



**S**o, you've been put in charge of fundraising for your church or school? Having been a professional fundraiser for many years, I understand it's no easy or simple task. Sometimes donors won't trust us if the process or plans aren't clear. Sometimes people focus on the money rather than what it accomplishes—putting the cart before the horse. And sometimes they're reluctant to give because they've seen donors' funds misused in the past. Although fundraising hasn't always had a good reputation, we can accomplish much by asking for and receiving money. It enables us to involve people in worthwhile ventures, help those in need and enrich life locally and globally. While fundraising can't be condensed into a single article, perhaps you would like to know the basics and how to do it right.

# give & get

## A Beginner's Guide to Fundraising for Ministry

Lilya Wagner

### Getting the Basics

Fundraising is the accumulation of funds for a specific cause that benefits a person or population. The emphasis should be on the *results*, with the money serving as a price tag to accomplish something worthwhile.

Fundraising can be a one-time event, a short-term project, or an ongoing program that is part of an organization's overall management and structure, providing sustainability. It is a significant tool used by organizations ranging from major universities to one-room schoolhouses, from nursing homes to major hospitals, from special interest groups to church groups.

The Bible is full of good advice on the value, importance and need to give and receive, including the well-known text, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Ellen White also gave sage advice on generosity and asking for donations. In a May 1893 article in *The Review and Herald*, she wrote, "The Spirit of Christian liberality will strengthen as it is exercised, and will not need to be unhealthfully stimulated. All who possess this Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, will with cheerful alacrity press their gifts into the Lord's treasury."

As you can see, fundraising is not a simple, to-do list that once you're done, that's it. It is a complex profession involving steps and strategies. There is no simple formula for accomplishing it, and experience and/or training are necessary.

In addition, it takes a team to carry out a good fundraising campaign or program. Although it takes



PHOTO BY HOUSHYAR KARIMABADI

### fundraising done right Southern Asian Church

**F**ranklin David (above), senior pastor of Potomac Conference's Southern Asian church in Silver Spring, Md., attributes the success of his church's fundraising efforts to prayer and hard work. Through trial and error, he grew to understand that wealth and geographic proximity to the church do not necessarily translate into giving. He refocused his efforts on those who cared most deeply about the church—the members. He helped his congregation and leaders understand the ministry of philanthropy and its biblical foundation. Through thoughtful cultivation and solicitation to the church—as an entire congregation and in one-on-one meetings—he secured approximately half of the nearly \$10 million needed.

Pastor David strongly encourages pastors considering fundraising to start with prayer, seek professional advice and training, and finally, ask.

"God has placed a desire to give in the hearts and minds of people, but there must be someone to ask," he says.

