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2022

Community Centric Fundraising at Highlander: Campaigns of Abundance in Times of Scarcity

Mia S. Willis & Rev. Isaac Collins

Welcome!



Mia S. Willis (they/them/theirs)

Interim Co-Coordinator of Development & Communications
Highlander Research and Education Center

Welcome!



Rev. Isaac Collins (he/him/his)

Development Specialist

Highlander Research and Education Center

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Agenda

1. A History of Solidarity
2. Community Centric Fundraising
3. The (New) Highlander Way
4. **Activity: Crisis Scenario**
5. Closing

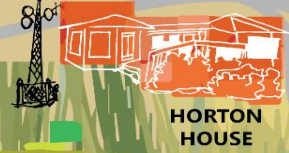


**Left to right: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Pete Seeger, Charis Horton, Rosa Parks, and Ralph David Abernathy
Monteagle, Tennessee (1957)**

HIGHLANDER

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

VISITOR GROUND MAP





**Workshop Center
New Market, Tennessee (2019)**



86th Homecoming Programming at the Workshop Center
New Market, Tennessee (2018)

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100% FORGIVENESS...
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A History of Solidarity

Since 1932, Highlander Research and Education Center has centered the experiences of those in the South to address challenges with collective action and build more just, equitable, and sustainable systems.

This legacy of resistance would not be possible without the generosity of our community members in the past and present.



Community Centric Fundraising

A NEW NAME FOR AN OLD PRACTICE

Community Centric Fundraising is a movement to evolve how fundraising is done in the nonprofit sector.

It encourages vigorous, ongoing dialogue between fundraisers and their communities so as to mobilize resources in ways that reduce harm and further social justice.

A NEW NAME FOR AN OLD PRACTICE

Community Centric Fundraising

The Community Centric Fundraising philosophy is comprised of ten principles:

1. Fundraising must be grounded in an understanding of racial equity and social justice.
2. Individual missions are not as important as the collective community.
3. Nonprofits must be generous with and mutually supportive of one another.
4. All who engage in strengthening the community are equally valued regardless of their position.
5. Time must be valued equally with money.

A NEW NAME FOR AN OLD PRACTICE

Community Centric Fundraising

The Community Centric Fundraising philosophy is comprised of ten principles (cont.):

6. We must treat donors as partners.

7. We must foster a sense of belonging.

8. We must promote an understanding that everyone personally benefits from the work of social justice.

9. We must see the work of social justice as holistic and transformative.

10. We must recognize that healing and liberation requires a commitment to economic justice.

The (New) Highlander Way

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Our team's work is guided by three core principles:

- Abundance
- Affirmation
- Investment



HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Abundance

With an operating budget that has grown from \$1 million (FY16) to nearly \$8 million (FY23), the focus of Highlander's messaging to institutional and individual partners has widened from surviving the present (scarcity) to securing the future (abundance).

Our donor base's generosity can be activated in any direction according to need.

- **Abundance**
- Affirmation
- Investment

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Affirmation

Our supporters are encouraged to imagine what Highlander's impact could be in a future where all of its operational needs are met.

Highlander's donors give repeatedly because of positive associations, whether it's with our organization's mission, programming, or staff members.

- Abundance
- **Affirmation**
- Investment

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

Investment

Everyone comes from a community!

Highlander has a responsibility to invest in mutually beneficial relationships with our donors and the nonprofit organizations in their respective cities.

