

When saying “no” to a proposal is the best way to help a charity.

Whether to give to a charity, when to give, and how much to give? Donors’ answers to these questions can significantly affect a charity’s future, for better or worse, especially with small and young organizations. Fritz Kling managed this *Philanthropy Paradox* to good effect with the Youth Life Foundation of Richmond (YLFR).

YLFR’s Challenge

Heather Goodlett sought out Fritz Kling of KPG upon launching her newly founded non-profit organization. Heather was overwhelmed with information about starting a charity and trying to digest the advice she was receiving from the organization’s national affiliate in Washington, D.C. She approached Fritz for guidance on how to solicit grant funding from the family foundation he directed.

Fritz Kling’s Influence

Fritz guided the conversation with Heather beyond YLFR’s immediate financial needs to help her focus on the long-term picture. Greatly reducing the budget for YLFR, Fritz advised, would be a better fit with the local prospect pool and giving levels in the mid-sized market. Fritz also advised YLFR not to seek large grants from foundations at that time, warning

that an inflated budget could give YLFR a false sense of its optimal scale and result in a funding gap in following years.

A Positive Outcome

Heather describes the interaction with Fritz as “the best conversation I had” during that challenging time. Following his advice, YLFR focused initial fundraising efforts on attracting smaller, recurring donors and seeking smaller grants, thereby building credibility within the local philanthropic community. This proved to be the main reason YLFR was able to secure larger grants from many foundations in the following years. Fritz eventually guided the foundation he ran to make increasing grants to YLFR, helping them avoid the dependency that often accompanies large grants. He also built in a “challenge” to give YLFR additional incentive for seeking support from a broader donor pool. YLFR used that challenge grant to open a new program site.

YLFR credits much of its growth to maintaining a consultative partnership with Fritz Kling that has helped the organization identify and improve upon areas of weakness and build a sustainable foundation for the future.