

# Communicating with Yr Donors

## Preparing for Success

Says Jerry Weissman, *Presenting to Win*,

a good case will move...

uninformed > understand

dubious > believe

resistant > act

Insiders suffer from the  
“curse of knowledge.”

*Made to Stick – Chip & Dan Heath*

**Insiders**

50,000 words of supporting info

*became*

2,500 word case document

*became*

weeks of heated debate

*became*

“Academic excellence? I’m for that!”

**Outsiders**

“Donors are staggeringly ignorant of the causes they support.”


-- Richard Radcliffe, dean of UK donor researchers

A case is primarily your  
*promise* to the donor ... or  
sometimes your *benefit*.

*The Achieve Hartford! goal:*

Every child living in poverty will  
have a real chance to succeed –  
with 100% graduation rates a  
realistic possibility.

Promise



We don't reject.  
We don't punish.  
We don't judge.

We mend  
young lives.

## The Bridge Family Center

Serving West Hartford and  
the region since 1969

Every family. Every child. Every time.



## Volunteers in Providence Schools

Problem



Every year more than 3,000 Providence public school students face some kind of learning crisis that could end their chances of a successful school career.

Solution



And then one of our volunteer tutors walks in the door.

### **I.**

#### **Why a child's failure in the classroom matters — to the adult that child will become, and to you**

We're not saying that money buys happiness.

We *are* saying, though, that money can buy a decent home in a good neighborhood, plenty of nutritious food, reliable transportation, excellent health care, clothing for all seasons, a college education for the kids, and lots of other things that contribute to a better quality of life.

"Giving to help people in poor countries is a great way to expand children's world view."

World Vision, Steve Quant




*Make one gift now and we'll never ask for another donation again!*

\*\*\*\*\*AUTO\*\*SCH 3-DIGIT 028

Ms. Simone Joyaux  
 10 Johnson Rd  
 Foster, RI 02825-1230



*One child. One surgery. One gift is all it takes.*



*Once & Done*      *Once & Done*      *Once & Done*

**"...one of the most productive charities – dollar for deed – in the world."**  
*The New York Times*

↑  
Note the testimonial proof

# The 3 big questions

Why us?  
Why now?  
Why you?


# Why us?

What are we doing that's so uniquely worthwhile?

Come to our breakfast,  
we'll come to your fire.

Gold Beach, Oregon, Volunteer Fire Department  
(from *Bowling Alone*)





**40% chance of going to college?  
Make it 92%.**

**Apply to the Steppingstone program. And it's free.**

In Massachusetts urban areas, only 4 out of every 10  
9th graders make it to college.

