



## **Tracks to Success - A Weekly Primer on Grants Development**

### **Re-Igniting the Passion for Your Mission**

*by Terry Axelrod, CEO Raising More Money*

#### **Introduction - Spring Out of Organizational Fatigue**

In the nonprofit sector, it's easy to lose sight of the mission when you have bureaucracy and budget cuts. But it's the mission that hooked you in the first place—the program building gardens in low-income neighborhoods, the agency taking care of stray and unwanted animals, the group offering food to the homeless or shelter for battered women.

So, first, sit back and realize the miracle of the nonprofit safety net. In the United States alone, the nonprofit sector employs some 11 million paid workers and 6 million full-time equivalent volunteers - representing 7-8 percent of the nation's workforce. That's three times the size of the agricultural workforce, 50 percent more than construction trades and 50 percent more than all the nation's workers in finance, insurance, and real estate.

According to an October 2002 Brookings Institution's Center for Public Service survey of 1,140 randomly selected nonprofit employees, nonprofit employees have a greater love of their work than any other workforce sector in America today.

Sometimes all it takes is a little rekindling of that passion.

The Minneapolis Foundation, one of the nation's largest community foundations, sponsored a session last February on re-igniting your board's passion that hit a nerve with attendees.

Before the event, the RSVPs exceeded room capacity, said Desiree Heller, the vice president of Philanthropic Consulting Services.

"From the beginning, the response to offering the event was outstanding," she said.

And the response during and after the three-hour session was overwhelmingly positive.

"Even before the [post-event] survey was sent, we received numerous unsolicited thank-you cards with sincere thanks and appreciation," said Heller.

One person wrote: "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change. That happened for our group that night."

A woman with a group advocating the sport of curling said: "Our team just realized we're not involved with this organization just to build a better curling rink but to build a better community."

Nobody knows more about rekindling that passion than Terry Axelrod, founder and CEO of Raising More Money, a Seattle-based organization that has trained more than 2,000 nonprofits in a mission-based fundraising system. It was

Axelrod who led that popular session in Minneapolis, and she is now constantly helping other nonprofits to re-ignite their passion. Axelrod is offering a series of six articles for readers of GrantStation:

- ❑ Part One: "The Inherent Generosity in the World," shatters the notion of donor fatigue.
- ❑ Part Two: "You Never Know Who Will Be Generous" dispels the myth of who is capable of a large gift.
- ❑ Part Three: "Re-igniting the Passion for Your Mission," is an exercise you can do with others in your organization.
- ❑ Part Four: "Zero in on Your Emotional Hook," teaches you how to tell your story with passion.
- ❑ Part Five: "What Makes a Compelling Video," discusses how to create a seven-minute video that packs an emotional impact.
- ❑ Part Six: "Tales of Passion," takes a look at how people facing burnout have found new passion for their cause.