

# Eskin Fundraising Training Calls for Modern Day Don and Donna Quixotes

*Men, women and youth who will relentlessly pursue quests that touch, improve and save more lives, especially helping those who are struggling.*

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Wanted: Indefatigable men, women and youth willing to defy the odds,

demonstrate chivalrous behavior and relentlessly pursue quests that touch, improve and save more lives, especially helping those who are struggling. Salary and compensation packages to be far surpassed by the knowledge that you are leaving the world better off than it was given to you.

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It is a time for modern day Don and Donna Quixotes to step up and provide courage, commitment and excellence to lead the non-profit sector to even higher levels of service and impact.”

*Jim Eskin*

Don Quixote, a Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes was originally published in two parts, in 1605 and 1615. The novel has been labelled by many well-known authors as the "best book of all time" and the "best and most central work in world literature."

Despite all that, very few of us have read it. For starters, the number of pages (more than 1,000) scares people away.

Fortunately, more of us are familiar with this enduring story through "Man of la Mancha," its Broadway musical and film adaptation in 1972. And chances are you are familiar with the play's feature song, "The Impossible Dream," that captures the essence of the novel. It gives me goosebumps every time I hear it.

This is a time of enormous challenge for American philanthropy. Regardless of the political persuasion, it is abundantly clear that a cloud of uncertainty looms over government aid that extends a helping hand to millions of people needing assistance.

Those societal needs aren't going away. If anything, they're going to escalate.



America's vibrant non-profit sector, made up of more than 1.5 million organizations serving every conceivable mission — healthcare, education, economic development, arts and culture, animal welfare social justice, and a host of human services — is being challenged to pull even bigger oars in what has been the charge for hundreds of years: to leave the world in better shape than it was found.

It is a time for modern day Don and Donna Quixotes to step up and provide the courage, commitment and grit to lead the non-profit sector to even higher levels of devotion and excellence.

After leading advancement for three institutions of higher learning, and for the past seven years serving as a fundraising trainer/consultant for a wide range of non-profits in experiencing the privilege of interacting with thousands of selfless professional and volunteer non-profit leaders, Eskin Fundraising Training is confident that the challenge will be met.

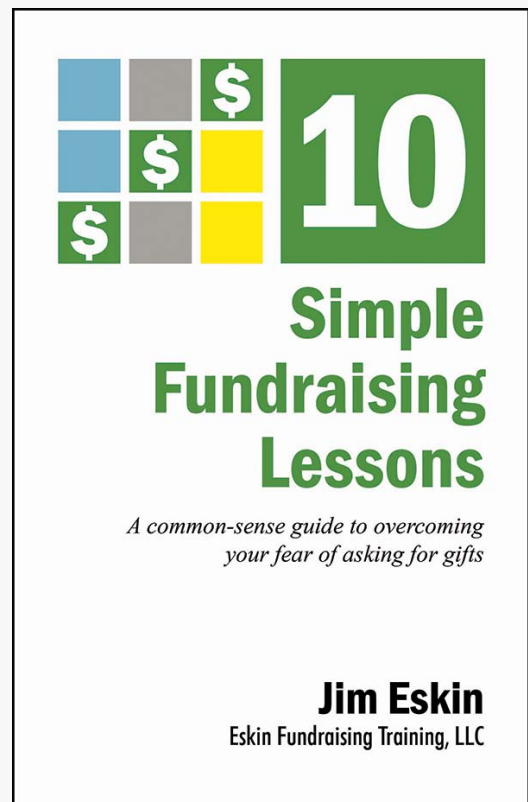
This confidence is based on several observations over a lifetime of engagement in the non-profit sector.

1. Non-profit leaders are motivated by big dreams. The most shining achievements have roots in audacious ideas. The overarching rationale is that more is possible. Diseases are cured, children are lifted out of poverty, relief is provided after natural disasters, and the quality of life is continuously improved because leaders don't shirk challenges, they embrace them. The can-do attitude drives social change and public good.

2. Non-profit leaders think in much grander terms than "What's in it for me." Many know from personal experience the consequences of being given the short end of the stick. They wouldn't want family members and loved ones to live that way and are resolved that no one else should have



Jim Eskin, Founder, Eskin Fundraising Training, LLC



10 Simple Fundraising Lessons

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too either.

