



## February 2009 – Strong Kids Kickoff – CEO Remarks

Now is the time to make our case.

Fundraising fundamentals do not change with the economy. Indeed, the current downturn compels our YMCAs to intensify our efforts to increase contributed income for our work. With the launch of our annual *Strong Kid's Campaign* this month, we must become more focused and more persuasive than ever when we tell our YMCA story. We must tell our members and constituents about the impact our YMCAs make on every child, every family and every neighborhood we serve. In other words, we have to make our case.

History has shown that during tough economic times, donors will continue to support causes and organizations in which they believe. Don't think you need to apologize for asking for support. In fact, given the economy's adverse impact on so many children and families, donor support is critical — and donors likely realize this.

According to a *Giving USA Foundation* review of charitable donations covering 1967 to 2007, human service agencies consistently saw donations rise during economic downturns. In fact, donated income grew by 5 percent during recessions lasting eight months or longer — more than double the average 2.3 percent increase.\* Clearly, donors are willing to respond to increased needs.

Our YMCAs can better manage the current downturn if volunteer campaigners (that's you) do so with a compelling case for support that demonstrates the Y's real impact in the community and in people's lives and hearts. The following elements are essential (refer to handout):

1. Concrete examples of the mission in action
2. Examples of donor impact
3. How you address community needs
4. How you measure success
5. How you achieve desired outcomes

Donors want to address issues that have particular meaning to them personally. They want to know that their donations have made a difference in the community and in people's lives. And they want to know that YMCAs use their money efficiently and effectively. Our YMCAs can best meet these expectations with a strong case that includes examples of the value of the YMCA to our communities.

The YMCA of Greater Long Beach continues to aggressively expand the amount of contributed income available to our YMCAs. In 2006, we hit the \$1 million goal and in 2007 and 2008 we secured over \$13 million in capital campaign pledges. In 2008, contributed support was 18% of total revenue while the national average is 10%. Clearly we are excelling at fund raising but fund development is not a destination, it's a continuing journey.

Donors give to the YMCA because our YMCAs maintain a vital part of the social engine that drives our communities. Every day, we do meaningful work on critical issues affecting kids, families and communities, and help bring value and fulfillment to people's lives. To continue to respond as we should requires us to expand our fundraising capacity to ensure that we have the increased resources to help those who need our intense support and care.

Now is the time to make our case. Good luck and Godspeed!

Kind regards,

Alan