

Fundraising in Your Community: Simple Ideas for Raising Thousands

The Abundant Opportunities of Fundraising for Libraries

Whether it is in your library, or in your community, fundraising programs and opportunities have never been more abundant. And despite the recent downturn in the economy people are still donating to their favorite non-profit entity. Consider this: The entire annual operating budget of the New York Metropolitan Opera (more than \$150,000,000.00) comes from donations from the public to their endowment. Why do people continue to support others...even during uncertain economic times? The answers are as abundant as the opportunities to give. They include the obvious, tax write-offs and the overall reduction of tax liability. (Why give it to the government anyway) The belief people have in philanthropy! The hope and desire to leave a legacy, to leave the earth a better place now and in the future. And, the often underestimated, yet very powerful "good feelings" that giving to others brings us as individuals and in groups. One of the keys to attracting potential donors and providing the motivation for them to give is to make the process of giving as easy and genuine as possible.

Focusing Your Fundraising Efforts

Choosing Your Fundraising Mission and Vision

Fundraising should be treated as a serious endeavor. It is a serious part of your business and should not be taken lightly. Most libraries do not go about fundraising by themselves. They use their Friends groups and Foundations to do the majority of the work. To begin this webinar, I want to highlight the need to have either a mission or vision statement (or both) to keep everyone involved in the community fundraising focused on the priorities of their efforts. I call this the foundation to fundraising. Even if you are not using an outside supporting group to assist you, (maybe your library only does book sales) I recommend that the people involved in your library set goals for any fundraising effort you undertake. This is your compass and your guide to staying focused.

As an example, The Detroit Public Library Friends mission statement gives everyone involved a clear understanding of their focus in their fundraising efforts for the Library:

To maintain an association of persons interested in promoting Detroit's cultural growth and enhancing all types of literacy (books and other forms of human record);

to secure for the Detroit Public Library System materials of cultural value and funds supportive of Library initiatives in addition to those the Library can secure or cause to be secured;

to establish cooperative relationships and programs with other cultural institutions and groups in support of the above;

to act as trustee for the receipt, management, investment, disbursement and/or disposal of monies, goods or other effects received by the Corporation by way of gift or otherwise for the general or specific use or benefit of the Detroit Public Library System;

and to increase the public awareness of the activities and services of the Detroit Public Library

With the importance of mission, vision and goals explained we can now proceed to think about how “knowing your community” is crucial to successful fundraising and relationship building!

The BIG 3 of Library Fundraising!

Three of the most critical elements in creating a focus for your fundraising efforts are to:

1. know your community,
2. know the interests of the people that utilize your library’s services
3. know the history of your community and your library

Why? The majority of the funds that are raised for your library come from the people and businesses of your community. The people that we call patron or customer and the relationships that they have developed with us since our doors have opened.

Let’s take a look at some examples of how libraries are successfully raising funds by using a specific focus on their community, interests and its history.

First, let’s look at the focus of community in the fundraising efforts of two libraries.

The East Cleveland Public Library was facing a problem that many of us have faced: A deteriorating library in a poor part of town with marginal funding..
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3978/is_/ai_n9471661

The Kansas City Public Library faced a different challenge. The Truman Exhibit was an important and historical part of the Kansas City community and it drastically needed to be updated and restored. The KCPL and the National Archives and Records Administration worked together to raise the funds needed to create an exhibit worthy of President Truman. You can learn more about their exhibit at: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/lifetimes/index.html>

In both examples, the library and their fundraising and development groups put their time; energy and focus together to create a project that reached the heart and soul of the community.

Here is an example of a library that uses the interests of their communities to help them with their fundraising efforts:

The Friends of the Pemberville Public Library has embraced the love of the holiday season in their community by creating 3 fundraising programs:

1. The Candlelight Tour of Homes on the first weekend of December, which is so successful that it sells out each year.
2. A Silent Auction of items including wreaths, small trees, swags, and centerpieces. Anywhere from 12-15 businesses and organizations donate auction items.
3. The Friends sell Miniature Village Replicas throughout the holiday season and the year. Using photos of buildings in the community, an Ohio company designs and reproduces the community buildings as small wooden miniatures. Prominent buildings and landmarks are included in the collection, which currently includes 16 pieces.

Food!!

Monterey Friends of the Library Chocolate and Wine Tasting Benefit

Sample a variety of wines produced in Monterey County and savor delicious chocolate cakes, brownies, candies, cookies, fondues, ice creams, molé and other goodies courtesy of local restaurants and bakeries. Event features live music and door prizes and all proceeds go to support the purchase of books and other library needs. This event sells out each year! In 2009 it netted more than \$3,000.00 for the Friends group!

