

Karen Gruner, CHOC Children's Foundation

“If it weren't for the interests of this group of donors, the plan would not be so heavily weighted to public recognition events. If we had a single donor, I expect there would be less emphasis on public recognition.” So says Karen Gruner when explaining the two-tiered recognition plan she's designed specifically to appeal to a group of donors likely to make a large combined gift. Once received, these donor groups will be presented with area namings and substantial, ongoing stewardship activities largely aimed at celebrating the gifts in the public arena.

“These people are interested in making a strong statement within their communities. Therefore we structured the activities where their contributions will be recognized among their peers.” CHOC focused on existing opportunities to maximize social impact, combining donor recognition activities with established social events, such as the annual community Persian day. Furthermore, plans will involve cultural clubs and business gatherings that will involve a majority of the donors.

To date, both of these naming opportunities are still pending, but feedback on the plans has been good. Prospect managers are pleased to have a concise tool and photographic examples to share with the members of the group. Donor response has been positive, too. These documents will serve as guidelines for future development of other recognition packages.

The recognition package is based on thoughtful consideration, but without any specific cost figures. “We're targeting 2-3% max”, Karen shared, but keeping to a budget can be tricky. Recent staff cuts and changes in recognition practices have forced her to be open-minded in her plans. “I can't be sure who will record the video vignettes the plan promises, or what exactly the donor listing will be now that we've suspended the annual donor report. We'll just stay creative and solve it as we go.”