

## **5 Steps for Effective Major Donor Fundraising**

With your organization's vision, mission and priorities as a background and a compelling case for support at the ready, fund-raising follows a straightforward, five-step process.

**1. Plan: Get organized by creating a strategy and a work plan** Effective fund-raising requires a calendar of planned activities, clearly laid out areas of responsibility and preparation of necessary resources and materials.

### **2. Prospect: Identify and qualify prospective donors**

Who among the organization's alumni, friends, past board members has the financial resources to make substantial gifts?

### **3. Cultivate: Engage the prospective donors**

Is the organization consciously drawing the donor closer to the organization, increasing his/her awareness of the need and increasing likelihood of a positive response?

### **4. Solicit: Actually asking the donor for the money**

People give because they believe in the organization's mission and because they are asked to become a part of the camp's life.

### **5. Steward: Retain a relationship and show appreciation**

Donors should be regularly apprised of the values that their gift is adding to the camp and be given regular opportunities to be involved in the organization's life.

## Stewardship

Of all the forms of cultivation, stewardship of donors once they have given is the most powerful of all. First and foremost, acknowledge the gift immediately. This includes an organizational thank you note as well as personal notes from the solicitor and the executive director or board president. The organization must be able to clearly describe for the donor the value of their gift. Camp thank you notes with photos, brief descriptions of program impact, annual reports, newsletters etc. all serve to “formally” involve the donor in the results.

Most institutions do a good job of accounting. They record gifts and provide both an acknowledgement and receipt thanking the donor for the gift. Stewardship takes the next step.

- Lets the donor know that their gift has made a difference and the ways in which the camp and its mission are stronger because of their generosity.
- Connects the donor’s values and the camp’s values.
- Demonstrates respect for the partnership between the camp and its donors.
- Is the underpinning for the long-term relationships that lead to increased financial support and personal advocacy.
- Engages the donor in the life of the organization in a first-hand, ongoing way that results in shared aspirations and long-term commitments.

Staff members must support the stewardship efforts by providing proper data maintenance structures and planning donor stewardship activities. **It is up to staff to schedule and plan stewardship actions and make sure board members help with implementation.** Board members and other key volunteers are critical for their personal involvement in maintaining donor relations.

Stewardship activities are similar to cultivation activities:

- make “thank you!” phone calls and emails
- make personal visits with donors – at least once per year!
- host donors for on-site tours
- personally invite donors to camp events
- invite donors to appropriate social or community events
- be attentive to individual donor interests

Establish personal relations with donors just as you would an old friend or a neighbor. Inquire about their interests and their families. Discuss shared values and camp stories. Connect with them.

Stewardship is not only critical to show appreciation for current gifts, but it enables the organization to clearly establish its position to ask for additional and larger gifts in the future.