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S P E C I A L

THE PARTNERSHIP CONNECTION

How to Handle Curtailed Support

From Jeff Townsend, Director of Field Development

I was doing a bit of research for the ISI board meeting recently and found that 43% of our staff enjoyed increased support in March compared to February. Praise God! Yet as we have noted in the past, changes in charitable giving typically lag behind extreme changes in economic conditions. So, it seems like a good time to consider how to handle possible curtailed support that we may experience, especially if the economic recovery is prolonged. Here are suggestions that may help:

- Keep ministering to your support team, even increasing contacts during these uncertain times. At the same time, keep a close eye on your Salesforce portal.
- If you see a zero where there had been consistent support, or when you get that dreaded email saying a faithful donor must stop or reduce support, first of all, pray. Ask God to increase your trust in Him and to prepare you for effective ministry to your donor.
- Keep in mind that as bad as curtailed support is for you, your donor not only has to stop support they have joyfully given, but they have to figure out how to pay their bills. **We must carefully consider that losing a supporter may be more traumatic for the supporter than the supported!**
- Make contact with your lapsed donor as soon as it seems appropriate and in a way that is best suited to the individual or family. Express genuine gratitude for past support. Ask how you can pray and help. As God directs, perhaps there will be an opportunity for you to give to your supporter. (I have never forgotten Pat Kershaw telling me that she always takes her checkbook on PD appointments.)
- Offer to stay in touch and continue to send your newsletter. Then note in your action plan a time to check on folks again who have supported you so faithfully.
- Finally, a word of advice that applies to us all in tough economic times. Always avoid "poor talk." It is incredibly easy to drop a statement into a newsletter that tells folks how low your support is and the impact that is having on your ministry and family. But such statements are especially unwelcome when many are experiencing tough economic times. Instead, stay positive. Present the opportunities to impact the Harvest through international student ministry, make a clear ask for support and trust God to move on hearts He wants on your team.

Remember that your DFD is here to help, so don't hesitate to call or send an email. I'm praying that God will help us all be a blessing to precious donors during these tough times.



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