

AFP New Brunswick Chapter

A Maritime AFP Chapter Seeks to Eradicate the Fundraising Ick-Factor



BY CHRISTINE GILLILAND

Raise your hand if you think fundraising is icky.”

Every one of the nonprofit board members lowered their eyes and raised their hands.

“It’s okay. You’re not alone,” I assured. “I’m here to show you how to put the fun in fundraising.” *Thankfully, someone chuckled at my groan-inducing pun.*

I led the group through a *Fundraising 101* presentation. We reviewed the operational tools needed for fundraising success and I stressed the importance of a compelling case for support. Heads nodded. A few people scribbled notes.

But when I brought up a *culture of philanthropy*, heads raised and cocked to the side a bit. A culture of *what?*

“How many of you donate to charities?” All hands went up.

“Wow! Thank you. We are so lucky to have generous folks like you in our community. And you’re giving of your time and talents by serving on this board, too. Thank you for the work you’re doing at this very moment to ensure the success of this organization!”

Everyone smiled. Shoulders relaxed.

“It feels good to be appreciated for your generosity, doesn’t it?”

“That’s how a culture of philanthropy feels. Supporters feel appreciated. They hear stories about the meaningful results made possible because of their gifts. As a donor, you feel good when you give your gift. You feel great when you hear your gifts are making a difference. It made me feel happy to show you appreciation. When your nonprofit adopts a culture of philanthropy, everyone in the organization embraces their role in the fundraising process. Everyone understands it’s their job to help donors feel the full joy that comes with giving.”

We talked more about our experiences as donors — the good, the bad, and the ugly. We reflected on the difference between organizational-centred fundraising that focuses on brand and image building versus *donor-centred fundraising* that makes your donor the hero of the story. By the end of the presentation, the board members were shouting out ideas and eager to support the organization’s fundraising efforts.

Fundraising wasn’t icky anymore. The board stopped seeing fundraising as transactional and started thinking of it as



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Chapter

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transformational.

This is what we envision for every nonprofit and charity in New Brunswick!

As directors of the Association of Fundraising Professionals New Brunswick Chapter, we strive to help our nonprofit leaders develop their knowledge and skillsets. Our goal is to help nonprofits efficiently and ethically raise the money they need to deliver on their mission and provide the best possible service to our community. It’s our hope that our efforts as a professional association will lead to stronger outcomes and healthier communities.

We’re a small chapter, and still relatively young (we formed in 2015). As an all-volunteer leadership team, it can be a challenge to keep up with the many great ideas we want to implement. Still, we’re dedicated to providing our members and our nonprofit community with valuable professional development and networking opportunities to help meet the needs of fundraisers at all levels.

We work to open the door for new ways of thinking about fundraising. We encourage our nonprofits and charities to show donors the love they deserve. We celebrate fundraising as a profession. And we’re determined to eradicate the ick-factor from fundraising forever!

To find out more about our chapter and all the resources available to AFP members, visit our website at www.afpnb.org. 

CHRISTINE GILLILAND is a freelance writer and communications consultant with a keen interest in community and nonprofit development. She serves on the Board of the AFP New Brunswick Chapter, where she’s eager to share her knowledge and help organizations cultivate their roots and grow their wings.