

Ten tip for making mindful charitable gifts

By **TIM MABRY**
Guest commentary

If you are like me, you may know what it's like to be overwhelmed with solicitations for financial support from worthy non-profit organizations, especially at year-end. Early in my career, I got lucky: A wise mentor advised me to be as thoughtful about my personal and family giving as I was about my company's finances.



Tim Mabry

Here are some ideas I've shared with other community-minded philanthropists.

Ask yourself the key questions. What's a realistic budget for charitable contributions? And, given my current and likely future available resources, where do I think I can make the greatest impact?

1. Don't wait for organizations (and causes) to find you. Do some homework to evaluate the vision and effectiveness of groups you're considering, then connect with them in ways that make the most sense. Sometimes, it's good to link with organizations

that align directly with your work. That's why home improvement retailers have supported Habitat for Humanity and why tech firm owners give hardware and software to schools and colleges. You'll be far more invested in their success if you pick the right partners.

2. Determine the best sources of information. Charity Navigator and GuideStar are two readily accessible online sources of intelligence about the structure and performance of many nonprofit organizations, but they don't evaluate and rate everyone. Ask trusted experts about what groups are really doing the best work on multiple measures: breadth and depth of effective services, financial management, leadership, innovation, community support and involvement, sustainability, etc.

3. Make gifts that satisfy both your heart and your head. Over time, figure out what really inspires you and commit to giving most generously there. If some of your biggest clients/customers really love animal

shelters, supporting them is probably a good way to demonstrate both affinity and loyalty. But the real key to long-term success and satisfaction is to give honestly, not solely for ulterior motives.

4. Leverage your resources. There are many simple ways to make your money go farther. For example, consider making a match challenge to other individuals and businesses who care about the same things you do. And investigate how "aggregators" such as community foundations can effectively pool

donor dollars to increase the number and size of grants, scholarships and other forms of support.

5. Fewer may be better. As the old saying goes, if you're thirsty, it's better to fill up a few cups than put one drop in a thousand. You'll achieve the greatest return on investment with deeper, longer-term commitments, not with a flavor-of-the-month approach. And, if you have a solid giving strategy in place, it's much more reasonable to decline opportunities that don't fit the profile.

6. Involve employees

and other supporters. Let staff members give you input on what causes and groups are most important to them. Even owners of micro-businesses often match their employees' donations up to a certain limit. Also, consider creating fun and meaningful staff volunteer activities such as a nonprofit facility clean-up or a holiday food drive.

7. Contribute things other than money. Time, talent, treasure — everyone has some of each. Once you've identified who you want to support, constantly inventory what you have to give that matches up best with what's needed. In addition to cash, you may want to join a nonprofit's board or host a get-to-know brunch for potential donors.

8. Think outside the "collection box." Many organizations, religious and secular alike, rely on donors who commit to making regular contributions. But, every once in a while, it's good to check around and see if there are emerg-

ing groups meeting new and more critical needs.

9. Ask for help when you need it. If doing all the research and legwork associated with creating and managing a philanthropy program seems daunting — especially while you're trying to run or manage a business — think about tapping into the expertise of The Oregon Community Foundation at www.oregoncf.org. It has helped thousands of business owners make this a great place to live and work.

One final thought. Although you may want to use charitable giving to enhance the visibility and reputation of your company, not all donations need to be publicly acknowledged. Many cultural traditions teach that the most rewarding gifts are made quietly.

Tim Mabry is president Credits Incorporated based in Hermiston and is chairman of the board for The Oregon Community Foundation.

Hermiston recognized by Chess for Success

Hermiston Herald

The Hermiston chess program received some exciting news when it was recognized as an official Chess for Success site for the 2016-17 school year.

The designation comes with several benefits for Hermiston players such as waived entry fees at tournaments, donated practice chess sets as well as one for each player to keep at the end of the season, an oversized demonstration board and lesson plans, chess reference books and team T-shirts.

Hermiston had been participating with Chess for Success for the last 18 years, but had done so without corporate sponsorship and had to assume all associated costs.

"It was frustrating to have to ask these kids and their families to come up with over \$20 per player to enter a contest we frequently put on ourselves, with those same families often donating snacks and time on top of the entry fee," team coach Delia Wallis said in a prepared statement. "Then, if the kids played well and qualified for state, it was another entry fee. Now, with the official designation



PHOTO COURTESY OF DELIA WALLIS

Hermiston High School student Logan Miller plays chess during a recent after-school practice.

as a Chess for Success site, the only expectation for each student is to learn and enjoy themselves."

Hermiston competes in Region 23, which covers Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Union and Wallowa Counties. Hermiston will host the Region 23 tournament for the third time in row in February.

Wallis, who is also the school librarian, coaches the middle school and grade school level chess teams as well, and said she's got about 44 players that consistently show up for practices.



FILE PHOTO

The body of Jose Antonio Leyva, 52, of Pasco was found Nov. 4 at the Sand Station Recreation Area on the Columbia River several miles northeast of Hermiston. His death is being investigated as a homicide.

Body found at Sand Station investigated as a homicide

Hermiston Herald

Authorities believe a man found dead Nov. 4 near Sand Station was the victim of a homicide.

The man was identified Thursday as Jose Antonio Leyva, 52, from Pasco.

Leyva's body was found the afternoon of Nov. 4 near the closed recreational area located on the Columbia River, about 10 miles northeast of Hermiston. The Umatilla County Sheriff's office, which is leading the investigation, said it took them days

to identify the body using fingerprints, and days longer to locate relatives. His identity was not released publicly until Thursday.

Jim Littlefield, Umatilla County undersheriff, said law enforcement does not know when or where the crime occurred, or "when the body was placed at Sand Station."

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said his office is working with the Pasco Police Department. The case is under investigation.

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