

Beyond Foundations – Expanding Your Funding Base

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As a network, we have more experience working with foundations than with finding ways to reach individuals and businesses—but we can learn new techniques from one another. Below are examples of two successful fundraising efforts, one focused on the business community, one on individuals. To discuss these techniques and others, sign up for the Voices Fundraising List Serve by sending a blank email (no sig line!) to join-voicesfunding@duke.lyris.net. The list is moderated by Paula Thompson Felder, Voices' Development Director.

Can you accept donations online? If you had GetActive, you could. Voices members can sign up at drastically reduced rates. Find out what GetActive tools have to offer your organization in terms of fundraising, online advocacy, contact management and messaging. Email Nick at Geisinger@voices.org.

Westchester Children's Association (WCA) in New York and Michigan's Children, both members of Voices for America's Children, have each developed innovative approaches to networking and fundraising. WCA's **Westchester Business for Kids** initiative is increasing the organization's visibility and funding base by reaching out to the business community, a group with a serious stake in children, and a group too often uninvolved in children's issues. Michigan's Children's **Individual Investor Campaign** is expanding the organization's pool of unrestricted funding by framing donations as investments in the state's children and future. Both treat the donation process in a unique way and make the actual donation a part of a broader relationship.

Westchester Business for Kids (WB4K)

WCA's Board of Directors, in collaboration with its Executive Director, initiated WB4K in March 2005 to network, raise funds and increase visibility.



- **Publicity** — WCA designed an introductory brochure for board members to distribute to local businesses and to their own professional and personal connections. The initiative was also announced in WCA's Spring 2005 newsletter.
- **Dues** — The annual participation fee is \$150.

- **Survey** — Businesses detail their specific interests in child advocacy, allowing WCA to align its advocacy efforts with issues of greatest concern to them.
- **Benefits** — Participating organizations receive:
 - a display sticker proclaiming their support for Westchester’s children (and helping to publicize the initiative)
 - WCA publications to keep them current on issues facing children
 - invitations to WCA events—documentary film screenings, speeches and annual meetings
 - special recognition in WCA’s newsletter, annual report and website
 - priority in event sponsorship

Since March 2005, nine local businesses, including health insurance companies, retailers, and accounting companies, have signed up for WB4K. A wider funding base will allow WCA to engage in a wider variety of issues. The extra publicity these groups provide allows WCA to reach a wider audience with its programs, publications and events. And, because WCA identifies issues that are important to business, it is turning previously unlikely allies into partners with a stake in public policy relating to children.

Individual Investor Campaign

Michigan’s Children needed to diversify its funding base to achieve more autonomy and flexibility in its budget. To expand its donor base beyond the small, reliable group of individual annual donors, the organization decided to stress ongoing investments instead of periodic donations. Donors invest in the future by pledging monthly donations that range from \$10 to \$100 or more. Regular ongoing donations encourage people to remain engaged in order to see the “return” on their investments. Midway through 2004, Michigan’s Children sent letters to current donors to introduce the concept.



Each investor receives:

- a copy of *Investor Quarterly*, a special publication from the President and CEO of Michigan’s Children, which informs them of developments related to their investment.
- recognition in Michigan’s Children’s newsletter and annual report
- complimentary tickets to two annual events that benefit the organization (for investors at the upper end of the range of support)

Last May, in an attempt to widen the investor pool, Michigan’s Children mailed brochures about the program to 11,000 potential investors, including doctors, obstetricians, gynecologists and pediatricians. The organization periodically holds events to thank current investors and to encourage new participation, and also enlists board members (and other notables who have previously lent their names and influence to the organization) to host similar events. The Individual Investor Campaign yielded \$10,270 in 2004 and reached \$16,100 in 2005.

Do you have *A Great Idea* for fundraising? Post it to the Voices Fundraising List Serve.