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THE NEXT GENERATION OF PHILANTHROPIC GIVING IN WEST MICHIGAN AND BEYOND

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Abstract

The nonprofit sector in the United States and in West Michigan is undergoing a monumental transformation as Baby Boomers pass on their wealth to next generations who will eventually become the driving force in philanthropic giving. It is critical, then, that nonprofit organizations begin to answer questions about these generations and their giving habits. What are the attitudes and desires of these generations as they relate to philanthropy? How will they give philanthropically and to what organizations? What, if anything, should nonprofit organizations do in order to engage these donors? This paper explores these questions, providing insights into the literature on the topic as well as anecdotal evidence about how West Michigan nonprofit organizations are addressing these issues drawn from a series of personal interviews. The introduction includes an overarching view of the transition that will take place in the near future and the paper goes on to discuss who these next generation donors are, their philanthropic identity, how they give, how organizations might engage them and finally recommendations for organizations on the best approaches to ensure their organizations are noticed by next generations and are able to continue to serve their communities in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Nonprofit organizations throughout the United States rely heavily, and in some cases, exclusively on charitable gifts from community members, foundations and corporations. Traditionally, the Baby Boomer generation and their predecessors have supported large national organizations like United Way and Red Cross because of their credibility and visibility, however, with these generations aging, in the coming years a massive shift will take place in the philanthropic world in which the children of these earlier generations (Generations X and Y) will become philanthropists in their own right, and in fact these younger generations are already participating in philanthropy. It is necessary that nonprofit organizations begin to look at their strategies for engaging these “next
generations.” In the following paper, questions about this topic will be addressed including whether nonprofit organizations have even begun to address these issues; if so, how far along in the process they are; and what further steps they may need to take to ensure that they will have sustainable donor growth in the future.

For the purposes of this paper, the term “next generation” will be defined in the context of philanthropy—detailing several authors’ definitions and descriptions of the groups that make up this “next generation.” The author then explores the philanthropic identity of these generations and their giving habits. In order to provide a local perspective on these issues, interviews several local West Michigan nonprofit leaders participated in interviews to determine how these entities are addressing next generation donors. The review leads to recommendations for nonprofit organizations who wish to engage with next generation philanthropists now and into the future.

Defining the Next Generation of Nonprofit Donors

Who are Next Generation Donors?

The “next generation” is defined as those givers who fall into “Generation X (Gen X)” and “Generation Y (Gen Y)/Millenials.” The #NEXTGENDONORS study (Johnson Center, 2013) defined Generation X as those born from 1964 – 1980 and Generation Y as those born from 1981 – 2000 (p. 3). Definitions from other studies varied slightly by one to two years.

Each of these generations has distinct characteristics that define them. Davis (2012) generalized the identities of these two generations, although she cautioned that it is dangerous to overgeneralize, especially when it comes to donor relationships. These characteristics are starting points for an understanding of the attitudes and influences on these generations, but they must be tempered with first-hand knowledge of individual donors. Davis said Generation X is generally self-reliant, motivated by financial incentives, results-oriented, and used to multitasking. Although they have often been portrayed as “slackers” or lacking direction, studies show they are equally philanthropic as the generation before them. This generation emerged at the dawning of the Internet age, and they have challenged traditional business and nonprofit practices utilizing the Internet to re-examine work/life balance and hierarchical leadership structures. Their more modern leadership style focuses on a mix of formal education, entrepreneurship and technological
innovation (Davis, pp. 12-14). Cone Inc. (2006) portrayed generation X in a harsher light saying they are, “…a strongly individualistic society. Thought of as a generation of slackers with little drive and no direction, Gen Xers are anti-rules and anti-groups. They rely on self over others” (p. 4).

Davis (2012) went on to offer her findings about Millenials, a generation nearly as large as the “Baby Boomer” generation. The rise of social media and the threat of global terrorism that emerged after 9/11 have shaped the attitudes of this generation. It is the most diverse generation in American history. Members are closely connected with their peer networks and looking for transparency in the organizations they support. They have many similarities to Generation X. They are innovative, look for mutual respect, are challenging tradition, and are independent and interactive. Like Generation Xers, Millenials are taking on leadership roles and challenging the status quo in organizations and in society. Cone Inc. (2006) described Millennials as “reared in a youth-centric culture…self-assured and civic minded…[Millenials] believe community extends beyond their own backyard and feel empowered and compelled to make the world a better place.” (p. 4).

