

# Following the Path to Donor Nirvana

The 5 realizations approach

Tom Ahern

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## Realization #1

Fundraising is NOT about money or your organization's **need for cash**.

## Realization #1

Fundraising is NOT about money or your organization's **need for cash**. It's about the savory, **enticing opportunity** you've put in front of a targeted prospect.

The screenshot shows the Greenpeace USA website. The top navigation bar is green with the Greenpeace logo and links for Home, Donate, Take Action, Volunteer, What We Do, Blogs/Media, Photos/Video, and Students. A search bar is on the right. The main banner features a photo of three polar bears and the text: "YOU MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE", "Save polar bear cubs from Arctic drilling!", and a "Make a donation" button. Below the banner, there are two columns. The left column is titled "In the spotlight:" and features a sub-header "23 years later and Shell has learned nothing from the Exxon Valdez disaster" with a small image of an oil spill and a "Read more" link. The right column is titled "What you can do:" and contains a sign-up form with fields for "Enter your E-mail address", "First name", and "US Zip", and a "Sign up for e-alerts" button.

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You're selling.  
Donors are customers.  
They buy offers.

6

“Donors are staggeringly ignorant of the causes they support.”

-- Richard Radcliffe, dean of UK donor researchers

7

What they *do* have, though, are values, interests, beliefs, connections, experiences, upbringing, lost loves, secret desires, mistakes, regrets...

8

We like to think of ourselves  
in certain ways...

9

KIND  
CARING  
COMPASSIONATE  
HELPFUL  
FRIENDLY  
FAIR  
HARD-WORKING  
GENEROUS  
HONEST

Source: psychologist Jen Shang, quoted in the NY Times 2012

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“Humans are driven by a will to establish meaning in their lives. They need purpose.”

That’s your real job, in donor communications: to bestow purpose in exchange for support.

Source: Psychologist Viktor Frankl, via the For Impact blog

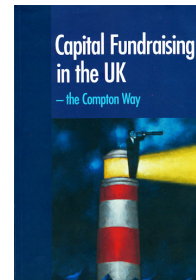
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offer  
=  
opportunity

12

“...the key motivator for giving is not need, but *opportunity*.”



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## The opportunity to...

**Help** someone who is struggling.  
**Pay** back. **Contribute** to something that matters to them personally. **Learn** something. **Memorialize** a loved one or themselves. **Change** lives. **Save** lives.  
**Relieve** pain. **Right** a wrong. **End** injustice. **Add** to the world. **Give** back.  
**Feel** good. **Feel** useful. **Feel** important.

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First, I want to thank you ...

Dear Tom,

I am writing today ... as humbly and gratefully as I can ... to thank you for your support of United Way of Anchorage this past year.

On behalf of so many you've touched ... thank you.

If you "gave at the office," thank you.

If you gave in response to an appeal like this, thank you.

And if you give again today, thank you.

I want you to know that you *are* having a measurable — and irreplaceable — impact on our community's toughest problems.

- You're changing the future for countless school kids locally, for

## FEEL USEFUL

These things matter ... to me, to you, to our community, and especially to the children who depend on us for a shot at a decent life.

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## Protecting the People and Causes Closest to You

When it comes to estate planning, you may have the basics covered. But you need more than just a will to protect the people and causes closest to you. Take these steps today to ensure you do everything possible to provide peace of mind and financial support for your family, friends and St.Vincent Foundation.

### 1 Update Your Will or Living Trust

Update your will or trust every three to five years and also after major life changes such as marriage, death, divorce, birth, adoption, an inheritance or a move to another state.

### 2 Review Your Choice of Executor or Trustee

Select someone you trust implicitly, someone who is experienced to act. You may consider naming a loved one along with an experienced financial institution.

### 3 Name a Power of Attorney

Assign someone to handle your financial affairs in the event that you are unable to do so yourself.

### 4 Create a Living Will

Draft a living will that makes your wishes

### 6 Watch Your Investments

Commit to learning more about investments. Your finances are your future, and the more you learn, the easier and more interesting investing becomes.

### 7 Give a Gift to Loved Ones

Take advantage of the annual gift tax exclusion, which makes it possible for you to give money to any number of people without having to pay gift or estate taxes. Check with your estate planning attorney for the current exclusion amount.

### 8 Create Your Legacy

When you remember St.Vincent Foundation in your estate plans, you help ensure that our important work will continue into the future. Please contact Rob Baker today at (317) 338-5085 or robaker@stvincent.org if you would like more information.



## Estate Planning Essentials

Tool	Your Benefit
A will	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The cornerstone of your estate plan. Ensures that your assets will be distributed exactly as you intend.
Trusts	<input type="checkbox"/> Special arrangements for the management of your assets for yourself and others. These can shelter assets for a surviving spouse and benefit heirs and

# LEARN SOMETHING

sure that you have enough to cover changing needs.

and financial matters in the event you are unable to do so.

Opportunity to help a place you love...