—Kristin Priest



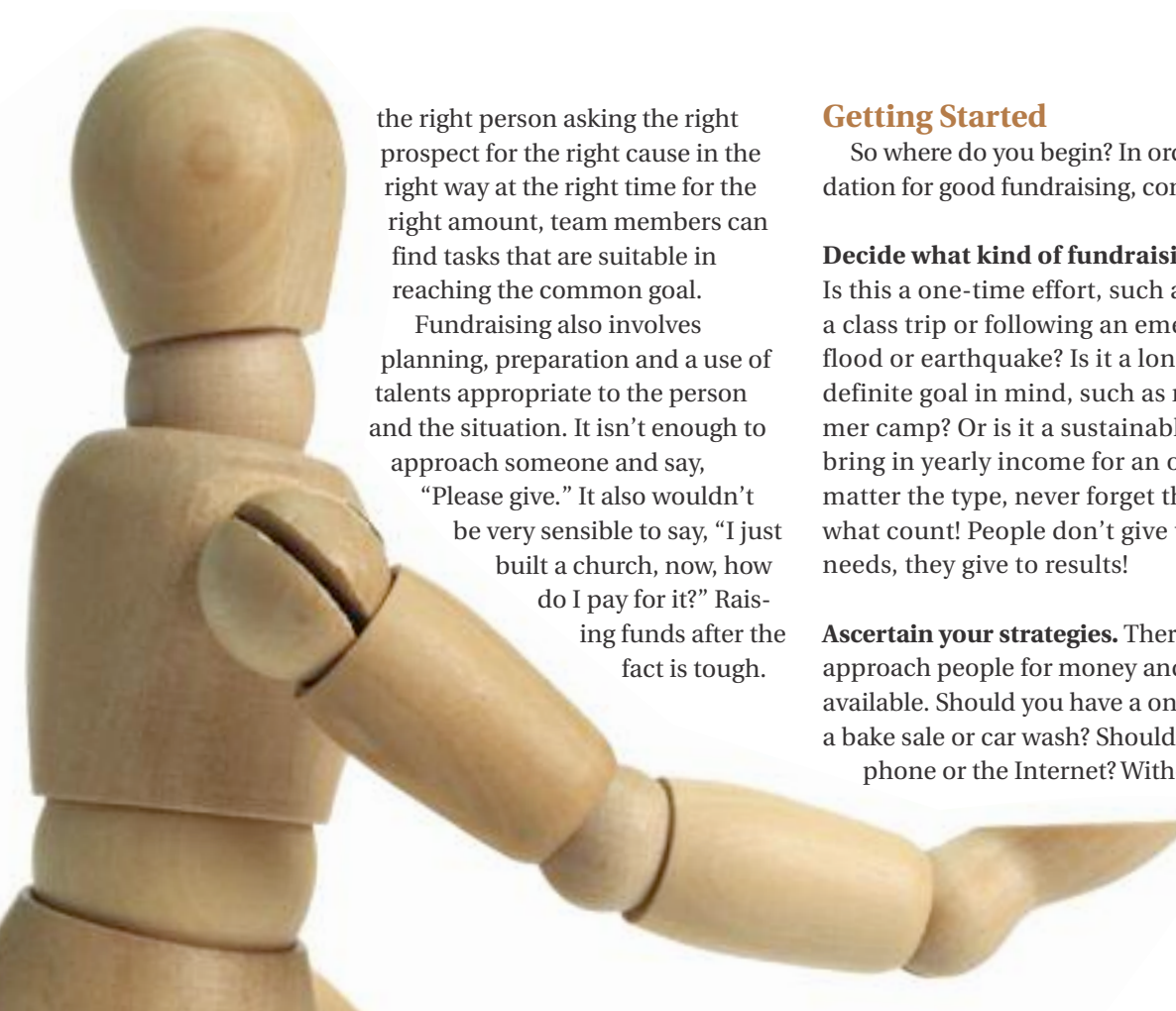
## fundraising done right Shenandoah Valley Academy

Located in New Market, Va., Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) provides a wonderful example of what can happen when the principles and best practices of fundraising are followed. In 2007 and 2008, SVA reported \$1,053,369 and \$2,680,353, respectively, in charitable giving. In terms of fundraising, this makes them one of the best performing academies in the North American Division. Jan Osborne (below), director of Alumni and Development, attributes their success to three key elements:

- 1. Continuity.** This is Osborne's 22nd year at SVA, which makes it easy to develop relationships and trust with key potential donors.
- 2. A well-rounded program.** SVA does not focus only on special events or selling something. Their program includes direct mail, events, personal solicitation and an emphasis on connecting and cultivating alumni and other key constituent groups.
- 3. Strong enrollment and a happy constituency.** SVA's constituency feels good about their school, making for a much easier fundraising environment.  
—Kristin Priest



PHOTO BY BERT WILLIAMS



the right person asking the right prospect for the right cause in the right way at the right time for the right amount, team members can find tasks that are suitable in reaching the common goal.

Fundraising also involves planning, preparation and a use of talents appropriate to the person and the situation. It isn't enough to approach someone and say, "Please give." It also wouldn't be very sensible to say, "I just built a church, now, how do I pay for it?" Raising funds after the fact is tough.

### Getting Started

So where do you begin? In order to provide a foundation for good fundraising, consider these points:

#### Decide what kind of fundraising you need to do.

Is this a one-time effort, such as raising money for a class trip or following an emergency, such as a flood or earthquake? Is it a long-range effort with a definite goal in mind, such as renovating a summer camp? Or is it a sustainable program that will bring in yearly income for an organization? No matter the type, never forget that the results are what count! People don't give to problems or needs, they give to results!

**Ascertain your strategies.** There are many ways to approach people for money and make opportunities available. Should you have a one-time event, such as a bake sale or car wash? Should you use mail, the phone or the Internet? Without a doubt it's most

powerful to ask people one-on-one, but you can't do that with everyone. What about a group invitation? Using the right tool is as important in fundraising as it is in constructing a building.

**Determine what kind of case to present to potential donors.** Why should someone support the cause? What reasons will you give? Your case basically answers the question, "So what?" What difference will it make to give to the cause? It also pays to understand motivations for giving. (See the Giving Trends sidebar on page 18.)

**Figure out who might give to your cause or organization—and why.** You might think of answering the question, "Who cares?" Those who have a link to your organization and an interest in what you're doing will most likely want to help. We often forget that people want to be involved; they want to see good causes happen and will be generous if invited to give.

