

*Your*  
**2015**

DONOR LOVE FUNDRAISING CALENDAR

**JANUARY**

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

# What's your year ahead look like?

Time management guru Alan Lakein said, "Failing to plan is planning to fail." January is the month to get a firm handle on your organization's fundraising plan and figure out where you're going in the upcoming year. How will you be growing your individual giving? Starting or growing your major gifts program? Communicating with your donors?

Great fundraising - as opposed to solidly mediocre fundraising - starts with developing a wholly donor-focused development department. Develop an 'attitude of gratitude' and appreciate the donors you do have for the wonderful work they're enabling you to do.

## January's Donor Love Tip

Take a cue from Penny Campbell, Donor Relations Associate with Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Oregon: "The one thing that we have implemented in the past six months to improve our communication with donors is an Impact Update.

It differs from the newsletter created by our communications department, in that it is less a report on what WE have done, and more an update on what the DONOR has made possible through their gift. Donors receive updates twice each year – 4 months after their gift, and 9 months after their gift – and we have both email and postal mail versions depending on their mailing preferences. Since we have just started the updates, I've included a brief survey asking donors for their feedback."

Click [here](#) to see inspiring examples of Impact Updates.

**"Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings."**

— William Arthur Ward



### January's Basics & More™ Courses

*Basics & More™ are nonprofit fundamentals ecourses created to guide you, your volunteers and staff, into a solid understanding of the essentials of great fundraising.*

Your Fundraising Plan & Case for Support | The Basics & More™  
Your Donor Engagement System | The Basics & More™

# JANUARY

## FEBRUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## A Focus on Loyalty

Don't have a monthly giving plan? Say it isn't so! Monthly giving is the best practice you're likely not doing.

Harvey McKinnon, author of *Hidden Gold*, the industry standard on monthly giving, told me that his first foray into monthly giving yielded a paltry three new members - and one of them was him! Yet, fast forward several years and that organization's monthly giving program raises a lion's share of the revenue. Even the smallest organization can and should begin a monthly giving program. The time to start is now.

Check out these great articles and think about enrolling in February's Monthly Giving | The Basics & More™, my four-week course created to guide you through the processes of launching your organization's monthly giving program:

[Monthly Giving for the Small Shop](#) – Interview with Harvey McKinnon  
[Don't Stop Now!](#) – How to keep growing your monthly giving program

### February's Donor Love Tip

Ron Skenes of Christ Community Health Services Augusta writes:

"The one thing that we implemented in the last six months to build stronger relationships with our donors is a donor 'thank you' call program. Members of our staff call donors just to thank them for their support. No ask - just thanks. The donors love it and the staff get to connect with donors."

**February's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Monthly Giving | The Basics & More™

love

care

trust

**"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough."**

— Meister Eckhart

# FEBRUARY

MARCH

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

# Rock Your Storytelling!

## What's your story?

Finding and sharing an organization's most compelling stories is always my first step in the consulting process. And many view it as a time-waster. They want that next big grant that will put them on the path to solvency. Or what about getting donations on Facebook or Twitter? "Can you create our ice-bucket challenge?"

And yet storytelling is the foundation of every successful fundraising program.

It's not magic. What stories tug at your heartstrings? Don't be afraid of emotion, seek it out. Here are a few resources to get you started:

[Nonprofit storytelling and you | 8 tips](#)

[Three Fundraising Lessons from HONY](#)

[The Real Secret for Fundraising Success | It's All About The Story](#)  
[Donor Newsletter Brings in \\$2 Million | The Power of Storytelling](#)

Here's an interview I did on the topic of storytelling: [listen in...](#)

## March's Donor Love Tip

Heather Sieting of the *Michigan Humane Society* shares what she is doing to love her donors: "The one thing that we implemented to improve donor relations/retention is increasing our stewardship. Everyone on my team doubled their weekly calls/emails/notes to donors (in addition to the thank you/tax letter) from 5-10 each week and every other month we have a thank-a-thon where we try and reach in the ballpark of 1000 donors. Development staff, volunteers, our board and even our executive team have helped!"



