Friend-raising: Empowering Parents of Color in Your School’s Fundraising Culture

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Friend-Raising: An Introduction

Our Agenda

- Defining Terms
- Meaningful Engagement
- The Parent Voice
- Scenarios
- Action Steps
Stereotype Threat and Fundraising

• Claude Steele’s *Whistling Vivaldi*

• “Inner City Blacks” and “Model Minorities”
Socioeconomic Diversity

- Inherent inequity of independent schools
- Trouble discussing class and money
Wealthy vs. Rich

- Chris Rock: Jay-Z, Mary J. Blige, and a dentist

There’s like three, four black people in my neighborhood in Alpino.
Wealthy vs. Rich

• Wealth goes up the family tree, not down
• Keeping Up with the Joneses/We Made It
Meaningful Engagement

POC are often written off for participation, and not pulled into process and culture.

- Provide a seat at the table
- Encourage involvement in broader school life
The Parent Voice & Empowerment

• Staff voices can’t speak for parents
What’s the Scenario?
**Scenario 1**

You receive feedback about a solicitation between a Parent of Color who receives financial aid and a wealthy Parent of Color. The Parent of Color who receives financial aid is unhappy with the way they were solicited by the wealthy Parent of Color, because the wealthy Parent of Color “doesn’t understand my situation.”
Scenario 2

You receive negative feedback about a solicitation between a Parent of Color and a White solicitor. The Parent of Color explains that there was no meaningful discussion about the fundraising effort and the White solicitor made assumptions about a limited ability to give.

“Anything, anything at all, even something small, just a few dollars, any amount you can afford... that would be amaaaaaaazing.”
Scenario 3

You receive feedback during a phone-a-thon event. A White solicitor is avoiding calling a Family of Color in the community under assumption that the parents don’t speak English well. They don’t.

What can you do to facilitate outreach?
Scenario 4

You overhear that a solid, go-to, long-time parent volunteer is strongly disliked by the majority of Parents of Color in your school community. This sentiment has only been shared with Staff of Color. The veteran volunteer is a Parent of Color, and the director of annual giving is White.
What Can We Do?
Action Steps

- Educate constituents about importance of annual giving, beyond appeals
- Review committee composition
- Be present beyond your specific role
- Define participation; it’s the beginning, not the end
- Campaigns, Galas, Benefits, Auctions, and Other Events: Who is it for? Who is invited? Who can participate?
Action Steps

• Address class conflicts among POC with colleagues who are unfamiliar
• Support opportunities for POC who arrive through CBOs to connect with each other BEFORE start of school year
• Connect advancement colleagues to parent affinity groups: specific projects, campaigns, successes, invitations, safe space to ask questions
• Break rules for funding; relationship with Diversity office
Thank You

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