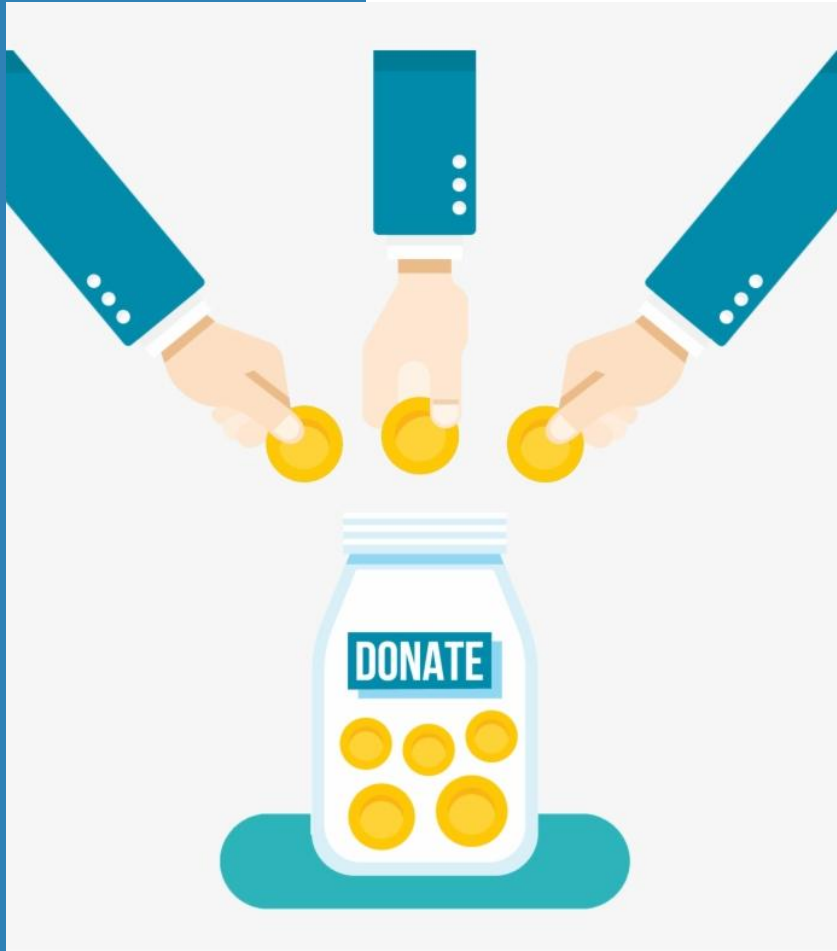
- Abundance
- Affirmation
- **Investment**

“Increasing my giving in general, and to Highlander specifically, has been an immensely liberating experience for me.

I encourage everyone to try it!”

**RACHEL SHERMAN
MICHAEL E. GELLERT CHAIR OF SOCIOLOGY
THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH**





The (New) Highlander Way

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Our organizational principles are manifested in three core strategies:

- Year-End Campaigning (Abundance)
- Donor Education (Affirmation)
- Event-Based Fundraising (Investment)

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Year-End Campaigning

Year-end campaigning allows our team to share Highlander's present successes and future goals with our donors. The following initiatives were executed during our "Road to 90" year-end campaign in 2021:

- Virtual donor cultivation event
- Appeal mailings to all donors active in the last five years
 - Three letters from staff
 - Giving Tuesday postcard
- 1:1 meetings with notable supporters
- Social media strategy

2021 Road to 90 Campaign (11/01/21-1/5/22)

- \$269,778 raised.
- 470 gifts received.
- 453 donors engaged.
 - 52 new donors acquired.
 - 133 donors gave their largest gift yet.



highlandercenter



highlandercenter Link to Donate in our Bio!

Through popular education, language justice, participatory research, cultural work, and intergenerational organizing, we help create spaces — at Highlander and in local communities — where people gain knowledge, hope and courage, expanding their ideas of what is possible.

Why is Giving important? Because your support helps us provide grassroots organizations with the resources necessary to create change in their communities. Highlander's donor base is 7,000 strong, we're looking to expand our family of sustainers and that growth starts with you.

The Road to 90 begins here.

Join our family of sustainers and make your donation today!

<https://bit.ly/donate2hrec>

#HCroadto90 #GivingTuesday2022 #GivingTuesday

39w



17 likes

NOVEMBER 30, 2021



Add a comment...