**"Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good."**

— **Maya Angelou**

**March's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Nonprofit Storytelling | The Basics & More™  
Fundraising with Program Staff | The Basics & More™

# MARCH

APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

# Planned Giving: The Gift That Keeps on Giving

**Did you know that, according to Giving USA, bequest giving accounts for \$27.73 billion (8%) of charitable contributions made in 2013?** That's more than corporate giving (5%)! What's the number one reason donors do not add a charity to their wills? "It never occurred to me."

Would it surprise you to know that there's no correlation between income or wealth with the likelihood of giving by bequest? Indeed, one 'small shop' organization I worked with routinely received two to four bequest gifts every year, and these gifts, ranging from \$15,000 to several hundred thousand, were from individuals you would never consider wealthy. Most bequest gifts are left by middle-class women.

If you're not actively promoting planned giving, you're not only leaving money on the table, you're robbing your donors of the opportunity to create a lasting legacy!

The time to start is now. Beginning can be something as simple as developing a tagline to add to your marketing materials. You don't need to get creative. Something as simple as "Leave a Legacy" could suffice. Have a look at this resource: [13.04: Bequests -- The Other White Meat?](#)

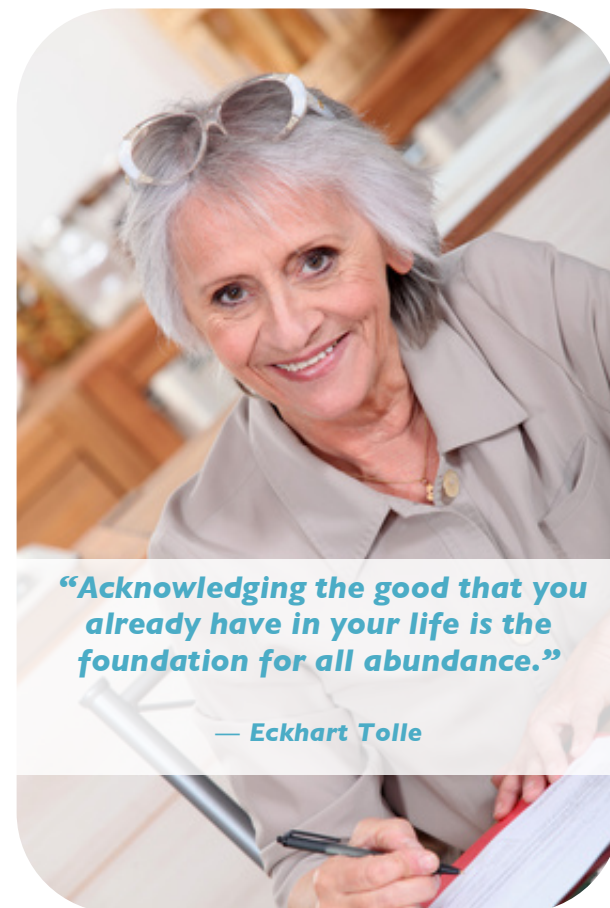
Our Simple Development Systems Archive features these additional recorded trainings:

- *Marketing Bequests: The Delicate Art of Asking for That Final Gift*, featuring Tom Ahern
- Planned Giving, featuring Leah Eustace, ACFRE

Are you a member?

## April's Donor Love Tip

Jen Pederson of *Western Development Museum* is doing something special for her legacy givers: "The one thing that we have done is invite some donors who have committed to planned gifts to a Leave a Legacy luncheon to thank them for their commitment to our museum. I co-hosted our table with our Executive Director and manager of our museum's local branch."



**April's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Planned Giving | The Basics & More™  
Online Fundraising | The Basics & More™

# APRIL

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
						31



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

# The Power of Thank You!

## How are you thanking the wonderful donors who make your work possible?

Now's the time to overhaul your stewardship plan. You'll want a plan that includes sample thank you letters for any eventuality (annual fund, monthly giving, in memoriam, foundation grants, in-kind, etc.), as well as factoring in regular updates to all of your correspondence.

How will you thank your donors via social media? Write it down! How can you involve your board in thanking donors?