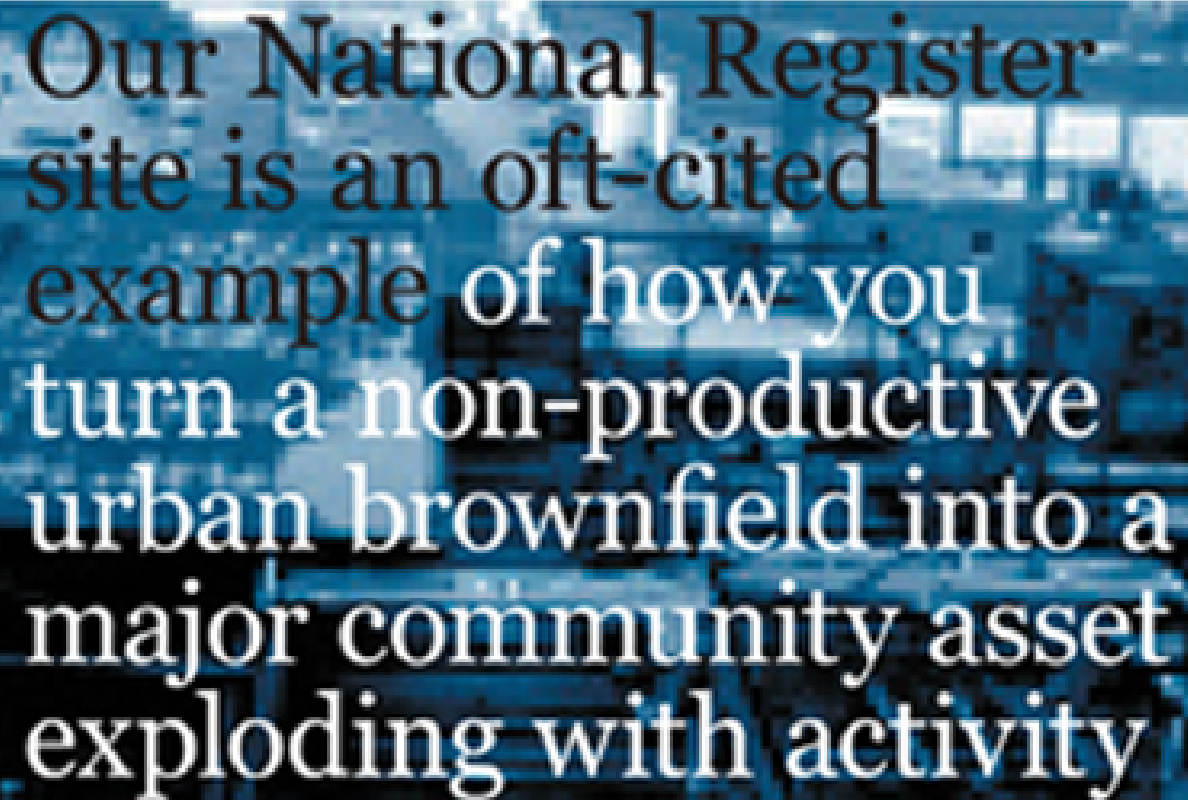
If your child is motivated and loves to learn, Steppingstone can  
almost guarantee that he or she will go to college.

Steppingstone is a celebrated after-school and summer study  
program, born in Boston, nationally recognized for success.  
92% of our graduates go on to college. We accept hardworking  
Boston students in 4th-7th grade, and we stay with them until  
they get to college.

**To apply for Steppingstone call 617-433-8300  
or visit us online at [www.tsf.org](http://www.tsf.org).**

  
The  
**Steppingstone**  
FOUNDATION

A brief history of the Steel Yard



Our National Register site is an oft-cited example of how you turn a non-productive urban brownfield into a major community asset exploding with activity

Not sure why you matter?

Pretend you've gone away.

