



MONDAY MORNING MEMO

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Training Highlights Strategies for Building Financial Base

Think big, form collaborations, and build relationships. Those were three of the main themes at a training on “Money for Mission” held June 23rd in Albany to provide expertise and inspiration to not-for-profits about fundraising.

The training is an annual offering of the New York Council of Nonprofits (formerly the Council of Community Services of NYS) and drew participants from around the state including representatives of CASA programs in Schenectady, Dutchess, Ulster and Oneida Counties.

“There isn’t a city in America that does not owe its lifeblood to what not-for-profits do every day.”

Keynote presenter Robert Egger, founder of the V3 Campaign (www.v3campaign.org) stressed that the not-for-profit sector is the seventh biggest economy in the world, with more than 14 million staff and 800 million volunteers, receiving \$300 billion in donations annually. As such, it has the potential to be a powerful political and financial force. What gets in the way of that is the historic silo mentality of not-for-profits, advocating for their own cause rather than working together to develop a coherent and common voice. “There is only one way forward, and that is together,” Egger said. Agencies can join forces in small ways such as sharing computer support or office buildings, or work to develop major collaborative programs providing services and revitalizing communities.

Not-for-profits, Egger said, were begun in the post-war era by women who may have been edged out of the work force by returning servicemen. There was an attitude of submissiveness in their requests for funding that has lingered to the present day. He said with the combined wealth and influence of not for profits, it is time to act as equals to the business world.

Nick Fellers, President of the Suddes Group (www.forimpact.org) presented a two-part workshop on “Making the Million Dollar ‘Ask’”. Key to the Group’s theory for raising funds is to “think and ask big.” Fellers encouraged participants to visualize success, “give yourself permission to dream and to risk.”

“It’s not what you say to funders that matters; it’s what they hear.”

-Nick Fellers

Much of the language used by not-for-profits in fundraising reflects a focus on lack, he said, asking for funds to plug a deficit or maintain an existing program. This doesn’t inspire donations. Philanthropists are visionaries, so the key to engaging them is to communicate vision “at 30,000 feet,” Fellers said. Rather than describe the day-to-day workings of your organization, discuss how you are changing your community and improving the lives of families and individuals. This message should be powerful – and short, not

a six-page brochure or 30-slide Power Point, “It should fit on the back of a cocktail napkin.” An example came from a participant from Habitat for Humanity. His three-word, 30,000 feet description of their vision is to “eliminate substandard housing”; this allows the broadest connection to mission before describing how the agency accomplishes that goal. “If you can’t get a common ground around the vision, the details don’t matter,” Fellers said. *Anyone have a great three-word message for CASA?*

Fellers urged not-for-profits to look carefully at the language they use. Involve rather than inform; seek investors and not donors; present opportunities instead of asking for money; and think in terms not of transactions but relationships.



Building relationships was also the theme presented by luncheon speaker Marshall Howard, author of *Let's Have Lunch Together: Four Proven Ways to Build Relationships That Easily Raise Money* (www.marshallhoward.com), who also presented a workshop on his method. He said not-for-profit leaders, particularly the Executive Director, need to develop relationships with their board and potential funders and community partners. This is not about being friends, social colleagues or about being liked, Howard clarified, it's a "positive emotional connection between two people that builds trust."

"People decide emotionally and justify logically" when making decisions about funding, Howard said. "If you don't trust the messenger, the message doesn't matter."

Fundamental to the process of building relationships is putting the other person first and your needs second. To be successful, you must make a conscious and significant time commitment. "Become human interest detectives," Howard said, and look for mutual values and goals.

"Funders are people, not walking wallets; spend more time learning about them than you do asking for what you need." – Marshall Howard

When you shift the focus to relationship building, you are more likely to have board members offer up their community connections, Howard added. They know you are not going to just ask their friends and colleagues for money, but are going to be genuinely interested in developing a connection with them. That connection might involve financial contributions, and it might not. Never underestimate the potential to your organization of individuals who may not have deep pockets, but are well regarded and connected in the community and might have energy and creative ideas to share. "Transform supporters into relationship ambassadors," Howard said.

Howard emphasizes his "Win/Win Commandments" that include "You must deliver at least one win before you make an ask to get your own win." Key stakeholders need at least two wins per year. "A thank you letter, no matter how well drafted, does not constitute a win," Howard said. Wins must be meaningful to the personal and professional values and goals of the supporter, be appropriate and well-timed. "If you don't continuously uncover and deliver a supporter's wins, someone else will," he said.

Materials from the Money for Mission training will be posted on the council's website, www.ccsnys.org.

Not Such Little Losses: Grief & Loss Experiences of Children

Children in the foster care system don't advertise their experiences of grief and loss in ways that all can recognize, according to Dr. Jodi Mullen, co-author of *Counseling Children & Adolescents through Grief and Loss*. Mullen presented a webinar June 11th, sponsored by the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, that was viewed by CASA program staff and volunteers and Parent Education programs around the state.