I make it a practice with clients of scheduling Thank-a-Thons or Thank-You-Note-Intermissions during board meetings. Board members will receive either a list of donors to call (along with a sample script and giving history), or note cards, names, gift amounts and samples to pen their own handwritten thank-you notes. Donors love it! Here are some other great resources to help with 'Thank You's:

- [SOFIL's famous 'Thank You Letter Clinic'](#)
- [Your Donor Love Toolkit](#)
- [How Hope Found says 'Thank You' \(and how they can help you say thank you too\)](#)
- [A free thank you letter you can swipe! \(downloadable template\)](#)
- [November Nonprofit Blog Carnival | Giving Thanks \(lots of great ideas for you\)](#)

## May's Donor Love Tip

Julie Klett of *Rocky Mountain Nature Association* shares her personalized approach: "The one thing that we do now is to follow up with significant project donors after the project they supported launched (or was completed, depending on the nature of the project), to tell them how the program performed and how their donation had an impact. We send a short, personalized letter (signed by the Ex. Dir.) and a one-page wrap-up of the project with photos. (this is in addition to immediate thank you letters, etc.) Timing varies with the project and depends on if it was a one-time or short term initiative, a continuing project, etc."



***"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."***

— **Maya Angelou**

**May's Basics & More™ Courses**  
The Power of Thank You | The Basics & More™  
Your Consulting Blueprint | The Basics & More™

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

# Are you loving lapsed donors back into the fold?

June is a great month to review your database with an eye to letting your lapsed donors know that you love them and miss them and want them back!

Time to pull up those LYBUNTs (Last Year But Unfortunately Not This) and SYBUNTs (Some Year But Unfortunately Not This) and reach out and touch.

Stuck for words? Take a cue from this great post from my friend, John Lepp of Agents for good:

[Loving lapsed donors back into the fold | Simple, brilliant and oh so swipe-able!](#)

*Let them know:  
you love 'em  
and miss 'em –  
and you want  
them back!*

## June's Donor Love Tip

Johnny Avots-Smith of *KVIE Public Television* is excited about sharing the love: "The one thing that we, here at KVIE Public Television, implemented in the last 6 months was regular thank you calls by board members.

At first only a few participated but once they started having a fun chatting with donors, more and more volunteered! Plus having Penelope Burk's statistics on the matter was really helpful: "In a survey, 95% of donors said they'd be grateful if a board member called to thank them and 86% said they'd consider giving a larger gift." Board member: "Where do I sign up?" Can't wait to see what comes of it!

PS - THANK YOU for the Grow Report. I love grabbing my cup of coffee to settle in for the BlogRoll and some great insights. It's my morning awesome sauce!"



**WELCOME BACK!**

***"Wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving."***

— **Kahlil Gibran**

### June's Basics & More™ Courses

Fundraising with Businesses | The Basics & More™  
(with Joe Waters)

Getting to Your First \$1 Million | The Basics & More™  
(with Joe Garecht)

# JUNE

JULY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

# Major Donor Month: Mining Your Acres of Diamonds

Recently I was talking to a small nonprofit organization about their individual giving. Now this organization, like all of the agencies I come into contact with, is engaged in vital, truly inspiring work in their community. Yet what I was hearing from them was that “funders aren’t interested in us because we don’t do blah blah blah.” And “it’s so hard because we work with men and most of the funders want programs that work with women and children.”

Listen up. Have you ever read the famous Russell Conwell speech titled “Acres of Diamonds”? Conwell contends that most people look everywhere for opportunity, success, and happiness, except the one place where they’re most likely to find it: *under their own two feet*.

The idea behind “Acres of Diamonds” actually translates to one of the greatest secrets of fundraising (and major donors). It’s been my experience that most *organizations fail to fully mine the gold hidden right within their own database, within their own circle*. Instead, they’re continuously looking for new donors and new methodologies -- and looking outside their organization for those elusive “major donors.” See:

[Major Gifts: Four Basics before You Begin Building Your Major Gifts Program](#) (use Password **schreifels1013kts** to access)

This is a special SDS recorded webinar presented by Jeff Schreifels of the Veritus Group.

