

## Fundraising in Girl Scouting

### Myth/Obstacle/False Limit

### Buster:

<p>Girl Scouting isn't about food, shelter, and survival. Our case can't compete with organizations meeting critical, life &amp; death needs.</p>	<p>Girl Scouting addresses some of the most prevalent systemic causes behind poverty, hunger, homelessness, and violence. Women, far more often than men, shoulder the responsibility as single head of household with children. Equipping girls with courage, confidence, and character gives them the attributes needed to be tomorrow's best parents, workers, and citizens.</p>
<p>Girl Scouting is perceived as an organization for white middle-class girls.</p>	<p>Membership statistics don't lie. The greatest rise in membership is now from the segment of girls who are often not in a position to partake in the more expensive after-school programs offered today. Girl Scouts is inclusive and councils often underwrite opportunities for girls to partake in camps, sports, and leadership development experiences at highly subsidized rates.</p>
<p>Some/several families in our membership can't afford to give financially.</p>	<p>Don't say no for <i>anyone</i>. It is not respectful of them, donors, or the girls we serve. Very few people cannot afford to give <i>something</i>. Anyone who sent out for pizza or rented a video in the past month can afford to give a modest gift. People generally do what is expected of them—or asked of them.</p>
<p>We have a strong balance sheet and our donors get the impression we don't need philanthropic assistance.</p>	<p>A healthy reserve is one indicator of thoughtful stewardship and sound financial management. The Better Business Bureau and other industry standards recommend that a charity's unrestricted net assets equal 50 to 200% of the previous year's expenses. Donors, especially those that fall into the 'investor' type, do not want to put money into a sinking ship. Financial stability is one way of demonstrating you are delivering on a relevant mission and the public can count on you being around for years.</p>
<p>People think buying cookies is supporting Girl Scouting.</p>	<p>Buying Girl Scout Cookies <i>is</i> terrific support of Girl Scouting on many levels: council, troop, and individual girl. We are extremely grateful to everyone who supports Girl Scouting in this way. But proceeds from cookies enable us to do approximately half of our work. Unless we are to turn girls away or close programs, we need donor support to do the complete job.</p>

<p>Girl Scout Leaders are often resistant to supporting “council” financially--and share these feelings with others.</p>	<p>Treat Girl Scout Leaders as a specific market with whom you must learn to communicate effectively. Leaders give tremendously and uniquely to Girl Scouting and are deserving of our sincere recognition. Ask a Leader if <i>others</i> should support Girl Scouting, and the answer is likely to be “yes.” Then enlist their support, if not their time, in approaching Girl Scout parents and others.</p>
<p>There isn't enough time/staff/ to get the job done.</p>	<p>Establish priorities and do the most important things, first, letting the less important things go, if necessary. Among the most important things is building a clear fund development plan, illustrating the investment necessary and payoff to the council of a robust fund development function. This plan must have the CEO's and board's sincere support and commitment to deliver on goals. If you cannot get support and commitment of the full plan, find out what it will take for you to get it.</p>
<p>Realignment has caused our membership to drop and our public perception to slip. Our donors are taking a ‘wait and see’ attitude.</p>	<p>Have you hugged a donor today? Now is the time to reach out and thank them for all their past support and for hanging in there with you through this time of massive changes. If the only way you have thanked major donors is through the mail, you are missing an opportunity to personally address their concerns and issues relative to the realignment and turn them from observers to supporters. Have a thank-a-thon and let people know you hope that XYZ council can continue to count on their support.</p>
<p>Our community shows signs of ‘donor fatigue’. There are SO many non-profits hitting up the same people over and over.</p>	<p>Remember that the bulk of philanthropic gifts come from individuals in households earning less than \$65k. These people rarely have their names on buildings or sponsor tables at events, but they are stalwart supports of the causes that they value. Your membership database contains thousands of members who fall into that category. Segment the ones who give to you annually, and begin giving them special cultivation and opportunities to upgrade their gifts. Successful fund development starts with the people who are closest to our mission, then goes out to the community at large.</p>
<p>Our council covers large rural areas, and the farmers/ranchers have been hitting hard times.</p>	<p>Rural does not equate to poor. Rural fundraising requires sensitivity to the ebbs and flows of the farming/ranching seasons. Commodities, livestock and mineral rights all found in rural communities during harvest seasons. Knowing what to ask for and being able to accept in-kind gifts will benefit the council.</p>

<p>Our council serves large populations of (Native Americans or other ethnic group) and they don't give to us.</p>	<p>All of these groups practice philanthropy in their own ways. By cultivating individuals, not the group, fundraisers can focus on interest, not ethnicity. Minorities have giving interests that are reflective of their experiences and values. Be sure to be link the impact of Girl Scouts in these communities with the desired values of the donors.</p>
<p>In our society, it's not polite to talk about money.</p>	<p>Money is our friend and Girl Scouts use it to help others. We are talking about investments in a better future for girls, families and our communities.</p>

Mary Lee Hoffman, CFRE - March 2007

Revised: Rori Lindo-Britton, CFRE – August 2008