



Cancer Program Fundraising

5 Viewpoints

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James M. Greenfield is executive director at Hoag Hospital Foundation in Newport Beach, Calif.

At Hoag Hospital Foundation, we have programs to accommodate two types of donors—those who seek hands-on involvement and those who prefer to make only an annual financial contribution.

“Sandpipers” actively serve as Hoag Hospital’s ambassadors to the community. This fifty-member fundraising group was formed twenty-one years ago to fund program needs and equipment for radiation therapy. The group now lends support to all Hoag Cancer Center programs and services through member gifts, benefit events, and other public services.

Sandpipers is a semi-autonomous organization governed by its own board of directors. The Foundation provides staff support and professional guidance to the group, primarily comprised of prominent women in the community who solicit contributions and manage day-to-day activities. For example, area department and specialty stores often seek out Sandpiper members to attend fashion shows or grand opening events. In exchange for their attendance, the store will make a direct gift and allocate a percentage of sales to the Sandpipers. The Cancer Center benefits from these donations, and the stores have access to potential customers.

Circle 1000 is a more traditional donor club for those who prefer to make an annual contribution to sup-

port cancer programs. In recognition of their gifts, members are invited to attend an annual brunch featuring a prominent speaker. Circle 1000, founded ten years ago, offers an opportunity to actively support Hoag Cancer Center for those who do not have the time or inclination to join a committee and attend regular meetings throughout the year.



Connie K. Ruff is vice president, Regional West Foundation at Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff, Nebr.

We initiated the Thelma Jones Memorial Golf Scramble to provide our donors with a fun-filled event in return for their dollars. The event, named in honor of a former patient who had been active in the local golf association, is nearly completely funded by sponsorships. Most of the revenue generated from this tournament comes from sponsorship of the twenty-six holes on the golf course. However it was also important to invent additional sponsorship opportunities to cover our costs. Inviting local businesses to sponsor accessories such as golf sleeves or markers helped minimize costs. Special grand prize events, such as a trip sponsored by a travel agency, are a good way to increase community interest in the event.

Many participants are unable to spend time away from the hospital or their practices to attend an all-day event. To improve participation among our hospital’s medical staff,

we organized our tournament around two shotgun tee-offs, or starting times, which limit participants’ play to about four hours. The tournament has thrived with the support of our medical staff; participation within the community has also increased.

At Regional West Medical Center, we learned that it takes time for a fundraising event to grow into a financially rewarding effort. It took us three years to achieve the level of return we expected from this event. Each year we experienced significant growth in participation and sponsorships, and we were confident that the event would meet our

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expectations. Starting with a quality, special event is an important first step. Next, carefully monitor and compare revenues against costs to ensure that your event is true fundraising and not public relations. Setting a deadline for your event's success will ensure that your time and effort are not wasted.



Keith Markstrom is director, Bay Medical Center Foundation, in Bay City, Mich.

A direct mail campaign can be a simple, inexpensive way to build relationships with potential donors. First, you must target a specific audience. Second, your message must affect the audience in an emotional way.

Each year at Bay Medical Center Foundation, we send a Memorial Day mailing, targeting all our previous memorial donors. Although the traditional holiday remembers service men and women of the armed forces, we believed that this theme would inspire the community to remember their loved ones with a donation.

In 1996 we sent out 726 letters with prepaid response envelopes. We achieved a 4 percent response rate, with most donations within the \$10-\$25 range. We mailed each donor a thank-you letter, in which we included another postage-paid envelope. In many cases that second envelope was returned within weeks, sometimes with a sizeable increase in donation. This kind of

response indicates to us that the donor is interested in the hospital and has potential for becoming a significant long-term donor.

This simple mailing helped us identify donors who may be ready for a higher level of giving. Remember, regular contributions to your hospital represent a loyal commitment on the part of the donor, no matter how small the initial offering.



Linda Showman, R.N., M.S.N., A.O.C.N., is oncology clinical nurse specialist in charge of coordinating commu-

nity activities at Westmoreland Regional Hospital in Greensburg, Pa.

Pay attention to your patient satisfaction responses—patients who respond extremely favorably might someday translate that satisfaction into dollars. In 1993, Westmoreland Regional Hospital treated a cancer patient who was also a nationally ranked bowhunter. The former patient was so impressed by the care he received that he helped organize the Bowhunters United Against Cancer annual event. Bowhunting, which involves shooting a fixed target using a bow and arrow, is a popular sport in Pennsylvania, and there are many bowhunting clubs in our area. Once a year, local bowhunters convene for a day of sport at a club specially designated for the event. All the proceeds received from the event are donated to the cancer center.

Patient satisfaction data can be a

useful tool in an environment where donors are becoming more selective about where to give their money. Individuals and community organizations tend to donate to programs they believe are high quality. By promoting your hospital's patient satisfaction data to your advantage, you can show potential donors that your program is worthy of their attention.



Charlotte Rhodes is vice president of development at the Don and Sybil Harrington Cancer Center in Amarillo, Tex.

Any fundraising initiative must have a correlating recognition program to acknowledge the generosity and commitment of donors. The Don and Sybil Harrington Cancer Center recognizes memorial gifts of \$1,000 or more on "The Tree of Life," a bronze sculpture located at the center's main entrance. Donors appreciate the permanence of a Tree of Life memorial donation. The names of loved ones appear on the tree as a symbol of both their fight against cancer and our continuing efforts to win the battle.

The Tree of Life distinguishes three levels of giving: the highest level, Harrington Founders, who are honored by stone markers that form the Tree's foundation; Golden Circle donors, represented by golden acorns; and Circle of Hope donors, symbolized by the Tree's golden leaves. All contributors to the Tree of Life are honored at our annual recognition event. ■