## July's Donor Love Tip

DeAnna Marler of *The Joshua School* is another who knows the power of hand-written: “Specific, hand-written thank you notes. We realized that in the age of electronic communication and social media, a genuine note carries more value and weight with our individual donors. We are a small enough organization (approx 300 donations a year) that this is still manageable. Our notes, written on cards with student-designed artwork, are specific to the donor, including information such as what part of our organization their donation directly assists. If appropriate, we follow up 6 weeks later with a photo that is relevant to that area their specific donation helped. Early reports from donors and people in our community tell us that this personalized outreach helps them stay connected with our school and acts as an incentive for additional donations!”



**“Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow.”**

— **Melody Beattie**

**July's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Hiring Your First Director of Development |  
The Basics & More™

Small Shop Major Gifts | The Basics & More™  
(with Amy Eisenstein, ACFRE)

# JULY

## AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

# Time to Revamp Your Donor Newsletter!

In a 2010 Grow Report, I shared my own formula for a donor newsletter. It was based both on my personal experiences and a seminar with Penelope Burk of Donor Centered Fundraising. And it consisted of a three-times-yearly newsletter (Penelope had noted that when donors were polled they didn't notice the difference between a quarterly and three-times-yearly publication).

I thought I had the answers but I was wrong. I learned first-hand from Tom Ahern that newsletters could be much more than simple stewardship devices - they could raise money (lots of it!).

It's time to revamp your newsletters, both print and email, putting the focus on your donor.

See: [Making Money with Donor Newsletters](#)

Is your print newsletter an afterthought? In the Nonprofit Newsletters | The Basics & More, you'll learn the secrets to creating newsletters that WOW your donors (and raise money).

## August's Donor Love Tip

Lisa A. Keeter of *Mountain Housing Opportunities* shows donors the impact of their investment first-hand: "The one thing that we have done is invite our large donors to tour our affordable apartment building that we are renovating. We called it our "hard hat tour". We also invited local legislators and community leaders as well as our board members. We hope that by doing this, our large donors will see the impact their investment is making on the community first hand."

# AUGUST



***"Silent gratitude isn't much use to anyone."***

— Gladys Browyn Stern

### August's Basics & More™ Courses

Board Fundraising | The Basics & More™  
Nonprofit Newsletters | The Basics & More™

### SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

# The Time to Start Year-End Fundraising is Now!

One of the most commonly asked questions I get (almost a weekly basis!) has to do with print versus email. I always respond that one shouldn't preclude the other. We've been hearing for years that "direct mail is dying." No, it isn't. You need to master it (or hire me or someone else to do it for you).

The physical impact of a piece of addressed mail, if it is relevant and compelling, can be even greater in a world where mail is becoming a rarer and more specialised channel. But it won't work in isolation; it will need to sit as part of a series of supporting messages across a range of media. A donor might see a mail piece and respond online. Or see a TV ad and respond by mail. Or follow a route where they see messages on several different channels before responding on another. They'll probably research an organisation online. Or seek validation through recommendations on social media.<sup>1</sup>

Email is ephemeral. Here and gone. For those of you who've been around the block, you know all about receiving a check in the mail inside an envelope from a campaign 10 years ago.

Check my website each Wednesday for *What's in my Mailbox*, where I highlight examples of direct mail: [Raise More With Your Year-End Fundraising Appeal Letter | Downloadable Template](#)  
[What's in my Mailbox | Free template to help you raise more with direct mail](#)

Learn how two organizations revamped their year-end appeal with this free downloadable template.



***“Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.”***

— Aesop

## September's Donor Love Tip

Who says annual meetings have to be boring? Kent E. Fillinger, Director of Partnerships for CMF International has a unique way of making their annual meeting a donor love-fest: "The one thing that we did was to change the focus of our annual meeting from a dull insider's event for the staff and board to an engaging, inclusive event for our donors. We also used the revamped annual meeting as a "good excuse" to call our top 100 donors to thank them for their continued generosity and to personally invite them attend."

**September's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Direct Mail Masterclass | The Basics & More™  
Foundation Grants | The Basics & More™

# SEPTEMBER

### OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

# Bringing Your Mission Alive With Video

Donors are inspired to give when they feel engaged and connected to your cause.

What’s the best way to do this?

The best way is for them to experience your mission first hand. Most of the time, it’s too expensive or time consuming to give your donors that experience. So how can you give your donors that necessary experience without the expense and time commitment?

A video transports your donor to the heart of your cause.