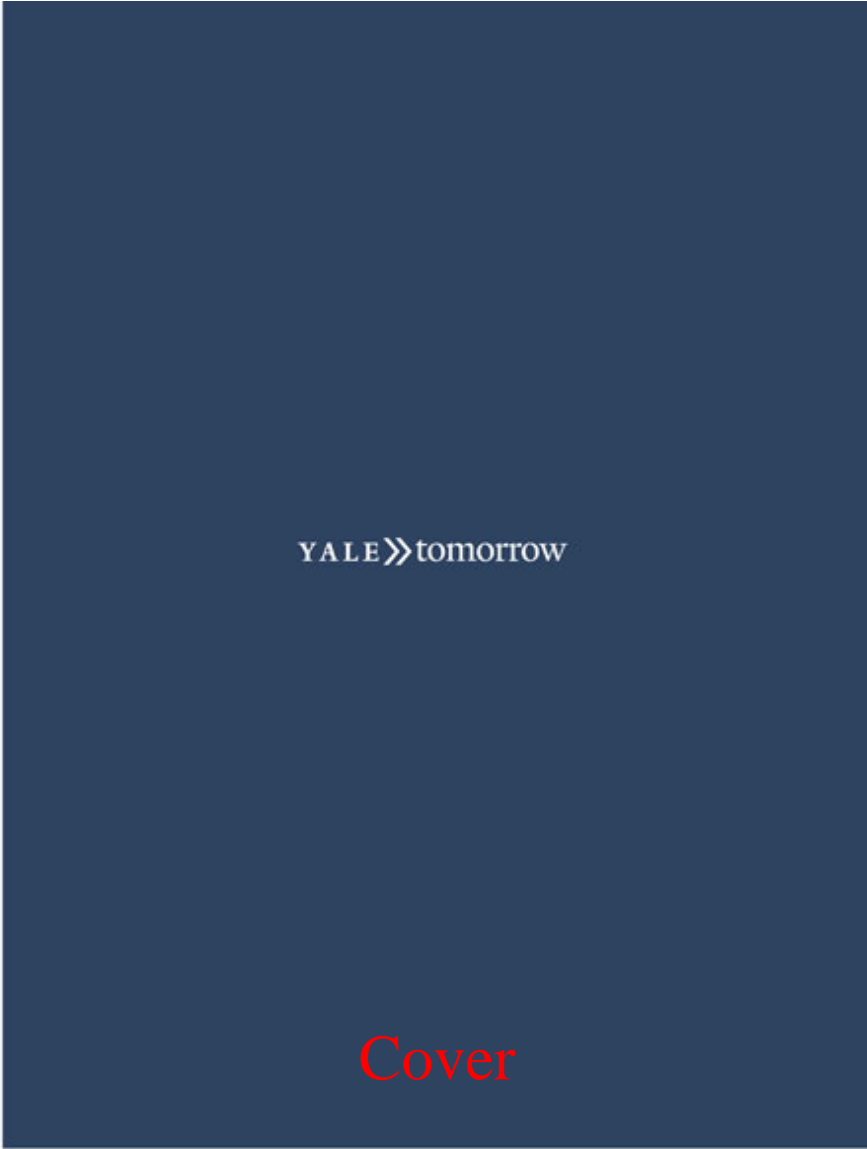
# Why now?

What's the big hurry? What changed? Why is this crucial now?



Bigger. Faster. Better.

“The demand for hospice care is about to surge. And that surge won't decline for decades.”



YALE >> tomorrow

Cover

3

Message arrow



Tomorrow, everything will be different

Next statement

*“Why in the world would I invest my hard-earned money in your project or mission?”*



- Because my peer asked me to
- Because I'll feel proud I've helped
- Because I'll feel guilty if I don't
- Because I feel it's my responsibility
- Because I love what you stand for
- Because I'm part of the family
- Because I'll relieve suffering
- Because I'll change a life

*A case is not about you and  
your need for cash.*

A case is about offering the prospect a way to feel good.

“...the key motivator for giving is not need, but *opportunity*.”



The opportunity to  
feel like they've  
made a difference.

# How do you start a miracle growing? You plant a gift in your will.

"Medical miracles" in children's health care ...

... those breathtaking advances that, when you first hear of them, seem almost impossible to believe ...

... can often be traced back to just two things:

1. an idea in the right mind; and ...
2. enough philanthropic investment to transform that wonderful idea into a healing reality.

The unrealistic way to view your audience...

Mostly **motivated** readers

A few others

The safest way to view your audience...

Mostly **uncommitted**

Few motivated readers




*Understand...*  
you ARE an intrusion,  
even to current donors

Thousands of messages.

Three piles.

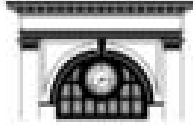
1. Can't ignore.
2. Can safely ignore.
3. A bit interested.