Book Dedication Program

An easy way to earn funds, with minimal effort, is through a book dedication program, allowing people to “adopt” a book by paying money to have a nameplate placed inside. The cost to adopt the book may be the true cost of the book or a set fee. One library found that charging \$10-15 is a good way to draw in a lot of donations.

Public and school libraries often draw in more funds by rewarding students who ‘adopt-a-book’ by giving them a small treat in return or by inviting them to a party. Other libraries garner more donations by combining the program with other special events, such as Grandparent’s Day or graduation.

Literacy Read-a-thon

Step 1 Select the books and the target participants

Find as many participants and books as possible. This event is best for a library that has built relationships with their local schools and/or has an active base of children and young adult patrons. The event could coincide with the release of a book the group has been eager for so the group can read other books by the same author.

Step 2 Plan your limit.

The Read-a-thon will work best with some sort of goal to work forward to. You can aim to read for 12 hours, 24 hours (whether each person alone or in relay teams), finish a book series (try “Harry Potter,” “Twilight,” “Discworld,” “Lord of the Rings,” or an author theme, such as Stephen King), or reading 1,000 pages. This will help you determine the length of your event. It should be long enough that it proves to be a bit of a challenge. One hundred pages isn’t enough.

Step 3 Find sponsors.

Give each participant a sponsor sheet. This way, they can seek pledges from friends and family for completing the Read-a-thon. You may wish to only have these people donate if the participant finishes, or have them donate any way it ends.

Step 4 Appeal to larger groups.

It’s hard to raise much money from individual sponsors. Find local bookstores, libraries, literacy advocates, and other related groups to help out. You may have to agree to put their logo on your advertisements or help promote them in some way. These groups can donate books, a place to read, or refreshments.

Similarly, you may need to appeal to people outside the idea for more pledges. Start a blog with the group and agree that everyone will write a few book reviews to be posted. If you’re reading some rarer books, many people will love to hear about them.

Step 5 Get started!

Start reading!

Make sure everyone has had ample time to get ready for the event, especially if it's a marathon-reading event. Provide a comfy place to read, plenty of drinks, and snacks. You may also wish to provide an area where people can discuss books when they've gotten to a certain point in them or finished. Set this conversation area a little bit away so people can still read quietly.

In these examples the focus is on the interests of the people of the community and it works!

In my opinion, one of the greatest opportunities for creating awareness of our library and in-turn building donor relationships is to create a focus on either the history of our community or our library. Consider these examples:

The Upper Arlington Public Library in Ohio provides a historical service to the community through the UA Archives. The goal of the UA Archives is to preserve original documents, photographs, and oral histories, while providing increased visibility and improved access to these valuable primary reference sources. You can learn more about at: <http://www.uaarchives.org/about.htm>

The Monterey Public Library in California offers the California History Room. The Library collects and preserves their community's memory in the California History Room. Written, visual and audible materials created by and about Monterey-area residents are housed in a climate-controlled room, and are available to the public and scholars for research. Collections document early California, the geographic, cultural and social region including the Monterey Peninsula, and the City of Monterey. You can learn more about at: <http://www.monterey.org/library/calhist/cahist.html>

Before I talk about the library and business partnerships, I must again emphasize the importance of focus in your fundraising efforts. We keep our focus by measuring each of our decisions against our goals, mission and visioning statements. We communicate the very essence of our fundraising efforts to our donors through the words of these statements. And finally, we put our donors at ease by reassuring them that we have the focus and competence to spend their donation wisely and appropriately. Without that sense of confidence in our fundraising efforts, people will not donate to our cause.

One last thought: People that donate books and other objects to our library are considered to be good prospects for donations of money to our fundraising efforts. Why? Once someone has given us something, they are likely to give again!

The Library as a Business to Business Fundraising Partner

Probably one of the most difficult changes that libraries have had to accept is that of the library as a business. While many library administrators and professionals prefer to resist or deny it, libraries that act and represent themselves as a business appear to have an advantage in the areas of fundraising and business to business relationship building. With "The Library as a Business" in mind, let's look at 3 possible courses of action that your library can pursue to create more fundraising awareness and opportunity.

1. Partnering with other businesses in your community

A simple question to get your brain cells firing: Which businesses in your community would benefit from a partnership with your library?

Libraries are taking advantage of fundraising opportunities with businesses in their own communities or campuses. These business include florists, restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, gas stations, and grocery and department stores, just to name a few. For example, The Encinitas Public Library has created partnerships with Ralph's and Albertson's to passively raise funds every time someone shops with their Community Partner card.



