

# Attracting new faces

*Indy Nonprofits  
Offer Entertainment,  
Fast Track to  
Leadership to  
Lure New Blood*

Holly Johnson, director of corporate and foundation partnerships, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Area nonprofits seeking to cultivate the next generation of leadership are using auxiliaries and special events to lure young professionals to get involved.

Women's Fund Executive Director Jennifer Pope Baker spends most of her time focusing on building the fund's endowment for projects that benefit area women and girls, but always in the back of her mind she's thinking about building the next generation of leadership.

"It doesn't do us any good to have the money if we don't have really smart competent people at the helm of our organization and other organizations in the community who understand philanthropy," she says.

At Women's Fund they cultivate their own. In 2000, the fund created a program called OPTIONS (outreach, projects, trips, information, opportunities, networking and service) for 25- to 45-year-old women to help educate them about how to become strategic philanthropists. "They spend a year with us and learn about the issues facing women and girls," Baker says. "They go on site visits to women- and girl-serving agencies. They learn about strategic grant making as a group. They learn how to think as an individual. At the end of the year they make gifts back to the community based on a pooled contribution.

"Some of those women have become really, really significant donors for us. What we're doing is building our future base. We see those women as being on line to be the board chair in 10 years. We really have a long view on everything we're doing. We're not just focused on today, but where are we going in meeting the future needs of women and girls, and where are we going in building tomorrow's leaders and tomorrow's philanthropists."

The United Way targets young professionals under 40 with its newest giving society, the Emerging Leaders. Ellen Annala, president and CEO, United Way Central Indiana, says when her organization kicked off the Emerging Leaders program last year more than 140 people showed up. Pretty impressive, since the Emerging Leaders give \$1,000 or more to participate.

Annala says a lot of the leadership training comes through "lunch and learns" where business leaders talk

about the importance of incorporating philanthropy into a career. "We'll have different CEOs in town come and talk to them," she says. Recent speakers have included Ann Murtlow, president and CEO, Indianapolis Power and Light, John Thompson, president, Johnson Distribution Co., and James Cornelius, CEO, Bristol-Meyers Squibb.

The Generation Now group has its own day of caring project at Noble of Indiana and recently had its first anniversary party at the Jazz Kitchen. "So it's social, it's volunteerism, it's networking, it's learning and its philanthropy," Annala says.

Among the Indianapolis arts organizations, the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra (ISO) have created young professionals auxiliaries to develop today's membership and tomorrow's leadership.

The Eiteljorg's Agave group has about 40 members and a board of 10, accord-

ing to Director of Communications and Marketing Tamara Winfrey Harris. "The idea is that these people will serve as ambassadors for the museum to introduce us to people under 40, but also so we can give them some opportunities to become involved in what we do at the museum," she says. "We hope to cultivate these people and they will become our board members, council members and volunteers."

Everyone in Agave has to become a museum member, but the Eiteljorg has a reduced rate of \$30 (versus \$50 for a regular membership) for them for the first year. "We hope that once they have participated for a year, they'll see the value and continue to support us at the regular level," Harris says.

Harris is aware that Agave has to be a two-way street, and the program is structured to benefit its members as well as the Eiteljorg. "They get social opportunities when they host the exhibit openings," she points out. "There are



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Barbara Baetzhold

also networking opportunities, because many of our members work with a lot of the major companies and organizations around Indianapolis. The chair of our Agave board is also an ex-officio member of the museum's big board, so there's a chance to build leadership skills, and it's also a chance to give back to the community.

"Where Agave differs from a lot of other young professionals auxiliaries is there are a lot of advantages," Harris says. "We don't just want to throw a party for young professionals, we want them to get involved with the museum. We want them to have leadership opportunities. We bring in Agave members when we start to plan programming for an upcoming exhibit. We put them in a room with the people who are brainstorming the things we need to do surrounding that exhibit so we're sure what we're doing will interest people of their age as well. So they actually have a voice in the museum. We're not just saying, 'Come see our exhibits.' We're saying, 'Come see our exhibits, get involved and walk away with some value.'"

Reaching out to young professionals is important, according to Harris, because Gen Xers are not participating in the arts at the same level the baby boomers are. "That's unfortunate," she says. "For our survival as arts institutions we need to take a look at that and



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*Jennifer Pope Baker*

why it's happening. And it's important from an education standpoint for the Eiteljorg as a museum because we want to reach as many people as possible. We can't stop with baby boomers, we have to educate Gen Xers. We have to educate their children and all the generations coming behind them. We want everyone to feel included.

The ISO's young professionals group is called FORTE. Holly Johnson, director of corporate and foundation partnerships for the orchestra, compares it to a junior board for the orchestra and says its purpose is threefold: to develop future leadership for ISO's board, to increase revenue for the orchestra and to build awareness for the symphony.

The core of FORTE is a 12-member board, which functions like a focus group for the ISO. "We talk about how to market the different events we're doing," Johnson says. "We use them as a sounding board and they help us generate ideas."

