

A creative approach to donor recognition

Why recognise donors?

Donor recognition activities can deepen relationships and increase the long-term value of a donor, but it can also capture the hearts and imaginations of prospective donors, adding leverage to an ask. We have an opportunity to move away from the traditional plaque and to develop something which inspires donors to give and make them truly feel that they will leave a lasting visual legacy of the difference they make.

Over the years I have collected photos of tangible donor recognition - generally those that move away from a long list of names on a plaque or on a wall and towards those that use a more creative, carefully thought out approach. This is my working document where I collate these - it's not a perfectly created guide, but it shares a selection of concepts to stimulate your ideas and discussion. Some are for naming rooms, others are ideas for donor walls or single donor recognition. Some are super expensive, some much more cost effective.

Some musings...

Where possible, donor recognition should be developed with the following principles:

- The chosen approach should be inspired by and help further the values and aims of a charity or a project;
- provide a tiered approach - proportionate to the level of gift to inspire higher levels of giving;
- be bespoke, particularly at higher levels, allowing the donor to feel they have an influence over their inclusion;
- and be considered in the planning stages of any strategy to ensure it can be used as leverage for major gifts and is costed into the expenditure budget from the outset.

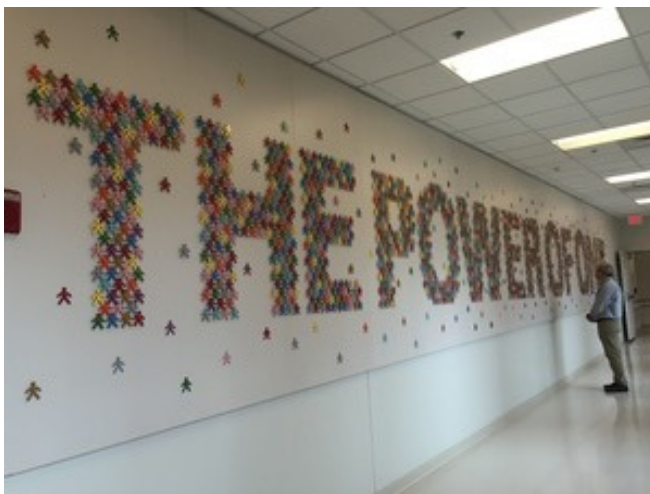
Devise a donor recognition plan as part of your overall strategy, this may include:

- whether it will only provide recognition for gifts over a certain level or include a mechanism to recognise the contribution of *all* donors and why they have made this decision;
- whether it will build in scope to recognise supporters who have made an outstanding non-financial contribution;
- an outline of what specific donor recognition is planned;
- who will be involved in the decisions around donor recognition in each case;
- any restrictions and how this may be handled e.g. if a donor asked to name a room something which the charity would feel was unethical, reasonable etc;
- whether the charity would be happy with the naming of rooms/areas e.g. "The Bob Smith Charitable Trust Treatment Room" or would prefer "This Treatment Room was funded The Bob Smith Charitable Trust";
- how your charity would manage a situation where an entire room/area is funded by a major donor but smaller areas/equipment within that room/area has already been funded by another donor;
- what budget is allocated to donor recognition and why this is felt to be reasonable - whether gifts in kind (e.g. artist time/materials) will be secured to cover costs in full/part;
- location implications e.g. infection control if within a clinical space, wear and tear if in a main public thoroughfare;
- consideration of the value of engaging with local/new artists, current/past direct or indirect beneficiaries or schools to commission individual pieces;

In developing a donor recognition plan, a charity may also wish to consider the development of a policy to cover all recognition and appreciation activities. This may include thank you correspondence, mentions in newsletters or social media, appreciation events, physical recognition in capital projects and thank you videos featuring service delivery staff, volunteers or beneficiaries for social media or to be sent to a specific donor or group of donors. Careful thought about how donors are thanked, appreciated and recognised can be a powerful asset to supporting the success of the broader fundraising strategy.



Painted donor wall in the National Railway Museum
Hand painted in an authentic antique style



The Power of One

A perfect way to recognise a large number of donors that have given smaller amounts - each little person could have the name of a donor. This emphasises the wonder of a fundraising appeal; how so many people come together to make a big change for the better. This doesn't have to include every single donor - could be a random selection, donors in a



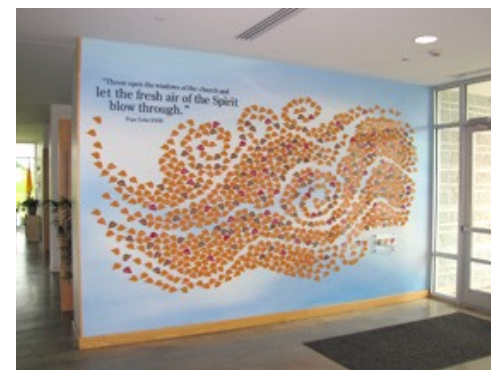
From our hearts

Perfect for a cardiac unit, but it resonates for any appeal as it is uplifting and sentimental, showing the beauty of how a collection of donors can make a big impact. Donors who gave larger amounts can have the larger hearts, smaller amounts can have smaller hearts.



