

# The Perfect Gift for a Major Donor

To forge unbreakable bonds, show your gratitude in memorable ways.

By Carol Weisman

**W**hen you have an incredibly dedicated donor, board member, or other special person you want to thank, but you can't imagine how to convey your deep appreciation, how do you proceed? Here are a few suggestions.

## Examples

**Talk to a family member or friend** of the donor. Ask: Is there an experience your donor has always wanted? Sky diving, seeing a rehearsal of Alvin Alley's dance company (this is my secret wish), throwing out a ball at a game? What does your donor want that you could make happen?

**Ask if there is anyone** your donor has always wanted to meet. Contact that person, and see if you can make a dinner or other meeting happen.

**Does your donor** have a favorite book? Can you get a signed copy with a note from the author? Obviously, if the favorite book is the *Bible*, *Huck Finn*, or *The Canterbury Tales*, you're pretty much out of luck. But there is likely a



contemporary writer your donor admires. If you can work your six degrees of separation magic, you might even get a video clip from the author.

**Is there something symbolic of your organization's mission** that you could give? I gave machetes to board members of the "Friends of the Eternal Rainforest" who traveled to Costa Rica on a donor trip. Each machete had a luggage tag with the donor's name on one side and "Defender of the Forest" on the other.

“Is there an experience your donor has always wanted?”

## Rules

**Any gift should be inexpensive** and highly thought through.

**If you have a shy donor**, give it in private.

**If you have donors who enjoy recognition**, give their gifts in front of the people they care about.

**Experiential gifts** that relate to the mission or your donor's passion are the hot ticket.

Always remember: Very special people deserve very special recognition. Get your most creative Martha Stewart wannabees involved. **S**

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## Gifts from the Heart

For more ways to express gratitude to the special people in your organization's life, see these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

**Twelve Ways to Say Thank You** (Vol. 16, No. 6)

**What's the Best Way to Recognize a Major Donor?** (Vo. 31, No. 2)

**How to Energize Your Thank-You Letter** (Vol. 26, No. 2)

**Relationship Marketing: Guaranteeing the Future** (Vol. 14, No. 5)

**Deeper Donor Relationships = Increased Contributions** (Vol. 26, No. 4)

**33 Top Tips for Building Donor Bonds** (Vol. 26, No. 1)

**What's Wrong with Thank You? Plenty** (Vol. 22, No. 2)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Resource Development and O for Opportunity: Exploring New Revenue Opportunities for Nonprofits (snpo.org/li).