

OCS News & Notes

DIRECT MAIL FUND RAISING TOPICS & EMERGENCY SERVICES NOTES

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September 2008

The Scene Matters

By: Don Stotzer

"It was a very warm night, mom had put us to bed and we said our prayers. We said something a little extra for our dad who mom said was in a place called Iraq. It seemed like mom had just left our room...but then I heard her screaming... "The house is on fire – get out!" The flames were right at our door. We could hear the smoke alarm going off, but we were trapped!"

"I was scared. I was eight, but my brother was only four and he was crying. Mom called 9-1-1 and was yelling to us to go to the window. I remembered some of the things the firefighters taught us when they visited our school. I kept the bedroom door closed and put a blanket along the bottom so smoke wouldn't come in. Together, we opened the window. From our window we saw neighbors pulling mom from the house as she was crying for us. The fire was making horrible sounds – it was getting very warm now! But within minutes we saw a fire truck pull up and firefighters quickly putting a ladder up to our window – we were still very scared. But as the firefighter got to the window he talked to us both; he grabbed my brother and told me to get low and the next firefighter would be up to help me down. Once down, mom hugged us, hard - but mom kept crying I didn't know why? I was out! She just kept saying thank you – thank you to the firefighters...."

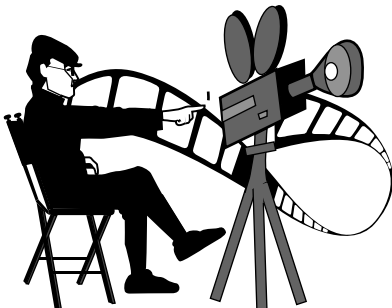
As many of our clients know we assist with designing and helping with putting the copy together for your solicitation packet appeals. This was just one example. However, much of the detail we say generally originates from information and/or photos we get from you. We help many of you by giving you ideas and samples of what we have prepared for other similar companies. As a suggestion to help with getting points to us, have your committee people start thinking about your organization's mission or activities like a movie.

You go to the movies to see the action and to be entertained. That movie is made up of *scenes*. They are situations that get you involved, that help explain, that help inform you. This is what we at OCS try to do when we put together your appeal packet-flier-letter. BUT we need *material*. We need good photos, we need information that has occurred in your mission to help save lives and property or have helped benefit the community. We need to bring those points – *those images* – to the public by putting it in print.

By us putting in words or showing some dramatic pictures we allow the reader (your potential donors) to be part of the scene -- they get a little more involved! If they know that their gift can help you do your job better or help you continue your mission, they may participate in the effort with a donation. These

scenes help involve the donor and thus inform them about your needs and about your organization.

So when we start your annual or periodic fundraising process by sending out our Information Packets to you or ask for information for your up coming appeal -- think about your organization as an interesting movie or play. Put yourself in the place of the potential donor – what has happened that will help tell your story – what will they be reading that could help motivate that person to want to donate or donate more to your cause?



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Relationship Building

As some of you have experienced first hand, the overall number of donors responding per solicitations nationwide has dropped over the past few years. Many people blame this on the economy and no question *this* year it is a factor, but another major factor is that there are more non-profits competing for donations than ever before.

The “*Giving USA Foundation*” (givingusa.org) states that in 1986 there were 375,000 registered 501(c)3 non-profits, in 2007 there were 1.4 million. In 1986 those non-profits collected a total of 121 billion dollars and in 2007 the total collected was 306 billion. So as you can see some of your “lost” donations could be due to those other non-profits. The saving grace in most situations is that the average donation has increased, making up for some of the lost revenue.

The frequency and timing of your fund drive can also affect response rates. Your needs may dictate how many times a year you ask for donations, but to keep loyal donors responding, you need to mail at least once a year. Increasing that frequency, responsibly to your current and past donors will definitely increase revenues and it will *not* create any negative feelings.

“Thank You” mailings acknowledge your appreciation to the donor and leave a warm feeling, and help promote many donors to repeat their action on your next drive. It is also important to be visible in the neighborhood and have a good image. Standing on call at community functions, hosting Holiday dances or parties, Open Houses and other events all build relationships with neighbors. People know you will respond in an emergency, but let them know you better than that. Offer CPR and other safety courses. Invite them to stop by and tour the station. Get to know your neighbors more!

Holiday Cards



Guess what is right around the corner? You got it – the Holidays. Would you like to send a personalized holiday card to your donors? We can help – but don't wait until Christmas. Get your order in now. This is a perfect time to add that extra mailing. The cost is low since it's just going to donors.



Share Good News!



Has your organization received recognition for a job well done? Maybe there was a positive article in the newspaper, or you received a letter from someone you helped. Put it in your flier and let others feel your pride. It will increase the good feeling they get when they donate because it strengthens your image and may make your cause seem even more worthy of their support than it already is.

