limited. Third, capital campaigns require very large gifts from a small number of donors. While traditional grassroots fundraising is certainly part of the strategy, there must be an emphasis on identifying donor prospects who are willing to make larger gifts than the organization is accustomed to getting from individuals.

We developed a fundraising pyramid to identify how many donors we would need at various funding levels. Then we identified prospects. Most of these were from our own membership, but we brainstormed and met with other people to identify prospective donors who may never have contributed to us before.

Our strategy for these major donors involved identifying the best person to approach each prospect—someone who had some sort of contact. Typically, a letter would propose a meeting and the request itself would be made in the face-to-face meeting.

We invited some prospects to a get-acquainted gathering where we gave a short program about our capital campaign. For most people who attended these gatherings, the asking process would follow up on the presentation in the following days or weeks.

Northern Plains Resource Council also employed annual direct mail appeals to our membership. The gifts obtained this way were typically smaller than those from the face-to-face meeting strategy because it was less personal and less focused on those with the capacity to make large gifts. We are about to embark on a small series of house parties; the hosts are community leaders who have already donated, and they are going to ask their friends and peers to donate to the project.

We felt it was important to have 100% giving participation among our board and staff members. Each board and staff member received a letter followed up by a personal contact from a fellow board member or fellow staffer. We had to update our requests periodically when we had turnover in staff or board membership.

Because major gifts are such an important part of the capital campaign, we used pledge forms in order to formalize and record pledges. A spoken commitment does not constitute a pledge—we need a signed commitment. Some pledges extend for five years. Others are tied to how far we have progressed toward reaching our fundraising goal. Some of our employees pledged by authorizing an amount withheld from their monthly paychecks.

Northern Plains is an organization that advocates on issues, that challenges powerful political and economic interests and that creates controversy at times. This fact limits our fundraising opportunities, particularly from the business community.

For the most part, our fundraising has been aimed at soliciting general support of the project. We have recently begun soliciting small donations for individual solar cells, though we have not focused much energy on this approach yet. We have also not provided naming opportunities to prospective donors, though we will likely do so once the building plans are finalized.

Expenses and Income

The budget for such a project, we have learned, is a moving target. It changes as conditions change over time; it changes as we gain new information; it changes as we modify our needs for

the building. We were advised early on that a building project always costs more than you think it will and takes longer than you think it will. This has proven true.

Lessons Learned

As we learned when we started building an endowment fund several years ago, we have some members who particularly enjoy giving toward the organization's long-term future. It is a different and more thoughtful kind of giving.

Because the building we purchased is very visible, our plans have received enough publicity so that many in the community are aware of our project, whether or not they are connected with our organization. This visibility has helped solidify our organization's status as a long-term member of the community.

Discovering how much some of our members care about the long-term work of our organization—this is more than fun, it's inspiring. We have also pulled new donors into the organization through the campaign. This is something that will benefit Northern Plains for years to come. The ever-increasing budget has been a big frustration.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

Our capital campaign is still in progress, so we are not yet in a position to give advice beyond where we are now. We can say that raising the money is taking longer than we had initially hoped (we were warned of this) and that some of the delays were the result of things over which we had no control (such as delays in the purchase of the building due to a crisis in the seller's family and delays in the design process).

A capital campaign is a special event in the life of a small nonprofit. It took us 33 years to reach this point. We have no plans for doing it again, though no situation is permanent. If the day comes that we decide to embark on another capital campaign, we will at least have done it once. Even if the key staff have turned over by that time, we will have a certain amount of institutional memory that will help guide us. And we will be starting from a different position—property owner and established community member.

A capital campaign demands a great deal of an organization, whether urban or rural. All the money required to pull it off is “extra” money—you still have to pay for your day-to-day operations and important issue work, all while raising a bigger amount of money than you have ever raised before.

And it isn't just the money. It takes a lot of staff and volunteer time to make it happen—the planning, fundraising, publicity and managing the project itself. Still, a capital campaign can be a long-term investment in your organization's financial health and can help establish an organization more solidly in its community.

