

National Committee on Planned Giving “Gift Planners” List Serve Compiled in 2009

105 Ways to Say “Thank You” to Donors

1. Send a formal, timely thank you
2. Acknowledge increased gifts and/or cumulative giving
3. Ask board members to write thank you notes
4. Call Donors to thank them for the gift and tell them the difference it makes
5. Recognize donors in your newsletters
6. Invite donors to tour your facility
7. Invite contributors to one of your activities
8. Encourage donors to become volunteers
9. Send special program updates to demonstrate the impact of their gift
10. Send “comp” tickets to your next benefit event
11. Share the good news
12. Send informal photos of your group in action
These can be found in the Article “Twelve Ways to Say ‘Thank You’” by Andy Robinson, as appeared on www.nhi.org/online/issues/95/fundrais.html.
13. Invite them to a Q&A session about your organization
14. Send larger donors a special gift such as a framed picture of a recent event
15. Invite donors to a year-end party at your board president’s home
16. Periodically invite major donors to attend a board meeting
These four ways can be found in the article by Richard Male & Associates at www.richardmale.com/richtips/richtips20051110.html
17. Have a luncheon for milestone donors (5 year continuous, 10, etc.)
18. Feature monthly donor profiles on your organization’s website
19. For membership organizations, have a “member of the month”
20. Send handwritten thank you notes when possible and appropriate
21. When possible, have the thank you note come from someone who has reaped the benefits of the donation (program participant, etc.)
22. Take a donor out to lunch or dinner to personally thank them
23. Invite them to visit projects that were funded with their donation (i.e. summer camp, art exhibits, animal rescue shelter, etc.)
24. Send photos of beneficiaries
25. Install a dedicated 800-number to make it easier for them to contact you directly
26. Issue press releases about major gifts (with permission)
27. Keep a camera with you at your organization’s events to take pictures of donors in attendance; mail a copy of the picture along with a thank you for attending the event within 24 hours.
28. Respond with a handwritten note to any donors who includes a comment or note with his/her donation, regardless of the amount donated.
29. Form committees for special events and programs and invite newer donors to join in order to keep them involved and invested
30. Create a feature story about one of your beneficiaries and include in your thank you letters

31. Create Young Philanthropist Awards to encourage gifts of time, talent and treasure among the younger generation.
32. Every month we circulate to our board a set of donor sheets: each individual who has given \$250 or more. The members call the donor and say, "Hi, I'm a volunteer board member...and thank you." Then they listen to donors, and hear why they care about our organization. Donors love it. The board loves it. Each board member hears five to ten times a month how wonderful we are. That gives them great confidence when they ask for funds or represent our organization.
33. Don't forget that your volunteers are donors too. Volunteers are often the backbone of a nonprofit organization. Take time to recognize outstanding volunteers in your periodic newsletters, on your website, and host a volunteer appreciation luncheon at least once a year.
34. Show respect: be on time for meetings, return calls in timely manner
35. Remember their birthday
36. Remember their gift anniversary
37. Personally deliver the first gift annuity check
38. Personally deliver the first gift annuity check at breakfast time with croissants and jam
39. Invite the donor to dinner at your home, and you cook the meal
40. Drop by unannounced and deliver appreciation from the president/head of the organization
41. Personally deliver a long stemmed white rose on Valentine's Day, accompanied by a barbershop quartet (dressed in tuxedos) who sing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart"
42. Deliver poinsettias at Christmas time
43. Bake and deliver homemade banana bread
44. Be present at the worst of times.
45. Take charge of feeding 600 guests at their home for the reception following the funeral of their college aged son
46. Take donor on a hunt
47. Take donor across state for funeral of friend
48. We once had a photograph taken of a bunch of students with a big "thank you" sign in front of a building that the donors renovated
49. Invite them to visit
50. Visit them
51. Ask them for advice
52. Take them to funded projects
53. Send them notes or cards on birthdays and anniversaries
54. Send them flowers when in the hospital
55. Send press clippings and notes when they're published or recognized in the news
56. Send photos of beneficiaries
57. Give them handicrafts or artwork made by beneficiaries
58. Write and call to thank them personally
59. Invite them to join delegations or go on trips
60. Send videotapes (DVDs) about your work

