

# Season 3 EP2

Mon, Feb 06, 2023 9:22AM • 37:18

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

donors, people, fundraisers, money, event, fundraising, gift, building, major donors, park, organization, magnet, nonprofit, talking, community, thinking, gala, impactful, isms, helping

## SPEAKERS

Monique Curry-Mims, Valerie Johnson

**Valerie Johnson** 00:00

Hello, and welcome back to beyond philanthropy. I'm Val. I'm here with Monique

**Monique Curry-Mims** 00:06

Hello.

**Valerie Johnson** 00:06

And we are talking about disrupting the practice of fundraising today. So last episode, we had guest Kia Jarmon with us and she helped to lay out for us the system within which we operate so as fundraisers as philanthropists, as anyone working in philanthropy, we are working within a system that is built upon a lot of isms. And now that we kind of have that building ground to kind of work from, we want to get a little bit into the different areas of fundraising and how you know, what they are, where they came about, or how they can be also rooted in isms. And then talk about how to disrupt them

**Monique Curry-Mims** 00:07

isms.

**Valerie Johnson** 00:08

isms, there are so many isms. And like

**Monique Curry-Mims** 00:10

there's so many

**Valerie Johnson** 00:15

it's I get, like, tired of always saying the same one over and over again. Because if I say racism, I don't really mean just racism. I mean, like racism and sexism, and like all the other isms that exist and it's easier

**Monique Curry-Mims** 01:06

I used to say, like two of them I used to give like racism, sexism, classism, all the isms, you know, two or three,

**Valerie Johnson** 01:14

I just trust that everybody is going to be with us. So there are different areas of fundraising, right. So like, if you're already working in fundraising, you may know some of these, if you're not as familiar with fundraising practices, we're going to kind of give you a breakdown. So kind of the bigger bucket areas would be major gifts, appeals, or, you know, mailed campaigns, events, and then grant writing. So kind of the first big bucket area that I wrote down in my notes, is major gifts, so Monique. What is major gifts, what does that mean?

**Monique Curry-Mims** 01:46

You know major gifts is it is dependent upon organization, because who a major donor is to one organization is going to be a lot different than another organization. Like if your budget is under a million, what a major gift to you is a lot different than what your organization's budget is 5 million. But it is a level that your organization considers if someone gives a gift that is considered a major impact to your fundraising to your finances. Some organizations might start at like 5000, others might start at 10, whereas others might say anything above 25. Anything above 50. Right. But it's someone who is going to make a gift to your organization that's going to be extremely impactful just from that one gift.

**Valerie Johnson** 02:38

Yea, significant is usually like, impactful and significant. So so that's what it is. So I think you're absolutely right, that it depends based on organization, I think some of the larger like healthcare systems even would consider anything below six figures to be a mid level gift instead of a major gift, which never fails to shock me because my organization thinks like \$5,000 is a major gift, that feels like a lot of money to us. But some organizations think a million dollars is a major gift and \$5,000 is like negligible. So the history of major gifts is the way I see it is that there are perks that come with being a major donor to a nonprofit. So we touched on this a little bit in our last episode, when we're talking about HBCUs and libraries, and making significant gifts in order to have some modicum of control over who was being trained in those universities, or what types of literature was being supplied to the community, that kind of stuff. And I don't know that it's quite so obvious these days. However, there is still a level of control and a level of input that major donors have to nonprofits, that other donors do not. Is that fair?

**Monique Curry-Mims** 04:00

Yeah. Yeah. I think that when you're considered major, you know, sometimes you get the handwritten notes, though, Vu Le just did a takedown piece on and hand written notes, I believe.

**Valerie Johnson** 04:10

Yeah.

