

Business Report

A Formula To Inspire

BY SUSAN L. AXELROD, CFRE, PFR

“What can I do that will really make a difference?”

Since Super Storm Sandy hit the east coast with massive impact, this has become a frequently asked question. Most people want to do something to help, to make a difference. I tell everyone who will listen the most important point about this storm: many of the people, who are now in need, are the same people who would have been donors to others throughout the holiday giving season!

In addition to supporting our downstate neighbors, I urge you to look around our own community and give right here in Saratoga. It may be the hospital, it may be Franklin Community Center or DVRC (Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Services), or Shelters of Saratoga; whatever organization's purpose moves you—do something about it.

Here's a formula to guide you: C + C + A = C. That means: CARE about something + COMMIT to it + take ACTION = create CHANGE.

What does this look like in actual application? Ask Chris Mullally.

CARE about something

In 2011, Chris was just an ordinary man, a small business owner, listening to a CNN news broadcast about the plight of children who were starving in Somalia. “When I heard that up to 600,000 children could die from starvation in Somalia, I said the same thing that almost everyone says today – ‘Wow – that's really terrible but what can I do about it?’ I realized that of course I cannot do anything about it because I never really try to do anything about it. It became apparent to me that if I would just make the time in my life to try to do something that maybe I just could.” Chris Cared.

COMMIT to it

Chris spoke with his wife and together they agreed to do something about this terrible tragedy. They knew it would take resources to make anything happen and they have now spent \$25,000 of their own money to create and administer the Extraordinary Project with the goal of raising \$1 million to feed starving children in Somalia—one dollar at a time.

They are paying for all of the administrative expenses so that, except for Paypal fees, 100 percent of all contributions go to feed the children. They never thought of themselves as wealthy people, and had never previously contemplated making a donation of this size. But because they cared about the cause and



Susan Axelrod, Director of Planned Giving, Saratoga Hospital Foundation.

Courtesy Susan Axelrod

that any or every person could donate \$1 toward the goal of feeding starving children in Somalia. Next, Chris leased a billboard, created and started distributing postcards, took out advertisements in several local newspapers, put up a Facebook page, created a video, spoke with his own church group and any other groups who would listen to the message: “All I am asking for is \$1 from 1 million people” (There are videos and other news clippings at www.extraordinaryproject.com), and for every person to ask their friends to take the same action.”

Create CHANGE

Chris Mullally and his wife Jin have become my new poster children for the movement Regular People Becoming Philanthropists (see the Facebook page by that name). I started this movement to help all people understand that you do not have to be rich to be a philanthropist and make significant and positive change in the world by taking action.

Of course, if you are rich, I hope that you might commit to action on behalf of whatever cause you care about.

There are many worthwhile organizations and causes discussed on that Facebook page and on my website under ‘Impressive Projects’ (www.whatwillyourlegacybe.com).

All of the people involved in these organizations applied the formula to Inspire in their lives. You can too by making a substantial contribution. Note: I get NO finders fee for donations made to any organization.

Today, the Extraordinary Project is making meaningful and lasting change having raised nearly \$50,000 to feed children in Af-