



# Atlanta Results

Your Monthly Resource for Philanthropic News

Alexander-Haas  
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

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from the desk of  
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Partner

## The ROI of Cultivating Your Own Professional Relationships

Cultivating donor relationships is at the core of successful fundraising. Different kinds of donors (i.e., Annual Fund, Major Gift, Principal Gift, etc.) warrant different levels of investment to cultivate and connect them to an institution. At the end of a campaign (or a fiscal year), you should be able to calculate the return on investment (ROI) based on your total expenditures and overall fundraising results. This gives you one way to evaluate if the effort (and resources) you and your team are putting into cultivating donors is yielding the results you need to be successful.

That's a high-level look at the ROI of cultivating donor relationships. **But how often do you allow yourself time to cultivate your own professional relationships?** My guess is not often enough. Yet professional relationships are some of the very best resources we have at our disposal.

During the 26 years I served in institutional roles in higher education advancement, there never seemed to be enough time to get to what needed to be done. When time was short and I saw a peer or networking meeting on my calendar, it was very tempting to reschedule the meeting. Yet, every single time I participated in such a meeting (in-person or virtual), I walked away feeling smarter, deeply inspired and markedly saner than I did before the meeting.

With that in mind, I encourage you to be intentional about how you are cultivating your own professional relationships. When is the last time you:

- Called your mentor or a former colleague?
- Gathered with peers at similar institutions?
- Checked in on someone who used to report to you?

While I hope your answer is "yesterday" or "last week", my point is that the time you invest in cultivating these mutually beneficial relationships should be a priority. And this applies to those just starting out as well as seasoned veterans.

One of the very best things about the Advancement field is how willing we are to

share good ideas and successful programs with each other. Advancement professionals do what they do to make the world a better place and so we love helping each other out. But how can we help each other if we don't connect with each other?

At the beginning of January 2023, there was a **[New York Times article about the power of the 8-minute phone call.](#)** The basic premise was that even busy people can spare eight minutes for a phone call. I agree and think the time you spend connecting with your professional network, whether it is eight minutes or more, will be time well invested. What might that ROI look like for you? Below are a few possible outcomes:

- Getting candidate referrals or recruitment ideas for a job search you are conducting.
- Thinking differently about your organizational structure.
- Hearing about different ways to quantify and analyze productivity and success.
- Discovering a new idea or program you might bring to your team.
- Evaluating the benefit of NOT doing something anymore.
- Shoring up a reference you might need down the line.
- \*Learning that you are not alone in the professional challenges you face.

\*This validation might be the most important benefit of all. It's so easy to fall into the trap of thinking that professional challenges or frustrations only apply to your institution. Learning that my peers faced similar challenges at their institutions has always been invaluable to me... as was the brainstorming we did to think through ways to overcome those challenges.

Time will always be a finite resource. But the resources that come from your professional network are limitless. So double down and commit to intentionally investing time to cultivate your professional relationships. Your ROI will be something you can tap into for years and years to come.

Please welcome Jaci to our team.

[Read all about our new Partner here.](#)

Our Team

## News, Gifts & Updated Contacts

**St. Vincent de Paul Georgia\*** and **HOPE Atlanta** announced their strategic partnership in an effort to pool resources, promote efficiency and expertise in order to make a significant impact on the lives of individuals and families facing food challenges in the community.

“This partnership will enable our two organizations to pool resources, share knowledge and expertise, and amplify our collective impact in providing essential services to those in need. Together, we will work tirelessly to provide immediate relief and sustainable solutions to those facing homelessness and hunger in our Georgia community,” stated **Mike Mies**,

**Tolton Pace** will assume the role of senior program officer, Atlanta's Westside, with the **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation**, on Sept. 5. Pace joins the Blank Family Foundation from The Home Depot Foundation where he served as manager, strategic partnerships and grant programs. In his new role, Pace will oversee a range of grants aimed at increasing economic mobility, through financial inclusion and affordable housing, for legacy residents in the English Avenue and Vine City neighborhoods. He will also foster connections with nonprofit partners who share in offering solutions to protect residents' opportunities to stay in this rapidly changing neighborhood. *MetroAtlantaCEO*, 8-25

**St. Vincent de Paul Georgia\*** named **Bea Perdue** as Senior Director of Philanthropy, the organization's head development position. With over 20 years of combined fundraising and management experience, Perdue most recently led U.S. development efforts at World Reader, and previously held senior philanthropy roles at MedShare, Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, and Middle Tennessee State University.\* Her strategic insights and creative approach to fundraising will play a pivotal role in expanding St. Vincent de Paul Georgia's impact and enabling the organization to reach even more individuals. *MetroAtlantaCEO*, 8-23