## A brilliant new library (with water view)

### On the need for a new library...

- Our existing library is squeezed into a space that was adequate when Shawangon was much smaller and made only that condition has almost tripled since then.
- We have 450 students pursuing their academic journey on Shawangon's campus. Yet our library has something like 90 seats to utilize. Using the resources of the school library should not come down to a game of musical chairs.
- Our library lacks the technological and educational hallmarks of excellence that parents expect at world-class elite schools. The current cramped space is ill suited to today's digital age; it's too inflexible for group learning, and it lacks sophisticated media-media capability.
- On a campus improved in recent years by more than a dozen new buildings, the library, long-time and long important, is the only remaining disappointment of the school experience, for visitors and students.

### Imagine this: What the new Centennial library will look like...

- Current plans call for it to be sited on a bluff overlooking Lake Okauchee, directly across from the Shaw Center for Science and the salmon hatchery.
- This will be a signature building, an architectural landmark on Maroon Hill, the soaring dining "athubal" for 500 that opened in 2012.
- At Shawangon, the magnificent natural landscape we occupy helps define the school. That's why this library will, like the spectacular dining hall, connect directly with the outside through walls of glass. A student only needs to look to be reminded of the Great Outdoors.
- A great thing about building a completely new library is you get to start at the very cutting edge of the library movement — and academic libraries are changing fast. They are on the cusp of a "digitalization" revolution, with so-called "e-resources" the fastest growing area of the collection. They need to accommodate



# CONTRIBUTE





# Endowment

Oldest: est. 1249 at Oxford.

# Endowment

Oldest: est. 1249 at Oxford.  
764 years later, which would you prefer?



This?

Or this?

**LIVE FOREVER**

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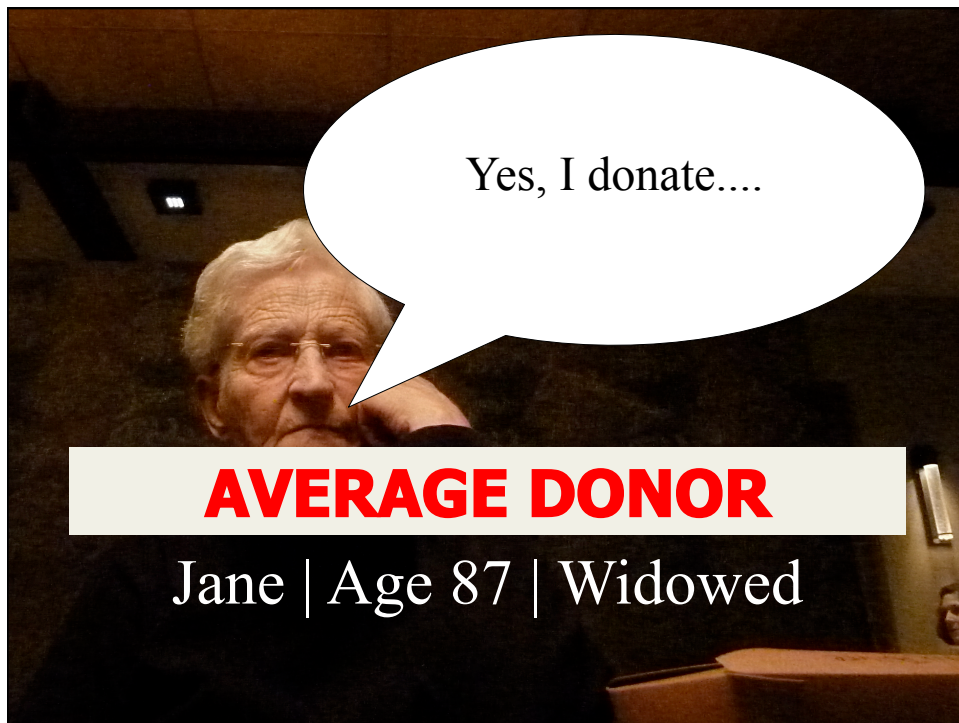
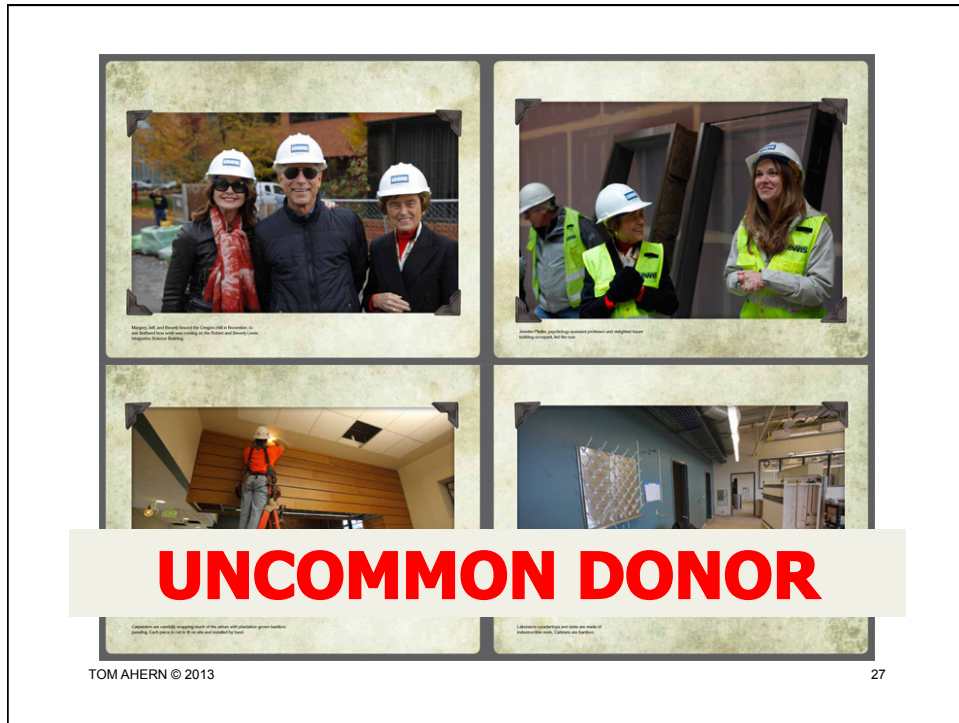
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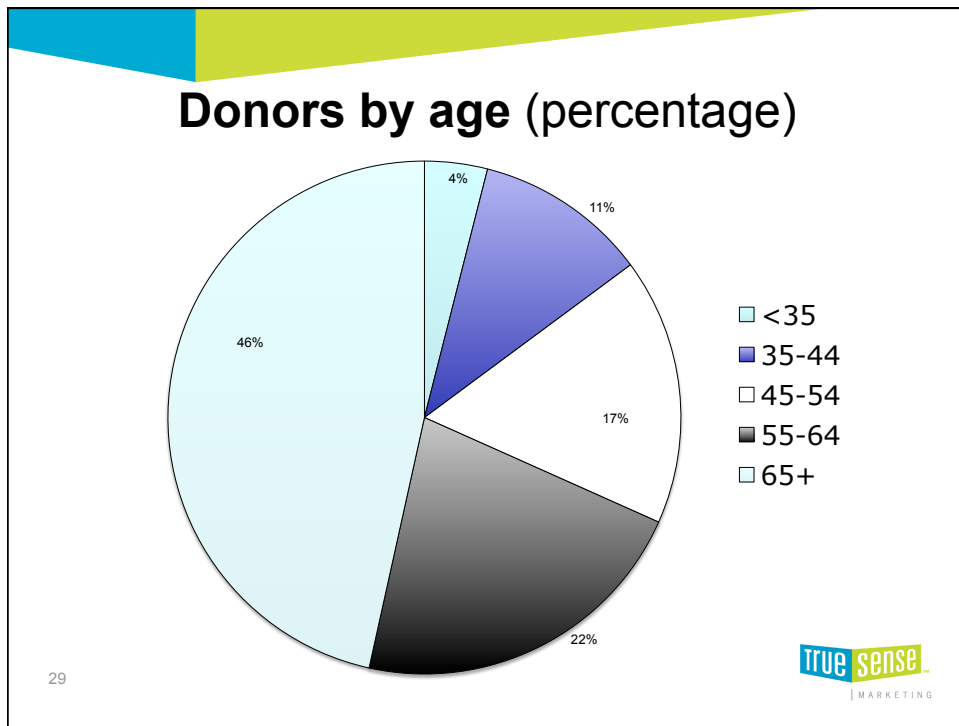
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## Realization #2

