



ON THE LEVEL

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

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RAISING FUNDS

FOR

CHURCH AND FAITH-BASED YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS
AMID CURRENT ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

By Rodolpho Carrasco

[PASADENA] – Peruse the latest headlines from The Chronicle of Philanthropy and the message is clear: Fundraising is tough for nonprofit charities, and will get tougher.

“Fundraising returns reach new low point,” according to a study by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. In the study, only 28% of the 481 fund raisers surveyed believe their organizations will raise more money this year, the lowest level of optimism found in the history of the survey.

Another survey, by the Nonprofit Finance Fund, found that 52% of America's nonprofits expect the recession to have a long-term (2+ years) or permanent negative financial effect on their organizations. 62% said they were bracing for their foundation grants to fall this year, while 49% predicted that contributions from individuals would drop and 43% expect less government support.

One need not subscribe to America's Philanthropy newspaper to find such information. Chances are you are already familiar with some graphic details. Here's something that happened in Los Angeles recently: A local foundation, Weingart Foundation, announced that it received an

overwhelming response to a NOFA (notice of funding availability) they put out in January that is focused on helping nonprofits through these tough economic times. The NOFA was the right thing at the right time – but the massive response caused the foundation to issue a statement a few weeks later lowering the expectations of applicants.

News from the nation's capitol is also cause for concern. The Obama administration has proposed lowering a key charitable deduction tax rate from 33% to 28%, a move that many nonprofit leaders believe will lower overall giving.

What's an urban youth minister to do? After all, most of us do not have the fundraising staff and resources that is typical among larger nonprofits (hospitals, universities, etc.) The answer is that the economic crisis presents a number of opportunities to try new things and improve current practices.

Face to Face: A tried and tested fundraising technique is face-to-face meetings with donors. If you are like me, it's always a challenge meeting my own goals for quantity of sitdown meetings. Check yourself: Have you met your own goals? Now is an excellent time to shift your schedule and make these personal meetings a priority ... Page 6

HERE'S MY TAKE

CHANGE HAS COME IN RAISING FUNDS

Like a rising pop star everybody's talking about the economy. Only difference is no one's seeking autographed memorabilia; they're just hoping the troubles surrounding it will soon end. More than lots of talk, thousands who do faith-based work are being driven to their knees (and the board room), praying they can ride out the current economic uncertainties or recover from the hits they've already suffered.

Waiting for that proverbial change to come can be painful when donations are down and the need for ministering to people is soaring. From the executive director facing budget cuts to the leader raising personal support, all are experiencing some financial shift and shake. But what about their faith? Here's their take.

David Stanley (Kansas City, 2003) **Joshua's Tent**

Every month is a different story. I've seen 3-4 supporters reduced or completely drop off. I have had other supporters who have increased their donations because they naturally assume that with the economic times the need is there. I still send out newsletters each month. I never changed models. Only thing that's changed is we have prayed a little harder! I hold to the axiom that money follows ministry. One of the most fundamental principles I learned from DeVos is to build on what you have, and it's so true. Don't wait on the next strategy, start with and use what you have. We have done some fundraising events. The most recent one failed however, and we lost our \$1000 deposit. I believe people are just a little more resistant with giving. We also have asked for specific material goods besides money. We had a copy machine donated and other items. People will respond to those special requests if they have what you need. But if we are true to the call, God's going to provide. Recently I called an emergency board meeting because I couldn't make salary. One hour before the meeting I was opening mail and thousands of dollars were pouring in. God said, "I will meet your needs."

Howard Eddings (Memphis, 2004) **Memphis Leadership Foundation**

These are our worse times ever but we have had hard times before. We've lost more donors from the corporate and church world than individuals. Our plan is to first trust God with whatever happens. But there are three things we must do; One is to work hard to cast a broader net and also fish deeper and seek our individual donors to step it up! Data says these are times when individuals rely on God more and give just as much or more. When things are booming however, they give less. Secondly, we said we'd save money wherever we can. If a program is not doing well, we cut it. If a staff person needed to leave, we would not replace them. So we're allowing for the normal attrition to determine where we can cut cost. But we have not had to do layoffs. Third thing is our staff is stepping up how we are leveraging smaller resources. Those core values of interdependence and leverage are critical. So we are all having to adapt. But most of all we are staying steady, focused and in a strategic position on the receiving end for when God turns the economy around. Donors are looking at organizations that will thrive and not just survive to meet payroll and utilities. If people have the stomach for it, they can weather the storm. Therefore, we're staying faithful to what God's called us to.