Through visual storytelling, you can connect with your donor’s values and touch their heart. Your video doesn’t need to be a slick production. What’s important is to capture emotion. In *Nonprofit Video | The Basics & More™* you’ll learn how to use simple tools like your phone or free sites to create your videos.

[Nonprofit Storytelling with Video | Three Unbreakable Rules](#)



**“Gratitude and love are always multiplied when you give freely. It is an infinite source of contentment and prosperous energy.”**

— Jim Fargiano

## October's Donor Love Tip

Ann H. Kloeckner of *Rappahannock Legal Services, Inc.* has a donor appreciation event (the personal call is key here): “The one thing that we implemented recently was a donor appreciation event. We separated our donor database into three regions matched to our three offices, and personally called all the donors from one region to invite them to a simple house party. We told them to keep their wallets at home; this event was just to thank them sincerely for all their support over the years. We kept it simple and used the lovely home of a board member as the location. We offered beer/wine/soda and appetizers from 5 to 7 PM on a Sunday. The response was great. Those who could not come were thrilled just to be asked and the ones who did show up were completely charmed by not being asked for money and instead simply being thanked. We are planning the next two donor appreciation events in our other two regions within the next few months.”

**October’s Basics & More™ Courses**  
Supercharge Your Year-End Fundraising |  
The Basics & More™

Nonprofit Video | The Basics & More™  
(with Chris Davenport)

# OCTOBER

## NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

# The Countdown Begins!

The heat is on. Year-end fundraising season is here.

If you've been following the program throughout the year, you'll be sailing into these last two months with calm assurance. How will you be maximizing giving, *across all channels*?

Use these nine simple tips to rock your year-end fundraising:

1. Supercharge your Home page
2. Engage your donors with a 'Thank You' page
3. Be a Donor
4. Let your donor know they've made a difference to someone—one is the loveliest number
5. Remember your lapsed donors, major donors, and monthly donors
6. Address envelopes by hand—the power of hand-written
7. Create an email signature line
8. Put your board members to work!
9. Offer a gift-matching incentive

Click [here](#) to read the rest

See also:

[The Key to Less Stress and Better Year-End Fundraising](#)

[Calling All Procrastinators: 7 Tricks to Raise More Money With Your Year End Appeal](#)

## November's Donor Love Tip

Lin Nelson-Mayson of *University of Minnesota* knows the power of personal connection: "The one thing that we have done to deepen relationships with donors is to talk to them and thank them personally. In at least two instances, the personal connection after the first donation resulted in an increase in subsequent donations."



***"Gratitude isn't a tool to manipulate the universe or God. It's a way to acknowledge our faith that everything happens for a reason even if we don't know what that reason is."***

— Melody Beattie

### November's Basics & More™ Courses

Your Year-End Appeal (Direct Mail) | The Basics & More™

*We'll also be offering our popular Appeal Review Package, where you'll have the opportunity to have your year-end letter tweaked by a professional copywriter.*

# NOVEMBER

## DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

# December - End the Year With Gratitude...

Chances are the month of December will find you in a whirlwind of year-end fundraising, parties, and donor visits.

This is the month to reflect on the year just passed...and to focus in on giving thanks.

Shower those wonderful donors who help make your work possible with gratitude.

How are you thanking your board members, those unsung heroes?

We all know that nonprofit workers typically earn less than their private-sector counterparts. But they're not in it for the paycheck. We're all here to make a difference! Remember, it's those little things that make your staff feel appreciated and know that they're part of a greater good.

**For all that you do every day to build a better world, thank you!**

## December's Donor Love Tip

Heather Sieting of the *Michigan Humane Society* shares what she is doing to love her donors: "The one thing that we implemented to improve donor relations/retention is increasing our stewardship. Everyone on my team doubled their weekly calls/emails/notes to donors (in addition to the thank you/tax letter) from 5-10 each week and every other month we have a thank-a-thon where we try and reach in the ballpark of 1000 donors. Development staff, volunteers, our board and even our executive team have helped!"



**"When you are grateful, fear disappears and abundance appears."**

— **Anthony Robbins**

**December's Basics & More™ Courses**  
Celebrating Your Nonprofit Milestones |  
The Basics & More™

# DECEMBER

## JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

