

Community Legal Aid

A non-profit law firm serving the legal needs of low-income individuals and families in central northeast Ohio



www.communitylegalaid.org

It's not a zero-sum game

by Maria Duvuvuei, communications & development director

It's that time of year again. And no, I'm not talking about the transition to football playoff season.

'Tis the season to be giving -- charitably, that is.

This time of year, when Giving Tuesday makes its turn around the sun, nonprofits become aglow with warm messages of how your support can touch and transform lives.

(I'm not being snarky. It's true. One small act from you can change the world. Have you made your donation to Community Legal Aid, yet?)

But I've been in virtual trainings lately, and on email threads, and I have noticed an alarming trend. Let's call it, the Hunger Games of Philanthropy.

There's a faction of the charitable giving world who paints fundraising as competitive, even cut-throat. There's this notion that if one organization gets a grant or a significant philanthropic gift, that this somehow means another organization gets less.

But we're not talking about pie.

The "us versus them" mentality in nonprofit development is disingenuous. We're all in this fight together. Community Legal Aid, while an important spoke in the wheel, is hardly the only organization deserving of philanthropic support. In fact, without robust funding for our partner organizations, the impact we would be able to make in our community would be severely limited.

We at Legal Aid would like to see us (nonprofits) as a sector be more supportive of other organizations getting the props and support they need. Positive movement for any one of us is positive movement for all of us.

Funders, donors, volunteers, ambassadors -- those who support our work and want to see our clients empowered know that when we support people holistically, we improve their opportunities exponentially. It would be exceedingly arrogant to think one organization alone could serve our

clients as well as we can serve them together.

Community centric fundraising is a concept that's been gaining traction, and it's no wonder -- it's based in common sense. If we all work together, support each other, build each other up, then we better serve those in our community who rely on our support.

This isn't just lip service. Given the inherent tensions that exist in the wealth gaps and philanthropic circles in our society, this goal of supportive and collaborative fundraising has direct ties to equity and justice in our community -- a cause, you may know, is near and dear to our hearts here at Community Legal Aid.

This article is part of Legal Aid's "Big Ideas" series.

Sidebar:

In case you missed it in our #GivingTuesday message yesterday, we've put together a list of partner organizations also working to bring about equity and justice in our community. They're worth spreading the word about and supporting this season of giving.

[See the list](#)

Printed: January 25, 2022

<http://www.communitylegalaid.org/node/1636/it's-not-zero-sum-game>

©Community Legal Aid