 **Steel Yard**  
27 Sims Avenue Providence, RI 02909

NONPROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 642  
PROVIDENCE, RI

**ARE YOU A  
STEEL YARD  
TRUE BELIEVER?  
OPEN THIS!**



THE RHODE ISLAND FOUNDATION

*Connecting private philanthropy with the public good since 1919*

One Union Station  
Providence, RI 02903

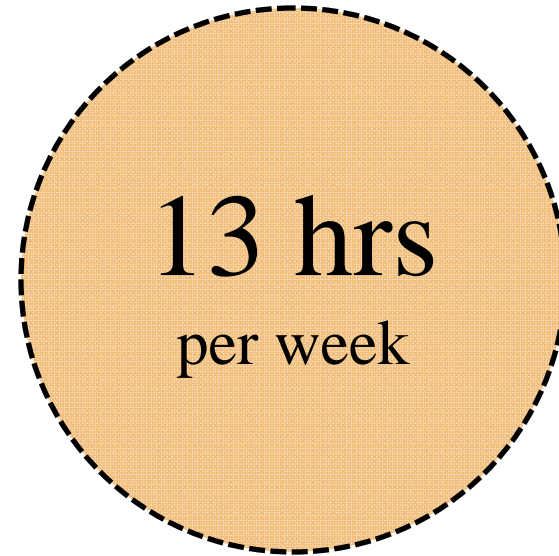
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Inside . . .*

A Circle of Influential Friends  
Awaits the Pleasure of Your Company



**BI: Before the  
Internet (1990)**



**AI: After the  
Internet (2010)**

*Howard Luck Gossage*

“The fact of the matter is that nobody reads ads. People read what **interests** them; and sometimes it’s an ad.”

*Well, then,  
what interests  
donors?*

# 1. Accomplishments

...What did you do with my money?

What interests donors?



# NOT!

## Accomplishments

- NRCA membership has grown over 300 percent since its first year of existence.
- NRCA (in conjunction with the University of Alabama and AmSouth Bank) has recently completed a statewide salary survey of nonprofit organizations.
- NRCA successfully established its Management Assistance Services Department in 2001.
- NRCA introduced a searchable online card catalog in support of its resource library in 2002.
- NRCA introduced an online grassroots advocacy and messaging system (GiveVoice) in 2001.
- NRCA developed a statewide meeting of nonprofit organizations called "The Nonprofit Summit" in 1997, and the event has now grown into a major annual educational conference.



ICA's home in Cambodia offers safety for girls rescued from sex trafficking.

## **CAMBODIA**

Your giving has made it possible to open our first home for girls rescued from sex traf-

vide a new life for more than 100 girls this year.

You also built a community center in a village approximately

# Accomplishments



Accomplishments have rosy  
glows about them.

*I feel* something.

## 2. Recognition (i.e., feeling good)

*...Do I matter? Am I important?*

What interests donors?



# ACTION

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND HELPING THE FAMILIES THEY LEAVE BEHIND • WWW.OPERATIONHOMEFRONT.NET • SPRING 2010

## “You saved us!”

Severe wounds made work nearly impossible for this discharged Iraq War vet. With a new baby coming and past-due bills piling up, Angelo turned to Operation Homefront for a little emergency help — and help you did!



he problems began during Operation Iraqi Freedom. During an attack, Angelo's Humvee over-turned into a canal. He was pulled from the wreck with a cracked skull and several fractured vertebrae. He needed both brain surgery and back surgery.

The back surgery led to eight months of paralysis and an infection in his spinal cord.

Angelo had worked hard all his life. He wanted to stay in the military. But his injuries were just too much, and he was discharged with a small disability allowance. More bad luck arrived. The National Guard informed Angelo that they had overpaid him by \$18,000 — and demanded repayment immediately.

### How your support went to work

With Candy expecting their third child, life turned

At that point the VA referred Angelo to Operation Homefront in Hampton Roads. Suddenly, there was daylight at the end of his long, dark tunnel.