Next Generation Donors’ Philanthropic Identity

While Generation X and Y are still in the early stages of their philanthropic trajectories, there are patterns emerging in the ways these young donors give. The #NEXTGENDONORS study (Johnson Center, 2013) focused on Generation X and Y donors with personal net worth of $500,000 or more; personal income of $100,000 or more; annual personal giving of $5,000 or more; annual family giving of $10,000 or more; or endowed family philanthropic assets of $500,000 or more. These donors were found to have very specific giving patterns and attitudes about philanthropy. Many of them have been raised in families with long philanthropic histories, and they are interested in balancing that legacy with the use of new philanthropic tools. They are willing to contribute to the same causes as their families if those causes fit their own personal values. These donors are actively learning about philanthropy from their parents and grandparents and have been participating in philanthropy from an early age. Generation Y, specifically, is considered closer to their parents than many previous generations (Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), 2012; Cone Inc., 2006). CAF (2012) notes their meaningful values are not different than their parents, but they want those values framed in personal ways, and they “…are not necessarily going to completely reinvent the wheel when it comes to giving, but they are going to develop the best tools to ensure their
giving makes a difference” (p. 18). While their values have been passed on from their parents and grandparents, these next generations are taking their own approach to the strategy of philanthropy (Johnson Center for Philanthropy and 21/64, 2013). Anheier (2005) noted that heirs to family foundations are differentiating themselves, creating their own grant-making foundations and finding new giving mechanisms. CAF (2012) also found that next generation philanthropists are more willing to take risks than previous generations and are more open to innovation and experimentation.

**Results and impact focus.** These generations are results oriented and want to see the impact their contributions are making. The desire of next generation donors to give to a specific cause where they can see the results was a common theme in conversations with three local nonprofit organizations. B. Greenleaf, a representative from the local branch of a national social services nonprofit noted that members of these generations want organizations to report back on what their funds are doing to further the organization’s mission. They are not interested in giving to general funds (personal communication, October 6, 2013). E. McCarthy, a representative from a nationally recognized arts and culture nonprofit stated, “…it does seem that the younger generation of philanthropists have a bit more of an expectation of impact (personal communication, October 11, 2013).”

In the #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study, the highest rated giving strategies included conducting due diligence before supporting an organization, selecting goals first and then identifying organizations that fit those goals, and root cause analysis and programming. According to the study, these strategic choices are aimed at maximizing impact. These donors define “good philanthropy” as that which assigns highest priority to impact. Millennials want to see the immediate effects and impact that their philanthropic endeavors are having (Cone Inc., 2006; Rovner, 2013). CAF’s (2012) study said, “…those under 30 place significant weight on the importance of making a ‘tangible impact’ with their philanthropic activity” (p. 14). A Forbes (2012) study found that

Part of this entrepreneurial spirit means the new generations asking for quicker deployment of capital. Pritzker Simmons points out that if a foundation’s spending policy is limited to 5% of asset annually and their goal is climate change it makes little sense to hoard capital. Why do you want to be around in 150 years? This generation is starting to ask these sorts of questions (p. 21).

**Transparency and accountability.** This desire for impact translates into a greater demand from this next generation for transparency and accountability in the organizations they support. Coppens (2002)
quoted Chuck Loving, director of the Snite Museum of Art at the University of Notre Dame who observed, “When (new donors) identify themselves to us, it’s more of a business relationship. They ask us to make our case. In the past, the pitch was not as rigorous, but now donors want follow-up reports; they want accounting reports” (p.3). Snyder (2011) noted “Millennial donors want to know details about the organizations they support… 86.3% want updates on programs or services, and 54.6% want information about the organization and its financial condition” (p. 2). Rovner’s (2013) study also found that Generation Y, specifically, demands transparency and accountability and that these generations ask specific questions about return on investment and expect concrete and thorough answers. This generation has an interest in making sure the organizations they support are financially healthy.

A. DeVos, a representative from a regional children’s services organization pointed out that, “…the next generation is also fairly discerning about financial choices of organizations, and they want to be involved with organizations that are making smart financial decisions (personal communication, October 19, 2013).” She pointed out that this is related to scandals that have arisen in recent years surrounding charities, which has led to skepticism and a lack of trust also mentioned by B. Greenleaf.

