

CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT + QUARTERLY +

An informational DIGEST to guide development personnel in the emerging field of development.

Volume X, Edition 3

PARENT GIVING

Enthusiasm. Energy. Commitment. Dedication. These are but a few of the nouns that you might think of when it comes to parents and their involvement in your Catholic school. That energy and enthusiasm can be channeled to benefit the school community and hopefully provide long term benefits as well.

STARTING POINTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

We must realize a broader context for the purpose of a Catholic school in our assumptions. Catholic schools are instruments of evangelization, not just instruments of good, spiritual "private education." At the outset, many parents do not enroll their children in Catholic schools because of the spiritual dynamic of the school. They enroll their children for the academic, performance and quality education.

That is a wonderful opportunity to evangelize those parents and children over a twelve to fourteen year span in elementary school, junior high school and high school.

The mission and values of the school must constantly be imparted to parents with particular emphasis on building a sense of school community and parish/school community (in a parish elementary school environment). Thus, they are made aware of the value and participation of a school community. To that end, a development program is not a quick fix or short term solution - like fundraising.

Many parents do have a "fundraising mentality" and much of it is narrowly directed. A "development mentality" will attempt to educate all donors -- including parents to give more broadly and over a longer, more sustainable period.

If your development program can convince your parent donors that they are part of a community much bigger than simply their children's school then you have a true "development" program where you are developing people, their faith and their relationships with people in a school community of faith.

Using the school community as the development backdrop and providing witness to those values, the case can be made for "development versus fundraising," the long term and the short term, "selfless" giving rather than selfish giving.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE FAITH COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

One of the very best ways to educate parents about giving and being part of a broader community is to make a concerted effort to acquaint them with the "cost" of educating each student. Of course, their "student" is their son or daughter. Make attempts to educate them in parent orientation meetings, tuition statements, annual financial reports and other venues about the cost per student. Consider a tuition statement that might look something like following knowing full well that different schools have different tuition rates.

SAMPLE TUITION STATEMENT

ST. CECILIA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TUITION STATEMENT

Dear Parents:

This tuition statement is also a recognition of the many sources of financial support from former parents, parishioners, alumni and friends of St. Cecilia's that directly benefit your child. The "cost" of educating each student, as you know, greatly surpasses the tuition for each student. Thank you.

ST. CECILIA'S COST PER STUDENT	\$3,000	100%
"COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP" (Annual Fund, Parish Support, Fundraising, etc.)	\$810	27%
ENDOWMENT INCOME	\$90	3%
TUITION	\$2,100	70%
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YOUR CONTRIBUTION (TOTAL)	\$2,100	

Testimonials from other parents at annual fund drive kick-offs, as well as comments from the religious community that is or was affiliated with the school should also be included in an ongoing educational program.

A compelling testimonial from parents who no longer have children in the school but still contribute to the annual fund or campaign can be effective. Avoid comments on fund-raising activities such as bingo, raffles, candy and magazine drives so you can educate and lead your donors to long term relationship giving and ultimately planned gifts.

EDUCATING DONORS TO GIVE

Over the years, in the pages of this newsletter we have advocated encouraging donors to give in a number of ways. This would be true for parents as well. All donors including parents should be asked to give in the following ways:

- **ANNUALLY:** Through the school's annual fund.
- **SPECIAL GIFTS:** Capital campaign, memorials, gift options, endowment, etc.
- **CHRISTMAS AND YEAR END:** 40% of all gifts are made in November and December; school Christmas Lists, etc. (see **CHECKLIST**).
- **PLANNED GIVING:** A bequest, life income or deferred gift.

These programs, in a broad sense also represents the standing goals of most development programs for all donors.

THE ANNUAL FUND AND THE "HABIT" OF GIVING

A good annual fund program invites and attempts to call on all of the Catholic school's "publics" which include parents. The other publics who should also be invited to contribute include alumni, parents of alumni, grandparents, parishioners, area businesses, faculty, parents of faculty. One of the very best outcomes of an annual giving program is the giving habit through thanks and acknowledgment as well as recognition in annual reports, special events, etc.

Another benefit is the fact that parents who are current donors are more likely to continue their giving as "alumni parents" if they are in the habit of giving to the annual fund. Whereas with "fundraising" (bingo, raffles, bazaars, etc.) those parents take their "fundraising dollars" with them when their children graduate or leave the school.

Most importantly, it distinguishes development from fundraising. The goal in fundraising is dollars. The goal in development is lasting, enduring, loving relationships with people. One result of those relationships is regular consistent dollars -- year in and year out.

The annual fund makes the "case" for supporting the annual goals of the institution. It should also educate them about the value of a periodic "campaign" for capital projects or endowment building endeavors that surface from strategic planning processes, self studies and accrediting requirements.

For parents, the "cost per student" can also be emphasized during a campaign for the school. Typically, an annual fund would not be interrupted or suspended during the campaign promotional period.

Ideally, you would have parents serving on your Development Council and chairing certain development program strategies -- working closely with the development staff. The parents on your Development Council could work in a number of areas:

- Annual Fund.

- Campaign.
- Planned Giving.
- Recognition, Donor and Public Relations.
- Memorials.

The Council would convene on a consistent, periodic basis, facilitated by the chief administrator and staffed by the development officer.

PARENTS AND THE CONCEPT OF PLANNED GIVING

The largest single gift any Catholic school will ever receive will be a planned gift. As challenging as the idea may be, the seed for planned giving must be planted while the parents are involved at your school. Your ongoing development program educates them over a lifetime through annual funds, campaigns, special gifts and ultimately to a planned gift.

Your planned giving program should contain educational opportunities through a development newsletter, mailings and occasional seminars on financial issues. If your Development Council offered a "Wills Seminar" for parents you might get 6-8 parents to attend because their "market need" is elsewhere. However, if you hosted a Financial Planning Seminar for parents on "Financial and Admissions Planning for College" the attendance would be better because of the perceived parent "market need." In that Financial Planning forum, you can platform information and refer to estate planning. Include a charitable giving component in it and subsequent seminars.

+*QUARTERLY*+ CHECKLIST

Listed below are a few more unique, appealing ways to encourage parent giving:

CHRISTMAS & YEAR END: Develop a "Christmas List" of gift options with cost amount and "impact statement" for distribution to parents.

HONOR GIFTS: Encourage parents to make gifts to the school in honor of their child's First Communion, Confirmation and Graduation. You can expand it to birthdays, anniversaries as this gift giving tradition is established.

MEMORIALS: Gifts in November and May remembering grandparents and departed loved ones.

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