The decision about whether to do a capital campaign needs serious debate. It will be a better one if not everyone goes into the debate already in agreement. Those individuals who are so valuable on your board—the ones who love your organization enough to ask tough questions—are critical to making a good decision.

Here are a few recommendations for an organization considering a capital campaign:

- Consider hiring someone or designating one specific person on staff whose job it is to manage the project. It is too much work to try to spread among everyone's plates.
- Create a budget that overestimates all expenses, and be sure to include a large contingency fund. If you end up being under budget but have raised the money, the extra money can go into savings for future building maintenance.
- Create an advisory board or find a few members or allies who know about building, construction and, in our case, energy efficiency. Such advisors have been immensely helpful in helping us get exactly what we want.

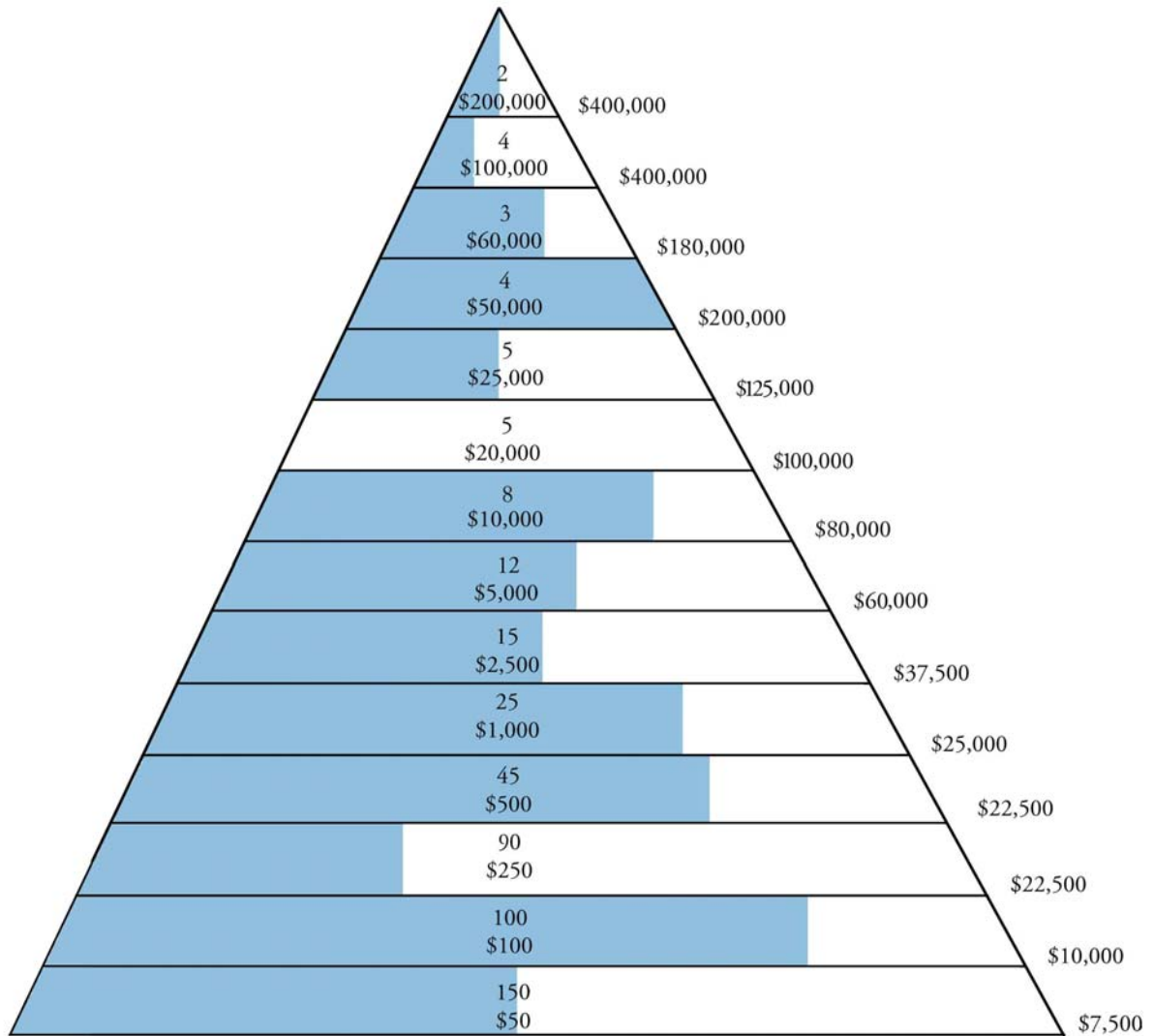
Sample Tool

See the following page for a sample gift chart that you can modify for use in carrying out a similar campaign.

Gift Pyramid (Number of Gifts Needed at Each Level)



NORTHERN PLAINS/WORC CAPITAL CAMPAIGN GIFTS PYRAMID



Total Gifts: 468

Total amount of gifts: \$1,670,000

14. Strategy: Wash-a-Thon

Save Our Cumberland Mountains

Submitted By

Linda Cowan
Save Our Cumberland Mountains
Campbell Chapter
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(865) 426-9455

The Community

Campbell County is a mountainous county found in the heart of the Cumberland Mountains. Half of the towns are located in the coal-field mountains, while the other half are in the agricultural valley, including the county seat. The population is about 40,000 and doesn't change much throughout the year. The county is ranked in the bottom quarter of US county economies, with high unemployment and primarily minimum-wage factory and service jobs. Coal mining-related jobs have diminished, with only a few existing at this time. There are many low-income retired people living in Campbell County. Norris Lake borders part of Campbell County, and because of the county's natural beauty, there are people retiring to the area that come from a mix of working- to upper-class backgrounds. The nearest large city is Knoxville, Tennessee and is over 30 miles away.

The Strategy

What is a wash-a-thon?

It is a free car wash! It works the same way that a walk-a-thon does with one exception—instead of the sponsors making pledges for one person walking, pledges for the wash-a-thon are for each car that the chapter (group) washes. There are two things that make this concept unique. One is that if you cannot help wash, you can still get sponsors (or pledges) for the group. The other is that it is a free car wash open to the public.

We believe that a good local fundraising event contains five main elements:

1. It brings attention to the issues that the chapter is working on.
2. It involves lots of chapter members.
3. It raises money.
4. It is an event you can repeat and improve every year.
5. It's fun!