Tile collage filling an entire wall

Fun way to recognise a large number of smaller donors - each one designed by children/people in the community and mentioning a specific donors name?



An abstract mural with inspirational quote.

Painted mural with individual donor names, relevant inspirational quote. Perfect to work with a local artist with this idea. This could be abstract or an image that fits with the chosen them. Cover it in perspex to protect it and for infection control purposes.



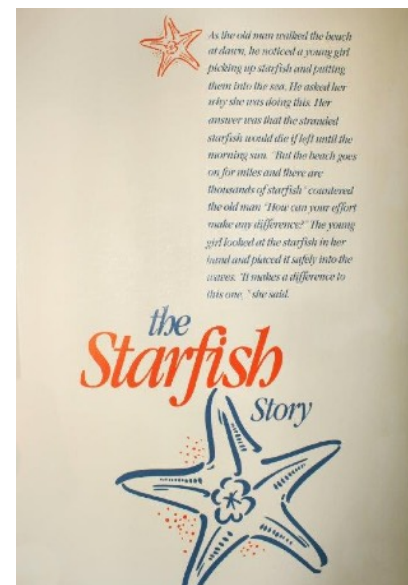
Commissioned ceramic tiles, mounted to form a shape which fits with the overall design theme of a building/room/area? Each tile fits together to form a specific image/shape - each has the name of a donor as well as a colourful design/painting. Perfect to enhance a design theme. Easy to clean and maintain



Graphic design inspired wall art Reminiscent of the type of personalised prints that you can buy... this piece of wall art can recognise different levels of gift through the size of font and can be made to be very colourful, fun and eye catching. Bespoke vinyl print.



Light box technology to display lists of donors in different gift brackets This is common place in American hospitals - long lists of benefactors giving different sums, but using beautiful imagery to display these in an uplifting way. More costly to produce and run/maintain.



Use of poetry/prose This example is from a water therapy Jacuzzi. The donor recognition here is more subtle and is just a poem, which is relevant to the donor's name and the charity's purpose.



Handmade, wall mounted fused colourful glass panels Could be used outside rooms with the name of the room (and funded by XXX). Produced by a local artist. Easy to clean, unique, colourful.



Carved benches A large inspirational quote together with "with thanks to XX for XXX". May particularly resonate with donors with a love of being outside.



Galaxy of friends

A nice idea where there is a space/stars theme in a building. A wall featuring lots of stars and planets with donors naming each one - a galaxy of friends making this dream a reality.



Flower mural Fitting for a nature themed interior design. The names of donors form the stems of flowers along a wall. This could equally appear as part of a garden themed mural throughout an area, outside each room to recognise the donor that has funded that room.



A mosaic featuring 'pools' of glass with donors names
A very organic feel to this one - colourful, beautiful and easy to maintain. Different pools relate to different sizes of gift.



Interactive piece - where children turn cogs to move butterflies

There are no end of ideas when it comes to more creative and interactive pieces like these. Each may bring their own maintenance issues with time and something like this is certainly more suited to a waiting room or entrance area. This greatly enhances an interior design theme and is stunning visually.



Colourful, circular 'plaques'

More interesting, simple alternative to brass/silver plaques for individual rooms. Include an inspirational quote? Or simply just the name of the donor that funded that room. Or bring together in a collection like this.



Framed lists and photos/art This approach is suitable for corridors and waiting areas perhaps. It can feature different levels of gift in different sized circles as above or within a more eclectic arrangement.



Bubble glazed unit with toughened glass A more expensive option, but lovely!



Printed tiles
Each with a name printed, added to the montage over time.



A bookcase...
With the names of the books being the donors names that have given over a certain level? Or each book could be the name of a room/area and funded by XXXX (so the donor's name is the author). The bookcase could be colourful and feature teddies, toys etc to make it more fun for children's charities.



Creative use of a corner of a wall to bring interest and texture Polished blocks of wood - it's a little more interesting than a flat donor wall.



Sustainable wood donor wall
Positioned in a location which helps steer visitor flow through the venue.



Colourful and fun circles
 These are painted onto slices of logs and it strikes me that mounted together on a wall with names of donors in the centre of each one would look beautiful and avoids the use of plastic.



Another creation - inspires a feeling of movement and flow of energy This time using tangible 3D colourful objects with donor names printed on. Textural and fun for small children.

Ceramic tile paintings This is one I did for a neonatal unit refurbishment appeal - so I'm a bit biased but I love it. Easy to clean, mount and cost efficient. Each tile was painted on a theme of the donor's choice, by a child who had been in the neonatal unit as a baby - a powerful message, that filled parents with hope. Where multiple donors funded one room they had a tile each (see special care room 2) and when the unit was officially opened, I asked our celebrity to paint some tiles too.