Every donor communication sends a message. Is it the **right message** or the **wrong message**?







Average donor age at Sharp?

75

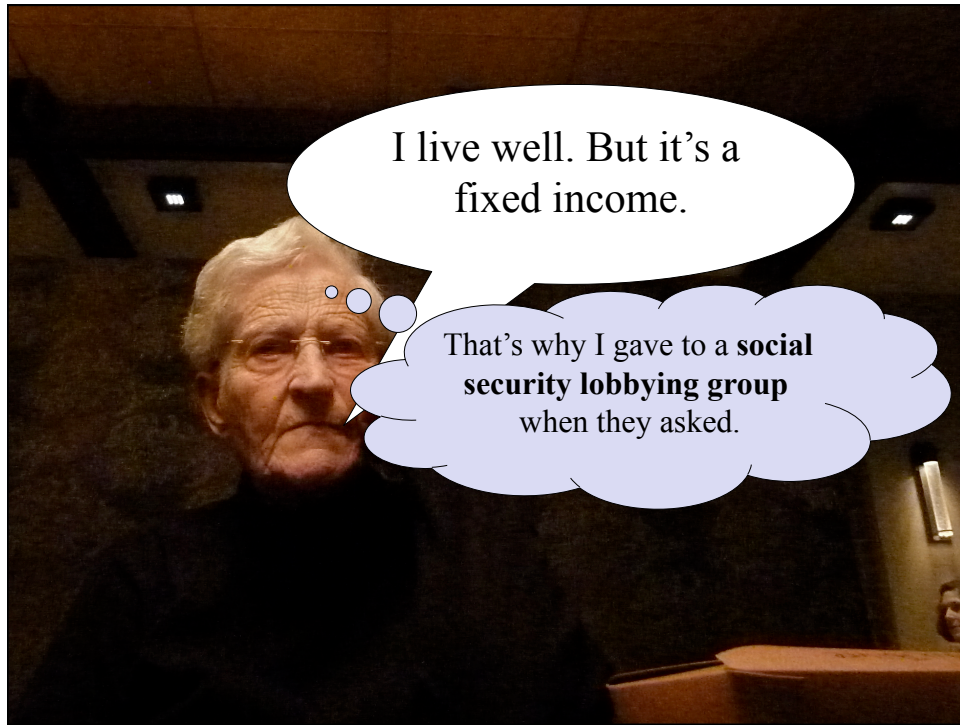
## For eyes over 60...