Lessons Learned

Allow about 4-6 weeks to plan for this event. Here are the details:

1. Set a date and an alternate “rain date” for the car wash.
2. Find a location to have the car wash. Make sure you have at least one water source. Two are better. However, if only one is available, you can purchase a “Y” to attach two hoses. The location should be a place that will allow easy access and flow of cars. You don’t want to be bogged down with people having to pull in and back out to get their cars washed.
3. Other decisions include a goal for how many cars you will wash (200? 100? 50?) and whether or not you will provide advertisement at the event for businesses that sponsor for a specific amount (we ask for sponsorships of \$50, \$100, \$150). Listing the sponsors on posters or fliers at the event is easily done. Some businesses may want you to pass out coupons.
4. Design a flyer/pledge form.
5. Send a letter to group members along with flyer/pledge forms and reply cards for people to commit to getting sponsors, to help the day of wash or to make their own financial commitment. You will have to follow the letter with a phone call. Not everyone will respond with the reply card.
6. Encourage the group to get sponsors and pledges. Sources include businesses, friends, co-workers, church members, doctors and other acquaintances. Allow a minimum of three weeks for this. We usually allow four to five weeks for getting sponsors and pledges.
7. Put fliers up in local grocery stores, convenience stores, gas stations and bulletin boards where allowed.
8. Start gathering supplies for the wash-a-thon. Items needed: good hoses, nozzles, “Y”, extra washers, sponges, rags, car wash soap, tire cleaner (optional), window cleaner (optional), brushes for tires, lots of buckets, sun screen and first aid kit. Don’t forget your volunteers—provide plenty of water, snacks and lunch. (You want extra buckets so that clean water is ready at all times. It is important when really dirty cars come through that the water is changed and the sponges and rags are thoroughly rinsed to keep little rocks and sticks from scratching the paint on other vehicles.) Other supplies include information about the group, membership brochures and any other materials you want to give to the people getting their cars washed. And don’t forget a donation bucket. Even though the car wash is *free*, many people will want to donate anyway. In fact, we’ve gotten more from donations in a free car wash than when we’ve charged per car.
9. Gather early the day of the event to organize volunteers. Four teams of four is optimum to keep from getting overworked. This allows two teams per hose, with teams alternating. (If you don’t have that many volunteers, we have done the wash-a-thon with much less help.) One person rinses, one does tires, and two wash the car. The two washing the car should work a system that allows for washing and quickly rinsing so soap doesn’t dry on the vehicle. Get a couple of other volunteers to stand alongside the road with posters to get people’s attention that you are having a *Free Car Wash*. A couple of people need to be available to talk