Quick & Easy Recipe

Mushroom Chicken Bake

Prep: 5 minutes • Cook: 35 minutes



What a Dish!

- 8 skinned and boned chicken breast halves
- 8 (1-ounce) Swiss cheese slices
- 1 1/4 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups seasoned stuffing mix
- 1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted

1. Place chicken breasts in a single layer in a lightly greased 13 x 9 inch baking dish.
2. Top each chicken breast with a cheese slice, and sprinkle with mushrooms.
3. Combine soup and wine in a small bowl, and pour over chicken.
4. Sprinkle with stuffing mix, and drizzle with butter.
5. Bake, uncovered, at 350 for 35 minutes or until chicken is done.

Yield: 8 servings.

Shows

Thanks to everyone who stopped by our booth at one or more of our shows in 2008 and we still have one to go! We always enjoy seeing our customers. Here is a tentative list of some of our shows so far in 2009. See you there!

November 6, 2008
Association of Fundraising
Professionals - Philanthropy Day
Emmitsburg, MD

January
Piedmont Fire Expo
Winston-Salem, NC

February
The VFCA Mid-Atlantic Expo
VA Beach, VA

March
EMS Today (JEMS)
Baltimore, MD



August
VSFA Convention
Hampton, VA

September
NJSFA Conv.
Wildwood, NJ

September
South Carroll Business Association Expo
Eldersburg, MD



May
Harrisburg Fire Expo
Harrisburg, PA

June
MSFA Convention
Ocean City, MD

July
SCSFA Conference
Myrtle Beach, SC

July
Firehouse Expo
Baltimore, MD



The Winner is...

Most recent Survey winner was Lisa Pragg from Aetna Hose Hook and Ladder Company in Newark DE. Congratulations Lisa. I hope you enjoyed your dinner out on us! The Company also received an OCS gift certificate towards future products or services. Thanks again Lisa, and to *everyone* who has responded to our surveys. The feedback is very helpful and appreciated!

**DON'T FORGET TO
EMAIL BACK YOUR
SURVEY RESPONSES –
YOU COULD BE OUR
NEXT WINNER!**

Sudoku Game

Each Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically without guessing. Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square. (Answer on our website: www.ocsmail.com - click on "INFO/NEWS" then "Current News")

5				8				6
7		6	1		5	9		
	1	3	9					
4		7		9		8		1
	3						5	
1		2		5		4		3
					2	1	6	
		4	6		3	5		9
6				4				2

New OCS Report System - Status

By: Don Stoetzer

For the majority of our clients we retain all the donor response history and if applicable additional marketing type information. For the donor history data to be accurate and up-to-date your committee MUST return those Donor Response Cards. This information is essential to analyzing trends, maintaining raw statistics and being able to compare how your returns match other similar organizations. It is also imperative for handling follow-up target mailings. Without those cards there is obviously NO history – so *return those donor cards!*

For over 28 years Donor Reports & history have been available to our clients. These include general Donor Lists, Return on Investment reports and various other statistical formats. Over the last year or two however, a few customers have asked if they could get closer access to certain specific data. With the oversight of certain privacy laws and confidentiality concerns, making "personal" data readily available is somewhat cumbersome. You *cannot* just post this information on the Internet or make it available to anybody! There are security factors that *have* to be considered.

We have been working hard to come up with *informative reports* that clients can have relatively easy access to via the Internet, that will have proper client selectivity *and security*. We feel we now have the report formats that will give those clients that want it, pertinent statistical data they can select and review *on their own*. Obviously we will still provide certain hardcopy and "pdf" data. These automated formats are now in the final testing stage with certain contacts. The Internet security procedures are still being worked on. But we are hoping to be able to make the new OCS automated Report System live by the first quarter of '09. Stay tuned.

Rainbows

By: Mary Woke

A couple of weeks ago I went outside our South Carolina home and saw a rainbow so bright and beautiful it really made me stop to look at it. At that moment, all felt right with the world. My sister was with me and we called our husbands out to see it. We took some pictures and watched as a second rainbow appeared. Of course we have seen rainbows before, but we were all impressed with the beauty and depth of color this one held. It was unexpected as it had been several hours since it rained. I appreciated the sight but after it faded I didn't really give it a lot more thought – until about a week later when my sister was talking to my brother and he mentioned the same thing. He also saw a rainbow about that time from his home in Maryland. He pointed out the date - it was September 11th. My sister ran and got her camera and verified the date she took the photo, which was indeed September 11th.

Ever since the rainbow that appeared after the great flood of Noah's time, the rainbow has been a symbol of God's "Promise of Hope". In Greek mythology, the rainbow was considered to be a path made by a messenger between Earth and Heaven.

