



Yes, She Is a *Philanthropist* Too!

By Abbie J von Schlegell, CFRE and Heather Dinneen



Not that long ago, there was a certain institution that received the largest financial gift in its history from a woman. The institution's top leaders wanted to thank this woman by recognizing her contribution in a public way, so they placed her name on a wall. Surprisingly, they placed her *husband's* name on the wall instead. It read: "Mr. & Mrs. Major Donor." To add to the embarrassing situation, the woman was divorced from her husband. What better proof that it is important to know your prospects and donors well.

This mishap speaks volumes to a common and troubling attitude in development, even now: an almost institutionalized ignorance about the potential of women as significant potential donors in their own right.

Even though women receive more respect today than they did in the 20th century, men are more often asked to give than women – even though women command considerable access to wealth and actively participate in many organizations.

According to the most recent statistics by the IRS, 43 percent of the top wealth holders were women between the ages of 50-65 in 2004. Assets were over \$4.6 trillion.

A NEW WAY OF THINKING

In the past, many development professionals typically sought only men as donors because they were considered the breadwinners of their family and in control of the nation's wealth. We cannot afford to perpetuate this process — not with institutions reaching the limits of their donor bases and women now making up a strong and growing source of new and increased contributions. Demographics demonstrate why: women are now better educated, increasingly independent and more affluent than ever before.

Since women's institutions and organizations were in part responsible for this turn of events, it should come as no surprise that women's colleges and universities, political action committees for women candidates, and foundations that support women and girls have been early beneficiaries of female philanthropy.

ATTRACTING WOMEN DONORS

Consider the following quote from Teresa Heinz: "I see philanthropy as a form of investing. While the bottom line is measured differently, it still involves allocating resources toward an activity organized around specific goals. But our involvement doesn't end when the box is ticked or the check is signed. We should expect results; we should know whether the goals are being met."

While Teresa may have donated many more millions than most women, the point she makes can be applied to women across the donor spectrum. Women want to invest in organizations that are making a difference, and they want to see the difference that their dollars are making. This relationship-building between donor and organization is critical to attracting and retaining donors.

Continued on next page ►

Women are changing the path of philanthropy in such organizations as Women Moving Millions and The United Way Women's Initiative, both philanthropic ventures led by women. The Women Moving Millions campaign, launched by sisters Swanee and Helen Hunt, raised over \$180 million in just under two years. With gifts of \$1 million or more from each donor, the vast majority of the donors are women.

The New York Jewish Week reported that Mark Charendoff, president the Jewish Funders Network, says that women in their 30s and 40s are taking on a stronger role today than ever before. "Women have always been partners in family philanthropic decision making, but a lot of times it was the men taking a more public role," said Charendoff. "There was a whole social network that might start in business and spread out to philanthropy. All that still happens, and more and more women are comfortable taking the lead in advancing their philanthropic interests and exploring how to make change."

Today women are coming together, uniting around philanthropic goals. There are currently more than 800 Giving Circles operating throughout the United States, the majority of them made up of women, who have raised nearly \$100 million dollars to be donated to nonprofits around

- The Center for Women's Business Research 2008 research reported that an estimated 10.1 million (privately-held) women-owned companies in the nation earned \$1.9 trillion in annual sales.
- Statistics show that since women live five years longer than men, they will more than likely be in control of the intergenerational transfer of wealth over the next five decades.
- Women are responsible for 83% of consumer purchases in the U.S. according to *Business Women's Network*.

the country. Giving Circles bring women together to consider social needs and direct their funds in a collective way.

Organizations that have been successful in recruiting women donors have done more than tap into their pocketbooks. They've also utilized and shown appreciation for their talents as volunteer gift solicitors, providing them with training and assistance traditionally reserved for male volunteers. Women who have been active philanthropically can motivate others to make substantial contributions.

GETTING STARTED

Where should an organization start? Clearly, recruiting women to serve in leadership positions on boards of directors and as major gift solicitors makes a clear statement about their priority as participants in an organization's philanthropic goals. Colgate University, for example, recognized it was not providing its women graduates with the proper backing or incentive to actively support the institution. Colgate had only begun to accept women as undergraduates in 1970, and administration and leadership positions on campus were still dominated by men.

Taking the lead from successful women's programs at Penn and Cornell, Colgate conducted focus groups of alumnae to better understand their attitudes toward cultivation and donor recognition and their motivations for giving. The groups resulted in Colgate identifying new institutional goals to address issues related to special academic offerings, women's athletics on campus, increased numbers of women in leadership and increased average gift size from women.