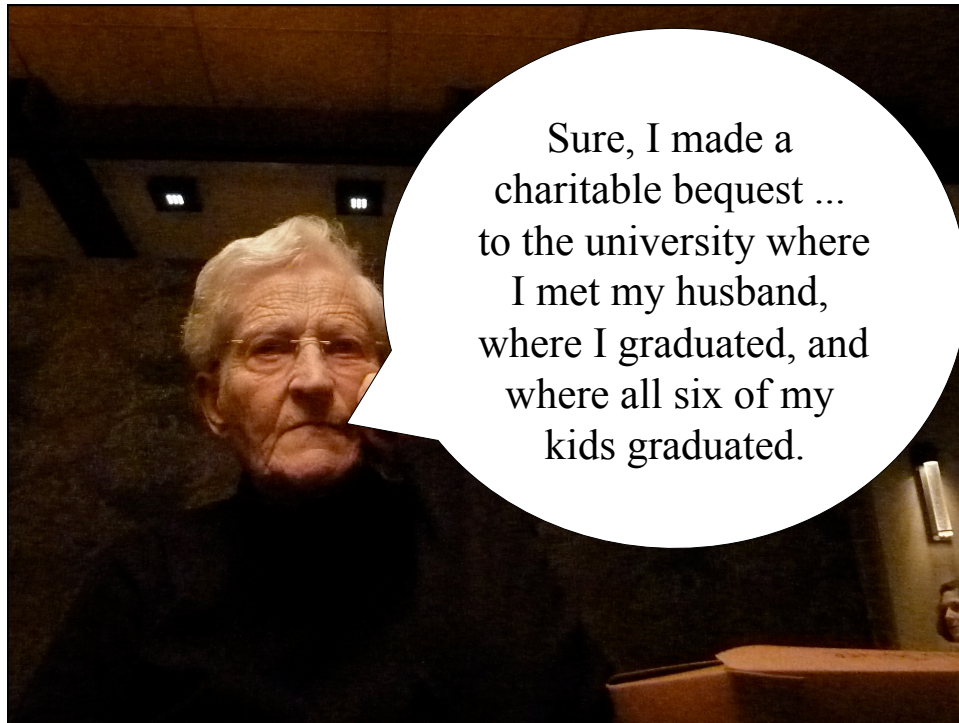
AIGA recommends 14 pt. for body copy.

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“Do they know that the success of this mission depends on **their donations?**”

**OREGONOUTLOOK**  
NEWS FOR AND ABOUT PEOPLE SUPPORTING THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON - FALL 2012

**All Systems Go**  
UO CELEBRATES NEW \$85 MILLION HUB FOR THE SCIENCES

**\$10 million lead gift**

**Thank You!**  
YOUR GIFTS TOP \$100 MILLION FOR FIFTH YEAR STRAIGHT

**Returning to a New Home**  
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION RETURNS TO NEWLY REMODELED AND EXPANDED ALLEN HALL

**\$7.5 million in gifts required**

**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON**  
1000 UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
EUGENE, OREGON 97403-0001  
503.343.2000

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**OREGONOUTLOOK**

**WHAT'S INSIDE**

- All Systems Go **PAGE 1**
- Henry for Hollywood **PAGE 2**
- Saving Endangered Languages **PAGE 3**
- Meeting Mary **PAGE 4**

[giving.uoregon.edu](http://giving.uoregon.edu)

**UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT**  
1000 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 211  
EUGENE, OREGON 97403-0001  
503.343.2000  
503.343.4444  
giving@uoregon.edu

**Returning to a New Home**  
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION RETURNS TO NEWLY REMODELED AND EXPANDED ALLEN HALL

**\$7.5 million in gifts required**

### Hooray for Hollywood

GIFT OPENS DOORS FOR CINEMA STUDIES STUDENTS



Recent Professor Dan Williams... gift opens doors for cinema studies students...

**\$25,000 gift**

"It's almost like venture capital."

—Steve Peterson

The concept for the series was to seek out LEO alumni and other friends of the program who...

Thank You! continued from page 1

Donation of faculty, he said. "The bulk of our students and faculty are from outside the region..."

The university received \$1,200 gifts and pledges from individuals, companies, and foundations.

—Michael Ward-Lewis

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work in the media industry and bring them to campus for informal talks about how they got started...

Among the filmmakers who have participated in the series... Steve Peterson, director of the series...

It was Peterson's talk that had the most impact on LEO student and cinema studies major Carter Pineda...

"It's almost like venture capital," Steve Peterson characterizes the gift.

"A lot of our students are interested in careers in media and the cinema industry," cinema studies director Michael Peterson explains.

The concept for the series was to seek out LEO alumni and other friends of the program who...

Thank You! continued from page 1

Donation of faculty, he said. "The bulk of our students and faculty are from outside the region..."

The university received \$1,200 gifts and pledges from individuals, companies, and foundations.

—Michael Ward-Lewis



### Saving Endangered Languages

**\$250,000 gift**

"Once a language is lost, you can never get it back. It's like a species."

