

## **Robyn Furness-Fallin, Metro Atlanta YMCA**

Metro Atlanta YMCA fundraises for 25 individual branches offering a wide variety of programs. Of their 50 top donors, most are corporations or foundations that focus on a specific program or outcome; about 20% are individuals giving to support a specific branch.

Robyn shared that the plan for stewarding major donors is rather informal. “We’re big on visiting people, most often program directors or the executive directors. We hand deliver a lot of our program updates.” She finds that most donors are focused on the ultimate social impact of their giving, the “so what?” numbers. Reports listing numbers of youth involved in a program are not enough any longer. “It is important that we demonstrate the link between enrollment in camp and later success.” What used to be anecdotal stories now have to be tracked so the organization can draw conclusions based on demonstrated outcomes.

Some of the more routine recognition efforts at the Y have been dropped, such as the listing all donors in the annual report. Instead, there is a focus on educating members about the charitable side of the Y, motivating them through success stories and building relationships that result in larger gifts.

I asked Robyn if any special effort goes into stewarding donors through the branches. She said that while there is no difference in the service provided to a donor who is a member, she does wish that the branch directors were more aware of the donor/member’s activity and would communicate that to her. “I always hold my breath for a second when I hear, ‘my grandchild was at camp last week.’ I don’t expect there to be a problem, I just wish I’d known. Maybe I could have stopped by, or had the director make a special connection with the donor.”