**Know what you can do on your own and when you need help.** There are many resources available, beginning with Philanthropic Service for Institutions (PSI), the North America Division (NAD) consulting office. (See Resource Guide on page 15.) You might even set up a one-time consultation.

**Practice the essential "extras" that keep fundraising at the high level of respectability it deserves:** ethical practice, accountability and transparency, good donor relations and good communication.

### Getting it Right

Fundraising is a ministry. Through helping people give—and learning to do it correctly—we can accomplish much and serve our fellow human beings and God. As Albert Schweitzer, the famed and respected missionary to Africa, said many years ago, "One thing I know: The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."

*Lilya Wagner, CFRE, is director for the North American Division's Philanthropic Service for Institutions, headquartered in Silver Spring, Md.*



## fundraising gone wrong

A small congregation had outgrown their facility and wanted to purchase a new building. Church leaders felt it would be an unnecessary delay to study the philanthropic capacity and interest of the members and community for this project and purchased the new facility with less than 15 percent of the needed gifts secured.

Over the next several weeks, they collected special offerings at church but leaders did not make specific and personal requests. With very few exceptions, church members only gave small gifts.

The church then turned to the community, assuming that being in the same town would make people care. They failed to realize that they had not been an active part of the community.

Finally, the church reached out to well-known, wealthy Adventists, individuals who had never worshiped with them or even lived in the same state. Unsurprisingly, the church's requests for funding were denied.

Sadly, this church continues to struggle and has had to cut its ministry budgets in half to pay the mortgage.—Kristin Priest

# giving trends

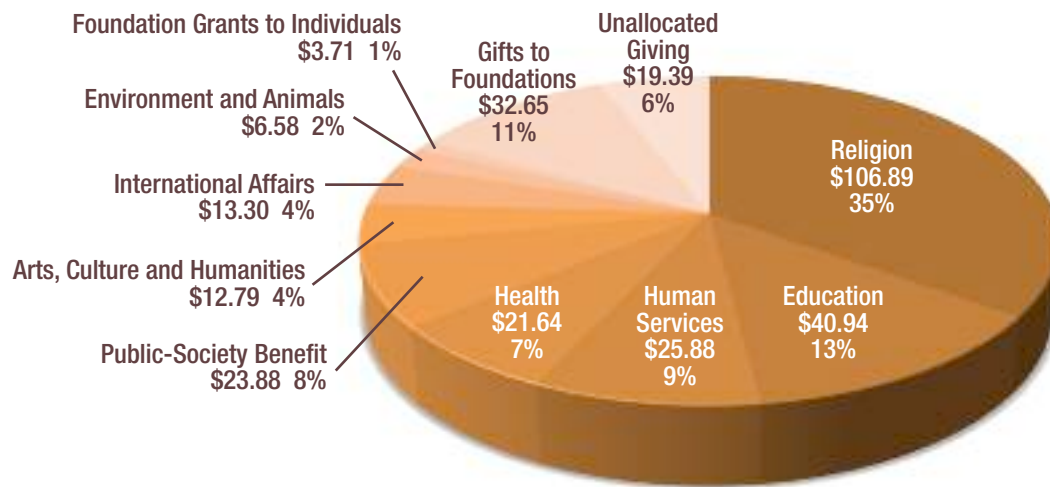
## What You Should Know

Americans are a generous people. Even during times of economic distress, Americans continue giving. Donors may focus their giving more, which means organizations—including churches—that have taken good care of them will continue to receive philanthropic dollars. Donors may ask harder questions about how their money is used; they may give less; they may volunteer more if they can't give, but they do not stop giving.

In 2008, despite the fact that charitable giving dropped 5.7 percent, Americans still donated more than \$307 billion, including one-third to religious organizations (see chart below).

We also know that more Americans provided financial assistance than received it. Statistics show that households earning less than \$100,000 a year account for nearly half of the nation's charitable giving. Thirty percent of households gave \$500 or more. Even 29 percent of those struggling financially came to the aid of others. In addition, Americans continue to volunteer close to home. Twenty million reported working to solve a community problem, up from 15 million a year ago.

2008 RECIPIENTS OF CONTRIBUTIONS (IN BILLIONS) • TOTAL GIVING = \$307.65 BILLION



SOURCE: GIVING USA 2010, GIVING USA FOUNDATION

### The Bottom Line

Professionals base their projections for future giving on changes in demographics, technology, the institution of charity, lingering effects of the financial crisis and continuing economic woes. But, as the statistics prove, people want to help, and their economic situation won't stop them from giving to a good cause.—*Lilya Wagner*