

insight

WIN - WIN RELATIONSHIPS

Business & Nonprofits Partner for Success

For Bill Corbett, it was the introduction of the year. As president of Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, Inc., Corbett was attending an event when a Chamber staff member tapped him on the shoulder and introduced him to Jennifer Robbins, manager of Business Development for Turner Construction Company. "I had been trying to get the company's attention for five years," said Corbett. "That introduction led to a \$20,000-a-year commitment by Turner and the opportunity for our nonprofit to directly assist even more students. It never would have happened without the introduction."

"Many of our members are looking for more than increasing their bottom line; they want to take an active role in their community and have it be part of their brand," said Chamber Communications & Web Strategies Manager Staci Makovich. "Partnering with nonprofits can be an effective marketing technique that sets you apart from your competition and attracts loyal customers who share in the nonprofit's mission. It builds a caring culture among employees when the business they work for gives back to the community."

"When our staff witnesses Turner's commitment to the local community they are proud of our company and want to do their part," agreed Robbins.



Photo at left (l-r): Chamber Communications & Web Strategies Manager Staci Makovich; Unity House of Troy Director of Development Diane Cameron Pascone; and Chamber Director of Member Engagement & Events Kate Ollier.

"Nonprofits and businesses are a perfect fit. It's B2B at its best."

Diane Cameron Pascone
Director of Development
Unity House of Troy

"Businesses want to play an active role in helping their communities prosper. Nonprofits are looking to connect with businesses to advance their missions and bring about positive change," said Chamber Director of Member Engagement & Events Kate Ollier. "The Chamber helps the two connect. Professional introductions are among our most valuable member benefits. The result is a win-win situation for everyone."

Whether it's providing financial support, donating products and/or services, sponsoring a cause or promoting employee involvement, regional businesses are investing in local nonprofits as part of their corporate culture.

"The response to volunteer opportunities is always outstanding. Our employees also take part in the selection of the charitable organizations we support. It really enhances our company culture."

And small contributions count, too, say nonprofits. "When we were planning our Troy Victorian Tea fundraiser, I thought it would be great if The Whistling Kettle participated," said Malissa Pilette-McClenon, director of development and marketing for the YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Inc. "But asking a business for support can be nerve wracking." A simple introduction by the Chamber to co-owner Kevin Borowsky led to the café donating a gift basket and setting up a display table to attract new customers.

"It was a no-brainer," said Borowsky. "A Victorian tea in Troy? We had to be there!"

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Connecting Good Causes with Good People

Today's professionals want more than success in business - they want to make a difference in their communities. Let the Chamber introduce you to diverse, local nonprofits at "Connecting Good Causes with Good People," a casual after-hours event featuring CEOs and development directors from more than twenty community organizations. Find your passion for nonprofits and discover how you can take an active role in real change for the better. Enjoy networking, appetizers and a cash bar all evening. This is a great "no-pressure" event designed to open up connections, communication and opportunities. Find the cause that lights you up by registering today!

Register now for **Connecting Good Causes with Good People** on Tuesday, July 7 at Revolution Hall, 417 River Street in Troy. Sign up online at rensochamber.com/events. Registration and networking at 4 p.m.; program 4:30-6 p.m. \$35 for members; \$50 for walk-in members; \$70 for future members.

Sponsored by Marvin and Company Certified Public Accountants and Consultants.



Non-Profit Participants (as of press time)

- American Cancer Society, Inc. Eastern Division
- Berkshire Farm Center & Services for Youth
- Capital Region YMCA
- Capital Roots
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany
- Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region
- The Friends of Dyken Pond Center, Ltd.
- Hope 7 Community Center
- Hudson Mohawk Industrial Gateway
- Junior Achievement of Northeastern N.Y., Inc.
- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County
- Pride Center of the Capital Region
- St. Anne Foundation
- St. Paul's Center, Inc.
- Stride, Inc.
- The Junior League of Troy, New York
- Unity House of Troy, Inc.
- Vanderheyden, Inc.
- Whitney M. Young Foundation
- YWCA of the Greater Capital Region, Inc.

ASK THE EXPERT:

Branding for Nonprofits

Featuring Our Board of Directors

Mel Quinlan is Owner and Operations Director of Oberlander Group, a design and advertising firm working primarily for clients in higher education, the arts, technology and health care. The firm's services include branding, web development and design.



Q: Why is branding important to nonprofits?

A: Nonprofits usually focus resources on their mission but they also need to attract private donors, corporate sponsors and volunteers who feel confident they are devoting time and money to the right cause. That's where a strong brand makes a difference. Your brand has to clearly show your core message and it needs to appeal to people on an emotional level. Branding is the art of communicating your message clearly, and with the greatest impact, in order to influence your target audience.

Q: How does it differ from business branding?

A: Business branding is about trying to find a unique way to differentiate yourself from a sea of similar businesses. Nonprofits are usually unique in what they offer, so differentiation isn't the main concern. But since there are many other nonprofits competing for the same funding, you want to tell your story in a more compelling way. Non-profit branding is about building an emotional connection so the public feels compelled to not only donate to the cause but help move its message along to others. One major agency describes it as "Loyalty beyond reason." That's where you want to be.

Q: What are some basic dos and don'ts?

A: Your website is the strongest vehicle. Invest in photos and videos—a picture is still worth a thousand words and you want to connect emotionally. Don't be concerned that things will look too expensive. Focus on your message and make it as impactful as possible. It's also imperative to have all collateral consistent and true to your established brand, even when there are different agencies involved in the production of your materials (and even if they are donated). Otherwise you risk diluting your message.



The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce is a business, civic and economic development alliance that strives to enhance the economic vitality of Rensselaer County and the neighboring Gateway communities of Cohoes, Green Island, Waterford and Watervliet. The Chamber seeks to improve the quality of life within the community for both residents and businesses.

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