



What Is The Price of Compassion?

A \$5.2 Million Campaign
for Homecare & Hospice

“A SHELTERING EMBRACE”

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What is the price of compassion? This is the question members of the Homecare & Hospice Foundation of Manhattan, Kansas asked themselves before launching their first multi-million dollar campaign.

“How we treat our families, friends, and strangers at the end of life says a lot about us as individuals and a community,” said Rita Keating, campaign co-chair. “We are defined by our compassion. We believe that death should involve dignity, respect, and fellowship. This was the overriding consideration as we decided to move forward with the campaign.”

The construction of a hospice house would be the goal of the campaign. Homecare & Hospice of Manhattan had provided traditional hospice services for 30 years. However, the traditional model of in-home hospice was being challenged by changing demographics and real-life stories related to the difficulties and impracticalities of in-home, end-of-life care.

Grown children were living and working half a continent away and could not return to help during a parent’s final days. Husbands and wives, living longer, were challenged in their final years by their own health challenges and unable to care for a dying spouse in their personal residence. Young parents—dying of cancer or another disease—did not want their

prolonged death to be a hardship on young children. Some private residences could not logistically accommodate the medical equipment necessary for in-home hospice. Long distances between farms, ranches, and rural areas challenged delivery of hospice services.

The circumstances – the stories of both the dying and the living – motivated the members of Homecare & Hospice and its charitable foundation to complete a campaign assessment and, ultimately to launch a campaign. “A Sheltering Embrace,” the campaign title, was also the mantra and the message throughout the endeavor.

“A Sheltering Embrace”

“They had several challenges when they started,” said Robert Swanson, Vice Chairman of Hartsook Companies. “A new executive director, some different philosophies between the agency and foundation boards, and very little history of major-gift donors created hurdles that had to be cleared. As well, this was their first attempt at a multi-million dollar fundraising initiative and the agency lacked a real culture of giving.”

According to Dean Thibault, Keating’s campaign co-chair, the early stages of the campaign were slowed

by a new-hire transition in the executive director position and disagreements among volunteers. “I was very proud of how the volunteer leaders and the professional staff addressed and conquered these challenges. Their desire to work together and move forward as a team set the tone for what would be a very successful campaign.”

“The staff and volunteer leaders had a good way of engaging us [Hartsook Companies] as their fundraising counsel to overcome issues and find creative solutions,” said Swanson. “They asked good questions, discussed the various dynamics and assembled answers for their organization.”

A couple of early decisions were keys to the organization’s success.

“The co-chairs each brought something different to the table,” said Swanson. “Rita brought passion, a personal narrative and energy. Dean brought a business perspective and a steady hand. They made a great team and really championed the campaign leadership committee.”

Following a recommendation from Hartsook Companies’ report, they also directed the process in

Campaign Name: “A Sheltering Embrace”

Original Campaign Goal: \$4.1 million

Amount Raised: \$5.2 million

Campaign Objective: To secure capital funding for Riley County’s first hospice house with administrative center while maintaining annual fund operations and revenues of the Hospice Foundation.

Capital Gifts By Range:

\$500,000 & Above:	2
\$250,000 to \$499,999:	2
\$100,000 to \$249,000:	4
\$50,000 to \$99,999:	13
\$25,000 to \$49,999:	19
\$10,000 to \$24,999:	71
\$5,000 to \$9,999:	38
\$1,000 to \$4,999:	164
\$1 to \$999:	278

Source of Capital Gifts:

Foundation/Trusts:	12
Business/Corporate:	78
Individual/Family:	501

hiring the foundation’s first paid staff member, Chris Nolte. “Chris’ performance validated the board’s belief that an investment had to be made in foundation personnel,” said Thibault. “She worked extremely well in partnering and collaborating with volunteer leaders and professional fundraising counsel.”

The Ins & Outs of a Campaign

“Robert Swanson counseled that every campaign has highs and lows—moments of energy and periods of waiting,” said Keating. “Unfortunately he was right. We all had to learn the ‘ins and outs’ of conducting a multi-million dollar campaign.”