61. Send your newsletter or magazine to them via first class mail
62. Establish a memorial or tribute gifts program
63. Establish a donor recognition program
64. Invite them to meet beneficiaries if appropriate
65. Ask beneficiaries to send thank you notes
66. Ask someone else in your organization to send a supplemental thank-you note (i.e., the president, dean of the college, CEO, program head, etc.)
67. Occasionally call or write with an update, piece of interesting news, or just to check in; make them feel like "insiders"
68. Identify common interests and share information about them with your donors (i.e., do you both love to visit art museums?)
69. Ask donors to host small gatherings for other donors and prospects - again, make them feel like insiders
70. Feature them and the beneficiaries of their generosity in newsletters and magazines
71. Invite them to give personal testimonials about giving
72. Invite them to serve on a board, committee, or task force
73. We give bookends made out of stone taken from the renovation of our Central Branch. They are engraved with words of gratitude and their names.
74. Take them on a drive – (luckily we have Mt. Rushmore and the Black Hills within 20 minutes). Many elderly folks don't drive anymore and haven't gotten out in the country or away from their neighborhood in a very long time.
75. Help them decorate their Christmas tree – widowers and widows with no family around really appreciate this.
76. Invite them to your house for a holiday meal.
77. Take them to a movie, a concert, or a play.
78. Bring them home-baked cookies, bread, or pie.
79. Send them a Valentine.
80. Give them a personalized tour of your university, hospital, or wherever you work and show them what their donations help accomplish.
81. Throw them a birthday party at your office.
82. Have a picnic in the park.
83. Making a video weaving a donor's personal story and philanthropy together with what their gift has or will accomplish to show them in the company of other donors and prospects at a special event is another way to say "thank you".
84. We just bought a case of giant Hersheys kisses (over 7 oz. of chocolate each) with personalized "ribbons" to send to donors, professional advisors and special volunteers.
85. Hand-written notes from students who benefited from a scholarship fund.
86. Clippings of articles re: happenings at the organization.
87. Send them newspaper/magazine articles that you think they would enjoy.
88. Hold a Donor Appreciation week where you spend the week showering your donors with thanks – drop treats off at their home or office, send personal thank you notes, hold a drawing for a prize at the end of the week, etc

89. One way that Theatre X shows appreciation for our donors is by giving them preferred parking in our parking lot – we have very few spaces so we mark a few with signs that say “Benefactor Parking” and put the name of the donors who will be attending a performance on the sign so that they can be guaranteed a spot.
90. Personal phone call upon receipt of gift, followed by formal "thank-you" letter and then a personal note from a board member;
91. Key donor families are given books of upcoming season productions; delivered at the beginning of the summer for the kids to enjoy (and hopefully get excited about seeing the production)
92. Free performance and post-performance party, themed to the performance
93. Special family reception with opportunity to meet the cast of a performance
94. Jester Society is invited to a reception and dinner on stage on the set of the season-opening performance. Small gifts are provided, themed to the performance. Customized and pre-wrapped cookies (again, themed to the performance) are provided for the parents to take home to kids.
95. I usually write a personal note on each TY note I send out because I believe that personal touch makes such a difference in communicating to your donors how much their donation means to your organization.
96. I think this will shed some light on our donor-acknowledgment process. In addition to our gift-acknowledgment protocol, i.e. signed acknowledgments and thank-you calls; these are a few things that go above and beyond the everyday and really seemed to make an impact when thanking our donors.
97. Musician Thank-a-thon: Symphony Musicians called donors who had increased their gift from last year and thanked them for their support. This was very successful. Donors appreciated getting a call from a musician and it was a great way for them to feel connected to their Symphony. Plus, we got everyone involved in donor stewardship.
98. Member Appreciation Month: During the month of April we rolled out several thank-you's to show our appreciation for the support our members. During each concert in April we used our electronic lobby signage, a banner with the words “thank-you CSO members”, and a published list of our members with a thank-you to our members included in every concert program book expressed our gratitude to our members.
99. Hand-written thank-you notes: Our board members wrote hand-written thank-you notes to our corporate sponsors.
100. Each gift is recognized by a call from a Development staff member and a personal acknowledgement letter. Each donor who gives a gift of \$500 or more is published in every concert book, and certain donor levels receive special benefits, such as valet parking at concerts and intermission receptions. We also host a donor open rehearsal and other events throughout the year meant to show our appreciation to our donors.
101. Videotape a special event or program and send a copy to donors/sponsors, thanking them for making it possible.
102. Behind-the-Scenes tours to show the impact of their gift
103. Phone call to say thank you as soon as gift is received
104. Handwritten notes to congratulate on successes and major life events

105. Invitation to lunch or event at our organization so that we may say “thank you” in person & give them more information about the latest developments & activities at our organization (give an insider’s view of the most exciting news, successes, etc.)