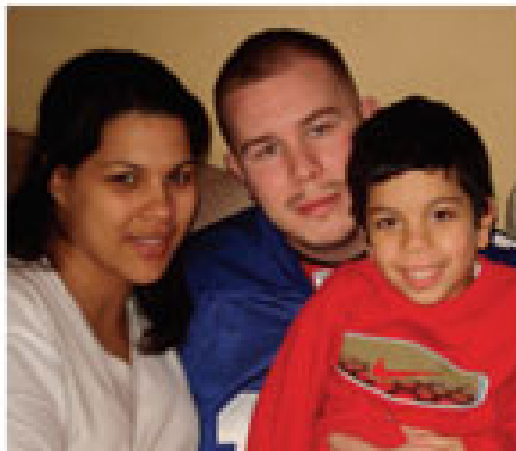
First, Operation Homefront helped Candy and

Angelo get current with their bills. The family received donated prepaid gift cards to help with food, as well as new furniture for the kids' rooms and a crib, car seat and clothes for the infant.

### The Family's future

Things are looking up again for Angelo and Candy. The VA has increased his medical disability to 70%, so there's a little more cash and resources around. Candy is returning to work.

What did the help of donor-supported Operation Homefront mean to this fam-



### 3. Your business sense

...Can I trust you with my money?

What interests donors?

“By any measure, Smile Train is one of the most well-managed and cost-efficient charities around.” -- *Bill Bradley*

**Testimonials est. trust**



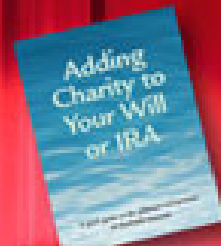
## 4. Opportunities

...What else can I do that will feel good?

What interests donors?

**So, you love the arts?  
Make sure the music never ends.**

Leave a gift in your will for your favorite arts organization.



Learn how easy it is.

757-622-7951 or [leavearequest.org](http://leavearequest.org)



Hampton Roads  
Community Foundation

Inspiring Philanthropy. Changing Lives.

If your primary purpose for communicating with donors is to **ask for money**, you're only fulfilling **half** your obligation.

## The other half?

Building your organization's brand by **reporting on results** ... and thereby retaining donors so you can realize their full LTV.

*And what IS a  
brand?*

A brand is not a logo.

Source: Marty Neumeier, The Brand Gap

A brand is a person's  
gut feeling about a  
product, service, or  
company.

Source: Marty Neumeier, The Brand Gap

*Consideration #1*

“Donor loyalty” is  
scandalously bad.



4 out of 5 (80%) of 1<sup>st</sup>-time  
donors do not make a  
second gift

## *Consideration #2*

The branding behind that:  
“They don’t need or  
deserve my support.”

That initial gift is not a wedding.

It's a first date.

Improving your donor  
communications will turn more  
first dates into long-term  
relationships.

# Typical donor communications calendar

	Acquisition	Print newsletter	Renewal	Major donor	Lapsed donor	Emergency	E - newsletter
January			#1	Annual report			#1
February		#1					#2
March	#1		#2	Annual mtg. invitation	#1		#3
April		#2		Appeal #1			#4
May			#3				#5
June							#6
July			#4		#2		#7
August		#3					#8
September			#5	Progress report			#9
October	#2	#4					#10
November			Year-end appeal	Appeal #2	#3		#11
December							#12

*Dr. Adrian Sargeant*

*Why donors*

*stay loyal...*

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*Your service quality is good*

Do you anticipate questions,  
for instance? Do you  
acknowledge gifts promptly?

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*They're aware of  
consequences*

Believing “Someone might be  
hurt if I don't give.”



"Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife." – John Dewey

# Who Needs Campus Compact?

Let's start with America.

Rockford College is one of 39 institutions of higher education that together make up the Illinois Campus Compact. From three member universities in 1985, Campus Compact has expanded into a major national movement, with more than 350 member institutions and 31 state offices.



"We know that connecting studies with problem-solving service in the community deepens, complicates and challenges students' learning. They become citizen scholars who renew our democratic society . . ."

– Tom Mardock, President, Antioch University Seattle

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*They trust you*

Oddly, if you're seen as smart  
in one area, people assume  
you're smart in all.

