

## **MAKE YOUR MESSAGES WORK**

Some things to remember when you formulate messages to persuade people to support your organization:

### ***Major Donors Fund the Future, not the Past***

While records of your accomplishments and evidence of your financial stability are important, it's the future – not the past – that most interests major donors. Make sure you articulate a clear and engaging vision for the future.

### ***Major Donors Are Interested in Helping People***

Improving the lives of others is what most inspires major donors; they care less about the programs designed to deliver those results. Focus on what a donor's gift will mean to the people your organization assists rather than how the gift will shape your organization.

### ***Talk "Loud and Proud"***

The most effective communicators are often volunteers who talk "loud and proud" about your organization, rather than professional staff who are seen as paid to persuade. Educate your Board members and volunteers about your organization's strengths and impact– and encourage them to go out and spread the word. For Board members who may be reticent to speak out, I suggest some one-on-one sessions with a self-confident and persuasive Board member.

### ***Change Requires Patience and Persistence***

Changing people's perspectives about your organization, especially if they start out as uninformed, ambivalent, or even negative, takes patience and persistence. As it is hard to predict the exact time and place when your message will be "heard" by your prospective donor, polite persistence will catch the prospective donor when they are most receptive.