Our culture tends to view grief as a private matter and provide little opportunity to process feelings of loss in a healthy manner, said Mullen, who is on the faculty at SUNY Oswego and a credentialed play therapist and play therapist supervisor. Societal myths such as "time heals all wounds" and "be strong" serve to stifle the expression of grief. Children in particular have limited ability to verbalize their feelings and limited capacity to tolerate emotional pain. "Any child who is mature enough to love is mature enough to grieve," Mullen said.

How children handle grief varies depending on their age, emotional health, the number of losses they have experienced and the significance of those losses, as well as the supports they have available to them.



Children not allowed the time and space to grieve can experience difficulties managing change – a vital capacity for children entering or leaving foster care -- and have trouble forming and maintaining attachments.

Mullen urged those involved in family court proceedings to watch for signs of unresolved grief in children, such as depression, anxiety, relationship conflicts, boundary confusion, guilt and a child's refusal to talk. Referrals to therapy, particularly alternative therapies such as play and art therapy, can be particularly helpful and necessary if the child's grief has become disabling, and is manifesting in suicidal ideation, regressive behaviors, or physical ailments.

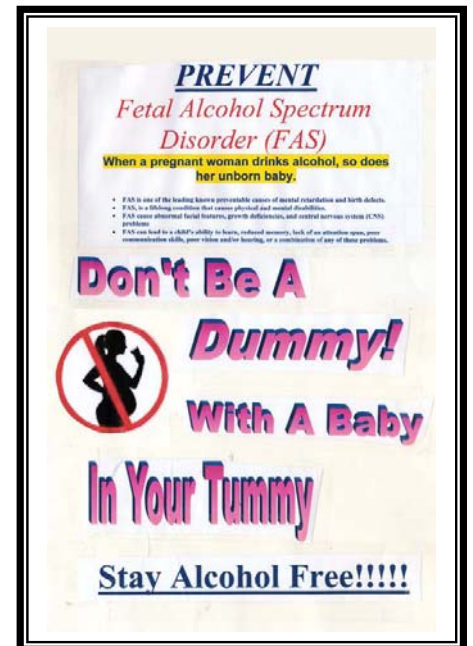
The webinar was a pilot use of Meeting Place technology to present training to the network and colleagues in child welfare in the most accessible and cost-effective way. While there were some challenges with the technology, the evaluations of the training were overwhelmingly positive and provided great feedback to inform our training series moving forward. An audio recording of the training will be available soon.

FASD Awareness Day 2009 and new FASD posters available

September 9th will mark the tenth annual Awareness Day devoted to helping to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD), according to Margo Singer, FASD State Coordinator with the NYS Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (NYS OASAS).

FASD refers to a range of birth defects which can include abnormal facial features, growth retardation, nervous system problems and other physical problems. It can occur if a woman drinks alcohol during pregnancy. Children with FASD may have physical disabilities and problems with learning, memory, attention, problem solving, and social/behavioral problems. "When a pregnant woman drinks alcohol, so does her baby," Singer said. There is no known safe amount of alcohol to drink while pregnant and there also does not appear to be a safe time to drink during pregnancy. Therefore, it is recommended that women abstain from drinking alcohol at any time during pregnancy.

NYS OASAS recently concluded its first FASD Prevention Poster Contest. The Contest was designed to help educate students in grades 6-12 from across the state, and to raise awareness among the general public about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. The culmination of the contest coincided with the annual observance of Alcohol and other Drug-related Birth Defects Awareness Week in May. Copies of the FASD prevention poster will be distributed to CASA programs in the coming weeks; a sample of one appears at right.



Events on the September 9th FASD Awareness Day are usually held at 9:09, the 9th minute of the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month of the year. This date and time is used to remind women not to drink during the 9 months of pregnancy. The www.FASDay.com website provides information on previous FASD Awareness Day events and suggests activities that can be held in your community. "Displaying the OASAS poster is also another way to highlight the importance of FASD prevention," Singer said. More information on FASD can be found at www.oasas.state.ny.us/fasd.



ABA Seeks Nominations for Spirit of Excellence Awards

The American Bar Association Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession is accepting nominations for the 2010 Spirit of Excellence Awards. These celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of lawyers who excel in their professional settings; personify excellence on the national, state, or local level; and who have demonstrated a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity in the legal profession. Nominations are due July 15, 2009.

For more information, go to: www.abanet.org/minorities/spirit/home.html

Resources

(Please note: Links to third party sites do not imply any affiliation between the UCS CASA Assistance Program and the site owner, or an endorsement, approval, or verification of any content available on such third party sites.)

Site Offers Research and Analysis of Child Trends

Child Trends (www.childtrends.org) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that studies children at all stages of development. Its mission is to improve outcomes for children by providing research, data, and analysis to the people and institutions whose decisions and actions affect children, including program providers, the policy community, researchers and educators, and the media.

Child Trends researches child poverty, child welfare and well-being, early child development and school readiness, education, parenting, health, marriage and family, teen sex and pregnancy, youth development and children of immigrants. The site includes a number of articles and fact sheets that could provide support to grant requests.

Quotable

"Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play."

- Heraclitus

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