



Nancy Barone, Vice President of Development for CentraState Healthcare Foundation
"You must have a passion for fundraising, the cause it supports and the community that benefits."



Nancy Barone is vice president of development for the CentraState Healthcare Foundation, which serves as the link between CentraState Healthcare System and the community. Through volunteer and contribution opportunities, the Foundation offers residents and businesses a way to become stakeholders in their hospital. She previously led the Raritan Bay Medical Center Foundation as executive vice president and was formerly with Meridian Health Affiliated Foundations, Jersey Shore University Medical Center Foundation and the Beaufort Memorial Hospital Foundation in Beaufort, S.C.

How has the fundraising landscape changed over the past five years or so?

More donors are making strategic giving decisions, with emphasis on long-term gift planning. There is less focus on capital campaigns and more on endowment campaigns. Following the recent recession, donors began to evaluate their giving options differently. Given economic uncertainties, they want their donation today to continue to have a philanthropic impact, say, five years from now. The result is a changing mindset about where and how to donate.

What challenges do you anticipate for CentraState Healthcare Foundation and other similar foundations in the near future?

Most medical centers are looking to the future, focusing on wellness and prevention, rather than disease. CentraState Medical Center has developed a robust program to help our community "Live Life Well" through prevention.

From a philanthropic perspective, this involves support for programs tied to health education, diabetes or Multiple Sclerosis, for example, as well as the information technology systems these initiatives require. We are moving away from "let's build something" to "let's create ongoing support for wellness and prevention."

You offer a wide range of ways that people can volunteer or donate. Have any of them proven more successful than others?

We've found that different age groups tend to gravitate toward different forms of giving. For instance, like all organizations, we want to build a strong network of millennials to support our efforts in the future. This group seems to prefer volunteering for projects that may be completed in a day or so. The wide range of fundraising and volunteer opportunities reflects our commitment to involve as many members of the community as possible.

What is the ideal background for a senior development executive of a healthcare foundation?

You must have a passion for fundraising, the cause it supports and the community that benefits – this is more important than a specific educational background. Patience, flexibility, compassion and empathy are all critical qualities in order to foster relationships. Since philanthropic results are built on extensive detail work most often invisible to the donors, organization skills are key. No fundraiser can be successful without follow-up, so I would add tenacity to the list.

A lot has been written about the critical need to have foundation trustees and board members as active participants in foundation activities. How do you keep them involved and motivated? What do you look for when recruiting new trustees or board members?

It is important to make a personal connection with the trustees, understanding why they are volunteering. Let's face it, most trustees are qualified to serve on many boards, so you have to find out: Why us? Why are they contributing their valuable time and talents to our organization? Once you know the answers, you'll have a better grasp of how to keep them involved, engaged and passionate about your mission.

Board members are your most important donors. They set an example for others and ask others to join them in support of your mission. You can never thank board enough for their service to the community.