**Kennesaw State University\*** had an economic impact of \$2.03 billion on Georgia in fiscal year 2022, according to a University System of Georgia (USG) report. Kennesaw State's economic impact in FY 2022 marked a 10.3% increase from \$1.84 billion the previous year, while the University System of Georgia's economic impact grew by 4.14% over fiscal year 2021. The total impact of all 26 USG institutions on their local communities was \$20.1 billion in FY 2022, up from \$19.3 billion in fiscal year 2021. *MetroAtlantaCEO*, 8-17

**Rainbow Village\*** named **Joy Holmes** as Chief Development Officer to aid in the expansion of its reach and scope. Joy brings nearly 20 years of experience as a fundraiser at virtually every level - from Development Director to VP of Development to National Campaign Director. Nonprofits that have benefitted from her expertise in the past include March of Dimes, American Heart Association\*, Hands On Atlanta, Junior Achievement of Georgia, and Hall County YMCA, among others. *MetroAtlantaCEO*, 8-14

\*Alumni Client Partner

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## Code of Conduct...For a Donor?

Some fundraising observers believe donor codes of conduct reduce sexual and other types of harassment, something more than a quarter of fundraisers say they encounter, according to 2022 research. Experts say nonprofits need to make donors more accountable and set limits to reduce problematic donor behavior — including donors pushing organizations to take on projects that are outside their mission or trying to involve themselves in nonprofits' day-to-day operations.

Many nonprofits are reluctant to confront bad behavior by donors because they don't want to endanger gifts.

“A donor code just sets a tone for what the organization is willing to tolerate,” says one fundraiser. “At so many organizations, nobody wants to do anything that will endanger the

gift. That's a real shame because it's hard to work in an organization where the gift is the most important thing."

This spring, Rogare, an international fundraising think tank, called on nonprofits to implement codes to reduce sexual harassment. A code helps remind donors this is a professional relationship. Codes also signal to fundraising staff that the organization recognizes harassment as a problem.

Nonprofits hope donor codes of conduct will also curb other types of problematic behavior: donors who try to fund passion projects that don't align with an organization's goals or who want to micromanage a project they've helped fund.

**Sue Cunningham**, CEO of the *Council for Advancement and Support of Education*, says accepting money from donors whose passion projects don't align with the organization's mission is a mistake but that she understands the temptation.

"When a college or university is relatively early in their journey around encouraging philanthropic engagement, it's really, really hard to say no," Cunningham says. "Yet having that rigor is critically important because it really doesn't do yourself any favors in the medium to long term if you don't show rigor." Accepting such donations sometimes leads to students openly disparaging a gift as unnecessary, leaving both the donor and the college unhappy. CASE offers guidance on curbing donor influence through its Global Reporting Standards, but not on donor codes of conduct.

Does your development department have a Code of Conduct? Have you thought about one?

[Read more here.](#) COP, 7-31

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## US Decrease in Donors & Dollars in 2022

The report mentioned above also finds that although a majority of individuals reported donating time, money, or other valuables in 2022, the US experienced a decrease in both donors and dollars. They found that globally, 84% of people donated time, money, items, or their voice in 2022, with 56% giving in at least three of those ways, and a majority (57%) giving to formal charities, informal groups, and individuals, the three recipient types tracked in the report. In the U.S., however, there was a decline in both the number of monetary donors and the amount of dollars donated, a trend not seen since 2010.

The report also found that the long-term trend of waning donor participation, which started in 2012, worsened sharply in 2022, with donors declining 10% year-over-year. While the leading cause of overall donor decline was an 18% drop in the number of new donors the number of new-retained donors (those who donated in the previous year to an organization, but never before) decreased 26.4%, and repeat-retained donors showed a decline of 3.5%, bringing the total overall donor retention rate for 2022 to 42.6%, the lowest on record. Almost all of the decrease in donors (nearly 90%) is attributable to losses of donors who donated \$500 and below (which represents 83% of all donors), and while the number of major (\$5,000 to \$50,000) and supsize donors (more than \$50,000) decreased the least, they accounted for a much larger proportion of the decrease in dollars, (26% and 48%, respectively). In addition, the report found a reduction in large donor results in the fourth quarter of the year, which is typically the height of giving season.

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**We Know Atlanta Nonprofits**

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the Atlanta nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, organizations that help make Atlanta a better place to live.

### Our Client Partners

### A Fresh Approach to Nonprofit Fundraising

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 unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your organization, your fundraising, and the people 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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