A big component of FORTE is its mentor program which pairs a FORTE leadership committee member with a member of the ISO's board of directors, according to Johnson. "We're trying to get them to foster a relationship, not only with the symphony, but with this community," she says. "We're trying to train young people how to be community-involved across the board, not just with ISO."

Scott Harrison, ISO's assistant director of marketing for subscription products, adds, "If these people are going to be the major donors, the major attendees, the major supporters in 30 years, we need to be getting them into it now. The word of mouth and the buzz factor are very important. If we can get them thinking about the orchestra and talking about it to their friends, it really has the capability to spiral and create a lot of good feelings and a lot of information and awareness about the orchestra."

One of the programs ISO has devel-

oped for young professionals working downtown is the AT&T Happy Hour. Four times this season, the ISO opens its doors for a two-hour event. The first hour features drinks and food and the second a performance by the orchestra. "It's been an interesting way to bridge between the orchestra and the audience," says Harrison. "We do small things. The orchestra dresses differently. The stage is lit a little differently. People are allowed to bring their drinks into the hall. We're just trying to have a light, casual performance in the early evening, but at the same time we've played some really great music and exposed those people to some really great repertoire."

Harrison said that after the October 27th performance the ISO will open the stage and have a post-concert party with a Halloween theme. "We'll be changing into a club atmosphere of sorts, but really saying to people, 'We

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rating with other organizations, particularly with universities, to tap in. A lot of local colleges and universities have made immersive learning part of their curriculum, so we have actually worked extensively with Ball State and University of Indianapolis to participate and to help us with research studies. We're also working on a new collaboration which is interesting because it's only made possible through new technology. It is a nationwide collaboration with other outdoor history museums to develop a curriculum, a distance learning curriculum, and that wouldn't have been possible 15 years ago because the technology wouldn't have been there.

**ROSSEBO:** You mentioned a merger with Lighthouse. I don't see a lot of that going on in Indianapolis, but I do know as a chapter of a national organization, I see many of our chapters merging with other like organizations, which is interesting because I'm not seeing that trend here very much.

**QUINTANA:** Other than Big Brothers and Big Sisters, I can't think of too many others.

**HEARN SMITH:** Child Abuse went into Villages the end of last year.

**KATTERJOHN:** *It strikes me as a good opportunity when we have this many smart, experienced people in the room that there are people from newer, smaller, younger not-for-profit organizations who will be reading this looking for tidbits and ideas. What kinds of advice would you give to a small not-for-profit CEO?*

**ROSENTHAL:** Well, this may sound like a plug, but I would definitely take advantage of having the Center on Philanthropy and the School of Fund Raising in town. It's the best place in the country, and it happens to be in your own backyard. They give fabulous classes for anybody who's starting out and wants to get up to speed as quickly as possible on the fundraising world and how to develop strategies, what the best strategies are, best practices.

**SMALL:** I've been with the APA for 10 years, and the first people that I hired were the artistic director, an administrative assistant and a communications director. If I had that to do over again, I would hire a development director. I just now this past year hired a development director and what a difference it's going to make. She has experience and the knowledge of all of the different ways of raising money. Coming through the way I did, I just kind of self-trained in this universe. For the breadth of the organization you need somebody who knows all of the aspects of development. That would be my advice to someone: Don't try to do it alone.

**HOWLAND:** I'd say one of the most critical things for a CEO of a fledgling organization is to really spend some time and effort on building a strong board, a board that is diverse in terms of talent and in terms of reach to the community. If you have that strong board and you have an effective partnership between a

CEO and a board and a shared vision of where you want to go, I think everything else can flow from there, so that board-building is critical. There are certainly a lot of resources out there that can help guide you to do it; Board Source is a great example. They've got tools online for free. Another thing that none of us have really talked about this morning at all is United Way. I think that, too, is an excellent resource. We happen to be blessed by virtue of the fact that we are a United Way agency, but they do a lot of things in this community to help non-United Way agencies as well. I would encourage people to go there as a repository of information and training as well.

**HERBST:** If it's a fledgling but growing organization, my advice would be to make sure that they've paid attention to the business infrastructure side of their non-for-profit. A lot of times when you're in a growth mode, the person leading this is very tied to the mission of the organization and that's their passion. But if you're going to grow the organization you need to have your ducks in a row as far as the business side of things. One of the ways you can do this is through getting the right board talent on; they supply this expertise. In Pittsburgh, one of my early hires should've been a controller type person instead of a bookkeeper; we really would've had a lot less growing pains if I had thought about that. Instead I was hiring curators and archivists, and I really needed to look after the business side of it.

