ACOW Fundraising Workshop
Saturday, October 5, 2013

How to Write Winning Appeals

• Who: Old friends and new
  ➢ Your members and donors are more likely to give than anyone else.
  ➢ #1 reason for not donating: WASN’T ASKED.
  ➢ Make sure you have 100% giving, at any level, from your board: funders like this, and they can say, “Join me in supporting our chapter with a generous gift.”
  ➢ Track your members’ and your donors’ giving history!
    ▪ Ideally with a database, much better than Excel.
    ▪ Salesforce is a good one. Other recommendations?
    ▪ Clean your list: someone needs to manage the list, update with corrections

• When:
  ➢ Welcome new members from National: get names from monthly report
    ▪ Write a template welcome letter, add a personal welcome note. (See web site for sample letter)
    ▪ Invite to your events, add them to your appeal list.
    ▪ New National donors are automatically local chapter members. After that, they have to renew their local membership with the chapter*.
  ➢ Send appeal to members and donors at least once/year.
    ▪ November before Thanksgiving ideal for year-end, no later than first week of December.
    ▪ Twice/year even better – some people give EVERY TIME YOU ASK!
    ▪ Every appeal is also a cultivation, connecting with your members and donors, informing them about what the organization is accomplishing.

• What:
  ➢ Inspire through pictures, stories, numbers: people tend to skip over the blah blah blah and go straight to the 1. Photo 2. Caption 3. Bulleted items 4. The P.S.
  ➢ Thank you! You make XX possible (what does their $$ accomplish? X number of Y, allows us to increase Z, connect children to nature, etc.)
  ➢ Ask: Make a gift/renew support of $XX
    ▪ Name the amount: Set a default ($50?)
    ▪ For past donors, customize with the amount of their last gift, say “renew your support with a gift of $XX or more” or “increase your support with a gift of $XXX so we can reach even more children with our programs.”
  ➢ Include a P.S.
    ▪ Special offer: Matches can really increase gift size for many people!
    ▪ Give a gift of $XX by X date and you will be invited to our annual donor dinner.
    ▪ Send your gift now so we can accomplish XX!
• How:
  ➢ Personalize!
    ▪ Their name on letter and envelope, and get it right
    ▪ Hand-written note on each letter: board and volunteer activity. Works!
    ▪ Make sure your chapter name and address are on the envelope.
    ▪ Hand-written envelope would be super personal if you have time/volunteers.
  ➢ Mail merge vs. mail house
    ▪ Microsoft Word mail merge: Mailings/Start Mail Merge/Mail Merge Wizard
    ▪ Mail house if have more than volunteers can handle, they can personalize.
  ➢ 1st class vs. bulk
    ▪ 1st class stamp gets the best result: doesn’t look like junk
    ▪ If go bulk, can’t personalize letters. Only do if really high volume, maybe to a speculative list, like a zip code mailing to bring in new prospects.

• Thanks!
  ➢ Thank within one week. No more than one month after!
  ➢ Write a template thank you letter that reflects appeal message. Photo if you can.
  ➢ Add a handwritten note. (Thanks so much! Your gift makes such a difference for the birds and children of the valley!)
  ➢ Thank your donors 7 times/7 different ways

• Follow up resources
  ➢ The Grants & Fundraising section of the Audubon Washington Chapter Resources web site: http://wa.audubon.org/grant-opportunities-fundraising-ideas
  ➢ The Fundraising section of Audubon Chapter Services web site: http://chapterservices.audubon.org/chapter-leader-guide/funding-fundraising
  ➢ Contact kbowen@audubon.org, 206-652-2444 x111 with questions or if you would like feedback on your appeals or plans.

*Note: New chapter donors or donors of $20 or more who give after 18 months are automatically National members if write check to National Audubon. See Chapter Services site for details.