

2004 OCIABC Communicator Awards

Name: Julie Piper Finley, ABC

Category: Publications
P-6 One Person Submissions

Entry Title: Loaves & Fishes *Prime Time*

Work Plan

Need/Opportunity: Loaves & Fishes Centers, Inc. has been serving the nutritional needs of Portland area seniors since 1970. From its early days when three dedicated women dished up hot meals onto paper plates, wrapped them in foil and delivered them to 14 homebound elderly, Loaves & Fishes Centers now serves more than one million meals annually with the help of 5,000 volunteers. With 14 senior centers in two counties, Loaves & Fishes provides a gathering place for seniors where they can enjoy a hot meal and fellowship with others, and operates the Meals-On-Wheels program. A nonsectarian, nonprofit organization, Loaves & Fishes derives more than 60 percent of its funding from corporate and individual donations.

When I joined the agency in the fall of 2002, the newsletter *Prime Time* had a limited distribution (just those who donated above a certain amount) and the design and photography was contracted out. In addition, the content primarily provided a means to recognize those who had already donated to the agency and did not focus on programming or giving opportunities. Each edition included a donation envelope, but donations to the newsletter were flat.

To maximize the potential of the newsletter, it was clear that a number of changes had to be made:

- bring the photography and design in house to eliminate costly fees
- expand the mailing to a broader audience
- change the content to focus on agency events, participants and programming and include an “ask” in at least one of the stories

While keeping the basic design created by an outside designer the same, I created a PageMaker template that could be updated with each issue. I also took over as the agency photographer, which allowed us to include a broader array of both volunteers and participants. The distribution of the newsletter was expanded to include anyone who had made a contribution to the agency in the past quarter, increasing the distribution from 10,000 copies to 15,000. Lastly, the contents began to more closely reflect what was happening with the agency, including features on volunteers, ethnic programming, and our recently-completed capital campaign. An entire page in each issue was dedicated to the Development Department and included information about purchasing gift annuities, including the agency in planned giving, and other fundraising prompts.

Audience: The audience for *Prime Time* is anyone who gave a donation to the agency within the last quarter. Recipients include some of our participants (aged 60 and older), children of participants (mostly baby boomers), foundations, and individuals who may have given us \$10 or \$10,000. Most are familiar with our agency and its vision that no senior will go hungry or experience social isolation.

Goals & Objectives: The objective was to expand the reach of the newsletter and keep more of our donors up-to-date on what was going on in the agency and how their funds were being used. The goal was to increase donations from an average of \$7,000 per issue to \$10,000 per issue.

Entrant's Role: I created the PageMaker template for the design, shot all the photos (unless otherwise noted in the cutline), wrote all copy (including the "Message from the Director") and designed each issue.

Implementation and Challenges: The budget for each issue is approximately \$7,000 (not including postage). While I eliminated the cost of photography and design, I used that money to increase the print run from 10,000 copies to 15,000 copies each edition. About \$3,000 of the budget is used for a fulfillment service that applies labels, sorts, folds, etc. The rest of the budget is used for printing in two colors, including a single color donation envelope that is inserted into each newsletter.

Results: Results for this project are easy to measure by tracking donations from the specially-coded newsletter envelopes. Here are exact results from the three editions included in this entry:

- Spring 2003 – \$10,251
- Summer 2003 – \$12,137
- Winter 2004 – currently at \$8,300 (donations continue to come in until April)

In addition, two individuals have purchased gift annuities in the amount of \$10,000 after reading about the opportunity in the Summer 2003 edition.