



My View

Hard Times

Like other nonprofits across the country, TIP Affiliates are being affected by the downturn in the economy. Donations are expected to be down significantly in 2009, and we are already seeing increased difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers. At the same time, the need for TIP services is increasing.

TIP Affiliates are reporting increasing calls to assist survivors of suicide and increased domestic violence responses. This is not surprising. The stresses caused by the poor economy are causing increased stress in the lives of individuals and within families. In short, TIP Affiliates will be asked to do more with less in the next year or two.

The good news is that TIP Affiliates are “lean and mean” and are used to operating on a shoestring budget. We are used to “living poor with style.” Nevertheless, we will need to adapt to a severe recession and we’ll find creative ways of staying financially afloat. Here are my ideas:

- We need to maintain the quality of our core service and not “cut corners.” Our ability to survive and thrive will depend more than ever on our ability to “deliver the goods.” We need to redouble our efforts to support and nurture our TIP Volunteers who are the ones who deliver the goods.
- We need to make the case to our constituents and donors that TIP is needed more than ever. The poor economy is throwing many families into crisis and these families need our services. Our country is in crisis and TIP is in a unique position to help.
- We need to stay close to our key funders. Our current donors are the ones most likely to help us navigate the downturn.
- We need to find creative ways of cutting expenses. For example, perhaps we can have our fundraising dinners in a hospital auditorium rather than in a hotel.
- Without being alarmists, we need to show our TIP volunteers the “Big Picture.” TIP Volunteers are very resourceful and will help us if they understand the need.
- We need to stay positive. There are many people who support TIP who still have good jobs (police, fire, hospital personnel) and the capacity to help us. This is by no means an exhaustive list of things we can do to “weather the storm,” and I welcome your ideas. I am optimistic.

Our Affiliates have survived other crises situations and as an organization we are resilient. By pulling together, sharing our “Best Practices” and by staying true to our mission, I believe we will not only survive these hard times, but we will find opportunities to become a stronger organization.

Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.

Email him at <mailto:Tipincceo@aol.com>