with customers about the issue the group is working on. One person needs to keep track of the number of cars washed. You only have to wash up to your goal, not one more.

10. Have a blast! Don't forget to thank the owners for the use of their property and water. Be sure to clean the area, so you'll be welcomed back next year.

11. Collect outstanding pledges.

Changes Made or Planned

When Wal-Mart moved into the area, the chapter learned that the Wal-Mart Foundation was matching fundraisers from nonprofit groups. We got an application form, filled it out and later learned it had been accepted. The grants were up to \$1,000. We raised \$1,300 that year. With the Wal-Mart grant, the grand total was \$2,300. Not bad for a car wash.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

This is an excellent fundraiser for a rural group. We have repeated it several times. The event is fun. The most frustrating thing is not having enough volunteers. It requires a lot of physical work and can be taxing if only a few show up.

Sample Tools

See the following pages for examples of materials that you can modify for use in carrying out a similar event:

1. Flyer
2. Letter to Members
3. Member Response/Commitment Forms
4. Pledge Form

THE CAMPBELL/ANDERSON CHAPTER OF
Save Our Cumberland Mountains

is having a

WASH-A-THON

FREE

BEGINS AT
10:00 a.m.



CAR WASH

at

PIZZA HUT

Hwy. 25-W • LaFollette

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1998

OUR GOAL - 50 CARS!

RAIN DATE - JUNE 20

Letter to Members



Save Our Cumberland Mountains

224 S. Main Street, Suite 1 • P. O. Box 479
Lake City, TN 37769
423-426-9455 or 426-9307
FAX 423-426-9289

August 8, 2001

Dear Campbell/Anderson Chapter Member,

At our July chapter meeting, the chapter decided to have a Wash-a-thon (car wash getting pledges) as part of its chapter fundraising plan. The date is 10:00 a.m. Saturday, September 8, at Pizza Hut in LaFollette. A rain date is scheduled for September 22. We plan on washing 50 cars. We've raised as much as \$2,000 in the past. Let's all pull together and see how much we can raise this year.

You, as a chapter member, can help in one or more of the following ways.

- ✓ Take the sponsor sheet provided and ask your friends, neighbors, doctors, church members, etc. to sponsor the chapter with a pledge or donation
- ✓ Make a pledge or donation yourself
- ✓ Come out the day of the wash and help

We need people who can:

- wash cars
- supervise the washing of cars
- count the cars
- talk to customers about SOCM
- help provide refreshments for workers
- help with clean-up after wash-a-thon

If you are willing to help, please fill out the enclosed reply sheet and mail to Linda at the SOCM office no later than August 31, 2001.

If you get sponsors and cannot collect the money, mail your sponsor sheet to the office and we will collect the pledges for you. If you can collect the money, we are asking that all money be turned in by the end of September.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Kathy
Campbell/Anderson Chapter

Member Response/Commitment Forms

Campbell/Anderson Fundraiser

Kathy, here's how I can help . . .