For about a decade, the annual development program for Homecare & Hospice revolved around a series of successful special events—a wine festival, a year-end light-of-life remembrance and a year-round memorial program. There was a database of charitable donors, but there were no major gift donors. On the positive side, there was also a pool of families who had been thoughtfully served through the years, decades of good relationships, and a track record of caring and quality service.

“Like many nonprofits Homecare & Hospice had some initial elements in place for a campaign, but there was a lot of work to be done and they needed help to understand and embrace the dynamics of a major gifts effort,” said Swanson. “Fortunately for those they serve, they were up to the task.”

“Breaking the campaign up into manageable components—incremental activities—was one of the lessons learned,” said Chris Nolte, development director. “Don’t focus on just the big goal, because that goal can be daunting.”

“With the counsel of Hartsook Companies, we learned that there was a specific set of steps and an ebb and flow to the campaign process,” said Thibault. “Prospects were prioritized and sequenced to maximize opportunities. Intermediate goals were set and focused upon. Achievement of those goals opened doors to other prospects.”

Foundation and Board agency members were the first to be cultivated and solicited. With 100 percent Board participation in place, selected lead donor prospects were cultivated and solicited. As increasing percentages of the campaign goal were achieved,



new layers of donor pools were added to the mix. The strategy led the organization to apply for—and ultimately qualify for and receive—a \$550,000 J.E. & L.E. Mabee Foundation challenge grant that launched the public phase of the campaign.

Through it all, a precise process was followed and progress was tracked through a series of fundraising management reports. “This helped it all make sense. In fact, we all learned to recite the four steps of fundraising,” said Nolte, “Identification, cultivation, solicitation and appreciation.”

“Sometimes the pace or the process itself was irritating, and I admit I am not a patient person,” noted Keating. “But the process worked. More than \$4.8 million was raised for capital and equipment and more than \$400,000 was raised for the annual fund program during this period. In the end, it was a success.”

The Final Numbers

“Robert reminded us repeatedly that the campaign was not about a building,” said Nolte. “The campaign was about helping those who were dying—and helping the families of those who were dying—to undertake difficult end-of-life issues and events with dignity, honor, and compassion. Robert hammered home the point that if we found ourselves talking too much about the building, we would be less effective in the cultivation and solicitation and overall fundraising. Given the results, this philosophy proved to be the right attitude.”

Almost 600 donors—individuals, businesses and foundations—were ultimately involved in the capital portion of the campaign.

“We had spoken with other hospices and nonprofits and learned that they didn’t have the broad base of support that maybe they should have had,” said Keating. “One donor might have done 25 percent or 50 percent of the total project and, as a result, those organizations didn’t have the ongoing relationships they needed to strengthen the overall development operations and donor base for future support.”

Thibault agreed with Keating’s assessment, noting: “While about 75 to 80 percent of all dollars donated did come from 20 to 25 percent of all our donors, we made a concentrated effort to engage donors at every level,” said Thibault. “Our attitude was that if someone could only make a \$100 donation, why not engage them. The opportunity for each of them to help us over the coming years could become significant.”

Nolte added, “Robert talked about each cultivation and solicitation meeting as an advertisement for hospice. Whether they made a gift and pledge or not, we had one more person, one more family, one more business who better understood our mission—and that unto itself is valuable.

About the Consultant – Robert G. Swanson, Vice Chairman, Hartsook Companies, has helped countless nonprofit organizations in social services, higher education, youth services, the arts, museums and healthcare raise funds as they seek to expand and improve services for their clients. In his more than 21 years as a fundraising professional, Robert has helped clients secure more than \$300 million in gifts and grants. Robert can be reached at robert@hartsookcompanies.com.

About Hartsook Companies, Inc. – Hartsook Companies, Inc., has served nonprofits nationwide with capital, endowment and annual campaigns; leadership support; board training; marketing and more since 1987. The firm has conducted more than 1,700 campaigns ranging from \$500,000 to more than \$1 billion. The web site: www.hartsookcompanies.com.