Engaging fully with organizations. Freeman (2013) notes, “They share distrust for institutions, and are more receptive to their peers. They want to be physically, mentally and emotionally involved” (p. 1). Davis (2012) echoed these findings, saying that these donors want organizations to show the impact they are having and a direct link to the cause. Generation Xers and Millenials want to engage fully with the organizations they support which means that they often support fewer organizations, and they want to interact on many levels with those organizations, not just through monetary gifts. Goddard (2005) interviewed Zenia Wadhwani, a United Way chapter’s “GenNext” program manager who asserted, “many younger donors take an active interest in where their money goes, or are looking for hands-on experience” (p. 1). This group offers young donors the opportunity to engage in multiple ways including through informational gatherings, fundraising events and volunteer opportunities. The #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study said that next generation donors believe that financial support without other types of engagement leads to a lack of impact. These donors want to meet the recipient of their gifts face-to-face and solve problems in collaboration with them. They also feel that this type of engagement makes them more
responsible as philanthropists. In the interviews conducted for this paper, these trends were echoed.

At the local level, each fundraising professional interviewed discussed the desire of next generation philanthropists to engage with the organizations beyond simply giving funds and noted these generations’ interest in seeing the impact of their dollars. One of the overarching trends discussed in each interview was the desire of next generation philanthropists to be fully engaged with the organization, giving both their time and their money. A. DeVos focused on this in her interview, discussing her perception that the people who are giving their time already are the most likely to become donors. She said,

…if people are volunteering their time, that’s where they’re likely to give money from the next generation. What I learned was that while my Grandma and Grandpa and my Mom and Dad might have made a gift just because or because somebody referred them, my friends and colleagues are going to make gifts because they were invested in the organization, so we know that it is critical to our sustainability that we engage our volunteers as supporters in the next generation (personal communication, October 19, 2013).

B. Greenleaf saw the same trend toward heavily engaging with an organization and noted specifically that this type of engagement requires more of the organization, saying,

I think the scope of fundraising is really changing. You can’t just send people a letter once a year anymore and expect them to write you a big check, so I think we really need to look at creative ways to engage people. Donors now want to be involved. They don’t want to just write a check. They want to write a check and then come and volunteer, and then they want to hang out with your clients, and then they want to get on the board. So they’re really active in your agency or your nonprofit, which is great, but it takes more staff to make that happen. It takes more effort and more of a thought-out process (personal communication, October 6, 2013).

E. McCarthy noted this move toward full engagement as well and is implementing some new strategies to do this, including inviting younger members of families who have traditionally given to events and providing networking opportunities for members of their young professionals group (personal communication, October 11, 2013).

**Meaningful engagement and social media.** All engagement is not equal, however. Next generation donors want to be engaged in meaningful ways. As Harris (2011) warned, “Young-donor focused events are an important part of a cultivation strategy, but don’t let these events be
the end of your engagement” (p. 2). Harris (2011) bolstered this finding, noting that it is critical to give next generation leaders a seat at the decision-making table and stated, “Too many organizations start a younger donor society or hold a special event but don’t find other ways to reach out to young donors through publications, face-to-face meetings, or other annual events. Special events should be a starting point, not a substitute for real engagement” (p. 7). Social media can also be utilized as an engagement tool, however, a key finding of Forbes in their 2012 next gen report was, Social media is taking hold as part of a philanthropic strategy, but is not a substitute for personal time and commitment. Facebook (37%), twitter (24%) and YouTube (23%) are the top three social media platforms considered most effective by survey respondents. However, all of the Forbes Insights interviewees indicate that social media can only highlight a cause. Seeing a project through to the end requires a significant amount of time and commitment in addition to publicity (p. 6).

The characteristics detailed above are evident in these next generations’ attitudes and activities, but their philanthropic identities are not yet fully formed. Although many are already actively participating in philanthropy, according to the #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study, “They are, right now, actively forming their adult philanthropic identities, influenced by generational, familial, and developmental forces as well as by their own experiences and those of the peers they trust” (p. 64).

**How Next Generation Donors Give**

More than ever, today’s philanthropic landscape is one of multiple giving channels and younger donors are more likely to utilize a variety of these channels (Snyder, 2011).

**Web-based vs. Mail.** Web-based giving is very popular, and those in Generation X who have given via web are equal in number to those who have given through the more traditional form of mail. In Generation Y, more have given via website than via mail (Bhagat, Loeb, Rovner, 2010). For high income next gen donors, giving online is the most common philanthropic activity with 77.7% participating (Johnson Center for Philanthropy and 21/64, 2013).