**Monique Curry-Mims** 04:11

So that's interesting. But you know, they they get the tchotchkes they get, you know, at certain levels. And if they're making a really large donation, you know, then they're getting their name on buildings or

rooms or programs, right. Like there's, there's some kind of like, quid pro quo for some reason that kind of goes with major donors at certain levels. I just want to take a step back, because the reason why we have major donors or even when we look at fundraising, you know, it just it all started with the idea of like publicity, right? When you think about the history of fundraising, which kind of started like, way back when when they were fundraising for the YMCA, like in the early 1900s, right? And they actually worked with a PR firm to get the word out and have a campaign to be able to allow for corporations and you know, people with with large checks to be able to say, Hey, I'm gonna give and help the YMCA school, you know build their building. And in return I'm going to get this publicity for it right? So that's where it comes into this idea of like, there's that quid pro quo or like you're getting some kind of gift or something in return for being this major donor? Do we really need to do that still? Like, is there like, I'm always amazed when I'm driving by a building, or I'm talking to someone specifically more around like college campuses? And I'm like, Oh, the so-and-so building like, oh, no, that's not the so-and-so building anymore. That's not this building. And I'm like, wait a minute, like that person helped build the building and was a major donor to the actual like, capital campaign. And then somebody else came along and says, I want my name on that building. Like, I just find that very interesting, especially when you think about legacy planning, right? Like people do that thinking that their their legacy is going to live on with this new dental building, whatever, right? And it's like, oh, no, somebody else wrote a bigger check. And now, you know, people don't even know that building is used to be that building. It's very interesting.

**Valerie Johnson 06:15**

That happened to my freshman dorm. So it had a name, that I called it when I went there. And then I went back like 10 years later, I happen to be driving by and there was a brand new name on the building, no outward changes to the building. So that I was like, damn, somebody must have written an even bigger check and said, take that name down and put my name there. And, and like, it's just, it seems so silly. But we still do it. Like as fundraisers, we still allow that behavior, we still encourage that behavior. Like we provide naming opportunities, we like specifically design campaigns to have built in naming opportunities to continue this quid pro quo kind of relationship. Yeah, when I and I also think about like, the percentage of their overall worth, right like dropping \$25,000 to put your that's not a naming gift, dropping \$500,000 to name a building might be less than 1% of your worth your value overall as a human being. But that \$50 donation that came in from someone else might be like 5% of their overall wealth, it might be more than 5% of their overall wealth. So in terms of like celebrating somebody's support and generosity, it might have been harder, and more significantly impactful for someone to give \$50 out of their monthly income than for somebody to give 500,000. But that \$50 donor is going to get a standard email, thank you. And nothing else like that is the extent of their stewardship. Whereas the \$500,000 donor who could do that six times in a row and not even flinch, they're going to get a naming opportunity, they're going to get a press conference, they're going to get a press release, they're going to be highlighted on the website. And for them, it was nothing like they don't even blink when they drop that amount of money. So that's what I think about when I think of major gifts, like what, like it just annoys me.

**Monique Curry-Mims 08:15**

I understand it because like I said, people are trying to build their legacies, right, their family legacies, and they want to do that in ways but I felt like is there a way to do it where it's not. So I don't want to

say ostentatious, but like glory hogging, right? Like, it's more like, instead of just my name being on something, it's like, I actually made this change in the community, right? Because if you if you've got your name on the building on a room on the program, but that school that building that program, is harming people or not creating any impact then what was what was the point of it? I mean, I think that they will hope that they would be putting their name on something impactful. But I'd rather be like, Oh, it's a scholarship fund that's helping, you know, it doesn't have to be that but your name is still on that too, I guess. But, yeah, I mean, it's a it's an interesting space. And I think that a lot of fundraisers, they that's a big focus, right. It's like, we get Yeah, we get these smaller donations. And but yeah, we got to, we got to get those major donors in because it's easier to hit 100,000 If you've got a couple of major donors, then you know, a plethora, or have just these small little donations, but at the same time, I don't know I just feel like it's just a weird space to be in

**Valerie Johnson 09:42**

And naming opportunities to like I remember being at it and a previous organization and they were like, well, obviously no one's gonna give to us because we don't have naming opportunities. So let's figure out how to name the various rooms in our center after certain donors so that we actually have something to offer donors. I'm like, we do have something to offer donors. We have high quality programming that they're supporting. That's what we're offering them. We don't have to offer them naming for. I don't work there anymore. But it's prevalent, like, it's pretty much anywhere I've ever worked. It's the conversation of, well, we don't have anything to offer the donors like we do we absolutely, if we have a valuable mission, if we're providing high quality services, if we're there for what the community needs, we do have something to offer, like, we don't need a room that we can name after them.

