



Opportunities and Possibilities: Fundraising and People with Disabilities

In October 2014, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore philanthropy and people with disabilities in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

AT A GLANCE

- 1 300 000 000** Global population of persons with disabilities
- 2 600 000 000** Global population of people connected to a person with a disability
- 113 300 000 000** Global income of persons with disabilities
- 6 200 000** Population of persons with disabilities in Canada
- 71** Percentage of people who have an “invisible” disability
- 42.5** Percentage of Canadians over the age of 75 years that have a disability

TERMINOLOGY

Disability: The result of a physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional and/or developmental impairment. A disability can present from birth or occur during a person’s lifetime due to accident or illness.

Ableism: Discrimination or prejudice against individuals with disabilities, characterized by the belief that these individuals need to be fixed and/or cannot function as full members of society.

SUCCESS STORY

Easily one of the most recognized Canadians in the world, Terry Fox is a symbol of inspiration and hope for people with disabilities. He was only 18 years old when he was diagnosed with bone cancer and had his right leg amputated above the knee in 1977. While in hospital, Terry was so moved by the suffering of fellow cancer patients, he made a decision to run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. His goal was to raise \$24 million or, more simply, \$1 for every Canadian. He began his Marathon of Hope in St. John’s, Newfoundland on April 12, 1980. For almost five months, Terry ran approximately 40 kilometres a day in the Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Ontario. Tragically, in September, after only 143 days, he was forced to suspend his run because his cancer had appeared in his lungs. Terry passed away on June 28, 1981 at age 22, but not before meeting his goal of raising over \$24 million for cancer research. Since then, Canadians across the country and around the world have continued Terry’s legacy by participating in an annual Terry Fox Run. To date, over \$650 million has been raised worldwide for cancer research through this global, unifying event.

WISE WORDS



“I believe that in order to be successful in fundraising with or on behalf of people with disabilities, one must use the “Triple A” formula: develop awareness with an enthusiastic attitude to accomplish our goals. People with disabilities are not better off when separated, segregated or protected. In fact, throughout the conference, we heard that differences need to be celebrated. We need to change the mindset that everyone with a disability needs to be saved. As fundraisers, we encourage you to work with the community to change perceptions of and barriers faced by people with disabilities instead of trying to “mend” them. You can start by including people with disabilities in your organization and fundraising work. Success is measured by the improvement we make in individual lives.”

— David Gélinas, Chair *Opportunities and Possibilities: Fundraising and People with Disabilities Conference*

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

AODA is critical legislation that helps ensure the rights of those with disabilities in the following areas: employment, communications, transportation and accessibility. The Accessibility Standard for Employment (ASE) will help Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of recruiting, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities. Most importantly, organizations will have to let job applicants know that recruitment and hiring processes will be modified to accommodate their disabilities, build the accessibility needs of employees into their human resources practices, and help

all employees stay safe in an emergency by providing them with individualized emergency response information. The Accessibility Standard for Information and Communications (ASIC) will help businesses and organizations make their information accessible for people with disabilities. Organizations will have to make their websites accessible according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and provide accessible formats and communications supports when a person with a disability asks for them. In addition, public libraries must provide accessible materials when possible. The Accessibility

Standard for Transportation (AST) will make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario. Service providers must make information on accessibility equipment and features of their vehicles and routes available to the public and cannot charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability. Finally, the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment (ASBE) focus on removing barriers in buildings and public spaces. Ontario’s Building Code has been amended to include enhancements to accessibility in buildings. As of January 1, 2015, all new construction and renovations will be subject to updated accessibility requirements.

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES NEED TO BE INVITED TO SERVE ON CHARITABLE BOARDS, NOT BECAUSE THEY HAVE A DISABILITY, BUT BECAUSE THEY HAVE THE TALENT, PASSION, LEADERSHIP CAPACITY, POSITIVE ATTITUDE, COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT AND THE ABILITY TO REPRESENT THE VOICES OF ALL PEOPLE.

UTILIZE FREE ADVERTISING WITH GOOGLE FOR NONPROFITS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF YOUR CAUSE.

CROWDFUNDING IS A GREAT WAY TO ALLOW PEOPLE TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE A PART OF YOUR CAUSE.

FUNDRAISING STORIES SHOULD FOCUS ON SERVICE DELIVERY AND POTENTIAL, NOT ELICIT FEELINGS OF SYMPATHY OR SORROW.

WHEN DEVELOPING FUNDRAISING COMMUNICATIONS, LISTEN TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES; FOCUS ON HOW THE SERVICES OF YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE IMPACTED THEIR LIVES.

PREPARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES FOR GREATER RESPONSIBILITY: "BRING US IN AT ENTRY LEVEL; PROVIDE MENTORSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT."

LET PICTURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AND ALLOW PEOPLE TO THINK FREELY ABOUT IMAGES OF DISABILITY.

WHEN SEEKING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM A COMPANY, CONSIDER WHAT PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO OFFER TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR A DONATION.

FUNDRAISERS SHOULD DEVELOP A PROSPECT LIST OF ALL THE TOP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THIS COUNTRY TO MOBILIZE THEIR COLLECTIVE RESOURCES.

"MY DISABILITY DOES NOT DEFINE ME. IT'S ABOUT ABILITY MORE THAN DISABILITY."

AVOID WELL-MEANING BUT MISGUIDED CAMPAIGNS THAT FOCUS ON PITY AND SADNESS.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO EXPAND YOUR REACH AND ADVANCE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.

"HAVING A DISABILITY DOESN'T MAKE YOU EXCEPTIONAL; QUESTIONING WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT IT DOES."

GREATER NEED MEANS POTENTIAL FOR FUNDRAISING: IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT SENIORS WITH AGE-RELATED DISABILITIES ARE THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT OF THE OVERALL POPULATION.

ENGAGE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS FUNDRAISERS - THEY OFFER A CRITICAL PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVE.

TERMINOLOGY CONTINUALLY EVOLVES; ASK WHAT IS PREFERRED AND/OR APPROPRIATE.

FOR A FULL LIST OF REFERENCES, VIDEOS AND RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:

www.afpinclusivegiving.ca

The Fundraising and People with Disabilities Conference was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the AFP Greater Toronto Chapter and the AFP Ottawa Chapter, this initiative was generously funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.