**HEARN SMITH:** I would agree with both of you and I would add that in an organization, particularly one that's new and growing and emerging that's probably meeting a current need, the CEO or executive director needs to have an outside coach who can really help them understand their strengths and their weaknesses. I think not-for-profit leaders fall in one of two areas—one is the passionate missionary want-to-get-it-done kind and the other may be a very business-savvy person. Each of us has different skill-sets. Once you really understand what your strength is, hire to your weakness. So if you are a development person and what you do well is sell the story, then you need to hire a business person to go in there. But if what you are is a bean-counter, business, methodical person, you need to hire the other. I always think it's important for the person who is at the top of whatever organization to have a real honest assessment of their skill-set and hire to your weakness because it benefits the organization.

**KINGSTON:** I would add that it's important to listen, listen, listen. It is amazing what you can learn from a donor, or a prospective donor, if you listen 80 percent of the time and only talk the other 20 percent. Learn all you can about your donor, down to the name of their children, grandchildren and even their pets. You will be amazed the returns it can provide you. Align the donor's interests to projects or priorities of your organization. The match is critical. •

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want you to be in our hall. We want you to get excited about what's here. We want to provide a different experience.' We want them to think about downtown, the Hilbert Circle Theater, about the ISO as a destination, one that is open to everyone.'

The Indianapolis Opera has created Opera Lite to entice young professionals to give opera a try, according to Barbara M. Baetzhold, the opera's director of community development. She says opera is a relatively easy sell to Gen X because it is a multifaceted experience. "You've got drama, voice, instrumental music, beautiful sets, cool costumes, lighting. So we're in a really great position to get people to dip their toe into this art form just because the art form itself is lots of stimulation. This MTV generation or Gen X is a multitasking group. It's a group that text messages and e-mails and does all of this stuff together. So, happily, we don't have to change the art form to make it attractive to this group. That's already established."

Opera Lite's approach is to host after-work events that let people get a taste of some aspect of the opera. Recently, Opera Lite hosted an event at McGuire Scenic, a scenic design studio that works for the opera. "It's a way to educate and make people feel like they got to see something you don't normally get to see," says Baetzhold. "We invited them over to McGuire Scenic for wine and cheese. They got to take a tour and we had John Davies, who directed "Magic Flute," talk a little bit about the process.

"We've been able to take them from there and see if they want to continue on with volunteering with the opera," Baetzhold says. "We have one gentleman who was in Opera Lite a year ago and now he's on our board. We look to get people involved at all different levels. It would be great to make them donors, but the fact of the matter is we know that's not what they can do right now, so we also love to have their time and their creative talent to help us make sure opera is interesting and the welcome mat is out for everybody.

"Our goal is to get people to try the opera so they might develop that passion or that desire so when they have a little bit more disposable income that would be something they would like to try," Baetzhold concludes.

She says one of the most popular events is in May when the opera invites people to Clowes Hall for a backstage tour and to watch a dress rehearsal. The event is topped off with a tailgate party in the parking lot.

A resource many of the civic and arts organizations in town rely on to get their message out to young professionals is Indy Hub, a social networking organization for young professionals formed with a grant from BioCrossroads, Indi-

ana's life sciences initiative, and support from the City of Indianapolis. Indy Hub works with dozens of social, professional and philanthropic organizations in Indianapolis to promote more than 75 events for young professionals between the ages of 21 to 40, in addition to hosting its own events. It has also generated additional sponsorships from a broad coalition of businesses and community organizations.

Molly Chavers, Indy Hub's executive director, says the organization serves four constituencies: "the young professional, trying to help them connect to something significant and meaningful; the young professional organization or organization that's looking for young professionals, trying to help them grow their memberships; the community at large (and that encompasses the non-profit community and the arts community as they try to develop their patrons of the next generation and also their volunteer base) and also the civic community and how young people interact with one another as future leaders of our city and our state; and the business community, helping them attract and retain talent.

"We work with those constituencies in the following ways: we have the online resource, we have an e-newsletter that goes out monthly, we do our big events, which spotlight or give better exposure to an organization or an opportunity and we also do individual consultations with young professionals helping them connect exactly to what is interesting to them.

Indy Hub hosts big events once or twice a month. Chavers says that when they work with an organization seeking to connect with young professionals they "ask that the host organization provide some sort of experience for our membership to see what this organization is all about and also to provide some sort of VIP flair. We ask them to treat our members just as they would treat their high-end donors, because it is all about cultivating them to be donors or volunteers of the next generation.

"We try to encompass three elements in each event: learning, sensing and connecting. Young professionals want to learn. There has to be some educational component. They want to sense and understand what the organization is all about, to really get the inside scoop. They want to connect in a deeper way with their peers there or with leaders of that organization," she says.

The Indy Hub Web site ([www.indyhub.org](http://www.indyhub.org)) is the cornerstone of the organization's efforts. It provides young professionals with useful and relevant information on topics ranging from health and fitness, to arts, culture, civic, community and professional development. Its calendar of events features Indy Hub events and events of Indy Hub partners and other community groups.

Chavers says Indy Hub events draw about 100 young professionals and sometimes as many as 400. •