**Monique Curry-Mims 10:36**

But you know what, but also, I personally, I don't I want to do a study on this. But I personally believe that things like this, especially in today's space, are the reason why organizations are struggling to find and keep fundraisers.

**Valerie Johnson 10:53**

Yep.

**Monique Curry-Mims 10:53**

The career itself of being a fundraiser is hard. Being told no, a lot. The economy's bad right now. So it's, uh, you know, it's even harder to make asks and close deals. But at the same time, I think I think AFP put out a survey last year around, you know, accepting gifts from people who might not be mission aligned, or might be people who cause harm to the communities you serve.

**Valerie Johnson 11:19**

Right.

**Monique Curry-Mims 11:19**

And I think that in this, like age of awakening around after social unrest, that people are really starting to question that. And it's making people feel like, I don't, maybe I don't want to fundraise.

**Valerie Johnson 11:30**

So I'm gonna move us into our next type of fundraising,

**Monique Curry-Mims 11:33**

I'm really trying to stay on time, guys. Apologies.

**Valerie Johnson 11:36**

so appeals. So there's mailed appeals there social media campaigns, there's, there's things that you do throughout the year to incentivize people to give. So I'm thinking of mailed appeals, and again, that what we're offering them in order to get them to give, so I just in the mail, like, literally Yesterday, I went to chop for an appointment for my son, we came home from the appointment, check the mail, we had a Will you give us a gift letter from chop in our mailbox, which already feels icky. And then it included a magnet that said, I heart chop, and I know those magnets cost like \$3. So like, the shipping, the printing, the magnet, they just spent \$5 on me to try and get me to give them money. And it's just the idea that you have to again, like the idea that you have to give something to your donor or provide them with something in order to get them to support you. It bleeds through major gifts, it goes to other areas.

**Monique Curry-Mims 12:39**

You know what that just made me, the first thing I thought of was it takes money to spend money, which is a very for profit business mindset. And there's this continuing argument in our industry is, you know, should we be looking at nonprofits as a for profit business? Or should they be kind of following those models? And there are a lot of people are like, no, no, no, it's different. But it's so similar, right? Because the fact that you think that you have to spend \$5 A person and how many people that they send it to Right.

**Valerie Johnson 13:13**

Probably a lot.

**Monique Curry-Mims 13:14**

Right, so they spent 1000s of dollars to maybe get \$50 from you, right? I mean, I guess if you get enough ffities, you know, it'll it'll add up. But it's the is that idea and that and that comes from a for profit mindset. So I always just find it interesting when people are like, No, we can't look at it, like for profit, but then you take all these for profit esque kind of models and campaigning, and then apply it to nonprofits and then do like, but it's different. I digress. I'm sorry.

**Valerie Johnson 13:42**

No, you're right on track. And it's my so my grandfather's in his 80s. So obviously, he's on every mailing list from anyone who ever sells a mailing list. So every year, my birthday card from him and my Christmas card from him are the free cards that are sent to him by like, the wildlife Conservancy, or every time he sends me something,

**Monique Curry-Mims 14:02**

I throw those things away. And now I feel bad I should be mailing those things. I don't even open them.

**Valerie Johnson** 14:08

He uses the return labels. Sometimes he'll like write down a note, like remember to ask Val for this. And then when he gives it to me, it's written on that free note paper where they give you like, you know, three pages of note paper. So he makes good use of that. And I'm not so sure he's actually donating in return. But I've seen all kinds of things I've seen, like pennies, stuck to pages of asking for money and like, we're gonna give you money to ask you for money. Like it's that transactional feeling that kind of reinforces that you're not in it for the mission, you're in it to get something out of it. And I think that that system that we're built upon is that it's an exchange and not just an opportunity to support something that's important to you.

**Monique Curry-Mims** 14:53

It is it's that exchange. I think that that really bothers me because why are we Giving, why are people giving? Right? Are we giving to get something in return? Or are we giving because we're trying to actually make an impact on something that we care about?

