

TO: Kim Mullins
FROM: Jennifer Samimi
DATE: July 19, 2006
RE: major donors for our organization

Professor Mullins,

It has come to my attention that, even though we have an operating budget of \$500,000, our largest individual donation last year was only \$5,000. I am confident that our donor pool is capable of giving at a higher level and have drafted some ideas on how to make this happen. Please review this information and respond with your thoughts.

Plan for major donor program:

- ◆ **I would like to target 5 new prospects for raising their giving levels or giving a first time major gift.** Our major donor pool should be large enough to be stable over time, allowing for one or two to drop off while others enter the pool. Every donor cannot be a major donor, however, and it is difficult to manage more than a few major donors at a time. Since major donors require the most time cultivating, it is best to incorporate a variety of individual donations into our fundraising plan. Focusing on only a few major donors will allow the Development Department to cultivate those relationships while giving the necessary attention to other sources.

- ◆ **Perhaps the simplest method for prospecting major donors is to look in-house.** I would like to draft an email to all staff asking for participation in this project. Staff and volunteers can assist in several ways :
 - 1) **Staff/volunteers may review the existing donor list and identify donors they have a relationship with.** I may ask the staff person to discuss the possibility of the donor raising the level of his or her donation, or I may ask to meet directly with the donor. It is also possible that I would meet with both the donor and staff person/volunteer.
 - 2) **Staff/volunteers can suggest new donors to add to our list.** If a relationship exists between one of our constituents and a potential donor, I would like to cultivate that relationship into a major gift.
 - 3) **Staff/volunteers can meet with potential donors that they don't know to share information about the program.** Potential donors, or donors who are interested in investing more in our organization, may request to speak with program staff, volunteers, or even clients about their experience with their organization.

- ◆ **Other forms of prospect research.** Two methods I suggest are:
 - 1) **Annual reports** – Collecting annual reports from other organizations is a simple way to gather names of people and foundations that donate to causes similar to ours.
 - 2) **Electronic databases** – There are many online databases that collect major donor information and sell subscriptions for access to these databases. This is an excellent way to identify potential donors when no personal connection to the organization is involved.

- ◆ **Implementing a major donor “club”.** Many organizations have a “giving circle” that recognizes major donors. Some ways to reward these donors for their contributions are to give them special seating at events, hold special events just for major donors, and recognize them publicly on our web site and in the media.

- ◆ **Timeline – July 2006-June 2007**

July- August – Present plan to Executive staff and Board and make any needed changes. Draft email to all staff and volunteers asking for participation in major donor campaign. Research possible prospect research databases. Create list of similar nonprofit organizations

September-October – Meet with staff and volunteers to discuss possibilities for new donors. Gather annual reports from similar nonprofits. Purchase subscription to prospect research database. Begin researching all prospects. Send literature to potential donors that have relationships with staff or volunteers. If possible, set up meetings with potential donors. Send literature to prospects from annual reports and prospect research database. Send invitations to all current and potential donors to annual event in late November.

November-December – Process all donations from previous mailing. Call each donor from prospect list to thank and ask if they would be open to meeting in person (or second meeting). Meet with potential donors and ask for major gifts.

January-February – Continue meeting with new and potential major donors. Recognize all major gifts at Valentines’ day party.

March-April – Continue cultivating possible major donors.

May-June – Recognize all major donors at 1st annual “Friends of our Nonprofit” luncheon with prominent community figure.

- ◆ **Costs:**

Subscription to prospect research database: 1 @ \$2500.00 =	\$2,500.00
Mailing to potential donors: 200 @ \$1.39 =	\$278.00
Meetings (coffee, lunch) with potential donors: 30 @ \$10.00 =	\$30.00
Heart-shaped plaques for Valentines’ awards: 2 @ \$100.00 =	\$200.00
Recognition Luncheon 1 @ \$2,000.00 =	\$2,000.00
TOTAL COSTS.....	\$5,008.00