Micah Espinoza (Denver, 2005) **Life Development Institute/ Praise Center Church**

God has always kept me on the edge, so this will be a proving period. Some grants are coming in and some have been delayed. But that might be a good thing for us. Individual donors is where we have seen the drop off, particularly the small individual donors. With the big individual donors they have continued, but some are only giving part of what they pledged and giving the rest later. We developed a strong individual donor base because I remember it was said at NC2 that 80 percent of giving comes from \$100-or-less givers. We had fears that at the end

of 2008 and the Bush administration that Faith Based Initiatives would not be supported. We're being forced to stick to the core of what we're about. This crunch has sped up our strategy. We are focusing on the best things now and staying on point. I am doing scenario planning so there is a plan A and a plan B, and I am committed to it. What the enemy meant for evil God meant for good. I believe provision is already in you. It's about what are you willing to give. The principle here is faithfulness. These times have one purpose and that's to strengthen and build our faith. Those who last will prove to be walking truly in faith.

Lisa Gintz (YFC, 2009) **Youth for Christ**

I don't associate making cuts with being a bad thing. God prunes so that there can be more fruit. God wants us to go through times of looking really hard at our mission, how specific roles align and to have those hard conversations that you normally avoid in prosperous times. Although I have seen a freeze in travel for a while, it only meant finding creative ways to connect with people. So using Skype or conference calls keeps us moving forward with the mission. Another creative way is going green. Ask donors if they will accept newsletters and updates by email. This cuts the cost of postage, paper and printing. Increase volunteers and in-kind giving or ask someone to host a fund raising meeting versus the organization paying for it. It's a sharpening time where everybody's got to get out there and work hard. I was told that no dollar amount is given without the prompting and power of the Holy Spirit at work. God is aware of exactly how much we have and what we don't have. The Holy Spirit has the critical part in it, and I am trusting in His timing. Sometimes we have to thank Him for what we don't have because if we did have it, we may not know how to handle it well. I am so grateful to Him that I can still do what I do in this economy.

By Gerald Bell

BRIEF NEWS AND BREAKTHROUGHS

Leslie & Brian Brock (Memphis, 2004) had a special package delivered just before last Christmas. Charles Avery Brock was born on December 21, 2008 at approximately 5:00 pm. Though a few days early, Avery, they call him, weighed in at 5lbs 9oz and measured 18 ½ inches long. This is the Brock's first child, and according to Leslie, he has his mom's cheeks and daddy's lips. "The hugs, constant smiles and simple things he has brought to our life," are some of the joys Leslie says she's experiencing.



Noel Castellanos (Trainer, Resource Networking) Noel was just appointed to President Obama's Council for Faith and Community Partnerships. President Obama has charged the council with four mandates that Noel and other faith-based leaders will be reporting on: Assuring that the funds allocated in the stimulus package impact poor communities, reducing the need for abortions through education and empowerment of women contemplating abortion, addressing issues related to fatherlessness and inter-faith dialogue and relationships. "Serving on President Obama's Council for Faith and Neighborhood Partnerships is an amazing opportunity to advocate for the thousands of community ministry leaders around the nation who touch the lives of young people and families in the name of Christ" said Noel in an email statement. "In the end, I pray my involvement results in more effective use of Government resources to serve under-resourced communities."



Ray Maldonado (Chicago, 2007) was honored for 25 years of service as a pastor in the city of Chicago. On March 13, 2009 several family, church members and friends gathered at La Villa Banquet Hall to commemorate his commitment to the community, where he's pastored two churches; Hope

Christian Fellowship and now Urban Vineyard. According to Ray's wife Teresa, they ate, worshipped, reflected, and danced. In his remarks, Ray encouraged the attendees with two keys to longevity in ministry, "Love and Forgiveness." A video clip of the event can be viewed dvuli.org/blog, search for ray.



