

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[printer friendly](#)

[download pdf](#)

Published March 4th, 2009

## Fundraising in Today's Economy

By Cathy Tyson

It was standing room only for the presentation, "Fundraising in Today's Economy," sponsored by the Lafayette Community Foundation. "We want to bring as many resources to the community as we can," said emcee Anne Grodin, Foundation Board Member. The Community Foundation supports projects that promote the civic, cultural, educational and environmental health of Lafayette. Helping other non-profits is right up their alley. Since 2000 they have given over \$141,000 to support a long list of community non-profit organizations.

"It was a wild success," said Grodin noting this event was the first of its kind for the foundation. "We found there was a great need for information in the community. We feel this is part of our mission, expanding philanthropy and giving locally."

Recognizing that the many non-profits they've supported over the years are feeling the financial pinch of the current economic downturn, the Community Foundation recognized this was a perfect opportunity to put together a free seminar that would offer advice and tips from Bay Area fundraising experts.

Sara DuBois, Director of Development of the East Bay Community Foundation suggested that "fundraising is really all about relationships." She acknowledged times are tough, but recommended being pro-active and going to donors to maintain a relationship even if the money is not there now. "Don't treat donors like an ATM - keep them in the loop with e-mail and newsletters." She also suggested seeing if there are other non-profits to partner with to increase efficiency and for larger organizations, bequests a good option for donors who can't give now.

"It's definitely a time to go out of your way to thank donors and to develop a sense of urgency - why it's important to give now," said Jan Berckefeldt, Executive Director of the Maybeck Foundation.

One tip offered by Linda Peterson, a Communication Consultant with Peterson, Skolnick & Dodge is to hone your story to its absolute essence, "say what you do and why it matters." She also suggested emphasizing donor needs that only donors can fill and reiterated the notion of cultivating relationships. She had the audience in stitches with rules of engagement regarding the courtship of a potential donor.

The one thing all the panel experts agreed and joked upon was the over-used phrase "in today's tough economic times," and suggested instead emphasizing the importance of continuing support.

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

[Home](#) | [Read Online](#) | [Archive](#) | [Links](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Contact](#)

[back to top](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA