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from the Carolina desk of
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One Small Step...

I confess: I like lists. Short lists where each point starts with an action word and ends with an action that seems, well, doable.

So when I recently read a post by Dan Rockwell, whose **website** has a great tagline “Leadership Freak: empowering leaders 300 words at a time,” I felt it was worth sharing:

7 ways to challenge yourself today.

1. **Avoid doing things that matter less.**
2. **Build new relationships.**
3. **Strengthen current relationships.**
4. **Practice a relevant skill (listening, planning, coaching).**
5. **Participate more in meetings.**
6. **Bring up an issue you’ve been avoiding.**
7. **Say no.**

I see lots of ways to put this list to work in advancement:

First, look at what you did last week, note what didn’t really accomplish anything, and resolve not to do it again for at least two weeks.

Second, do something instead to build a stronger personal relationship: call a donor, talk with a colleague at another organization, or, best of all, reach out to someone who benefits from your organization’s good work.

Third, tackle some subject you’ve been avoiding: helping a staff member who’s hit a productivity slump or hearing out a board member or donor who has been critical of a recent decision. If it’s keeping you awake at night, then resolve to deal with it the very next day.

As Rockwell sums it up: **“Set short-term wins. Long-term goals can paralyze. Short-term wins lend themselves to taking action today.”**

Here’s to more short-term wins that will have long-term impact — for all of us!

Schools See Highest Return Since '05

Independent schools reported a 25.8% average return on their endowment assets in fiscal year 2021, a sharp increase compared with the 2.8% returns in FY20. An annual report from the Commonfund Institute found the average return on FY21 endowment assets to be the highest average annual return since the study commenced in FY05. When segmented by size, the FY21 data indicates that the larger the endowment, the greater the return, as schools with assets exceeding \$50 million reported an average return of 29.3% (vs. 2.7% in FY20), while those with assets under \$10 million reported a 21.2% return (vs. 3.3% in FY20). [Report here.](#)

\$50 Million Gift

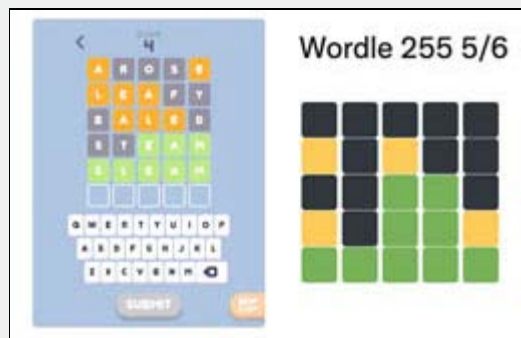
St. Xavier High School, a Catholic school for boys in Cincinnati, has received a pledge of \$50 million from Harry and Linda Fath to provide tuition assistance to students in need. The gift kicks off a \$200 million capital campaign to enhance the private school's academic and religious programs, upgrade facilities, and mitigate tuition increases in the future. The Faths have appeared on the Philanthropy 50, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy's* annual ranking of top donors, three times. *COP, 2-28*

When 2 Wordles Collide A Nonprofit Wins

Six years ago, Steven Cravotta was an 18-year-old who developed an app, a game called Wordle!, uploaded it and waited. He originally thought the project was a bust; its average daily download rate was in the single digits. Then last December he checked the app's stats and noticed it had 500,000 downloads in a span of five days. He realized a slew of people looking for the viral, web-only game "Wordle," created by Josh Wardle, were mistakenly downloading his app instead.

Cravotta's Wordle! has since become the No. 1 game in the App Store in eight countries (8 million downloads and counting), and the now 24-year-old is cashing in on that success for a good cause. With Wardle's blessing, Cravotta will donate \$50,000 to Boost! West Oakland. Boost! provides free tutoring and mentorship for children in Oakland, CA — the city where Wardle, used to be based. As both games centered on word puzzles, Cravotta felt the money should go to a literacy-focused nonprofit. Wardle agreed.

[Do yourself a favor read the whole story.](#)
[Washington Post, 2-22](#)



Giving, Value of Avg Gift Up in '21

Both overall giving and the average gift amount increased in 2021, with giving increasing by 9% on a year-over-year basis and 19% over the last three years. The Blackbaud report also found that the overall average gift amount increased 10% from 2020, with an average donation amount of \$813. Online giving also grew 9% in 2021, showing a three-year increase of 42%; and 28% of online contributions were made from a mobile device. All giving subsectors showed growth in 2021, with giving to environmental organizations growing the most, at 19.3%. *PND, 2018*

DAF Data for 2021

Fidelity Charitable donor-advised funds awarded \$10.3 billion in grants in 2021, a 41% increase over pre-pandemic giving in 2019 — 2.2 million grants were awarded to 187,000 charities, with 2021 grant dollars increasing 13% year-over-year. The report also revealed that COVID-19 effects influenced grant activity, including continued support for direct medical and economic aid. *PND, 2-15*

The **National Philanthropic Trust** awarded more than \$5.15 billion through donor-advised funds — a 15% year-over-year increase and an increase of 212% compared with pre-pandemic giving in 2019. In 2021, the trust awarded a total of 95,717 grants, with all eight charitable subsectors seeing an increase in grant volume. *PND, 3-1*

We Know Independent Schools

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with so many remarkable independent schools, both secular and non-secular, across the country that help mold today's adolescents into tomorrow's leaders. Take a look at our list of independent school clients, past and present.

[Our Clients](#)

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Our services aren't cookie cutter. We don't operate with a boilerplate, merely changing names and locations. We craft each and every service we provide to match your organization's unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your institution, your fundraising, and the community you serve.

Whether your need is in Capital Campaign, Annual Fund Campaign, Major Gifts, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned Giving or all of the above, we take a fresh approach to nonprofit fundraising.

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