**Valerie Johnson** 15:10

Setting it up the way we set it up is teaching our donors that they're supposed to get something out of it

**Monique Curry-Mims** 15:15

Right

**Valerie Johnson** 15:15

Like we're reinforcing that transactional relationship by setting our campaigns and our appeals up the way that we do,

**Monique Curry-Mims** 15:23

you know, we're gonna go. So Mackenzie, right. So originally, she was giving all these things, you know, anonymously, you didn't know you till you got them. And, you know, she was being very trust based. And, and then from there, it's like, oh, I'm going to create a website. And now I have a new form of philanthropy that I want to teach everybody and I want to and I'm just like, okay, so what are we doing here? So now, like, I, you know, everybody's talking about her in the beginning, okay. She's doing good work. And now it's like, okay, everybody's talking. Everybody wants to know. So now I'm going to create my own website. I'm going to create my own form of philanthropy, which utilizes trust based practices. And I'm going to it's just like,

**Valerie Johnson** 16:07

but she's not.

**Monique Curry-Mims** 16:07

It's like clout like clout, right? Yeah, instead of, instead of just doing it for the impact, we're doing it for the clout, which it's so okay, I've got to share it. I'm going to share it guys. I'm not right now. But there is this I've fallen in love with AI over the last month. And I found this site that creates Drake videos for you. And Valerie's face right now, so you type in what you want him to rap about. And it generates a song

and then has Al Drake wrap it for you. And I've literally typed in building a legacy of impact and not clout, and the song, which just made me think of that. And then the song, he actually made a song for me that he raps about leaving a legacy of good and doing better. And I'm just like, Yes, I'm gonna drop this on some social media channel. I'm going to drop it when we drop this episode, when this episode drops checks Civic Capital's Instagram, it'll be there. If you're listening to this, you can check it. Yeah,

**Valerie Johnson 17:14**

sorry. I was just like, what his what?and then I was like I want my favorite rappers to rap what I want them to I want to write raps for people. That's, that's really cool. But no, I think you're right. I think McKenzie is reverting almost back to like, wanting that give and take relationship as opposed to just the traditional giving, non traditional giving relationship that she had started to do. So another area of fundraising is events, special events, so like galas, golf fundraisers, silent auctions, like all of those things. So basically, anytime that you spend money as an organization and invite people to show up, you're holding a special event. That's what a special event is.

**Monique Curry-Mims 18:00**

I don't want to get too far into events because we have a whole episode dedicated. So there's that coming soon. But you know, there are two types of events. In my mind. There's one that is educational, right? It's the one where you're not really trying to fundraise, you're just trying to educate. And as part of your stewardship process, right, you're trying to educate potential volunteers, donors, philanthropists, so that hopefully they will get involved later, they will write that check later. But then you have the galas and fundraisers and I sit here and soon as we started talking about it, I laugh because I've produced some really successful galas. And just thinking about the idea that you talked about the auctions, a key to all of my auctions, I had a plant, I had a plant in the audience who was already going to give at least \$10,000. And I said, Hold on, I need you to give that \$10,000 At my gala and be my plant. And they start the level at 10,000. Right? So it's just always like, you know, it's always interesting around how authentic these events are part of our gala, we would have, you know, some people maybe speak and we weren't necessarily writing scripts, but we want it then to talk about be very focused right on the conversation, like have a focused conversation around something specifically what you want to say is what you want to say but be very specific, because this is what the topic right? Like, we're not just out just talking, we're saying we're giving a news anchor from NBC and they were doing an interview is actually an interview. They had questions they wanted to ask. So we would always bring all the speakers together to get to know each other to kind of start the dialogue. The week before the event that way they didn't get on stage and just be like in DEERS and headlights. And I remember a mother being very upset because she didn't understand exactly what we were trying to do. And she thought that we were scripting it and she just felt very like I am, you know, I have my own mind, I can say what I want to say like this comes off as very fake. I don't want to be part of this. And it was kind of like, well, no, it's not that, but they were like, oh, no, we're not coming. And it's just like, but then no, we want to participate interview, we just want to talk. And it's like, but it's actually an interview like that is what this is. It's not just getting up and just talking for five minutes. It is an interview with an NBC anchor on stage. And that and I think conversations like that really just got me thinking about extractive practices and trauma that our events and even the way that we highlight and work with our constituents, our community members that we cause.

**Valerie Johnson 20:45**

Yeah, and I think, too you, so the events that you produced, you were heavily focused on maximizing revenue and decreasing your expenses, so that the majority of the funds that you raised went to the actual mission of the organization or the project as opposed to what I've seen in other organizations in order to meet the standard of the attendees. They spend way too much in my opinion, money on creating an experience, and an event that will meet the standards. So I'm thinking of, there's a particular park here in Philadelphia, that is incredibly fancy, there are a lot of high rise condos surrounding that park.

