



Clearinghouse for Volunteer Accounting Services

a California Public Benefit Corporation

Winter 2003



The Glass Menagerie

...a message from Paul Glass, President of CVAS

There has rarely been a time in Southern California history that provided the nonprofit community with the challenge that the past fire season has created. With firefighters exhausted from fighting the inferno and thousands of people displaced from their homes, nonprofit organizations like the American Red Cross kicked into overdrive. To many, the organizations and volunteers that supported them during that difficult time are nothing short of heroes.

The nonprofit "hero" organizations are no different than yours and ours. They depend on donations and volunteers to serve when and where called upon, and like many of us, utilize the Web to solicit these resources.

As discussed in the September CVAS newsletter, more people are giving online since the events of September 11. Additionally, according to Giving USA 2003, "Young, college-educated Americans had the highest levels of confidence in nonprofits."¹ The implication of this statistic, coupled with the fact that Internet security and ease of use continues to improve, is that the presence of the Web in the nonprofit sector will continue to increase in importance. The successful nonprofit will embrace this fact and press forward with development of their Web presence.

With this in mind, CVAS recruited Allan Pressel of Charityfinders to submit this issue's feature article entitled "How Your Nonprofit Can Use the Internet Strategically". In his article, Allan offers suggestions on creating e-philanthropy web sites that allow your nonprofit to *interact* with potential resources. I hope you find this article both interesting and useful.

¹ for more information regarding this reference please navigate to:
http://www.afpnet.org/tier3_cd.cfm?folder_id=1805&content_item_id=13171

Coming Up in March

The CVAS March issue can be **YOUR** issue. Please e-mail us with suggestions for articles that would be of interest to you for the March issue. We can then solicit authors to address your topic(s). Better yet, submit an article. Please e-mail suggestions to info@cvas-usa.org.

Funding Opportunities

As with any nonprofit organization, in addition to volunteers, we are in need of financial support. If your schedule doesn't allow you to dedicate your time or talents, perhaps a monetary contribution will allow you or the organizations you represent, to help CVAS continue its work. Checks can be sent directly to **CVAS at 920 Hampshire Road, #A-29, Westlake Village, CA 91361**, or we are able to accept donations *on-line* at www.cvas-usa.org using American Express, Discover, Mastercard, or Visa, via our secure Web site connection. Remember, Clearinghouse for Volunteer Accounting Services is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, so your donation is tax deductible. We are grateful for any and all support.

Kelly's Kolumn

by Kelly Alblinger, CVAS Program Administrator

"Giving is the secret to a healthy life." **John D. Rockefeller**



Kelly on her day off...

Winter is the time of year when it is easy to seriously consider hibernation! However, CVAS is hard at work, matching volunteers and needy nonprofits. We wish to welcome the organizations that registered this past quarter:

- Asha for Education (Union, NJ)
- Assoc. for Family Counseling (Houston, TX)
- CA Cancer Registrars Association (Union City, CA)
- Children's Rights Council (Hyattsville, MD)
- Choose Life Ministries (Wisner, LA)
- City Prep, Inc. (Bronx, NY)
- D/FW Chapter of Myasthenia Gravis (Roanoke, TX)
- Everybody Wins (Sommerville, MD)
- Empowerment Institute (Seattle, WA)
- Growth Improvement for Female Teens, (Phoenix, AZ)
- Libertarian Party of Oregon (Beaverton, OR)
- Margalit Dance Theatre (Fountain Valley, CA)
- Marines & Friends Org., Inc. (Simi Valley, CA)
- Maryland Community Connection (Landover, MD)
- Minding the Village Scholarship Fund (Arlington, VA)
- Opera Theatre of No. VA (Arlington, VA)
- Rebuilding Together/Christmas in April (Raleigh, NC)
- The Green Team (Lucerne Valley, CA)
- Tools for Schools, Inc. (New York, NY)
- UNITE-LA, Inc. (Los Angeles, CA)

CVAS welcomes the opportunity to assist you in locating a CPA for your needs.

Additionally, CVAS recognizes those volunteers who have just registered and are eager to be matched with an NPO needing assistance. CVAS welcomes:

- Yohanness Ayechew (Washington, DC)
- David Batcho (Merced, CA)
- Beverly Bunnell (San Mateo, CA)
- Anne Coe (Riverside, CA)
- Kelly Fairchild (Miami, FL)
- Kamabu Johnson (Kampala, Uganda)
- Eva Kjoss (Albany, CA)
- Scott Lominack (Atlanta, GA)
- Snejana Mihaylova (London, England)
- Denyce Miller (Bellwood, IL)
- Silas Mwithimbu (Meru, Kenya)
- Andrew Ozurovich (Los Angeles, CA)
- Oyun Puntsagdorj (Wilmington, CA)
- Madhavi Rajdev (Sunnyvale, CA)
- Wendy Ren (Los Angeles, CA)
- Luella Schmidt (Madison, WI)
- Jinjun Zhou (Seattle, WA)



How Your Nonprofit Can Use the Internet Strategically

By Allan Pressel, Founder/CEO, CharityFinders;
Phone: 310-793-9707

In the "old days" Web sites were the exclusive province of well-heeled corporations, costing hundreds of thousands of dollars to develop and maintain. Today, technology has advanced to the point that a well-designed site can be developed and maintained for a few hundred dollars. Nonprofit organizations are discovering that Web sites are an immediate and effective means of relaying their message and mission, and more importantly, garnering support from potential donors.

