

## Arts groups aim to reach new generation of donors

Monday, October 31, 2005

By KATIE GRASSO  
Courier-Post Staff

### PHILADELPHIA

Charitable people have opened their wallets more than once to help support relief efforts after this year's multiple natural disasters. Now, museums, theaters, dance companies and other arts organizations are taking a look at how people give their money and the future of philanthropy in the region.

The arts rely on contributions from donors to stay in business, and these gifts have typically come from people who are older and therefore have more discretionary funds, said Eileen Heisman, president and CEO of the National Philanthropic Trust at a recent seminar hosted by the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia.

Currently, she said, the arts are receiving more attention and donations from the baby-boomer generation than their parents' generation, but the challenge is to reach out to the post-boomer generation.

These post-boomers are the new focus of arts organizations.

"I look at (arts organizations') Web sites and want to know that our money is being well spent," said Elaine Tse, a post-babyboomer arts supporter and board member of the Young Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. "My decision-making process is based on whether it will impact the organization."

Another important factor in reaching out to the post-boomer demographic is to establish personal contact -- either through cultural events, parties or meetings.

"It's hard to weed through what is significant, what speaks to me," Tse, from Philadelphia, said. "If I know someone on the committee or board, I'm more likely to give."

Seminar panelists gave the following tips for organizations to reach out to younger donors:

- Send out newsletters to keep people up-to-date about the organization. The newsletter could also list how donations are being spent and list how a \$10, \$50 or greater gift will specifically benefit the organization.
- Talk to prospective donors about leaving a legacy through donating to the arts.
- Update the organization's Web site to accept donations.
- Attract first-time patrons with coupons to places in the community. Code the coupons so you can track the impact.
- Keep your name in front of people. Just because they say "no" to contributing now, doesn't mean they will never give.

### KEY POINTS

The number of nonprofit organizations increased by 4.8 percent between 2003 and 2004. More organizations are seeking philanthropic support from a somewhat static base of philanthropic dollars.

Forty-two percent of baby boomers think their contributions are well spent, compared with 36 percent of older donors and 34 percent of younger donors; however, when baby boomers stop donating, it is most likely due to dissatisfaction with an organization's performance.

Post-boomers are more likely to "shop around" for charities or advocacy groups for personal contributions as interests change.