The potential that exists from women is astounding. Initiating a process to attract women to become influential donors and philanthropic leaders for any institution begins with educating administrative and development staff. Understanding women's giving patterns is a strategic asset, and programs to involve more women donors are critical to the growth of philanthropy. Since the initial publication of this article in 1993, much has changed in terms of how nonprofit leaders view women as potential donors, as well as how women view the impact they can have on the third sector. According to James M. Greenfield (2002) in *Fundraising Fundamentals*, "Women as donors and volunteers will continue to be significant in the future of nonprofit organizations.... Women as the inheritors of wealth now control or will control decisions on the distribution of the bulk of an estimated \$46 to \$136 trillion in the next 50 years, of which an estimated \$6 to \$25 trillion may be directed to charitable organizations." Nonprofit fundraising managers cannot afford to overlook women as potential donors and leaders.

Abbie J von Schlegell, CFRE has over 40 years of fundraising experience; she now leads her own consulting firm based in Berkshire County, MA. Heather Dinneen, MSW is Development Associate for Chore Service, Inc and works as a freelance grant writer. She is a student in the Bay Path College Master's in Fundraising Program and lives in Cornwall, CT.

Ms. Von Schlegell is also a presenter in Connecticut Association of Nonprofits' "Essentials of Fundraising Certificate Program," presented in collaboration



CARNEY, ROY AND GERROL, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants

Guiding Non-Profit Organizations with
 accounting & audit services for over 30 years.

Together we can make a difference
 in our community.

Thomas D. Roy, CPA
 Director of Non-Profit Division
 35 Cold Spring Road, Suite 111
 Rocky Hill, CT 06067-3161
 860-721-5786
 tomroy@crandg.com

with the Association of Fundraising Professionals Connecticut Chapter. She will conduct a seminar about individual major gift fundraising on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at CT Nonprofits' offices in Hartford. Attend Abbie's training for \$75, or attend all five workshops for \$300 and obtain a certificate. For details and to register, visit www.ctnonprofits.org/education/offerings.

Sources:

Abbie von Schlegell and Dr. Joan M. Fisher (1994), *Women as Donors, Women as Philanthropists*. Jossey-Bass.

Heinz Family Philanthropies (2010), "Theresa Heinz," www.heinzfamily.org

Women Moving Millions, www.womenmovingmillions.net

The Jewish Week, Debra Nussbaum Cohen, "Harnessing The Growing Wealth of Women," 11 June 2008, http://www.thejewishweek.com/viewArticle/c37_a12249/News/National.html

Greenfield, James (2002) *Fundraising Fundamentals*, 2nd Edition, John Wiley & Sons, Inc

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University (2010), *Why Focus on Women's Philanthropy?* www.philanthropy.iupui.edu

GOOD NEWS: Your Organization Is Growing.

BAD NEWS: You've Outgrown QuickBooks®.

■ **Imagine** being able to break down your budget by each grant, program or project directly in your accounting system.

■ **Imagine** if grant management and allocations were built directly into your financial management system.

■ **Imagine** what it would be like if you could easily generate the reports you need – spending hours instead of days each month!

That's exactly what **Sage MIP Fund Accounting** can offer. Call us today for an on-site demonstration.



For more information, contact us at:

The Technology Group, LLC
147 Charter Oak Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
860-524-4400

www.thetechnologygroup.com



When your business relies on technology, you can rely on us.



**TRAVELERS
CHAMPIONSHIP**

JUNE 21-27, 2010 | TPC RIVER HIGHLANDS | CROMWELL, CT



Fore!Charities

SPEND NOTHING, RAISE A LOT!

The 2010 Travelers Championship is this June, but you can get in the swing early by participating in Birdies for Charity, an easy, fun and effective way for all Connecticut 501(c)(3) nonprofits to raise funds with no cost!

Connecticut Association of Nonprofits and J.H. Cohn LLP would like to invite your organization to participate in this simple fundraising program! The Birdies for Charity program is a pledge-based fundraiser based upon the number of Birdies made during the 2010 Travelers Championship. With the Birdies for Charity program your fundraising possibilities are endless!

PARTICIPATING IS FREE AND EASY!

1. Simply solicit pledges based on the number of birdies made in the 2010 Travelers Championship. Pledges can even be as low as one penny and the more pledges you gather, the more funds you'll raise!
2. Travelers Championship and J.H. Cohn LLP will manage all of your pledge collection.
3. Following the Travelers Championship the Birdies for Charity program will return 100% of pledges collected to your organization.

INTERESTED?

- Visit TravelersChampionship.com/charityinfo.htm to learn more about the Birdies for Charity program.
- For any questions, contact Caitlin Champ at 860-502-6804 or birdies@travelerschampionship.com



PRESENTED BY
J.H. COHN LLP
Accountants and Consultants since 1919



CONNECTICUT
ASSOCIATION
of NONPROFITS

...to serve, strengthen
and support Connecticut's
nonprofit community.

TRAVELERSCHAMPIONSHIP.COM