To take advantage of Ralphs' Community Contribution program, just follow these simple instructions:

1. *Have your Ralph's Club Card near by or handy*
2. *Go to the following website: <http://www.ralphs.com/ccprogram.htm>*
3. *Agree to their registration terms*
4. *Fill-out the form. The Friends' NPO number is 84633*
5. *After submitting the form, you will receive a receipt saying that you have successfully signed-up.*

After that, a small percentage of your purchases will go to the Friends.



Friends of the Encinitas Library is a Community Partner with Albertson's. Shoppers can earn money for their favorite schools or non-profit youth organizations - just by using their Preferred Savings Card. Go to http://www.albertsons.com/abs_inthecommunity/ and sign up.

Every library can benefit from the thousands of dollars raised each year by these partnerships. The rule of thumb here is to identify businesses where people normally spend money each month and ask them if they partner with non-profit businesses. Note: Many of these programs require their partners to be a certified 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization. Also, some businesses have very specific criteria for the use of their donations. Albertson's for example, stipulates that all monies received are to be spent on activities involving children. The best places to research these requirements are the company's website or their partnership brochures that are available at their stores.

2. Partnering with associations in your community

Another source of smaller, yet usually very consistent gift donations are the many associations and clubs in your community. These groups are formed and exist on the basis of community service and (are you ready for this) are often looking for non-profit organizations to partner with in their community. Here's a small list of clubs and associations with the link to their location finder for the clubs that are in your area. I suggest you immediately begin building relationships with them:

Rotary International -
<http://www.rotary.org/en/AboutUs/SiteTools/ClubLocator/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

Kiwanis International - <http://www.kiwanis.org/FindaClub/tabid/84/Default.aspx>

Lions Club International - http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/content/resources_club.shtml

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks - www.elks.org

Loyal Order of Moose International - <http://www.mooseintl.org/Public/MooseSearch.aspx>

Fraternal Order of Eagles - <http://www.foe.com/>

Veterans of Foreign Wars - <http://emem.vfw.org/findpost.aspx>

The best approach in creating a relationship with each of the groups is to contact the president of the club or association and ask them about opportunities to partner or be involved with them. Once you have started to receive donations from the clubs and associations, be diligent about sending them updates on how you are using their donations and thanking them for partnering with you. One of the biggest complaints that I hear from these groups is that there is normally little or no follow-up from their community partners. Not so surprisingly, the clubs are discouraged by the lack of communication and eventually look for new partners for their giving.

3. Giving Back: Being visible and giving presentations in your community

Fundraising is about giving and receiving. To receive, we must give in return. A well rounded fundraising strategy must emphasize the need for the library and its supporting group to give back to the community by being an active part of it. There are many library leaders that understand the law of giving. I see them speaking at local businesses and association events. Some have become members of these civic organizations, giving of their time, talent and money.

Your library and fundraising team should be taking every opportunity to speak in the community that is available to them. This is an opportunity for the library fundraising leaders to build key relationships with other community and business leaders for future fundraising boards and teams. This can't and won't happen if they are not visible in our community. This can't and won't happen unless they make a commitment to make it happen.

When you make the commitment to have your leaders speak in the community, there are a few things to consider in the person(s) you choose to represent you:

- Do they have the speaking skills and experience necessary to be an effective presenter and representative of the group?
- Can they present the information to the audience so that the audience cares about it too?
- Have they had any professional training as a speaker?
- Will they know what to say...when it needs to be said? Are they informed and knowledgeable enough to represent your team?

One final thought on being visible in the community that your library and fundraising team should consider is finding ways to bring the community to your library. If you have the meeting space available, ask the clubs and associations to occasionally "meet at the library". If people never come through your doors...they will never see what they have been missing.

Giving Our Community Fundraising Programs Structure

Annual Giving

Most of us are annual givers: people who make gifts, generally in the \$50 to \$100 range, in response to periodic (not necessarily annual) appeals, such as those from educational television and local privately supported radio stations in on-air pledge drives. We also give in response to mail appeals, known in the fundraising business as “direct mail.”

There is a seemingly endless number of nonprofit organizations that use direct mail, including museums, zoos, environmental organizations, literacy promoters, universities, and library Friends groups. Door-to-door solicitation, an approach perfected by the Girl Scouts, is another method used to raise large numbers of low-level contributions.

The Library Director is normally the leader of an Annual Giving Campaign and he or she would be responsible for creating the goals and determining the methods the volunteers will use.