**Monique Curry-Mims 21:29**

I don't know what you're talking about. [sarcastically]

**Valerie Johnson 21:31**

The park is supported by a friends group that raises money to maintain this public park, then they feel ownership of said park if perhaps some teenagers choose to sit in the middle of the park and smoke in the afternoon, the friends feel that they are allowed to tell those teenagers to leave even though it is a public park. Yea. It's a whole thing. So I had the opportunity to work on the massive fundraising event that happens in that park. So they tent the entire park for three days. They do multiple events. And the large part of the event is a nighttime Gala. They bring they quite literally bring in an entire kitchen like they they deliver ovens to the tent that is considered the kitchen and cook and bake on site, a gourmet meal, they lay floor so that there is an actual dance floor. In that tent, instead of just dancing in the park. They completely transform the park basically into like a high class gala type venue. It is not cheap to do that there's, security they have to pay full time security for three days to keep everyone out of those tents. They air condition the tents because this event happens in the summertime. So the amount of money that goes into producing that event is counterintuitive to the goal of the event, which is to raise money for the mission of the organization, which is to support the park and it takes the park away from the community as a resource for three days while they do this massive fundraising event. And why do we have to have a dance floor? Isn't the point to enjoy the park? Isn't the point to be a part of the day, why can't you just have your gala in the park? Why does it have to be an air conditioned tent? Why do you have to bring in gourmet chefs who have their own stoves that get delivered into the tent? Like, it just seems so counterintuitive. And again, it's because the donors have an expectation that has to be met by the nonprofit. So in order to get that money from those donors and to get those donors to attend the event. The organization has to do a lot of things that maybe are counterintuitive to their mission.

**Monique Curry-Mims 21:53**

Really? I have to go one year because three days that's insane. And I think that, you know, my the best event that I ever put on that raise the most amount of money and cost under 100,000 was at Blue Cross River rink. I rented out the rink we had dinner on the rink and hors d'oeuvres and networking in the booths outside and things like that, raise half a million, I think it cost 97,000

**Valerie Johnson 24:15**

which means that you spent less than 20% of your overall spend.

**Monique Curry-Mims 24:20**

So in a Garces is our cater like I used Garces for everything. Like I'm not using cheap caterers we you know, it was amazing. I'll find a video and post that as well. Like, there's ways that you can have events where the money just goes towards the actual mission, right and not to the expenses because that's, that's the thing that I hate. It's like you're going to do all of this and how much of this money is actually going to your fundraising for and that's

**Valerie Johnson** 24:48

on average 50%

**Monique Curry-Mims** 24:49

Yeah, and that's a little ridiculous. If you're going to do a fundraiser, think about the cost you should not be spending 50% of the money on the event itself, right the point is to fundraise money for your mission for the actual cause for the program implementation and overhead. And I don't want to get into an overhead general operating costs conversation.

**Valerie Johnson** 25:10

We'll get there. eventually.

**Monique Curry-Mims** 25:11

Right. But if you're spending more majority of your money from your fundraiser on the actual fundraiser itself, then we're missing something. So just be very clear about what the purpose of your event is, if it's something that is educational, or it is actually a fundraising event, and really make sure that you're doing it in a way that is not harmful, not extractive, and is really to support the mission of your organization.

**Valerie Johnson** 25:34

Absolutely. And our last little, you know, area of fundraising is grant writing. So I actually don't know where grant writing was born. Like, who had the first grant, I imagine it was kind of back 100 years ago when philanthropy was being established. But I know that we're not in a great place. It's very transactional. There are power dynamics involved that are related to the systems within which we work that make grant writing also feel icky as a fundraiser, I don't know. does it feel icky to you?

