

Tipsheet for Developing Stories

Inspiring philanthropy in your community often comes down to telling a good story. For potential donors of planned gifts, sharing examples shows them what is possible. For potential donors to your community grantmaking endowment, sharing stories of grant-funded projects illustrates the impact.

General tips

- Develop several stories that support the key functions of your foundation.
- Practice telling them in a way that clearly conveys the role of your foundation.
- When sharing stories on social media or in presentations, include photographs — especially images that feature people.
- If your foundation has adopted strategic goals, emphasize stories that support those goals.
- Donors may be reluctant to have attention drawn to them. Remind them that sharing their story of generosity can encourage others in the community to be generous.
 - That said, **always respect requests for anonymity.**
- When possible, close with a call to action:
 - Donate to a fund
 - Establish a new fund
 - Join the Legacy Society
 - Support a nonprofit
- Need help? The CFO's Communications team can assist with developing story ideas and suggest the best ways to tell them. Ask your director of affiliate engagement or affiliate coordinator to request support.

Possible story sources

Legacy Society

- Celebrate donors when they join your Legacy Society.
- Highlight existing members of your Legacy Society.
- Whether old or new, share their motivation for making a planned gift.

Planned Giving

- Honor deceased donors who made a planned gift in their estate.
- If a fund was established years ago, share the impact it has made since inception.

Grantmaking

- Announce new recipients of your community grants with a description of their grant-funded projects.

- Check in with grant recipients and share updates on grant-funded projects several months after making a grant.
- Look back at past year's grantmaking and highlight funded projects that continue to have an impact in your community.

Leadership

- Share a brief profile of each board member that highlights their charitable interests and role in the community.
- Announce new board members with an introduction sharing their professional experience, volunteer efforts and charitable interests.
- Thank outgoing board members for their service.

New Funds

- Highlight donors or nonprofit partners who establish new funds with your foundation.

Nonprofit Partners

- Recognize the work of nonprofit partners in your community.
- During Giving Tuesday and the year-end donation season, spread the word about their fundraising efforts.

Scholarships

- During the summer (after scholarships are activated), celebrate local graduates who receive scholarships from endowments held by your foundation and/or the CFO.
- During the application period (Jan. 1–mid-March), highlight the scholarship endowments held by your foundation and the donors who established the funds.

Special Times of the Year

- **Tax-preparation season:** January–April 15 — a great time to highlight charitable giving
- **National Make-a-Will Month:** August
- **National Estate Planning Awareness Month:** October
- **National Estate Planning Awareness Week:** Third full week of October
- **National Philanthropy Day:** Typically held in mid-November
- **Community Foundation Week:** Nov. 12–18 every year
- **Giving Tuesday:** Tuesday after Thanksgiving
- **Year-end giving season:** November–December — Another great time to highlight charitable giving
- **Your Foundation's Anniversary:** Check the CFO's annual report for the founding date