Now, I'm not sure if the rainbow was a sign, a promise or an arc of color formed by light and moisture – but I'd like to believe that it is a message sent from above to let us know we are not forgotten and there is always hope. I just wanted to share that experience with you in memory of the tragic date of September 11, 2001 and all who were and still are affected by it. You are not forgotten, and there is hope. God Bless us all.



Just for Fun



A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00 AM for an early morning business flight. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and LOSE), he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5:00 AM." He left it where he knew she would find it. The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00 AM and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, "It is 5:00 AM. Wake up." Men are not equipped for these kinds of contests.

Now we know why we miss things when Proof Reading....

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and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!

Bet you thought you couldn't read it!

Another Laugh

THE PERFECT DRESS.....

Jennifer's wedding day was fast approaching. Nothing could dampen her excitement -- not even her parents' nasty divorce.

Her mother had found the PERFECT dress to wear and would be the best dressed mother-of-the-bride ever! A week later, Jennifer was horrified to learn that her father's new young wife had bought the exact same dress as her mother! Jennifer asked her step mom to exchange it, but she refused. 'Absolutely not. I look like a million bucks in this dress, and I'm wearing it,' she replied.

Jennifer told her mother who graciously said, 'Never mind sweetheart. I'll get another dress. After all, it's your special day.' A few days later, they went shopping and did find another gorgeous dress.

When they stopped for lunch, Jennifer asked her mother, 'Aren't you going to return the other dress? You really don't have another occasion where you could wear it.'

Her mother just smiled and replied, 'Of course I do, dear. I'm wearing it to the rehearsal dinner the night before the wedding.'



Staff Notes

New Additions to our OCS Family include:

Mark Boucher, Warehouse/Pressman.

In his spare time, Mark enjoys playing the Guitar and Singing (Classic Rock and Country). He also enjoys hunting and fishing. Most of all he enjoys spending time with his children.

A Special Addition:

Congratulations to Heather (our VP Operations) and Steven James on the birth of their son (Jayden John James). Jayden weighed 7 lbs., 11 oz. and was 20 ½ inches long. He was born on June 27th. Everyone is doing great.



Jayden at
2-days

What a Cutie!



This is Sir Diesel, our OCS mascot!
(he currently weights 250 lbs)

It is NOT Junk Mail

By: Mary Woke

The fund drive is very important to your organization, sometimes critical. Most people go through their mail, quickly making decisions – *is this mail urgent?* (like bills or something they have been waiting for), *is it not urgent but interesting?* (something that caught their attention, curiosity or interesting enough to look at it), or *is it a waste of my time?* (these are just trashed).

For many, your solicitation packet may not fall in that urgent category; our goal is to make it fall in the “items of interest” category. Some may be interested because they value the organization sending it, while others are attracted to something on the envelope or package. So – how do you get noticed?

To get your packet noticed, here are several suggestions. If you are not already doing so, add a promotional item to your packet. The “Free gift inside” will pique some curiosity, as will a teaser line or question that leaves the reader *eager* to open your envelope to get the answer or the rest of the story. Color stock envelopes or ink and various fonts can also be attractive, also consider adding a “feel good” type photo, this could generate some interest. You should also promote your fund drive through local newspapers, small political type signs posted throughout the neighborhood at the time of the mailing, as well as on your sign in front of your building if you have one. Word of mouth helps too! Ask your membership to spread the word to their neighbors, etc. to watch for the fund drive packet to arrive soon. These may be little things, but little things add up and they can help!



Did you know? You can retrieve archived copies of our OCS News & Notes from our website. Just one more reason to visit www.ocsmail.com

More Humor

A teenage boy had just gotten his driver's license and inquired of his father, when they could discuss his use of the car.

His father said he'd make a deal with his son. “You bring your grades up from a C to a B average, study your Bible a little, and get your hair cut. Then we'll talk about the car.”

The boy thought about that for a moment, decided he'd settle for the offer, and they agreed on it.

After about six weeks his father said, “Son, you've brought your grades up and I've observed that you have been studying your Bible, but I'm disappointed you haven't gotten your hair cut.”

The boy said, “You know, Dad, I've been thinking about that, and I've noticed in my studies of the Bible that Samson had long hair, John the Baptist had long hair, Moses had long hair ... and there's even strong evidence that Jesus had long hair.

“To this his father replied, “Did you also notice they all walked everywhere they went?”





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Important Tips and More!
We think you will really like this one!



*The Holidays
are coming!*



A great Thank You or
Sales Promotion tool



OCS Holiday Promos

We offer a variety of items for your company.
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and customers, especially during the holidays!

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