Great brands are “stories that are never completely told.”

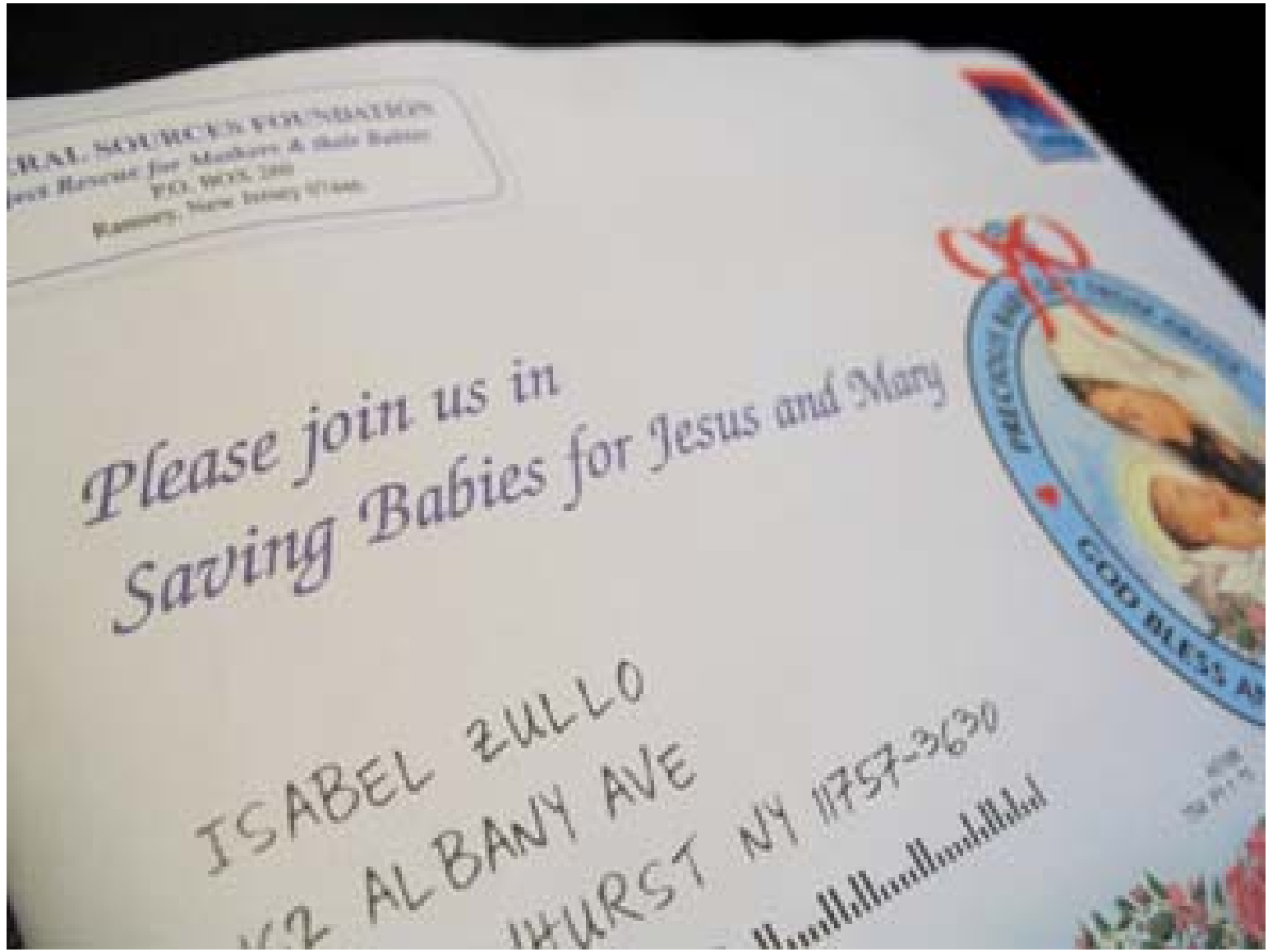
– Scott Bedbury

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*They share your beliefs*

“We’re a little, mission-driven place that wants to be recognized for providing the best care for the poorest people.”