- I will get pledges for the chapter
- Here's my gift of pledge of
 - \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 _____
- I can help the day of the car wash (See ✓ Check List)

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

✓ Check List

- Wash Cars
- Supervise Washing of Cars
- Count the Cars
- Talk to customers about SOCM and the Chapter's work
- Help with refreshments
- Help with clean-up

PLEASE MAIL BY AUGUST 31

Campbell/Anderson Fundraiser

Kathy, here's how I can help . . .

- I will get pledges for the chapter
- Here's my gift of pledge of
 - \$5 \$10 \$15 \$20 \$25 _____
- I can help the day of the car wash (See ✓ Check List)

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- Wash Cars
- Supervise Washing of Cars
- Count the Cars
- Talk to customers about SOCM and the Chapter's work
- Help with refreshments
- Help with clean-up

PLEASE MAIL BY AUGUST 31

Pledge Form

SPONSOR SHEET • SAVE OUR CUMBERLAND MOUNTAINS • CAMPBELL/ANDERSON CHAPTER

Member's Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
PLEASE PRINT _____

Thank you for taking the time to sponsor the Campbell/Anderson Chapter in its endeavor to have a FREE Car Wash. Your donation will help continue the important work that SOCM does in our communities, counties, and throughout the State of Tennessee.

Here's How It Works: Our goal is to wash 50 cars. To sponsor the Chapter, you can make a pledge per car washed or pledge a flat amount. For example: Twenty cents per car up to 50 cars would make your total pledge \$10.00. Fifty cents would make your total pledge \$25.00. NOTE: Your pledge is per car up to and no more than 50 cars.

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	PLEDGE	PAID

15. Strategies: Corporate Membership Program, Major Gifts Initiative

Women's Resource Center

Submitted By

Mandy Mikulencak
Executive Director
Women's Resource Center
Durango, CO
director@wrcdurango.org

The Community

Durango is a rural college town (population 15,000) with a county population of about 45,000. Tourism is the largest industry, with the Durango Mountain Ski Resort, Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, Mesa Verde National Park, hiking, biking and river sports as the main attractions. There is a large disparity in income levels: there are many wealthy retirees contrasted with low- to middle-income working individuals (median household income \$34,000 per year). The largest employers are service-related. There is no large industry to provide stable employment options with benefits. The nearest large town is Farmington, NM, population 37,844, about 50 miles away.

Strategies

1. *Corporate Membership Program*

The corporate membership program provides an opportunity for businesses or organizations to join the Women's Resource Center (WRC) as a corporate member at three giving levels: \$250 Bronze, \$500 Silver or \$1,000 Gold. Corporate members are solicited with an introductory letter about WRC programs and the benefits of corporate membership from the WRC staff person in charge of membership. A board member follows up with a call or personal visit to give more information on WRC and its programs.

Corporate members are recognized in several ways throughout the year, including our quarterly newsletter, weekly email alerts and an annual appreciation party. Each corporate member receives an attractive wooden plaque that features a new "button" for every year they renew. These are usually displayed in a prominent place in their offices. We also provide a simple window sticker that identifies members as proud supporters of

WRC. And we encourage our individual members and the public to support these businesses as often as they can.

The goals of the strategy are to establish a base of donors that renews automatically every year, to use the stature of some corporate members to entice other businesses to join (“I have to be a member if so-and-so is a member”) and to move away from time-consuming, low-revenue special events that drain staff time and energy away from programs and strategic planning.

Expenses and Income

In 2004, WRC spent \$1,396 for new member plaques, returning member “buttons” and the appreciation party. We earned \$18,000—approximately \$10,750 from renewing members and \$7,250 from new members.

The business community in Durango is especially generous with area nonprofits. WRC has offered an easy system for donations that frees the business from receiving multiple requests for funding throughout the year—they know their membership is their annual gift. They also have flexibility to move up a membership category in good years and to reduce their membership level if their profits are low in other years.