Felecia Thompson (Chicago South, 2007) was recently appointed Project Site Executive Director of World Vision Chicago. In her role she assumes all fiscal responsibilities and programs for youth, youth advocacy and more. "I am so excited I am about to bust," said Felecia. "I asked God to take me where I needed to go and even though I wasn't job hunting I knew it was time to move on." Felecia said that she sees how the DVULI training prepared her for this opportunity. "From First Things First to looking at my gifts, it's almost scary," she said. "All the stuff I ever dreamed of is happening."



Peter Vivaldi (Orlando, 1998) is the new Development Manager for Cogun. The firm contracts with churches across the nation to provide design, building and the construction of ministry space. As the face for the company, Peter will be the point person to meet with pastors and church leaders to determine what their needs are beyond just building four walls. Among their many services, Peter says they also coach and connect pastors with lenders and assist with capital campaigns. "It feels awesome," said Peter, who was out of work for 3 months. "But I trusted God and am doing the Lord's work. Plus using some of the things I learned from DeVos."

Chris & Tammi Jehle (Kansas City, 2001) gladly welcomed their first child, Chase London, into the world on April 5, 2009. Weighing in at 8 lbs 4 oz, Chris shared in an eBlast statement, "We are grateful for the responsibility to raise Chase and to shape him into a man who will follow Christ and love others with all of his heart."



CAUGHT ON CAMERA

WELCOME CLASS OF 2009!

Now in our twelfth training season, the DVULI is excited to introduce this year's cohorts representing Cleveland, OH, Dallas, TX, Miami, FL, New York, NY, Washington, DC, and Youth for Christ. Our largest class in a single year, it's an intense time for each group of learners who have already completed their Personal and Ministry Assessments, and learned about the Five Core Values and Healthy Change.

The 15-month program continues to be a journey in which the youth leader discovers more about who they are and broadens their value for not doing ministry alone. From the first local workshop to the last, seeing transformation in the life and ministry of each participant is our prayer and goal.



We believe this adventure will be a breakthrough experience for the class of 2009, and they'll come from it wanting more. Congratulations to the new participants. Enjoy the ride!

— Rick Diaz



Photo credits: Eileen Kooreman, Ginny Vander Hart, Virginia Ward & Taylor Voss

FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2009

Three new alumni core values presenters were introduced this year; Micah Espinoza (Denver, 2005) presented Interdependence, Felicia Hooker (Chicago South, 2007) presented Empowerment and Curt Gibson (Los Angeles, 2005) taught Leverage. Returning alumni presenters included: Henry Greenidge (Portland, 2003), Ron Carter (Birmingham, 1999) Sandra Valentine (Orlando, 1998) Marvin Daniels (Chicago, 2002) and Gerald Bell (Kansas City, 2003).

As always, participants left with much more in their luggage than they arrived with – pre-assignment included. Trust the process!

– Gerald Bell



COVER STORY CONT.

At Harambee, face-to-face includes scheduling as many site visits as possible so that supporters can see the children and young people themselves and get a taste for our programs in action. If you do not have a facility to show, take young people with you on supporter visits. Reminder: Some of these meetings can be structured as "Thank You" visits, meaning that the up front purpose is to simply thank your supporter for their partnership and give them an update. It's not always necessary to directly ask for funds.

Improve Collections: This year at Harambee has been a time of tightening up collections of pledges and fees. We receive fundraising pledges throughout the year, particularly at our annual benefit, and also collect tuition and fees from our private Christian school, a preschool, and from visiting service groups. When we evaluated our rate of collecting on these promises, the results were surprisingly dismal. We assigned a staff member to gently, lovingly, but firmly remind parents of their promises, and we assigned another staff member to kindly follow up on giving pledges. These relatively simple measures increased our collections on fees to over 90% fulfillment. With service groups, we changed our long-standing "love offering" policy to a direct, per-head fee for groups, and in this way increased group revenue over \$7,000 beyond last year's revenue.

