Georgia Grant Professionals Association

August 25, 2015 Meeting Notes

Welcome – DeaRonda Harrison

Guest Speaker – Rachel Ezzo, Kate’s Club, Director of Development and Communications

* Kate’s Club is a children’s bereavement organization that empowers children facing life after the death of a parent or sibling.
* Rachel has been in non-profit work for 10 years, first at the Atlanta Opera then the Columbia Theological Seminary and now Kate’s Club.
* Kate’s Club has 7 people on staff, which impacts fundraising expectations.
* 1 in 20 kids will lose a parent or sibling before age 18.
* Kate’s Club’s job isn’t to cure grief, but to be hopeful and provide a place of understanding and somewhere the kids can have fun. Peer support is also a big part of what Kate’s Club is about. They serve kids age 5-18. 60% of their kids are low-income.
* There are 76,428 grieving kids in a 29 metro Atlanta county area.
* Kate’s Club is free to members. This is one less hurdle to deal with while navigating everything else. Their core programs will always be free. They have kids from 22 counties participating.
* Kate’s Club created an infographic with the help of Create-a-thon, a marketing program that has several agencies create a suite of marketing products.
* Kate’s Club activities include: monthly clubhouse days, quarterly club outings, Camp Good Mourning, KC Connects. For the parents: Park Bench, Holiday HUGS, and Memory Walk.
* Kate Atwood is the founder. She began the organization after sharing her story of her mom passing. She started it at the age of 23 when she took 6 kids bowling.
* Special events: They started with 2 – a cabaret and Dinner of Champions. In 2013, they transitioned to one event, a gala, for their 10th anniversary. When transitioning, they asked themselves if the events reflected the community, if they were using staff/resources effectively, and if they were maximizing their fundraising potential.
* The anniversary gala had 620 attendees and raised $270,000, netting them $180,000. They did different price tiers for ticket sales and learned that some levels didn’t work and there should be a cap on how many people can purchase a ticket at a certain price. The one gala was a better return on their investment than the previous two per year.
* Their event is successful because they have large committees, well-defined goals, they maintain momentum, they never underestimate the donor experience, and are willing to make needed changes.
* Events should be reflecting of your mission and constituents. Make the night meaningful by incorporating your mission in a positive way.
* Their event also incorporates a paddle raise auction. Best tips: have meaningful funding levels, make it relatable to patrons, be willing to challenge yourself, be prepared by communicating with donors ahead of time, consider a professional auctioneer, have well-trained volunteers, and have a plan of execution in place.
* Make messaging appropriate so people know what their money is going to, but in a way that the funds remain unrestricted to be used for the program in general.
* Kate’s Club has a $750,000 annual budget. 80% of spending is on direct program expenses. The budget has grown 15-20% each year.
* Individuals make up the highest percentage of contributors.
* They estimate 25% of the people attending the gala are new supporters and a lot of times are able to convert them into reoccurring donors.
* Kate Club’s average foundation gift is $10,000 to $20,000 with usually 1-2 $90,000 to $100,000 gifts each year.
* Their average donor is in their 30’s or 40’s, and most gifts are made online.

Chapter Business – DeaRonda Harrison

* Accept the July minutes: motion, Kate Bachman; 2nd, Meghann Adams
* Treasurer report – we have $6,108.22 with all conference expenses paid.
* The GPA national conference is in St. Louis, November 11-14, 2015. <http://www.grantprofessionals.org/conference>
* Every Chapter Challenge--$250 has been pledged for the chapter, and donations support scholarships for the regional conference.
* The 2016 GPA national conference will be held in Atlanta. Volunteers will be needed for planning.

Introductions