**Monique Curry-Mims** 26:09

So I'm in a, I sit in a weird space when it comes to grant writing, because so there's all these random practices of philanthropy and trust based, and do we collect data? Do we not collect data and all these things, right, regardless of how a foundation gives out their money, whether it's through a grant process, or it's through a conversation. If we're not understanding what the impact is, what is the point. and yes, we have to learn to trust nonprofits or, you know, foundations need to learn how to trust nonprofits. And I'm not saying that we don't, or we shouldn't. But you know, I've worked at a nonprofit for many years, like I understand that sometimes nonprofit work is not as effective as it needs to be. Sometimes that's because, you know, the nonprofit came in with a preconceived notion about what it is that they needed to do without actually talking to the community. Things happened. 2020 happened, right, it totally disrupted what was needed in certain communities. So maybe at one point, what was needed is no longer needed. And change didn't happen. But I just feel like, you know, there's a side of grant making

where you're giving out the grants, but then there's the other side, when you're trying to understand the change that was actually made in the community, right, and not actually measuring the effectiveness of the nonprofit or the effectiveness of the foundation and what we're doing, but really understanding how effective was our attempt to change this issue? And I know that's a little bit off topic. But you know, there's a lot of people like, Oh, we don't want to write grants, and we don't want to do and we just want to have conversations, and I can have a great conversation. I know how to have a great conversation, especially when things aren't going well. You know what I'm saying? Like, you know, we're not really meeting those metrics. We're not really serving effectively the amount of people we said we're going to serve. I know how to talk about that. But when did we talk about regardless of like, the lessons learned, that's the thing, right? Like, if you didn't hit your goal, what were the lessons learned? Great. But what you learned that internally, but what did the community get out of that? Because if we're going to just keep giving money and writing and giving grants to organizations to learn lessons, but none of those lessons actually push communities forward. What are we what are we doing?

**Valerie Johnson 28:39**

Yeah, so I am working on a grant that's due today. And one of the things we're asking for is money to continue a pilot program we've been doing. So there's a type of medication for opioid use disorder called sublocade. That is a month long injection. So I think most people are most familiar with methadone. As a medication for opioid use disorder, you have to take that daily. So you have to get up every single day, go to your clinic of choice, get the methadone, take it and then go back the next day, in order to keep your withdrawal symptoms at a minimum. So sublocade is a month long injection. So you get it once a month, and it does the same thing. So it keeps your withdrawal symptoms down. It makes it easier for you to not use. And it's once a month, so it also makes your life a lot easier. So we have a pilot program we've been running where we just do a small incentive. So every month for the first six months, you take your injection, you get a \$50 stipend, and we filled up really quickly. We had 25 slots, they were filled up within two months. So we're trying to write to get more money to provide more incentives to help more people discover sublocade As an option, trying to explain the impact of this pilot program. You know, we're like three or four months in so we don't even have official statistics on like, Is this helping people stay sober? Is this helping people avoid over doses is this helping people become more stable in their lives like we have none of that. But the visible difference in the people that we are serving, when they come into the office for their appointments, it's night and day to see the Visible Difference is enough for us to be like, Yes, this is working. Yes, we need to continue this. But to explain that to a funder, like, well, I don't have data, I don't have statistics, I don't have like a tracking sheet that tells you like, you know, what they've achieved this month. But if you could look at the before and after pictures, you would believe us that this is a program that works that is really helping the community and helping to support people. So yeah, that transactional nature of like, they need to get something out of this in order to give us the money. It's definitely a problem. And there's a power imbalance. Because if there's something wrong, you as the grantee don't always feel like you can speak up because you're at risk of losing your funding. So part of me says like, Yes, this is exactly the way the system was designed. And this is always how it's been. And part of me is like, maybe it wasn't actually designed this way. But it's evolved into operating this way. Because the power dynamics involved.

**Monique Curry-Mims 31:10**

So, how do we break down the power dynamics within fundraising? I think that that is key to this this episode. And just like our sector, our profession,

**Valerie Johnson 31:23**

I think the biggest thing that you can do as an individual to disrupt the practice of fundraising is education. We are actively teaching our donors what to expect from us in everything that we do. So if we're sending them a magnet to put on their fridge when we ask them for money, we're telling them this is a transaction, this is you get something and you give something. But if we're actively having those educational conversations of we are not giving you a gift like everyone else does. And this is why that means x more dollars goes towards our mission. And x more people are supported as a result of us not playing into these power dynamics. I think people respond to that. I think they understand. I mean, the magnets nice, but most people throw it away. So at the end of the day, if they know more money is going to the mission and what your mission is actually doing and how you're impacting your community. I think most people would be happy to help and happy to not have that magnet mailed to their house once a year. I don't know, what do you think?