Monthly Giving Program: Greg Gorman, Development Director for St. Mary's Catholic Center in College Station, Texas, notes a fascinating detail about the power behind a monthly giving plan. He says that every 120 people that a nonprofit gets signed up to a monthly giving program is equivalent to having a \$1 million endowment. Here's Gorman's math: 120 donors will donate between \$45,000 and \$50,000 a year. A \$1 million endowment, at a modest 5% annual return, will generate \$50,000. So these 120 monthly givers are equivalent to having a million dollars in the bank. I checked Harambee's numbers to see if Gorman's experience is an aberration. Here's what I found: 56 of our monthly givers, ranging in monthly gift size from \$10 per month to \$500, provide \$60,000 per year (this figure does not include churches that give to us monthly). Not bad! I never

thought of our monthly giving base as being equivalent to having a million dollar endowment. This fact begs another question: Are we – are you – am I investing properly in these committed supporters via personal contacts and informational updates? Perhaps a random phone call to thank a donor for their gift.

Volunteer on the Fundraising Side: Fundraising may not be your thing, or perhaps you do not have any fundraising responsibilities in your ministry. "The violent bear it away," says Flannery O'Connor – volunteer for fundraising duties.

Do the mundane, thankless things. There's a lot to learn down in the boiler room. Here are some things

I constantly re-learn: Mailing lists are critical, like blood, to urban Christian ministries; people give for some strange reasons; supporters have startlingly fresh perspectives as to why your ministry is unique and worth supporting.

These approaches are most effective in the long-term. If you need short-term stimulus, so to speak, the best way is to simply get face-to-face. Get face-to-face with your Heavenly Father first.

Then get in front of people. Even if you aren't feeling it, or fear criticism, do it.

And don't just go to people you know or believe can support you financially. Go to anyone you believe cares, or would care, about your ministry. Even after 18 years, I'm often amazed at how much people feel personally touched that a person in ministry would simply come and share with them about God's work among young people. These meetings are not just a source of support raising for the ministry, but also serve as personal encouragement to me. For that reason alone – the encouragement to keep going – face-to-face may be what is needed right now.

Rodolpho Carrasco is the executive director at Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, CA. For 18 years he has served in a variety of capacities at Harambee, including the last 12 years in executive-level leadership carrying fundraising responsibilities.



BEFORE YOU GO

WELCOME HEATHER...

as DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative Administrative Assistant.

Please join us in welcoming Heather Fiet as the DeVos Urban Leadership Initiative Administrative Assistant. Heather replaced Liz Koster, who left in December for another position. Heather's first day was March 2, and she jumped with enthusiasm into a gargantuan pile of event details that needed her attention!

Heather graduated from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan in December of 2007. She is married (one year in June) to Ben, and they just bought their first home in nearby Jenison, MI. Heather plays the cello, loves gardening, and enjoys skiing. When asked for a quote about her new role with DVULI she replied with a big smile, "Life is good."



If you need anything from the DeVos Initiative office, or just want to say hello, please feel free to call Heather at 616-643-4700 or e-mail her at heatherf@rdvcorp.com.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Hector Morales (San Diego, 2001) After graduating from DVULI Hector went in to fulltime ministry as Pastor of Community Outreach at Emmanuel Faith Community Church in San Deigo. He was married in July 2005 to Brenda. They have a two-year old daughter Cecilia and are expecting their second child this summer. According to Hector and the doctors, it's a boy! One of his ministry highlights is the community service project for local public schools that affords him the opportunity to partner with another local church and serve several hundred people. Hector says that he's especially enjoying time with family, hiking and taking camping trips, as well as hearing his daughter call him, "Daddy." "Hearing her say that really makes me feel good," he said.



