

High Hopes Development Committee Meeting
Wednesday, January 4, 2023
Meeting began at 4:00 pm

Present:

In person: Gary Rogers, Jackie Kangley, Mac Mummert, Rachel Edwards, Claire Gadrow, Kitty Stalsburg, Trudy Burgess

On Zoom: Peter Watt, Scott Douglas, Jane Bolles, Jeff Ridgway, Jamie Childs, Cheryl Heffernan

Peter welcomed Committee members and Jamie Childs. Jamie is a longtime leadership volunteer, former Board member, Chair of the Development Committee and has led the corporate sponsorship effort and co-chaired the Share Hope Campaign with Jeff Ridgway. Jamie joined the meeting to share his perspective and guidance on the June benefit corporate sponsorships and the Community Partners initiative.

Claire reviewed the New Commitments Dashboard and reported on development progress as of December 31, 2022.

- Fundraising is tracking ahead of goal and ahead of last year at the midpoint in the fundraising year.
- Our marketing efforts have proven effective, including positioning the One Health initiative in the High Hopes Fund fall appeal.
- Overall new commitments are in excess of \$1.1 million, including \$576,000 in planned gifts. Larger gifts to the High Hopes Fund were received from Emily Fisher (nearly \$25K in appreciated securities) and from Jennifer and John Bauman of Essex (\$20K).
- This year we incorporated an industry best practice of recording the value of planned gifts. Claire is confirming with donors that their planned gifts are still in place and recording them at their face value and classifying them as revocable or irrevocable. The \$576,000 in planned gifts is from five individuals. Susan Peacock from North Carolina, a former local resident, has a \$500,000 bequest for unrestricted endowment. She informed High Hopes in the Share Hope campaign but it was never booked. She has done the same planned gift for UNC and the university has recorded her bequest at full face value. She was pleased to learn we were going to do the same and confirmed it is still in place. She may come to High Hopes for the 2023 Horse Show Days. She made a \$100,000 endowment pledge in the Share Hope campaign. When that pledge is fulfilled, she shared that she plans to start 'spending down" her bequest and making gifts of probably \$10K annually to High Hopes.
- The High Hopes Fund (annual fund) has a goal of \$325,000 and we've raised nearly \$180,000. This is \$20,000 ahead of last year at this time. If we raise \$325,000 in the High Hopes Fund, that is the equivalent of the current use spending power of \$8.125 million in endowment (using our 4% spend rule). We are going to start demonstrating to donors how important the annual fund is using this endowment-equivalent analogy often used by higher education institutions.

- Unrestricted and restricted operating funds are tracking well to goal. The restricted goal is \$255K and raised nearly \$207K. The unrestricted goal is \$165K and raised over \$107K.
- A discussion followed on the reporting of planned gifts. Planned gifts will be recorded in the year confirmed as a pledge in Bloomerang. If the planned gift is ever revoked, the pledge will be written off in Bloomerang. If a bequest is received and has not been previously booked as planned gift, it will be recorded as new gift for the value of the proceeds received from the estate.

Claire reported on a new communication strategy. The RIDER magazine will be rebranded as HIGH HOPES Magazine.

- The name change is to reflect that our services are both mounted and unmounted. It also follows a familiar branding used by universities, where the origination's magazine is named for the institution.
- Each issue's content will follow a consist format and be designed to both inform and inspire the reader.
- Each issue will have five sections: Welcome, Impact, Profiles, Community and Solutions.
- For the January issue, the content will be as follows: Welcome by Claire as Development Director. Impact on health of animals, people, and environment. Profiles - Why I Give by Sandy Mulligan and Why I Volunteer by Sarah Hill Canning. Community – Holiday Market and Community Partners. Solutions - tax-wise giving including giving directly from your IRA and planned giving.
- To engage the HH staff who were writers for the Impact section, there will be a staff content to pick the photo for the cover.
- HIGH HOPES magazine will be mailed to FY21, FY22, and FY23 donors to date - approximately 2,000 households.
- Gary Rogers suggested run extra copies and giving them to Community Partners to display and distribute at their business.

Trudy provided an assessment of the Holiday Market. An executive summary was distributed prior to the meeting with quantitative analysis. See handout for detailed analysis.

- Market had three goals: raise awareness of HH mission and program offerings, recruit volunteers and expand social media platform.
- We added 718 contacts to Constant Contact and followed up immediately following Market with an eblast.
- This was the first time the Volunteer team had a formal presence at the Market and they came away feeling very enthusiastic about the conversations they had with visitors. Two people have gone through volunteer training, and two more are scheduled to go through training this month.
- 73 people who indicated on door prize forms that they wanted more information. We are going to sample them to see if they received the information they were looking for, what they wanted more information about, their experience at the market and what we could improve on. Susan Shulman, a volunteer, will be doing this work for us.