—Steve Peterson

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... saving endangered languages...

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... saving endangered languages...

The gift is already making a big difference. For instance, NLL has been able to fund a new distance education initiative for...

—Steve Peterson

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### A DECADE-LONG INTEREST IN NATIVE AMERICAN HEALTH ISSUES AND A FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UO'S OLDEST EVER GRADUATE INSPIRES DONOR TO SAVE \$250,000 TO THE NORTHWEST INDIAN

**\$250,000 gift**

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... saving endangered languages...

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... saving endangered languages...

The gift is already making a big difference. For instance, NLL has been able to fund a new distance education initiative for...

—Steve Peterson

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### Mourning Art Matters

**\$2.8 million gift**

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... mourning art matters...

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... mourning art matters...

The gift is already making a big difference. For instance, NLL has been able to fund a new distance education initiative for...

—Steve Peterson

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of architecture and related arts, rather than just for the 600 million to expand the school's Business Administration Program in Portland...

At the time, he said he hoped the gift would help expand the reach of business education.

"I just want to make sure that when I see him, I feel comfortable if people could be surprised that I was about to be laid during a video interview."

—Steve Peterson

The gift is already making a big difference. For instance, NLL has been able to fund a new distance education initiative for...

—Steve Peterson

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### Meeting Mary

**\$5 million gift**

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... meeting Mary...

Steve Peterson's gift to the University of Oregon... meeting Mary...

The gift is already making a big difference. For instance, NLL has been able to fund a new distance education initiative for...

—Steve Peterson

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They think of you as a school.

Do they also know you are a  
major charity?

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Source: Wall Street Journal, December 2012

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Princeton: 63%  
Yale: 37%  
Harvard: 36%  
University of MI, Ann Arbor: 17%  
Michigan State: 13%  
UOregon: 13%  
US average: 13%  
UC Berkeley: 12%

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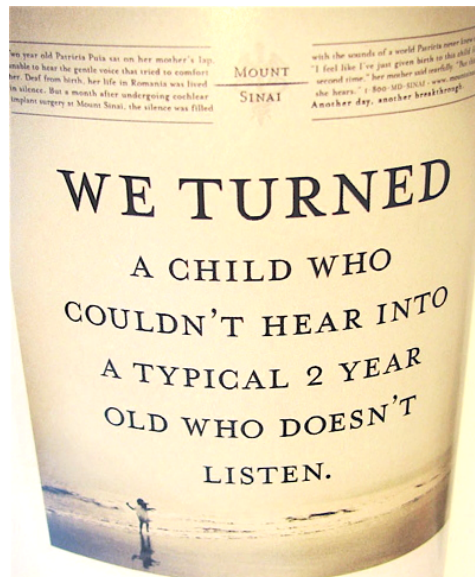
**“Am I treating the  
donor as our org.’s  
superhero?”**

44

Corporate communications are about how great the organization is. Favorite pronoun:

we

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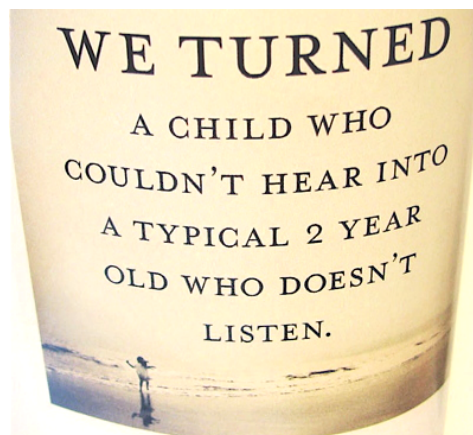
46

Donor communications are about how great the donor is. Favorite pronoun:

you

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Thanks to you and other generous donors like you...



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**Donor-NEGLIGENT:**

“We did this. We did that. We were amazing. Oh, by the way, thanks.”

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What we are doing in Pakistan



From emergency healthcare to clean water and relief items, read how we're helping survivors.

**FIND OUT HOW WE'RE HELPING ▶**

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**Donor Report**

The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers wish to thank each and every donor and partner who contributed during the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2006 and extending through December 31, 2006.

4 Season's Recreational Outfitters  
 541 Lounge  
 A Systems Integrator, Inc.  
 A.E. Willis, Inc.  
 Dorothy W Abramson  
 Acrovision Sports Center  
 Action Donation Services  
 Action Earth Movers  
 Jim and Maryanne Adams  
 David A and Audrey P Adams  
 Marian Adams  
 After School Buddies  
 Diana Almonse  
 Art Alamo  
 Alder Creek Ranch  
 All Trade

Joshua and Melanie Ausborne  
 Awbrey Glen Golf Club  
 David and Rhonda Ayling  
 Azila Noza  
 Robert and Diane Babcock  
 Kathryn Bailey  
 Debra Baker  
 Heather Baker  
 Lisa Bader  
 Bart and Carrie Ballard  
 Barna Companies, Inc  
 Bank of the Cascades  
 Tom and Lori Barber  
 Barnes and Noble  
 Norma Barnes  
 Rachelle Barnes

Bend Wine Cellar  
 Benjamin Moore and Co  
 Alan and Debra Bennett  
 Raymond Bennett  
 Betty Berg  
 Karen Bergin  
 Beta Sigma Phi Preceptor Alpha Tau  
 Betanstar, Inc  
 Bill Moore and Associates  
 Daniel and Theresa Bilyeu  
 Jalin and Brett Bingham  
 John and Robyn Bischoff  
 Karen and Douglas Bish  
 Bissell, Inc  
 Bits  
 Blaine's Lawn and Garden Service



“Is this  
 all I am  
 to you?”