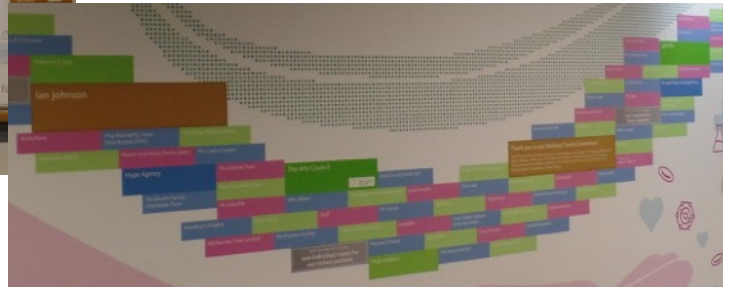


Bubble walls, columns etc
 An interactive piece of art which gives a sensory experience to calm and stimulate. The donor's name could be above a small bubble wall or within the structure itself so you see it through the bubbles. An expensive piece but may be suited to a main benefactor in a venue where sensory installations are planned.



Vinyl displays

A donor wall that features the names of donors that gave £1K+ to a £6m appeal with images from the city landscape and industry. The vinyl is washable and removable.



Above & Beyond is extremely grateful to the John James Bristol Foundation for its support of the Golden Gift Appeal totalling over £600,000.

Through its outstanding generosity, the first Adult Bone Marrow Transplant Unit was created in the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre, serving patients from Bristol and the South West.

In addition, it has enabled the creation of individual patient rooms in the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

The John James Bristol Foundation stands as a beacon of philanthropy in the city of Bristol. We are honoured that the Foundation chose to support the Above & Beyond Golden Gift Appeal to make a real and tangible difference to Bristol patients and their families.

You can find out more about John James Bristol Foundation by visiting the website: www.johnjames.org.uk.

The story of this great Bristol philanthropist is available in the illustrated hardback biography *The Sky's the Limit* available from the website at £16.95.

The free DVD *John James - the man who gave to Bristol* (2011) can be obtained by sending a large letter stamp together with your name and address to: John James Bristol Foundation, 7 Clyde Road, Bristol BS6 6RG.

Above & Beyond is the charity for the Bristol city centre hospitals. To find out more about our work, please visit www.aboveandbeyond.org.uk or call 0117 927 7120.

Part of the same display below... wall vinyls showing the historical time line of a local trust to celebrate the difference that they have made in the area - beyond the specific appeal that they supported.

1900s
A pivotal education
The Dawn James Trust

1920s
Childhood
Family life

1940s
Life and times in the RAF

1960s
The making of a businessman

1970s
My home for a cabbage! A selfless philanthropist
An MRI for the people of Bristol

1980s
Honouring a lifetime of achievements
The James family at the heart of Bristol

1990s
Advancing medical research
Supporting Bristol's children

2000s
Passing the philanthropy baton
Help in the community
Bristol Walk of Fame



Interactive art - recognising donors of different gift levels
Moving cogs. Larger cogs have name of donors at higher gift levels.



Use of photos - a bespoke creation with an inspirational quote through the middle Strung and mounted in a main area/corridor. Photos that inspire each individual donor over a certain gift level or a specific group of donors? Photos that represent all the different types of fundraising that have been carried out within the community to support an appeal? Could work well for an annual business membership scheme - images of staff outside their business and why they have supported the charity written underneath (if using polaroid).



An outdoor installation

Colourful, a sense of movement, informative and visual to attract passers-by to read it. A good way to screen unattractive areas perhaps?



Interactive light technology

Expensive of course, but lovely to see how this American charity have recognised donors...



Train theme - vinyl artwork for children's charities/projects Trains going along the wall. Each with words thanking and naming donors on each carriage?



Backlit donor wall with inspirational words

Lists of donors in different gift brackets - if colourful could brighten a corridor.



Use of relevant/recycled materials Superbly creative method of donor recognition for a food bank charity - what could be used that's relevant to your charity?



Light box technology

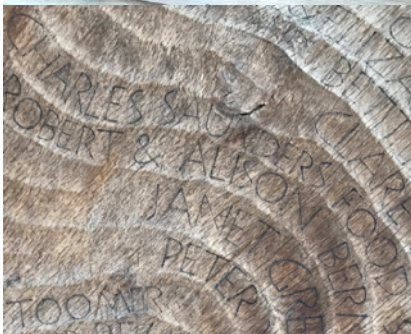
More light boxes with donor names listed - in picture frame format.



Star constellation donor wall Evokes thoughts of children being little stars - so brave and strong. Large stars for higher levels of gift.



Metal signage
Antique design metal signs in a museum.



Subtle, beautiful, unique
This simple piece of engraved wood is interesting, textural and subtle. I love it.



Collage of old film reels for a Grade II listed cinema
Difference sizes for gift levels, can be added to over time. One of mine too... bit biased here!



Eclectic mix of perspex squares mounted on the wall
Simple/discreet design, can be added to over time, easy to clean.



Use of natural materials

I love this, different depths, shades and textures create interest and draw you in. The use of black and white images creates curiosity and the use of natural materials is always a winner for me.



Personalised gift to a major donor - donor recognition in their own home.



Traditional brass plaques

There is still a place for plaques and, to be honest, they are to be celebrated in many ways because they avoid the use of plastic. This one is in keeping with the decor in the Science Museum.



Interactive wheel in a neonatal unit

This "Wheel of Thanks" was another one of mine - turn the wheel and reveal the names of donors who supported a capital appeal.