Lessons Learned

The fun part is getting to know the business community. WRC has formed some nice alliances as a result of the corporate membership program. In fact, many corporate members choose to give time or money to other WRC-sponsored events or activities. For example, a local bank that joined at the \$500 corporate level agreed to advertise a WRC-sponsored workshop series on financial management and provided two staff members to teach the series; in exchange, we bumped their corporate membership up to the next level.

One of the frustrations with the corporate membership program is that some businesses want more advertising in exchange for their membership dues. WRC tries to communicate that the program is designed to give corporate members certain benefits (which vary by level) and is designed to be a relationship-building opportunity. Of course we want to provide exposure for their corporate members, but corporate membership is not primarily an advertising-based endeavor.

Changes Made or Planned

This is an ongoing strategy. WRC will use board members in the future to make more contacts and to do more face-to-face visits with current members to show our appreciation.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

We believe that this is a replicable program in rural areas if there is a fairly stable business community and the nonprofit is well respected. With differing membership levels, it is possible to get a wide diversity of members. WRC has found that banks and realty offices are the easiest to approach and secure funding from.

2. **Major Gifts Initiative**

WRC wanted to move away from time-consuming, low-revenue special events that kept staff and board from more important work. We also wanted to establish a base of donors who would give annually.

To do so, we decided to build relationships with individuals who had the capacity to make large gifts (\$5,000 and above). The strategy was to make personal contact with current and former friends of the agency who were in a financial position to give. Board members made phone calls and arranged meetings with potential donors and the executive director.

Board members were trained by a fundraising consulting firm on “Making the Ask.” They read materials on how to make face-to-face asks and practiced in teams. They also sought the help of the executive director in learning to speak more articulately about program specifics. A major gifts committee of the board was formed. Past giving histories of current donors were analyzed, and the committee assembled a list of approximately 20 potential major donors. This list was refined to a group of three to five who might give more than \$10,000. The rest were to be asked for gifts of \$1,000, knowing that \$5,000 was beyond their giving capacity.

Expenses and Income

We expected board members to cover any costs associated with phone calls, lunches and other face-to-face meetings. So WRC spent nothing on this strategy and earned about \$25,000. We expect an additional \$10,000 to come from the campaign.

Lessons Learned

This strategy took board members outside their comfort zone, but they did so in order to protect the financial health of the agency. The most frustrating thing was convincing board members that individuals with no history with the agency were not likely to give. It took time to convince them that WRC may need many personal contacts (over months or years) with a person to reach a point where they could be asked for a major gift.

Changes Made or Planned

This is an ongoing strategy. We will draw on current donors to help recruit future donors. We will also draw in more of the board to participate in training and the actual meetings, but we will put them in pairs so they feel more comfortable.

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

We would advise another rural organization to take on this strategy *only* if it has a fairly wealthy donor base in the area and some history with those potential donors. Durango is unique in that it has a large retirement population that places a high priority on philanthropic giving. Given that, we still only attract four or five individuals who are willing to give over \$5,000. Our most longstanding supporters give \$500 to \$1,000 per year.

Story Template

To share your fundraising success with other rural CASA/GAL programs, please fill out the following form (with additional pages if needed) and mail to:

CASA Rural Success Stories
The National CASA Association
100 W. Harrison, North Tower, #500
Seattle, WA 98119

Other options: Fax to 206/270-0078 or email staff@nationalcasa.org with the words “Rural Fundraising” in the subject line.

Submitted By

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Phone:

Email address:

Website:

The Community

Describe your community’s demographics, challenges and opportunities.

Strategy (or Strategies)

What successful fundraising strategy or strategies did you carry out? Where did the ideas and the person-power come from?

Expenses and Income

How much did you spend, and how much did you raise? Did you make money the first year, or did it take some stick-to-it-ive-ness?

Lessons Learned

What tactics were the most successful? What pitfalls can others learn from?

Changes Made or Planned

Anything you would or will do differently?

Advice for Other Rural Organizations

How would you advise other rural organizations in adapting this strategy?

Sample Tools

Attach clean originals of any documents, flyers, invitations or other samples that will help others adapt your strategies.