Examples of Annual Giving Programs

The Helen Matthes Library in Effingham, Illinois has a community *Books and Bytes Club*, where 100% of each tax deductible donation goes towards the purchase of library materials and computer equipment.

http://www.effinghamlibrary.org/GiveAGift/annual_campaign.htm

The Colchester-East Hants Public Library Foundation in Nova Scotia, Canada 2008-09 campaign contribution has the goal of adding new and varied titles to the shelves, expanding and updating the non-print and reference collections.

http://cehlibrary.ednet.ns.ca/library_foundation/foundation-annualcampaign.htm

While Charlotte & Mecklenburg County generously covers the majority of the library’s operating expenses, there are some critical gaps that rely on other annual campaigns and other donations such as private/corporate gifts. A breakdown of the monies are used is on their donations webpage.

86% County Funds: Salaries/Benefits, Utilities, Phone, Facility Maintenance, Collection
14% Gifts/Other Funds: All Programs, Promotions, Collection, Training, Outreach

http://www.plcmc.org/About_Us/Get_Involved/annualFundcampaign.asp



Occasional Giving

The Linebaugh Library System in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, uses the holiday spirit and their Giving Tree to receive one-time gifts of books for their collection.

<http://www.linebaugh.org/givingtree.htm>

Major Giving

Major gifts are multi-thousand-dollar gifts. There is no hard-and-fast dollar figure attached to a major gift because such gifts should be assessed relative to the range of gifts an organization normally receives. A small public library might consider \$10,000 a major gift. New York Public

Library might think of a major gift as being \$100,000. Many fundraisers think of \$25,000 as being an arbitrary minimum level for a major gift.

Major gifts are usually made:

- (1) after a significant period of one-on-one cultivation,
- (2) after the careful formulation of a strategy for the prospect, and
- (3) after the prospect has been asked directly to make a gift by the most prestigious, effective, and appropriate person or persons connected with an organization.

Examples of Major Giving in Libraries

I have found that many Academic Libraries have excellent major gift programs. The UCLA Library has a webpage dedicated to soliciting gifts of at least \$10,000.00 for various programs.

<http://www.library.ucla.edu/development/13005.cfm>

Santa Clara University's major gifts campaign for its Learning Commons Technology Center and Library recently received a \$20 million donation. How did they do it? Hard work and a great program for giving!

<http://www.scu.edu/newlibrary/donors.cfm>

Planned Giving, another method of collecting major gifts, offers donors the opportunity to give a lump sum of money to the library and receive many benefits including lower taxes and a return on their money while they are living. These programs will require your fundraising group to partner with a financial planner.

The Library of Virginia Foundation solicits "Planned Gifts" as a major giving opportunity. Gifts from this program can provide meaningful charitable support to the Library of Virginia Foundation and may offer donors valuable tax benefits, potential lifetime income, and the ability to transfer assets at a reduced tax cost. Their planned giving program promotes a variety of methods by which individuals may contribute to the Library of Virginia Foundation. "We want to encourage individuals to make gifts that support their library beyond their lifetimes".

<http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwedo/foundation/index.htm>

The Downers Grove Public Library Foundation in Illinois offers donors three levels of major giving as part of membership in *The Andrew Carnegie Circle*:

\$10,000.00- \$24,999.00	Silver
\$25,000.00- \$49,9999.00	Gold
\$50,000.00 and above	Platinum

<http://www.downersgrovelibraryfoundation.org/pages/givingclubs.html>

Middle-Range Giving

A middle area exists between a annual giver and a major giver; this range falls between \$100 and \$10,000 for most types of libraries. Givers in the middle range may be either generous annual givers who really do not have the ability or inclination to give more, or they may be potential major donors who are not yet making gifts of great size. For this reason, donors who fall into this category should receive special attention. Research and assess, as thoroughly as possible, the

potential of middle-range donors to give larger gifts and be sure that they receive attention from both the library director and the development staff member in charge of annual giving.

Examples of Middle-Range Giving

Memorial Gifts have become a popular method of leaving a legacy by giving to the library. The Santa Clara County Library accepts memorial gifts on their website. You should too!

<http://www.santaclaracountylib.org/services/memorialgifts.html>

Endowments are one of my favorite fundraising programs for libraries to create and grow. The Foundation for the Kendallville Public Library Endowment Program solicits middle range gifts to grow their endowment each year and offers an excellent webpage that not only explains what endowments are, it also tells how they use gifts for their "Investing in the Future of Your Library" program.

