

Top Five Ways to Appreciate Your Donors Now

- 1) Show them what their gift enabled you to accomplish. Give specific examples of the number of people it allowed you to reach, serve, educate, and inspire. Give them at least one story about one of these beneficiaries.
- 2) Thank them promptly after receiving their gifts. Make your thank you personal—a note, a phone call, if appropriate, or a letter or hand-delivered gift from one of the participants in your programs. Something that lets each donor know you appreciate his or her unique gift.
- 3) Invite them to mission-related events (as distinct from traditional fundraising "entertainment" events). Ideally invite them to an event or meeting related to their particular area of interest in your program, like a meeting with the music director, a guest speaker on the latest discoveries in teaching piano, or the student music performance.
- 4) Ask for their advice and listen to it like you are trying to see how you could follow through on what they are suggesting. Don't be defensive or default to "it's not my job to make something that big happen around here."
- 5) Find at least two opportunities each year to communicate personally with each donor. For your higher-level donors, these should be face-to-face meetings or personal telephone calls. Resist the temptation to do all the talking; ask lots of questions, and listen to what they need and want. People like you a lot more when they know you are genuinely listening to them (even if you can't follow through and deliver on all their suggestions).