In interviews with local organizations, there was also much discussion about technology, and while the implementation ranged across a wide variety of mediums all interviewees agreed that technology needed to be a critical piece of the strategy to engage next generations in philanthropic activity. While all three organizations agreed that to further
engage these donors, technology must be a piece of the strategy, each organization is using technology in very different ways to engage next generation donors. At the time of the interview E. McCarthy’s organization did not have a “Donate Now” button on their webpage, but they were in the process of redesigning their page, and she was working to have that included on the new page. Her organization is also interested in implementing a text-to-give program to acquire new donors who may not have given to the organization before (personal communication, October 11, 2013). When asked about strategies to engage younger donors, B. Greenleaf talked about social media and the use of those platforms to promote events and generate interest among peer networks. He said of their social media efforts, “It’s really creating that conversation… (personal communication, October 6, 2013).” At A. DeVos’ organization, in addition to implementing the online fundraising event platform mentioned above, they are vigilant about their social media presence and learning about technology. They encourage members of the organization to take webinars and trainings on issues including google, their own database system and social media. In addition, they are implementing strategies to reach out to donors in multiple ways, for example they have an e-newsletter as well as a hard copy newsletter; appeals are mailed, emailed and a follow-up phone call is made. She noted that donors may receive a hard-copy appeal in the mail but go online to give, so it is important to approach potential donors through a variety of mediums (personal communication, October 19, 2013).

Social media. Bhagat, Loeb and Rovner (2010) found that Gen X and Y feel that solicitation through social networks is acceptable, but in the #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study it is noted that respondents did not give through social media or text messaging. Rovner (2013) bridged this gap, explaining, “There is little evidence that social media is growing as a transaction channel, that is, people are not donating on social networks… On the other hand, there is growing evidence that social media plays an important stewardship role” (14).

Peer to peer. When asked about the most appropriate method of solicitation, donors across the board preferred to be asked in person by someone they know, and Gen Xers and Millennials preferred this method by the highest percentage points – 89% and 87% respectively (Bhagat, Loeb, Rovner, 2010). Snyder (2011) also found that a request from a friend or family member was most likely to yield a result. Davis (2012) stated that young donors want to hear about philanthropic opportunities through friends, family or personal experiences. This preference for personal connections is not surprising given the interconnectedness of these generations. CAF (2012) said, “…they thrive on engagement, valuing their
networks and giving together. They are also more willing to shout about what they are doing. So, in the future we can expect to see strength in number and more people power” (p. 4).

Locally, all of the interviewees mentioned “peer-to-peer fundraising” and utilizing next generation networks. Peer-to-peer fundraising and engaging next generation donors as ambassadors for the organization who will go out and solicit funds and support from their networks is a subtheme of the larger desire for engagement. Younger donors want to hear about organizations from a trusted friend. E. McCarthy, when asked about desired outcomes noted that she looks for, “…people that would be an ambassador for your organization and do their own cultivating and motivating their peers. That’s really important. It’s really important to use networks (personal communication, October 11, 2013).” A. DeVos also talked about the importance of this type of fundraising, mentioning that her organization itself does not hold any fundraisers, but instead over 170 fundraisers per year are held by members of the community who take the initiative to raise funds from their own friends and family on behalf of the organization. In fact her organization feels this type of fundraising is so critical to their success that they are working to create an online platform specifically for this type of peer-to-peer fundraising event (personal communication, October 19, 2013). The #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study found that next generation philanthropists, “…also give their ties – their peer networks, their connections to others” (53).

This value placed on peer networks is manifested in pooled funds, for example “giving circles,” defined by The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers (2008) as:

…a type of pooled fund where members make grants together; sometimes called a ‘social investment club.’ Giving circles are very flexible and allow members to express their creativity. Giving circle members organize around a common interest… Each circle member contributes money to the fund. Members combine their resources for a bigger sum of charitable dollars (p.1). Next generation donors are more interested in the use of communal types of giving vehicles like giving circles and pooled funds #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013; CAF, 2012).