– Susan Kelly, president Charles Drew U. of Medicine and Science, 2008



Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*You've established a personal  
link*

In English, you use the word  
“you” heavily. And you speak  
conversationally.

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

*They're learning*

Are you taking them on a  
journey?





## A Puccini shopping list

When you support HGO productions, you contribute to the creation of a magical new experience...but have you ever wondered about the details? Here's a partial list of items purchased by HGO's props department for this fall's new production of *Madame Butterfly*:

36 handheld fans, made in Kyoto, Japan .....	\$30 ea.
36 traditional lanterns, handmade in Nagoya, Japan .....	\$250 ea.
36 black bamboo poles (for lanterns) .....	\$35 ea.
1890s-style English dining table with 4 chairs .....	\$1,500
Wooden Buddha statue, 500 years old .....	\$600
1890s vintage makeup mirror chest .....	\$300
312 square feet of Cherry Blossom confetti .....	\$2,350
2 ancestor dolls, 300 years old .....	\$400
Parasols, made in Kyoto, Japan .....	\$25 ea.
Custom-built toy boat .....	\$200

...and that's just props. Add costumes, wigs, makeup, scenery and lighting and the vast array of talented people required to create them — PLUS the necessary musical and administrative resources—and you can see how invaluable your support is.

### YOUR SUPPORT KEEPS OUR OPERA AFFORDABLE...

Ticket sales make up only a small portion of HGO's income. How much? A single orchestra circle ticket for a weekend performance currently costs \$104. BUT, if we relied on ticket sales for all our income, that same ticket would have to cost \$396!



That's right — support like yours makes up nearly three quarters of HGO's budget!

## Opera: For Rent

HGO productions have for years reached rare heights of genius, thanks to your unstinting financial support. Now other opera companies are lining up to rent Houston's audience-pleasing stagings.

In February of this year, *The Independent*, one of the UK's leading dailies, awarded the Welsh National Opera's premier production of Mozart's *The Abduction from the Seraglio* a rave review for its originality, "opulence," and brains: "After recent attempts to rewrite Mozart's rescue comedy as a post-9/11 polemic, it's a relief to see a production that embraces innocence..."

And where did this fresh and audience-thrilling Welsh production originate? WNO rented it from Houston Grand Opera back in 2002.

HGO has 24 different productions available for opera companies around the world to rent, with more being created every year (including, most recently, our new 2010 production of *Tosca*). When you support them, you're not just helping to create a fresh new experience of music drama, you're helping HGO build an asset which, for years to come, will generate rental income for the company.

Many of the world's great opera companies, including Washington National Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Canadian Opera Company, San Francisco Opera and San Diego Opera have recently rented HGO productions. They recognize the quality and innovation which HGO brings to its stagings.

Our productions of core repertory operas like Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* let audiences experience these popular masterpieces as if for the first time—while remaining true to the feel of each opera. HGO's technical department works hard to make our productions as flexible and accessible as possible. They are designed to travel well.

Besides earning rental income, when opera houses choose HGO productions, audiences around the world recognize our high standards. When you help us create these assets, you help to boost HGO's reputation worldwide.

## Merkle | Domain's proven formula:

- 11x17 format, folding to four 8.5x11 pages
- one-color, two-color, full-color
- NOT a self-mailer
- mail in a #10 envelope: “Your newsletter enclosed.”
- send exclusively to current donors
- include a reply envelope and reply device
- mail as often as possible
- use the newsletter for “accomplishment reporting”

Dr. Adrian Sargeant: *Why donors stay loyal*

## *Multiple engagements*

Every *two-way* interaction  
such as a survey *significantly*  
improves retention



## Adopt a Word campaign