



GIFT PLANNING ASSOCIATES
Fundraising Counsel

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Mr. J. Mikel Ellcessor
General Manager
WDET 101.9 FM
4600 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI 48201

Dear Mr. Ellcessor:

This letter summarizes the discussion we had today about a potential ethical issue related to fundraising for digital archiving at WDET.

Along with Meg Callow, you showed me the print materials, e-mail materials, and letters to staff and donors related to this issue. You also played an audio sample of the appeal in question. Based on what I was shown, and on my training and experience over thirty-one years of non-profit organization work, I offer these observations:

1. The *implied donor contract* (what was promised in the solicitation in exchange for a charitable gift) does not seem to have been violated. I do not feel there was misrepresentation with donors. The on-air example I listened to today could have been qualified further with words like “this is an example,” or “this simulation demonstrates what we need to do.” Even without that, the intent seems clear to me. No donors have registered a complaint about this, even after explanatory letters about the issue in question were sent to each donor who contributed to the appeal, and even with an offer of a refund if this issue was of concern to donors.
2. The concerns reported to me included phrases such as “donor fraud,” “impugned journalistic integrity,” and “misleading the donor.” I do not see anything approaching such strong accusations; in fact, my opinion is that this fundraising appeal was conducted forthrightly and ethically. I presume the funds will be used for the purpose for which they were solicited, so this is a valid approach, in my opinion. I have included the Association of Fundraising Professionals Code of Ethical Principles and Standards, which is the industry standard for guidelines.

I trust this statement will further clarify the situation for WDET, donors, and other stakeholders who may raise concerns about possible ethical breaches. It is positive to operate in a way that allows such concerns to be raised and considered. If I may be of further service, I would be happy to assist.

Sincerely,

Rick M. Kress, ACFRE

Encl: AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards
Rick Kress – short form bio

RICK KRESS BIO

The Rev. Rick M. Kress, ACFRE, has a 31 year career in the non-profit sector, focused primarily on executive management, philanthropy, and governance. His positions have included:

- President/CEO of Gift Planning Associates, Shelby Township, Michigan, a consulting firm he founded in 2002, specializing in non-profit executive management, philanthropy, and governance
- One of fewer than 100 people in the world to have earned the ACFRE (Advanced Certified Fund Raising Executive), the highest certification conferred by the Association of Fundraising Executives (AFP), the world's largest association of philanthropic professionals
- Vice president of development, William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, Michigan (a Top 15 Teaching Hospital and Top 100 Hospital)
- Vice president of development, Providence Hospital and Medical Centers, Southfield, Michigan (a Top 15 Teaching Hospital and Top 100 Hospital), and president of the Providence Health Foundation
- Vice president of development and public relations, Lutheran Social Services of Michigan, Detroit, Michigan
- President, Greater Detroit Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)
- Chairman, Ethics Committee, Greater Detroit Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP)
- Member, Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), Alexandria, Virginia
- Member, Partnership for Philanthropic Planning (PPP), Indianapolis, Indiana
- Member, Association of Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), Washington DC
- Member, National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW)
- Chairman of the Board, Samaritan House, Washington, Michigan
- Secretary of the Board, Turning Point, Mt. Clemens, Michigan
- President, American Prospect Research Association of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Advisory Board member, Black United Fund of Michigan, Detroit, Michigan
- Ordained clergy, Church of God, Anderson, Indiana
- Speaker and faculty for the Association of Fundraising Executives (AFP) International Conference, Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP) International Conference, and dozens of other national, regional, and local groups