## Donor-CENTRIC:

“With your help, all these amazing things happened. And without your help, they won’t.”

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**THIS IS YOUR VICTORY!**

Thanks to EMILY's List members like you, in the 2008 cycle we unseated some of the most extreme Republicans in Congress and gained strong Democratic majorities.

**11 NEW U.S. REPRESENTATIVES**

Ann Kirkpatrick	AZ	D-01
Jackie Speier	CA	D-12

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Hello, I'm Ken Hackett, president of Catholic Relief Services. Welcome to our 2009 interactive annual report.

The generosity of **you**, our donors, is one of Catholic Relief Services greatest blessings. **Your** support gives us the resources we need to bring innovative solutions to tough humanitarian problems. **Your** compassion transforms lives.

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Realization #3

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## Realization #3

Give your donors **an important job to do** ... and small donors matter just as much as big ones (sort of).

### You Helped Give Grace a Voice!

#### Mom Hears "I Love You!" for the First Time

Imagine going through childhood unable to ask questions, whisper secrets — even tell people your name. Until this spring, life without words was Grace Wright's reality. The lively 4-year-old was born with cerebral palsy, a form of brain damage that affects her ability to speak.

"We relied on rudimentary sign language and pictures to communicate," says Grace's mom, Linda Wright. "Conversations were a guessing game."

#### Grace's Voice — and Personality — Emerge

Grace understands language, but she couldn't express herself before coming to Gillette. Here, she tried using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device. It shows pictures that represent words and phrases. When Grace touches the screen, the device "speaks" the corresponding word for her. "I learned that Grace's favorite color is red and she loves pancakes!" exclaims Wright.

#### Grace Inspires Mom During Cancer Battle

Shortly after Grace received her device, her mom was diagnosed with cancer and her dad lost his job to staffing cuts. Although Grace qualifies for Medicaid, her family faces limited insurance options. Wright, who also cares for two other sons with special needs, is undergoing chemotherapy. Amidst these challenges, Wright's bright light is Grace's new voice. "I never thought I'd hear my daughter say, 'I love you,'" she says. "My dream came true."

#### Help Us Help Families in Need

Your gifts to Gillette support state-of-the-art technology so children, like Grace, can express themselves. They also help us bring Gillette services within easy reach of struggling families. Most of all, they make



Grace says "hello" using her new device. Children's Miracle Network sponsors help Gillette purchase communication devices for patients to test at home. Each device costs at least \$8,000.

## ... the distance and wins

You make  
the stories in  
this newsletter  
possible!



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Lives you've touched

## Survivors are “Living Proof can be beaten

Medical treatment is only a part  
of what your support provides  
for people with cancer

**F** every year, cancer survivors  
and their loved ones return to



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## 13 strongest words in English