Liz Koster (DVULI, 2006-2008) Liz accepted a grant funded position of the DeVos and VanderWeide Foundations with the Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS). In her new role, Liz will work alongside the district's Athletic Director, applying her creativity, innovation and vision to coordinate the Academic Athletic Expansion Project (AAEP) aimed at increasing the engagement of middle school students in sports and school. "I am very excited to take part in a project that will [enhance] the culture of our school system here in Grand Rapids," said Liz. "To use a tool such as athletics to impact the lives of middle school students is an amazing opportunity. It's the greatest challenge I have ever faced in my life." GRPS is the third largest school district in Michigan serving nearly 20,000 urban students.



Raising Resources

A More-Than-Fundraising Workshop Handbook

In today's economic downturn, being a skillful fundraiser is more important than ever. With increased needs and less available resources, funders are even more selective about who they support financially. As a result, the margin of error for making fundraising mistakes has shrunk significantly. Eliminating these mistakes is therefore, critically important.

In Raising Resources you'll find a wealth of valuable of information and practical suggestions to help you become more efficient and creative in seeking financial support for your ministry. More than simply a grant-writing guide, this fundraising workbook seeks to help nonprofits develop a complete strategy of fundraising that involves personal giving, in-kind donations, private grants, and corporate sponsorship.

The structure and tone of the workbook are easily accessible. It is written as an interactive tutorial, with the reader completing various exercises and worksheets that eventually produce a fundraising plan. The workbook consists of seven main chapters plus a section of FAQ and Resources for Further Study. To help you improve your fundraising skill, we'd like to recommend Raising Resources, a handbook produced by the Empowerment Resource Network.

Go to www.ernonline.org/rr.html. There is no cost for this resource.

— Ron Carter



MESSAGE BOARD

These people have updated contact information:

Address:

Altricia Payton-Black (Cleveland 2007)
Christine Garde (San Diego 1999)
Wade Norris (Portland 2003)
Rebecca Ray (Boston 2006)
Jin Min Lee (Boston 2006)
Kirt Thompson (San Antonio 2001)
Michelle Robinson (Philadelphia 2004)

Email:

Kathleen Greenidge (Portland 2005)
Ingrid Broadnax (Boston 1998)
Felecia Thompson (Chicago South 2007)
Eunice Bello-Childress (Miami 2007)
June Smith (Pittsburgh 2004)
Ann Heerde (Grand Rapids 2000)
Anika Smith (Grand Rapids 2006)
Hilda Guinn- Arsenault (Memphis 2004)
Gilbert Hernandez (San Antonio 2001)
Brittany Mackey (Atlanta 2006)

If you are interested in contacting any of these people, please visit the DeVos Urban Leadership website for updated contact information. devosurbanleadership.org.

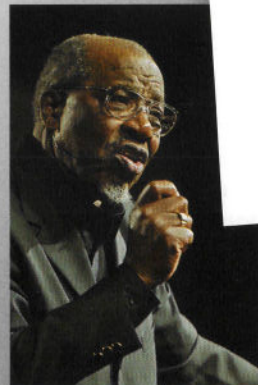
John Perkins Leadership Retreat

July 14-17, 2009 Jackson, MS

How can we challenge our urban youth to pursue a biblical vision of love, truth, and justice, and to be a catalyst for change in their churches and communities?

Exclusive to DVULI alumni, spend four days with Dr. Perkins in quality dialogue and discovering a deeper understanding of leadership in the context of community. This retreat will focus on empowering Christian leaders who are passionately engaged in proclaiming the whole gospel of the kingdom to urban youth.

Visit www.dvuli.org/jplr for registration details.



CLASS OF 2008 Graduations

Phoenix, May 2
Atlanta, May 2
San Diego, May 9
Minneapolis, May 16
Kansas City, May 22

CLASS OF 2009

Community Capacity Building

2nd Local Workshop

June 4-6 Cleveland
June 8-10 Youth for Christ
June 11-13 Dallas & New York
June 18-20 Miami
June 25-27 Washington DC

Scenario Planning

3rd Local Workshop

August 6-8 Cleveland
August 13-15 Dallas & Miami
August 20-22 New York
August 25-27 Youth for Christ
August 27-29 Washington, DC

Participants should check www.dvuli.org/workshop for complete workshop details.

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