<http://www.kendallvillelibrary.org/foundation.htm>

How does a library team double or triple a donor's gift? By making their donors aware of Matching Gifts programs offered by many corporations and organizations! The John F. Kennedy Library Foundation in Boston promotes matching gifts on their Make a Gift webpage. You can do this too! Call the businesses in your area to find out which ones offer matching gifts for donations from their employees.

http://www.jfklibrary.org/JFK+Library+and+Museum/Join+and+Support/Make+a+Gift.htm#matching_gifts

Just a reminder...Think Big!

A Friends Group can successfully secure major gifts for their library. The story of the St. Paul Friends Group hiring Peter Pearson in 1992 as their Executive Development Director is infamous in our industry. With more than 3,000 members and an endowment of tens of millions of dollars, the message is clear. When you put together the right fundraising team and focus your efforts on the community...anything is possible for any type of library. In case you're wondering, despite the economic hard times of 2008, giving at all levels increased for the St. Paul Friends Group last year.

Other Tools:

Library Fact Sheet

www.onslowcountync.gov/library

Fundraising Strategy Form

Bookmarks

[Step by Step Fundraising](#)

Stepbystepfundraising.com

A website of practical fundraising resources for non-profit causes. Sign-up for their free newsletter.

[Voluntary Sector Knowledge Network](#)

www.vskn.ca/fund/fund_giftr.htm

A website with advice and information on How to Develop Planned Giving and Major Gifts from Individuals.

[Friends of the Library USA](#)

www.folusa.org

The website for the Friends of the Library groups in the United States. There are very good fundraising programs and ideas for Friends on the website as well as information on building a strong and productive Friends Group in your library.

[Becoming a Fundraiser - Book](#)

www.amazon.com/Becoming-Fundraiser-Principles-Practice-Development/dp/083890783

A wonderful book by Victoria Steele and Stephen Elder on fundraising and development for Libraries of all types.

[Fundraising for Libraries – Book](#)

www.amazon.com/gp/product/1555704336

With 25 proven ways to get more money for your library, this book by James Swan is one of the most comprehensive publications for library professionals.

[Building Your Fundraising Team – How to Recruit More Volunteers](#)

www.fundraiserhelp.com/build-your-fundraising-team.htm

Fundraiserhelp.com is a website full of articles and information on many different aspects of raising funds. This article specifically focuses on recruit volunteers that want to work for your cause.

[Building Your Fundraising Team – How to Build and Manage a Successful Fundraising Team](#)

www.boostyourfundraising.com/how-to-build-and-manage-a-successful-fundraising-team
Website with articles and fundraising resources for non-profit organizations.

[Affiliate Programs for Website Fundraising](#)

www.alhambralibrary.org/shop.html
Example of a library website using affiliate programs as a part of their fundraising strategy. The affiliate partners are Amazon.com and MyCause.com

[Major Gift Donation Solicited from Website](#)

www.contra-costa.lib.ca.us/donations/
Example of a library website asking for specific donations for programs including Materials Budget and the Leave a Legacy Campaign

[Book Donations Solicited from Website](#)

www.detroitpubliclibrary.org/friends/index.htm
Example of a Friends website asking for Book Donations from the user

[Library Friend's Group e-Newsletter](#)

www.waterloo.lib.ia.us/friends/folnewsletter/
An example of passively staying visible in the community. The Friends of the Waterloo, Iowa Public Library Group Newsletter

[Library Fundraising Web Page](#)

www.kclibrary.org/ways-to-give
An excellent example of a website donation page with multiple ways to give

[Website of Resources for Cyber Giving](#)

www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1387/is_3_48/ai_63165619
Great article on giving online (also known as cyber giving)

[Website for Library Fundraising Information](#)

www.fund-raising.com/
General fundraising tips and ideas for your library and supporting group

[State of Iowa Fundraising Information Website](#)

www.statelibraryofiowa.org/ld/funding-info/internet/fundraise
A list of fundraising resources for libraries including a link to FOLUSA

[Website Specifically for Online Library Fundraising](#)

www.lights.ca/how-to/libraries.html
A website specifically focused on helping libraries raise funds through their websites

[Michigan State University Website for Academic Library Fundraising](#)

www.staff.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/4acfrais.htm
From the Michigan State University Libraries, a list of Academic Fundraising Web
Resources

[Association of Fundraising Professionals Dictionary of Fundraising Terms](#)

www.afpnet.org/content_documents/AFP_Dictionary_A-Z_final_6-9-03.pdf
Online Dictionary of Fundraising Terms from the Association of Professional Fundraisers

*Becoming a Fundraiser, The Principles and Practices of Library Development, Authors Victoria
Steele and Stephen Elder*