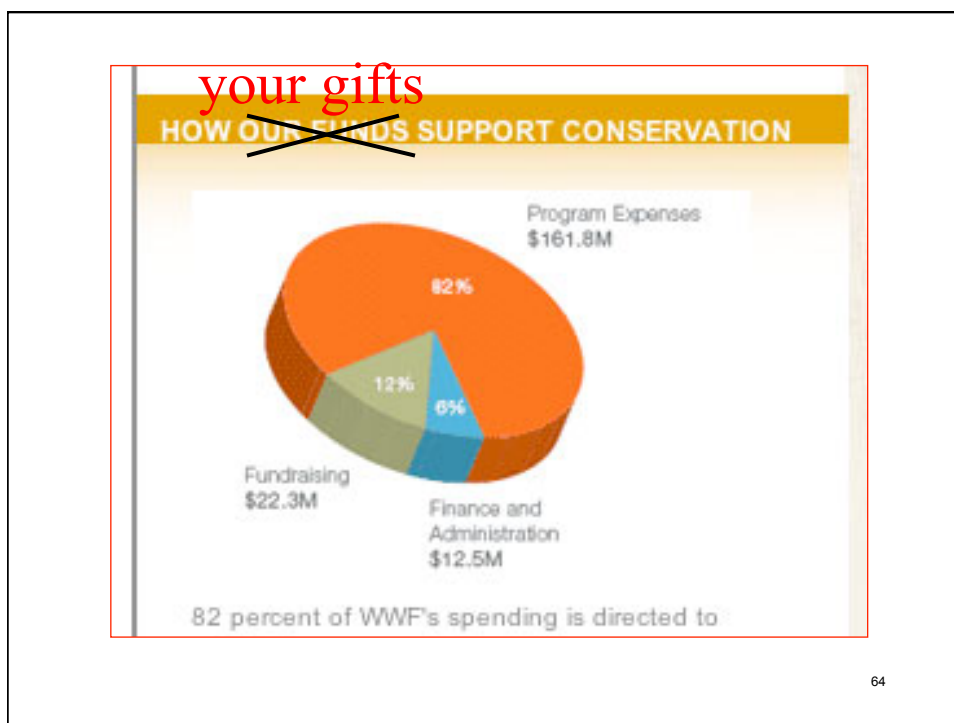
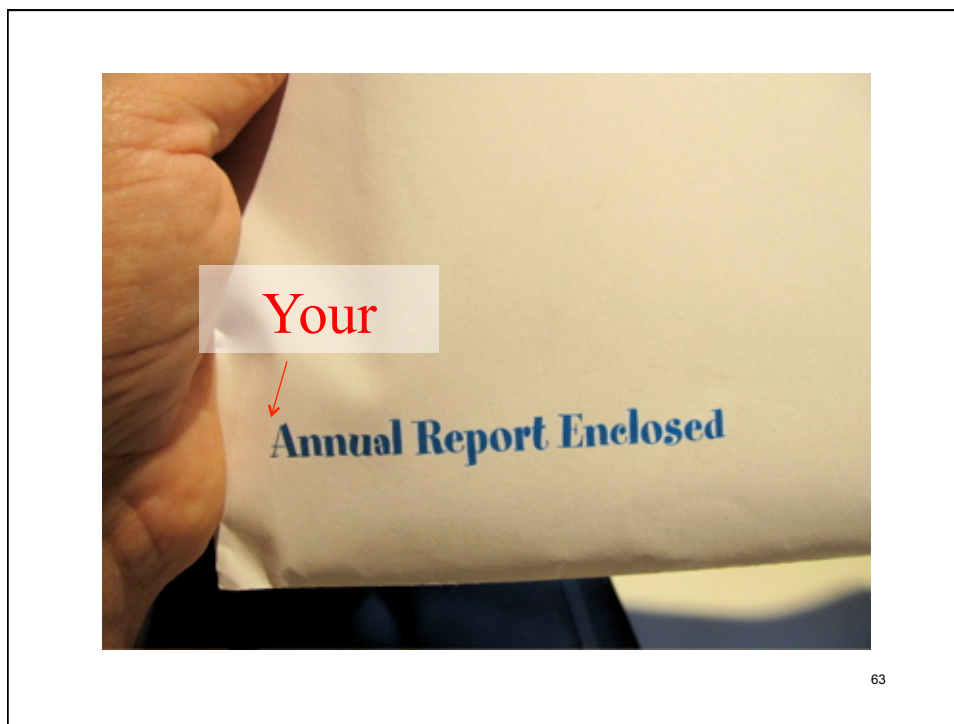
- Discovery
- Results
- Proven
- New
- Safety
- **You**
- Health
- Early
- Money
- Save
- Guarantee
- Love
- Free

Source: direct mail guru Jerry Huntsinger

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The word “you” is a  
*profound* emotional  
trigger.

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All fundraising copy should  
sound like someone talking.

-- George Smith, *Tiny Essentials of Writing for Fundraising*

Marketing bequests | © Tom Ahern | © 2012

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## Realization #4

You suffer from the “**curse of knowledge,**” (Heath Brothers, *Made to Stick*) ... and it's definitely holding you back.

## Insider talk

The study of innovative ways to synthesize materials using nanomaterials' unique properties provides a strong basis for important nanoscience and nanotechnology breakthroughs. From inquiries into the properties of gold quantum dots to revolutionary work with carbon nanotubes, Georgia Tech researchers are focused on uncovering the unique properties of nanomaterials that are the stepping stones to tomorrow's technologies.

## Outsider talk

“Nano fabrics never need dry-cleaning. You remove stains with a good shake.”

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## Ban jargon.

“Interdisciplinary” is not a sales word.

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... NEED?

## The endowment goal: \$5 million minimum

**A symphony is a tough business. Every time you perform, you lose money ... if you depend on ticket sales alone.** Consider the National Symphony Orchestra, resident at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. The National Symphony earns just 60% of its income from ticket sales. And that's pretty typical. In Rhode Island we do a bit better. Here, subscriptions and single-ticket sales earn back 65% of our cost. **Still, it's clearly not enough.**

**THE HIGH COST OF CONTINUED EXCELLENCE**

NOWHERE AMONG AMERICA'S QUALITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS do ticket prices alone cover the costs of a renowned conductor, top professional musicians, world-class guest artists ... not to mention the technical staff, overhead and the Annual charitable gifts, overhead and the ships, and the occ...

Permanent endowment is a remedy hotly pursued by top classical orchestras ... The Boston ... mill-

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1. Make it big.
2. Make it simple.
3. Make your donor the hero.

	DONOR'S INCOME TAX DEDUCTION	INCOME BENEFICIARY	INCOME PAYMENT
BSA CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY	Difference between the fair market value of the initial gift amount and the actuarial value of the non-charitable income obligation.	One or two individuals named in the agreement.	Based on actuarial tables. Rates increase with age.
BSA POOLED INCOME FUND			Pro-rata share of pooled fund's income. Paid quarterly.
CHARITABLE REMAINDER ANNUITY TRUST	Present value of charitable remainder calculated with government mortality tables and earnings assumptions.	Donor and/or others named in the trust agreement.	At least five percent of initial fair market value. Paid at least annually.
CHARITABLE REMAINDER UNTRUST			At least five percent of net fair market value, revalued annually and paid at least annually.

