



SMITH COLLEGE

UNION  
COLLEGE  
FOUNDED 1795

# Giving and Getting 100%: Creating a Culture of Thanks on Campus

Halley Ofner, Smith College

Ashley Tyner, Union College



## Giving & Getting 100%

Thank-A-Smithie

*Halley Ofner, Donor Relations Specialist*





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## Thank-A-Smithie

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### *At the Beginning*

- Paige Eubanks
- Lynne Wester





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## *Planning and Collaboration*

- Donor Relations
- Annual Fund
- Planned Giving





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# *Year One: 2012*

- What worked



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### *Year One: 2012*

- Lessons learned





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### *Year Two: 2013*

- What worked



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### *Year Two: 2013*

- Lessons learned







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***Year Three: 2014***

- **Materials**
- **Marketing**
- **Communication**



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*Questions?*

THANK  
YOU



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# Giving & Getting 100%

The Student Stewardship Experience

*Ashley Tyner, Director of Advancement Events and Stewardship*



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*What does this mean and how do you achieve it?*

- Introduction
  - New stewardship department
  - Not getting the quantity and quality of letters we wanted
- You have to put in *a little* extra effort to elicit a student response
  - Reach out in many different ways
  - Language
  - Provide examples and [best practices](#)
  - Get in front of the students
    - How? Host EVENTS *with a purpose (and with food)*

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### *Thank-a-thon*

- Who
  - All scholarship recipients
- What
  - Opportunity to educate scholarship recipients on philanthropy, meet them face-to-face to talk about their scholarship and donor(s) and get their thank you letters signed and written if they haven't done so already!!
  - **Bonus:** gather quotes and info that you can use for other stewardship pieces and events, learn who may be a good speaker, get permission for donors to contact them, student photos
- When
  - Be strategic: day of the week, time of day and semester
- Where
  - Be centrally located
  - Get noticed – balloons, candy, posters, food



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### *Thank-a-thon continued*

- Why
  - We want 100% participation (406 letters)
    - Hand signed, printed thank you notes
    - We want more: **holiday cards** and photos
- How
  - We begin by contacting students at least 6 weeks before the Thank-a-thon and ask them to submit their thank you letter in advance of the event
    - Proof and print
  - Handle logistics: contact catering, facilities, photo booth and outside vendors, purchase supplies, organize student files, assign staff to specific jobs (many students come at once)
  - Down to details – **personalize the event**, make it **fun!**
    - Thanksgiving-themed food, hot cocoa, cupcakes, decorate your own cookie, ice cream

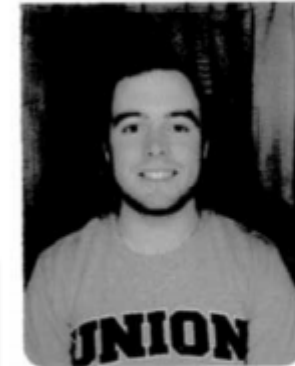


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## Thank-a-thon photos



11.12.2013



Find Your Photos At  
[www.saratoga-photo Booth.com](http://www.saratoga-photo Booth.com)





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### *Freshmen Scholarship Orientation continued*

- Intro
  - We wanted to create a relationship with our students
    - Wanted to improve the process and product
  - Struggled with quantity and quality of freshmen letters
    - The lost art of writing a thank you
  - Educate students on gratitude, paying it forward, endowed funds
- Who
  - All freshmen and transfer students who received named scholarships are “required to attend” or make other arrangements to meet with us
- What
  - An orientation to educate freshmen and transfers on stewardship and their role in the process
  - We have a donor meet students and tell them what their letters mean to our donors and why they are important00

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## Freshmen Scholarship Orientation

- When
  - The first session with the bulk of students is two weeks after school begins, in the evening
    - Pizza dinner, cupcakes
  - Follow up sessions are held during common lunch
    - We have several scholarships assigned after that time
    - One-on-ones
- Where
  - On campus in a private dining room
- Why
  - To teach best practices
  - Introduce our staff and College Relations
  - Review requirements, expectations, deadlines
  - Make the students feel important and fortunate



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### *Tips and Tricks*

- If at first you don't succeed, try and try again
  - Host a follow up date
- Offer prizes
  - iPad drawing for attending
  - M&M count
- Feed them!
- Allow everyone to participate
  - Have a list of top donors so that those who don't have scholarships can create a card as well
- Personalize and customize letters to donors





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### *Impact*

- **HAPPY DONORS!**
  - Mr. Cooper gave an additional \$15,000: \$10,000 toward his endowed fund and \$5,000 annual to his current recipient
  - Mrs. Cohen wrote “I would like to add the following funds to my scholarship. I am delighted to have heard from the current recipient of that scholarship. His expressions of gratitude beckoned these added funds.”
  - A note from one of our top donors to his recipient....  
“...My only message to any of the recipients is that when they graduate and achieve some level of success, they contribute to the Annual Fund, no matter what amount so that people who follow in their footsteps may also have the financial support to allow them to attend Union. If it were not for financial aid made available by graduates who preceded me, I would never have been able to attend Union.”
- Involved and gracious students
- Educated future donors
  - “I will give back one day because you have given so much to me”
- Impressive attendance at our annual Scholarship Recognition Luncheon



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*Questions, Comments*



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