Post

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HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Year-End Campaigning

"Rumble on the Hill" is the internal fundraising competition which runs concurrently with Highlander's year-end campaign. Staff and board members are eligible to participate.

The participant with the most new individual donations made in their name at the end of the eight week campaign is crowned "The Long Hauler" and receives a championship belt to retain for a period of one year.

2021 Rumble on the Hill
(11/01/21-12/31/21)

- \$5,285 raised.
- 34 new donors acquired.
- Winner:

Office	Manager
Brittany Bonner	
(8 new donors)	

Highlander

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HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Donor Education

Highlander's bimonthly donor education series "The Gift of Chaos" launched in March 2022. It is comprised of three ninety minute training sessions for donors of all giving levels:

- Highlander's Programs and Methodologies
- Community Centric Fundraising and Southern Solidarity Economies
- Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

2022 The Gift of Chaos Series

- March 2022
 - 172 registrants
- May 2022
 - 68 registrants

HIGHLANDER'S DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Event-Based Fundraising

The “house party” is one of our organization’s oldest traditions. Instituted by former Executive Director Jim Sessions in the 1990s, it has become customary for Highlander’s supporters to organize grassroots fundraising events in cities across the U.S.

Some of our favorite places to gather are Massachusetts, New York, California, Maryland, North Carolina, and of course, Tennessee.

2022 House Parties

- Seattle (8/5)
 - 49 advance registrants (35 of which attended)
 - 25 Seattle area gifts received since 7/5/22 (\$2,537.24)
 - 12 new donors in the Seattle area (\$910)
- Boston (9/11)
- Amherst (9/12)
- New York City (9/15)
- Denver (11/13)



Highlander House Party
Seattle, Washington (2022)

TRY IT OUT!

Crisis Scenario

Highlander's office building in New Market, Tennessee, was intentionally burned down in April 2019 with staff members on-site. Based on our organization's development principles, what strategies could we have launched to engage with our supporters in the wake of this tragedy?



Closing

Highlander Research and Education Center is the place where Southern communities rehearse the world they want to see.

For our Development Team, connection is the most valuable currency.

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A blue-tinted photograph of three women smiling and laughing together. A thin yellow horizontal line is positioned above the text.

QUESTIONS?

Now's our time
to hear from
you!

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL

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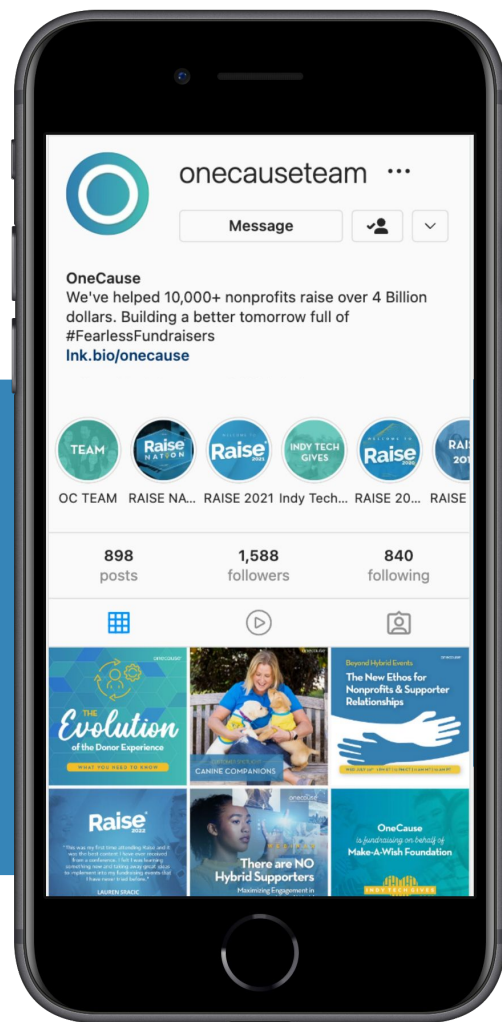
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