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~~“Planned giving.”~~  
Jargon. Insider talk. Bad.

“Bequests.”  
Everyday talk. Good.

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“Some say bequests constitute at least 80% of so-called planned gifts; others say 90% or more...”

Source: Mal Warwick, March 2004

**Find the Right Tool - Charitable Giving Tools Comparison Chart**

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED how many types of hammers there are? They are available in a dizzying variety, differing in size, weight, length, and materials, each one appropriate for the intended job. Craftsmen know that any job is easier when they use the right tool. Sophisticated techniques for making a charitable gift are becoming popular and common as more and more people learn about the benefits they can create for themselves and Scouting. It's important as one investigates making a gift, that the details of each option not be overlooked.

The chart inside provides a starting point in understanding the basic features of several popular planned charitable gift arrangements. While it is impossible to list and describe all the options you might consider, we hope this information will point you in the right direction, helping you identify some options that you'd like to investigate further. More detailed information is available online at [www.buagiplan.org](http://www.buagiplan.org), and from Scouting's staff of experts. With these resources, you and your attorney or financial advisor will be able to find the right tool for the charitable work you want to do.

	DONOR'S INCOME TAX DEDUCTION	INCOME BENEFICIARY	INCOME PAYMENT
BSA CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY	Difference between the fair market value of the initial gift amount and the actuarial value of the non-charitable income obligation.	One or two individuals named in the agreement.	Based on actuarial tables. Rates increase with age.
BSA POOLED INCOME FUND			Pro-rata share of pooled fund's income. Paid quarterly.
CHARITABLE REMAINDER ANNUITY TRUST	Present value of charitable remainder calculated with government mortality tables and earnings assumptions.	Donor and/or others named in the trust agreement.	At least five percent of initial fair market value. Paid at least annually.
CHARITABLE REMAINDER UNITRUST			At least five percent of net fair market value reviewed annually and paid at least annually.
WILL BEQUEST	No income tax deduction. No gift tax.	No transfer occurs until death. Donor retains ownership and rights to all income.	Donor, during life.
INTERSTATE AGREEMENT	Value of Scouting's remainder, interest, dividends, depreciation and depletion.	Donor.	Usually no income under this arrangement.
CHARITABLE LEAD TRUST	Generally no income tax deduction. Possible gift or estate tax credit table deduction.	Scouting or other qualified charity.	Amount established by trust agreement.

Chart continues on next page

Page 3 Giving Times - May 2011

80-90% of all "planned gifts" are bequests. Why is it an also-ran?



Realization #5

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## Realization #5

Make your communications **faster**.  
Fewer words, better pictures.  
Skimmers are 99% of your readers.

## What do “readers” really look at

- Artwork: 80 percent
- Photos: 75 percent
- Headlines: 56 percent
- Briefs: 31 percent
- Captions: 29 percent
- Text: 25 percent\*

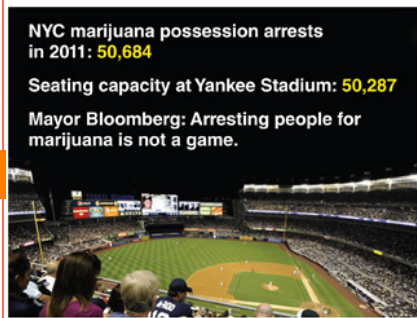
\*This number is abnormally high, according to Poynter Institute researchers. They tested prototypes rather than actual publications. Prototypes invariably produce higher, more positive numbers than real publications. *Source: Ann Wylie*

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This 2<sup>nd</sup>

### DPA Campaign Leads to Breakthrough in Reducing NYC Marijuana Arrests

NYC marijuana possession arrests in 2011: **50,684**  
 Seating capacity at Yankee Stadium: **50,287**  
 Mayor Bloomberg: Arresting people for marijuana is not a game.



In September 2011, we reached a major breakthrough when NYPD Commissioner Ray Kelly issued an internal order

Not this

marijuana – as long as the marijuana was never in public view. The order did not change the law itself – but simply instructs officers to comport with the existing law.

The fact that the NYPD admitted any wrongdoing – an extremely rare occurrence – represents a tremendous victory for the many New Yorkers who are fighting to end the city’s marijuana arrest crusade. But the devil remains in the details as to whether and how the

Not this

marijuana arrests have fallen by only 13 percent since the same period last year – a disappointing drop considering the scale of the NYPD’s marijuana arrest crusade.

This 1<sup>st</sup>

This 3<sup>rd</sup>

Thanks to you, thousands of New Yorkers could be spared from the devastating collateral consequences of getting arrested for possessing a small amount of marijuana.

public view. Despite the existing law, in 2011, more than 50,000 New Yorkers were arrested for possessing a small amount of marijuana in public view. The vast majority of those arrested did not possess marijuana in public view, as

Not this

80



(Psssst)

Almost no one reads the  
articles.

81

PS: Only the **big** type matters.

82

What did the reader learn  
from your “big type”?

83

SUBSCRIBE to my  
*free*  
how-to  
e-newsletter...  
[www.aherncomm.com](http://www.aherncomm.com)

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