Venture philanthropy. As wealth transfers from one generation to the next, new trends including, “venture philanthropy” and “strategic philanthropy” are emerging, and young donors are willing to make strategy changes for maximum impact (Anheier, 2005; #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013). Anheier described “venture philanthropy” as an investment to create social wealth. Those who participate are focused on
results and apply business principles to nonprofit operations and strategy. “Strategic Philanthropy” emerged from an entrepreneurial attitude toward foundations. He cites the International Network of Strategic Philanthropy who states that strategic philanthropy involves:

…a vision of the desirable society of the future, a distinct value orientation…, a concept of social change to the effect of greater social justice…, foundations serving as laboratories to develop model solutions, new ways of thinking, and new understanding for resolving societal problems… (Anheier, 2012, pp. 323–324)

The #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study also suggested that part of the value that these generations bring to philanthropic endeavors is their “ties” and connections which can be an asset to the organization as they often have large wide-spread networks. According to the same study, they, “…see new peer contacts from conferences or elsewhere as essential additions to…[their] valued, trusted, expanding network” (p. 54). According to Wolf (2014) in her interview with Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen, “young Americans view their social networks as their communities. She thinks that this kind of giving will increase the scope of donations, allowing people to give money farther afield, such as directly to projects in developing countries.” (p. 1). Dagher (2014) also noted this trend stating, “Having grown up with the Internet and social media, which have made the world smaller, millennials tend to favor socially conscious, globally minded charities that champion civil rights, good business practices and environmental protection, among other issues, experts say” (p. 1).

The #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study also found that these generations place high value on experiential learning, but not just their own learning. In fact the experiences of a trusted peer are equally valuable to them (p. 58). These donors encourage each other to give, and Snyder (2011) found that 71.7% of Millennials surveyed would be willing to share about a cause they supported with their network.

Engaging Next Generation Donors

In order to engage these donors in a meaningful way, Snyder (2011) suggested focusing on face-to-face relationship building and identifying donors who are willing to spread your message among their own network. These personal interactions, “friends asking friends,” solicitations are preferred by all donors said Rovner (2013).

Several authors recommend developing opportunities for donors to give to very specific programs and projects (Snyder, 2011; Rovner, 2013).
The #NEXTGENDONORS (Johnson Center, 2013) study noted that these younger donors are more interested in giving based on issues rather than institutions. They want to engage with and give to organizations that resonate with them on a personal level rather than with broad community institutions.

Organizations may not be able to link giving to causation as closely as with previous generations (Bhagat, Loeb and Rovner, 2010). Rovner (2013) discussed the difficulty of attributing giving to a specific engagement channel. Income from each channel does not reflect appropriately its importance in the fundraising process. Bhagat, Loeb and Rovner (2010) suggested perhaps organizations should focus on the influence of each solicitation and giving channel separately rather than on causation. They note that “donors who are acquired via one channel…may prefer to continue giving via another” (p. 11). Snyder (2011) echoed this, suggesting that a multichannel approach will maximize contact with younger donors.

As was noted previously, Generation X and Millennial donors want to be engaged more deeply and in meaningful ways with a small number of organizations. Snyder (2011) recommended that nonprofit organizations plan for long-term relationships with these donors rather than a quick return and that incorporating young donors in your strategic planning may encourage meaningful engagement. Harris (2011) echoes this stating, “If you really want a multi-generational perspective in your organization, you must have young people at the table where decisions are being made” (p.7). According to CAF (2012), Generation Y donors are enthusiastic about personal involvement with their charities of choice. They see philanthropy as an opportunity to make the world a better place.

CONCLUSION

The final survey question asked of the three local nonprofit organizations, “What are your intended outcomes for engaging these generations?” elicited a different answer from each person, but taken together the responses create a powerful image of the impact that next generations can have on philanthropy if they choose to embrace it and become engaged with local organizations. B. Greenleaf’s intended outcome was to continue the legacy that previous generations have left us (personal communication, October 6, 2013). E. McCarthy’s response was to create sustainability (personal communication, October 11, 2013), and A. DeVos hoped to promote the growth of the organization (personal communication, October 19, 2013). Legacy, sustainability and growth are powerful goals
that indeed can be harnessed if organizations take the appropriate steps to engage Generation X and Y’s current and future philanthropists.

The first step for organizations in the process of building a sustainable pipeline of donors that will extend into the future is to acknowledge that this transition will happen. It may not be immediate, and in fact, Baby Boomers will likely continue to make up the highest percentage of philanthropic dollars for some time, but organizations cannot ignore that eventually Generation X along with Millenials will become the primary source of philanthropic giving. By acknowledging this, organizations can take the first steps to diversifying their donor base to include younger generations.

