



## Greetings from Prospero Group President Doris Feinberg

### Saying Thank You Every Day

At this time of Thanksgiving, we reflect with gratitude on that which makes our hearts sing. If we're very lucky, we give thanks in the company of the people who appear at the top of that list.

Those of us who dedicate our lives to growth through philanthropy are especially fortunate. We are invited to say thank you all year long. Making sure that our donors feel appreciated is intrinsic to our personal and professional missions.

In the spirit of the season, we've put together some thoughts, observations, and tips that may inspire you as you develop or refine your stewardship program. We hope you find our offerings helpful – and we hope you know how much we appreciate your friendship, counsel, and partnership, and how much we value all that you do for the world. Thank you.

Please feel free to send this newsletter along to any colleagues or friends who might be interested and, of course, contact me at any time at [dfeinberg@prosperogroup.com](mailto:dfeinberg@prosperogroup.com). With best wishes for a warm, wonderful Thanksgiving,



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## Deepening Donor Relationships

Saying thank you isn't a moment. It's a mindset. A great stewardship program incorporates both the strategic and the spontaneous. It treats our donors the way we treat our friends and family – with respect, affection, and empathy. And, just as long, well-tended friendships deepen over time, donor relationships grow richer and more profound with care. Here are some reflections on effective stewardship:

**It starts with a plan.** Like every other aspect of fundraising, the quality of your stewardship depends on how well you know your donor base – and what you do with that knowledge. Know your donors' history, giving patterns, and interests. Develop a strategic, thoughtful stewardship plan that reflects donors' giving levels, depth of affinity and engagement, and capacity – and follow it.

**It doesn't end with the plan.** Take advantage of spontaneous opportunities to let your donors know that you understand what matters to them – and that they're in your thoughts. Share a link to a study or news item in an area of interest. Send a note – a handwritten, personalized, old-fashioned, hard copy note – when they're honored or mark an achievement. Invite them to lectures or performances you know they'd enjoy.

**Build on affinities.** If your organization is a camp, send your donor a photo of her grandchild happily immersed in camp life – or, even better, pay her a visit and show her the pictures on your iPad! If your organization is a hospital, send your donor information about a new therapy or approach in a clinical area of interest – or introduce him to an exciting new physician or researcher. If you're an advocacy organization, share compelling new data before it's widely available.

**Make it personal.** People don't give to organizations; they give to people – the people you serve and the staff, board members, and others who bring your mission to life. Acknowledge gifts within 48 hours – hand-signed, with a P.S. that reinforces the impact of the gift or reflects recognition of the donor. Send handwritten birthday cards and holiday cards. Introduce your donor to a student, a patient, or someone else whose life is impacted by philanthropic support of your organization. Or ask that individual to write a thank you letter.

### Our Team

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**Be authentic and open.** Bottom line: it's all about the donor. But don't be afraid to talk about your own passion for your organization and its mission. Let your donors know that you share their affinities. Share your epiphanies, your challenges, and your history of involvement. And give them the opportunity to do the same, perhaps by inviting them to speak at a parlor event or featuring them in your newsletter. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Stewardship is the bedrock of philanthropy, and it's worth doing well! Keeping donors is a lot more effective than acquiring new donors. And your next gift often comes from your last gift – because of the deepening of a donor's emotional investment through great stewardship or because of the expansion of circles of affinity when well-stewarded donors introduce their friends to your organization.

It's pretty simple, really. We should all take every opportunity we have to say thank you.

## About The Prospero Group

The Prospero Group, LLC, provides fundraising counsel that ensures lasting growth and change for non-profit organizations. We promote effective governance models and principled leadership to empower professionals and boards as the driving forces of philanthropy.

### Services:

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#### Solicitation Training

#### Strategic Development Program Planning

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#### Board Development

- Board evaluation & assessment
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Learn more at [www.prosperogroup.com](http://www.prosperogroup.com)



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