**Monique Curry-Mims 32:23**

No, I think that's a, I think that is a very valid point in this. And what just really popped into my mind was, like companies that focus on environmental progress, right? Where they're like, No, you helped us save X amount of trees, or this is printed on recycled paper, which save X trees or dollars or things like that. And I think that if we actually start talking to donors in that kind of light, where it's like, Hey, thank you for your donation. Maybe you're used to getting a mailed letter, because we no longer buy paper by the reams, we save X amount of trees, or you know, or something like that, right? Or your, God forbid you plant a tree in honor of a donor, right? Like, instead of giving you a magnet, we took this \$3 and planted a tree in your name to help our communities have fresh air something right.

**Valerie Johnson 33:20**

Yeah.

**Monique Curry-Mims 33:21**

And and I think that if we start equating giving them something, and you're still giving them something in a way, right, but it's something that is less materialistic, and more impactful. I think that that will go a long way.

**Valerie Johnson 33:35**

Yeah, cuz I mean, ultimately, they're giving to you because they want to support their community. So if you're, in turn, supporting your community, as a part of your mission, then win win, right like that's ultimately what we want people to be giving for, and then not expecting anything in return. So it's a it's a big change, and it affects all the different areas of fundraising. So when it comes to major gifts, maybe sit down with your major donors and explain why you are no longer offering naming opportunities and why it's important to you as an organization to not shift that power. Or when it comes to appeals. We just talked about not sending things or planting a tree as opposed to sending a magnet when it comes to events. You know, we do not have giant flower centerpieces this year, because we thought it was more important that \$2,000 goes towards our scholarship program. That's an easy thing for you to tell

people at the event that I don't know, I think that's something that people would respect. And then on the grant side, just talk to them. They're humans, the people behind the grants are humans. And if you explain like, hey, we do not have impact statistics, however, here's why I know this is working. And here's why it's important that you invest in it. I don't know. You're a funder. Would you react to that? Positively negatively? mediumly.

**Monique Curry-Mims 34:53**

Yeah, I would react. I would react to it. I mean, at the end of the day, I you know, I also am of a different mindset. So that's true, you know, my mindset in the traditional donor are a little bit different. So, but I think also, you know, when you are looking at donors, and you're, you know, we all prospect donors what you know, whether we like it or not, it's something that's part of the job, right, and understanding holistically who they are. And you know, maybe they do care about something else that might not be directly related to what you do as an organization. But if you're able to say, we took this money, and we did this instead, because that also helps our community because, you know, I heard something that I thought was common sense, but maybe not. February is Catholic Schools Week. And on the news, they were highlighting Catholic schools throughout the week. And I missed why she said it. But a teacher said, you know, I care about the bellies of my kids, if you ask my kids, they say the most important thing to the school day is having a Full Belly belly, because I don't believe kids can learn on empty belly, right? She's a teacher, her job is to teach. But she knows that there are other factors that impact her teaching. So if you have a donor that cares about something else that impacts your work, and you're able to plant a tree, or you know, give money to Manna for food, or whatever the case may be where you if you want to do something with that, just to have some kind of quid pro quo, make it impactful. Don't just make it materialistic.

**Valerie Johnson 36:28**

Agreed. And with that, we're gonna have to come to a close.

**Monique Curry-Mims 36:31**

We're trying to be respectful of your time, guys, we appreciate you listening every month.

**Valerie Johnson 36:36**

Yeah,

**Monique Curry-Mims 36:36**

We want you to keep coming back. And we don't want to keep you too long.

**Valerie Johnson 36:41**

But we do want to know what you think. So when it comes to disrupting fundraising practices, we want to know what you think, tell us like we have an email, we have social media, there are many ways to contact us and we really want to hear from you. Do you think this is going to work? Do you think it's not going to work? Do you think your funders are gonna laugh at you? We want to hear that. And then we'll call them out and tell them not to laugh at you. Man, I'm saying that for a lot of stuff today, huh?

**Monique Curry-Mims 37:07**

I know she's spicy today. Well, guys, thank you for joining us. If you didn't know, now you know, this has been beyond philanthropy.