Nonprofit organizations should consider one of two types of websites. First, a **brochure-ware** site simply contains information about the nonprofit. A brochure-ware site can be a single page of unformatted text, or hundreds of pages of text, graphics, animation, audio, and video. Regardless of its complexity, since all of these pages provide information only, it is considered a brochure-ware site.

The second option is an interactive **e-philanthropy** site. An e-philanthropy site includes a brochure-ware component, but also contains a transactional component that enables website visitors – donors, volunteers, staff, and others – to interact with the nonprofit (and each other), and to support the nonprofit in various ways that sustain its mission, both tangibly and intangibly.

***A brochure-ware site has a lot for the user to SEE.
An effective e-philanthropy site also has a lot for the user to DO.***

An e-philanthropy site is definitely more desirable, since it allows visitors to actively participate in some form with the nonprofit, whether it be to sign up on the mailing list, make a financial donation, or volunteer their time and talents. Most nonprofits want an e-philanthropy site, yet few actually have one. Why not? The answer typically boils down to one or more of the following obstacles:

- **Cost:** Developing a complete, robust e-philanthropy site using the traditional "custom development" approach costs hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- **Time:** It takes months - often more than a year.
- **Technology skills:** It requires advanced technical skills.
- **Technology infrastructure:** The development team needs significant hardware, software, and network resources.

Any one of these obstacles is enough to dissuade all but the largest and bravest nonprofits from even considering an e-philanthropy website. Fortunately, a number of e-philanthropy Application Service Providers (ASPs) now provide tools that permit nonprofits to eliminate these obstacles by building their own e-philanthropy website quickly, easily, inexpensively, and with little or no training and limited technical skills. For example, the cost can be as little as a few hundred dollars. The time required to build a site can be as little as two hours – provided that you have first developed your content; i.e., text and images. The technological skills required can be as basic as the ability to use a web browser. The technology infrastructure needed can be as simple as a PC connected to the Internet.

An e-philanthropy site can offer a wide range of opportunities for visitor interaction.

Here are some e-philanthropy features you should consider:

Donate	Cash donations. Here are some options you may wish to offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payment via credit card or e-check. • Preset donation amounts (e.g., \$10, \$25, \$100, other). • One-time versus recurring (e.g., monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc.). • Specify whose name the donation should be in.
In-kind donations	Several convenient ways for donors to make in-kind donations include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer an in-kind item (or service) to your nonprofit. • Fulfill a non-cash request. • Offer an in-kind item for sale in your e-store.
Donate investments	Instructions on how to donate investments.
Planned Giving	View planned giving options.
Volunteer	View one-time or ongoing volunteer positions and sign up for them.
Feedback	Permit anyone who donates, volunteers, becomes a member, etc. to rate your nonprofit and post comments about it. Users may view this feedback. Ideally, users may contact those who have given their permission.
Referrals	Refer friends, perhaps even enabling the donor to match their donations.
Events	A list or graphical calendar of your nonprofit's events or classes. Click on any for more detail, or to register online.
E-cards	Send an electronic greeting card
Employment	View employment listings – as a staff member, management, or board member – and sign up. Even attach a cover letter or resume.
Membership	Enroll as a member of your nonprofit, or renew membership.
Public opinion poll	Respond to a one-question poll on an issue of topical relevance, and immediately view the results-to-date. This can be a powerful way of immediately engaging your website visitors.
E-store	Donate in-kind items for sale in your nonprofit's e-store. These items may be posted for sale by donors (with your approval, of course), or by your nonprofit.
Petitions	Sign online petitions.
E-advocacy	Select an issue of importance and send a letter taking action – customizing the text, recipients, and signature.

Your website can be a powerful strategic tool to achieve tangible and intangible results that help further your mission. What's more, tools are available to implement a powerful e-philanthropy site inexpensively, easily, and quickly.

One such tool that CVAS has discovered is CharityFinders NonprofitSite123 -- an online tool that enables any nonprofit to build its own world-class website in just a few hours, with no training or technical skills required. CVAS recently invited Allan Pressel to its office to offer suggestions about how NonprofitSite123 could move our website from the world of brochure-ware to e-philanthropy and were very impressed with the ease of use and sophistication of the tool set to improve our site. The CVAS e-philanthropy site is currently in a test environment.

You can check out the products and services offered by CharityFinders at: www.charityfinders.com. Allan Pressel can be contacted at allan@CharityFinders.com.