- Designed a Holiday Market social media platform that reflected industry best practices. We added reels to our social media content. These are seen by more than just our followers expanding our exposure.
- Jeff congratulated Trudy on a good job with the Holiday Market.
- The collection for the food collection was down this year. This may be due to the fact that visitors did not want to bring their food items from the off-site parking. A solution is to have collection bins in the parking location next year. Kitty shared that other food pantries are experiencing reduced provisions.
- The Holiday Market was budgeted for net revenue of \$45,000 – an aggressive goal, given that year's net revenue of \$28,000. The raffle sales were about what they were last year – this was a revenue area affected by the economy. The anticipated 2022 HM overall net revenue is \$26,000. We met our objectives and covered costs. Claire noted she will craft a more realistic budget for the 2023 Market based on the net revenue of the past two years and given that it is not meant to be a fundraiser. In contrast, the 2023 June Benefit has a net revenue goal of \$200,000.

Trudy gave an update on the planning for the 2023 Big Barn Bash

- Introduction of event chairs - Rachel Edwards, Jane Bolles and Nancy Lucas.
- Décor Chairs, Rachel Rinolski and Kate Bartlett, own the Homeward Collective, a lifestyle boutique in Old Lyme and Madison.
- 2023 Benefit will return to a more elegant and formal event.
- Event Sponsorship will be approached with consideration of the Community Partner initiative. Community Partners initiative was launched this year and business can have a deeper, year-round relationship with High Hopes. There are higher gift levels - \$5,000, \$10,000 and \$20,000. For some businesses, the Benefit event corporate sponsorship might be the better fit and gift level. The Benefit corporate sponsorship levels are the same as last year.
- Gary Rogers noted an event sponsorship might be a good entry point for a business to engage with High Hopes.

Group Discussion on June Benefit and Corporate Sponsorships. In advance of the meeting, a list of 2018-2022 Benefit corporate sponsors and their 2022 solicitor was shared with the Committee.

- Jamie shared that when High Hopes switched to corporate sponsorships, Jamie met with the principal partners of Northstar Wealth, James McArw, Chip Dahlke and Tyler Potts. At that time, they were interested in the year-round partnership. It struck a chord with them. That was the first one and that seemed to take off with them. Being a part of the Community Partner program allows the company a way to show its support for the community and philanthropic causes. Event sponsorships will reach a different group of companies and both programs are valuable for High Hopes.
- Gary noted that companies are eager to publicly demonstrate their values and being a Community Partner shows they are civic-minded to stakeholders and prospective employees.

- Two big challenges every year for the Benefit - is identifying new companies and then getting the promotional material into the right people's hands. Development Committee members are given the opportunity to identify the people they would be comfortable teaming up with Claire to meet with business owners or reach out to them on their own. Sending an advocacy email encouraging a meeting with High Hopes is also helpful.
- Some businesses were added to the list - Whelen Engineering and The Lee Company. Peter asked if we had ever reached out to Janskys Rubbish and recommended that we add them to the list. Jamie said he could reach out to them and also Novak Brothers to see if they could increase their support.
- Claire sought input on the number of companies of the list. Given that this is a team exercise, is it daunting? The group agreed it is manageable. The initial marketing mailing will be at beginning of February and Committee members and staff will start on follow-ups by mid to the end of February.
- Claire thanked everyone involved in the past and Jamie for becoming involved again. Committee members to follow up with Claire on solicitation assignment or if you have contacts at any of these businesses.
- Mac asked if we had found a contact for Pfizer yet. Claire reported she plans to reached out to Sally Susman, former Connecticut College board member and current Executive Vice President and Chief Corporate Affairs Officer at Pfizer. She is vice chair of the Pfizer Foundation and co-chair of Pfizer's Political Action Committee. Scott Douglas also has a contact of a former Pfizer executive.
- Gary gave Claire an introduction to Jeff Pugliese, the new Director of Public Relations at Eversource and former VP at the Middlesex Community Foundation.

Final group discussion on general items

- Claire shared that we are having success with grants, but encouraged Committee members to share any contacts with new foundations that we could approach. Ideally, we seek foundations that will support us with unrestricted grants, but restricted grants are impactful.
- Mac asked if we are doing any other cultivation programs. We are going to have a cultivation event in May 2023 with a horse demonstration. Jackie asked if we are having salon/parlor events. Claire noted that as we plan for our 50th anniversary, events hosted at people's homes are effective for a major gifts program and as a part of any campaign. When we resume them, we will also be using them to reach deeper into affluent communities including Essex. These events are not currently in the FY23 budget so any parlor event costs would ideally be covered by the host.
- Kitty encouraged the group to put the week May 20-26 for Horse Show Days on their calendars as it is one of the best ways to demonstrate the effect of High Hopes. We are considering engaging deeper with corporations and bringing their employees to High Hopes for an equine experience. Kitty noted the Killingworth Lions Club will be at High Hopes on February 1st for their Chili Cookoff. Kitty will

be speaking to the Rotary Club of Old Saybrook on January 25 and as well as a group of attorneys on January 28.

- Claire thanked everyone for their creativity and leadership. The Development program is evolving and philanthropic support is growing. Claire shared a narrative of *Caring for The Whole Horse* written by Holly Sundmacker that will be featured in the inaugural HIGH HOPES magazine.

Meeting concluded at 5:13 pm.