

AFP Central PA Chapter “Vignettes” Program

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The Importance of Making a Difference

Principle: This vignette illustrates the importance of making a difference in the lives of those in our community who are less fortunate.

Vignette text: Whether you are a paid professional or a community volunteer, all of us in this room have the opportunity, through fund raising, to make a difference in the lives of those in our community. If asked, most of you might say “I fell into fund raising.”

I have always had my hand in fund raising. I was born into it. My parents were community volunteers, board members and philanthropists. From a very early age, my sister and I helped to raise money for the various charities that our parents supported. Instead of baking Christmas cookies, we decorated felt stockings to fill with treasures from the five and dime store. We distributed these stockings to the children in the pediatric unit of the hospital.

Every summer for almost 10 years, my friends in the neighborhood planned a circus. We were clowns, magicians and the talent. We baked brownies, sold popcorn and candy and of course, charged admission. We also auctioned ourselves off to provide yard work for each of the four seasons. At the start of each circus, we would ask a member of the audience to pick a card out of a hat. The hat contained the names of several charities. The winning charity received the proceeds from the circus. The first year we raised \$500.00. The second year we raised \$800.00. The third year we surpassed \$1,000.

My father served on the local and state Heart Association Boards. February is heart month and each year my parents hosted a party for children who had open heart surgery. We spent days baking hors d’oeuvres and pastries. There were clowns and magicians. But something was missing. A friend of mine’s mother was a puppeteer. I asked one of my father’s law partners – who happened to be my uncle – if he would underwrite the cost of the puppeteer. The puppeteer became a regular staple of the party!

Prior to a symphony event my parents hosted a cocktail party for the major supporters. As guests were milling around in their tuxes and long dresses, my sister and I decided to shake things up. We unearthed a vase from the basement. My mother never liked the vase and allowed us to take it outside when we picked flowers. Standing on the landing in the foyer and ringing a bell to get everyone’s attention, we auctioned off the Aynsley vase for \$5,000.

In college I worked in the sociology office. The other student workers and I started an investment club. Out of each pay check we took enough money to buy a case of beer and gave it to the chair of the department to invest. Kenyon College is located in Knox County Ohio at the tip of Appalachia, one of the poorest counties in Ohio. Every quarter we gave our earnings to a family in the area.

After getting married and moving to Harrisburg, I immersed myself in the community as a volunteer fund raiser. For over 30 years my husband and I have been giving back to our community and church. In the summer of 2006 my world as I knew it came crashing down around me. I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. As upset as I was, my doctor assured me that this was just another bump in the road. Although wider and longer, I would find a way to get

around it or over it. I did just that! My husband and I are starting a foundation to build a camp on Cape Cod for children who suffer from RA.

Today, I am blessed to be a gift officer with the PinnacleHealth Foundation. As you can see, my passion for fund raising is in my blood. Although my parents are no longer living, I carry their legacy through the values they instilled in me. There is nothing more rewarding than being able to make a difference by helping a family or an organization in my community that needs support.