



Team

The Education Advancement Monitor

Alexander Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

October 5, 2023



from the desk of
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Associate Partner

Adjusting Behaviors for the Neurodiverse Donor & Staff

I live in a house full of neurodiverse thinkers who see, feel, and experience the world differently than those who approach the world through a “neurotypical” lens. My dyslexic and ADHD family is not alone with approximately 20% of the population living with different wiring in their brains in the form of Autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder) among others. Because I live in a neurodiverse world, I am fascinated by studies that show we can all benefit in a world more accommodating for those who see things and think differently – especially in the workplace. To take that a step further, shouldn't we as fundraisers keep in mind that 20% of our donors are probably neurodiverse as well?

Just because an individual falls in this category does not mean that they are less than or disabled. Many have high IQs and are extremely bright. Heightened skills, such as pattern recognition, empathy, interpersonal skills, innovation, creativity, and leadership are prevalent among dyslexic thinkers (of which experts say 15 and up to 20% of the population fall into this group). Because these are such critical business skills, 40% of the world's greatest innovators and entrepreneurs are dyslexic. With that said, it would be safe to assume that some of your best donors are likely dyslexic as well.

What does this mean for us as development professionals? We need to be mindful in our communication. Lengthy emails are probably not going to be read. Those with ADHD and dyslexia often rely on administrative support to keep them organized and on track. Get to know gatekeepers and make sure that you schedule meetings through the proper channels. In designing printed materials and proposals know that text needs to be concise, have visuals and include summaries that hit the highlights.

Something else to consider are meetings and events. If someone struggles with anxiety, simple steps like those listed below can make the difference in whether someone agrees to meet with you or not. However, isn't it nice to take these steps regardless?

- Provide detailed parking information and where to go once they arrive.

- Include the appropriate attire (if necessary).
- Personally meet guests as they arrive at the door.
- Take away any other anxiety-inducing stressors.

Along those same lines, if you work in an organization, be mindful of your neurodiverse colleagues and those that you are looking to hire. Accommodations can be simple. Quiet workspaces, understanding that a complex CRM system can be overwhelming for someone with ADHD, so they may need more time with meeting notes or voice-to-text technology, or even some admin support. Try not to get frustrated if a colleague doesn't have the same work schedule as you do. You never know what they are struggling with. Anxiety, depression, OCD, etc. can be crippling at times, and we are not to judge others.

Finally remember, divergent thinking generates multiple ideas or solutions to a problem. Creative problem-solving is a good thing. Ernst & Young did a research study that showed that many of the future workplace skills perfectly align with those that you find in individuals with dyslexia. LinkedIn has added dyslexic thinking as a skill. If we can all see these differences as talents as opposed to disabilities or hindrances, make accommodations, and approach every donor and colleague with grace and understanding, the possibilities are endless.

Please welcome Shelly to our team.

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

Our Team

\$124M to HBCU Transformation Project

The **HBCU Transformation Project**, a collaborative effort to drive tangible, long-term progress across historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and boost the Black economy, was awarded \$124 million from Blue Meridian Partners.

The latest investment, which boosts Blue Meridian's total investment in the effort to \$184 million, will expand the Transformation Project's work to drive systemic improvements among HBCUs nationwide. The HBCU Transformation Project is a collaboration between UNCF (United Negro College Fund), Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf), and Partnership for Education Advancement (Ed Advancement). Forty HBCUs are currently working intensively with the project. Blue Meridian Partners made the additional investment after HBCU Transformation Project leaders and individual campuses reported positive results from the project's initial phase. *PND, 9-14*

Our LinkedIn

Big Donors Give Bigger

Rich donors gave an average of \$34,917 to charity last year, a 19% increase from pre-pandemic levels and 13.5 times more than the average amount given to charity by the general population. And 85% of high-net-worth households gave to charity in 2022. While that is just a 3% drop from 2020, it is about 35 percentage points more than the share of nonwealthy households that gave last year.

The 2023 *Bank of America Study of Philanthropy: Charitable Giving by Affluent Households* surveyed those who have a net worth of at least \$1 million, excluding their primary residence, or an annual household income of \$200,000 or more, and was produced by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI in partnership with Bank of America.

The study found that wealthy women continue to be an important force in charitable giving. Women make 85% of charitable-giving decisions in affluent households, the study found. In addition, 42% of women respondents said they volunteered at a charity last year, compared with 33% of men respondents. While more rich women volunteer than rich men, only 16% of those women served on a nonprofit board, compared with 30% of men.

And what is most important to these donors? Climate change. Younger donors are twice as likely as older donors to say climate change is most important to them. Like many rich donors today, wealthy millennial and Gen Z givers want to see the inner workings of how charities operate and carry out their missions, they want to visit the group, and, in general, want access to more information. [More here.](#) *COP, 10-3*

\$9.2 billion Spent Annually on Climate Change

A report from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, focused in part or entirely on the environment or climate change, estimates that nonprofits spend between \$7.8 billion and \$9.2 billion annually on programs and activities that address climate change. Of that spending, an estimated 49% went to climate mitigation efforts—those focused on limiting greenhouse gas emissions to stop global warming—and 14% went to adaptation, which is focused on limiting the negative effects caused by a changing climate, with 34% not clearly specified.

According to the survey, the most common tactics employed by nonprofits to support their work was policy-based approaches (30%), followed by climate justice and just transition of climate action (21%). When organized by sector focus, greener energy use and green and resilient energy supply topped the list of total climate expenditure (35% and 34%, respectively), followed by green and resilient land use (23%).

The survey also found that in fiscal year 2021, philanthropic sources (including foundations, individual donors, and corporations) provided approximately 88% of this funding, with the remaining coming from government sources (7%) and fees collected for services (5%). *PND, 9-27*

[Our Facebook](#)

Welcome New Client Partner



We Know Colleges & Universities

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with so many large and small college and universities; both public and private institutions, across the country. These schools that help mold today's young adults into tomorrow's leaders. Take a look at our list of higher education clients, past and present.

[Our Client Partners](#)

A Fresh Approach to 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 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.

[Our Services](#)



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