A challenge that became evident when talking with the three local nonprofit organizations is ensuring that next generation philanthropy is embraced by the leadership of the organization. In two of the organizations this is not the case, and they as fundraising professionals are working to convince their leadership about the urgency of engaging these younger donors, so that they may grow with the organization. It is critical for organizations to begin to develop relationships with these donors now. As each of the interviewees noted, Generation X and Y donors are interested in engaging deeply with a few organizations over a long time-period. Literature on this subject backs up this finding. Snyder (2011) found that with each younger generation the average number of charities they support financially goes down. She stated, “...if you are one of those charities successful in attracting younger donors, they can be quite profitable...” (1). These generations are also skeptical of nonprofit organizations and want to see clearly the impact that their donations are having on the mission of the organization. Cone (2006) stated, “...Millenials question whether their efforts are making a lasting impact” (p. 7). This increases the importance for organizations to take time to build trust.

Literature and the interviews conducted support the finding that it is important for organizations to utilize a mix of mediums in reaching out to prospective donors. Both peer-to-peer fundraising and technology were at the forefront of the author’s discussions with fundraising professionals. Organizations should utilize the technology that is available. However, they should not fall into the trap of seeing technology as an end in itself. Bhagat, Loeb and Rovner (2010) made note of this saying, “…younger donors are more likely to support a charity when friends/family ask versus the charity asking them” (p. 10), and their study found that it is important to include “friend-to-friend communications as a core element of an effective fundraising strategy” (p. 12). A. DeVos’ organization is wise to utilize a
variety of channels for solicitations, increasing their touch-points and the likelihood of reaching a potential donor in the way they prefer.

This research indicates that although “next generation” donors are not yet the most pervasive philanthropic group, they do have the inclination to participate in philanthropic activity which will likely grow over time. Organizations must learn new strategies for interacting with these young donors who favor innovative, hands-on approaches aimed at maximizing impact. However, their innovative attitude does not mean that they will ignore lessons from previous generations. In order to engage these donors, nonprofit organizations will need to make personal connections with them, provide meaningful engagement opportunities, and ensure increased accountability measures.

REFERENCES


Appendix A

Design and Methods

This paper includes a review of the literature available on the topic of “next generation” philanthropic giving. Sources for this review were gathered through Grand Valley State University library research, as well as online research and resources.

Additionally, in order to determine what, if anything, organizations across West Michigan were doing to address the issue of next generation philanthropy, three fundraising professionals from local nonprofit organizations were interviewed and asked a series of ten questions (See Appendix B) about their activities related to next generation philanthropy.

These organizations were from various subsectors in order to gain insight from a wide range of viewpoints. Each of the interviews was conducted on-site at the organization’s facility for approximately 45 minutes. They were all asked the same set of questions, and the interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed.
Appendix B

Local Organization Interview Questions

Q1A: Can you start out by telling me, has your organization considered the impact that the transfer of wealth from older generations to generations X and Y will have on it?

Q1B: What do you see that the impact will be of this transition of philanthropy from older to younger generations?

Q2: How are you gathering data or staying on top of these issues?

Q3: Do you believe that younger donors can be engaged in the same ways as previous generations, or do you believe that new strategies need to be implemented to engage them?

Q4: What’s your understanding of the desires and attitudes of generation X & Y about philanthropic activity?

Q5: Does Catholic Charities West Michigan have a plan in place to engage younger donors?

Q6: Can you identify strategies you are using to engage younger donors?

Q7: Can you identify strategies you are not using, but would like to see used to engage younger donors?

Q8: Are there any organizations you have seen that are doing an especially good job of engaging younger donors?

Q9: What is your timeline for implementing strategies to engage generations X and Y?

Q10: What are your intended outcomes for engaging these generations?
Katelyn Hanley Semelbauer received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and English with a concentration in Public Policy from Albion College in 2008 and she recently completed her Master’s in Public Administration from Grand Valley State University in December 2014. Katelyn began her career as a political consultant in Chicago for the firm Grainger Terry. After four years in the political sector, she chose to move back to West Michigan to pursue a career in higher education. Katelyn worked as the Campaigns and Community Giving Coordinator for University Development from 2012 – 2014 and in December 2014 took on the role of Assistant Director of Annual Giving, focusing on engaging Grand Valley’s alumni in philanthropic giving to the university. Katelyn serves on the board of Young Nonprofit Professionals Network – Grand Rapids where her position includes managing a nonprofit job board and helping to plan the organization’s annual Leadership Awards ceremony. Katelyn and her husband Justin reside in the Eastown neighborhood of Grand Rapids and enjoy outdoor activities and travel.