3. Non-profit leaders are tenacious and persistent. Money and fame aren't motivations. Most professional and volunteer non-profit leaders are unsung heroes, and their names are unrecognizable. The commitment of volunteers is especially inspiring. AmeriCorps research indicates that more than 75.7 million people — or 28.3 percent of Americans — volunteer and give more than 4.99 billion hours of service with \$167.2 billion of economic value. Non-profit organizations couldn't possibly achieve their awesome results and impact without volunteers.

4. Throughout history, the social sector has consistently stood tall when presented with unanticipated challenges. The response to the pandemic is a vivid reminder. Not only through organizations, but at the grassroots level first responders, emergency workers and neighbors stretched the meaning of the word compassion.

5. The next generation is poised to step up. Though motivations and giving priorities might differ, they definitely want to make a difference in the world. An Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy report highlights that Generation Z (born 1997-2012), and Millennial (born 1981-1996) donors focus their giving on supporting issues rather than specific organizations and consider themselves to be active social change agents. Next generation donors bring a decidedly tech-forward approach to all aspects of their philanthropy, including learning about and advocating for causes on social media and making donations online. They participate in crowdfunding at higher rates than older generations, and growing numbers of younger donors are giving through social media-based charity streaming events hosted by influencers.

HOW TO SCORE  
**Your First**  
OR NEXT  
**Million-Dollar Gift**



**Jim Eskin**

Eskin Fundraising Training, LLC

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**NON  
PROFIT  
STRONG®**

The non-profit sector has men, women and youth who are ready to lead.

6. Non-profits are business savvy and perform both effectively and efficiently. Too often we hear critics say that they should conduct themselves more like for-profits. This is based on misunderstanding. Non-profits are experienced at stretching nickels not only into dimes but into quarters. The work ethic is admirable. Innovation isn't an option, it's a necessity. Missing are the lucrative compensation and bonus packages visible in the corporate sector.

7. Courage is a defining attribute. The sector does the right thing even if it isn't popular at the moment. Eskin Fundraising Training has never been so proud of our support of Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) because of its bold leadership in not retreating from but doubling down on commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Time after time, the social sector does more than mirror society; it leads it in the right direction.

8. Collaboration is crucial. In ways both formal and informal non-profits support each other's success. The most common form is making joint requests that funders love to receive. Other strategies include teaming up on providing programs and services and sharing back-office responsibilities.

9. Philanthropists live next door. The super wealthy make headlines for their lavish lifestyles. But America has more than 25 million millionaires and a great many live below their means. Most have modest roots and can easily relate to underdogs.

10. Heroes are born by the challenges presented to them. Generation after generation, Americans have responded to adversity, crises and threats to the pursuit of happiness. In doing so, the nation has developed new muscles, come together and emerged in a stronger position.

Abraham Lincoln said it best in his first inaugural address referring to the "better angels of our nature." America is not good because it is great, but it is great because it is a nation of good people. Since the founding and the growth of 13 original colonies into realizing a manifest destiny the heritage and success is built on a deep and abiding conviction that by sharing and caring for others, Americans are helping themselves and prudently investing in leading healthier, happier and more fulfilling lives. In a very real sense, there are Don and Donna Quixotes all around us.

After a successful career leading advancement for three institutions of higher education, Jim Eskin's consulting practice, Eskin Fundraising Training launched in 2018, builds on the success of more than 250 fundraising workshops, webinars, webcasts, podcasts and board sessions, and provides the training, coaching and support services that non-profits need to compete for and secure major gifts. He has authored more than 150 guest columns that have appeared in daily newspapers, business journals and blogs across the country, and publishes Stratagems, a monthly e-newsletter exploring timely issues and trends in philanthropy. [Sign up here for a free subscription.](#) You'll also receive invitations to free virtual learning community broadcasts and podcasts. He is author of [10 Simple Fundraising Lessons](#), an 82-page common sense guide to

understanding the art and science of fundraising, and [How To Score Your First or Next Million-Dollar Gift](#), 104 pages filled with strategies, best practices and homework assignments to elevate your organizations to the next level of capacity and impact. Both books are available in both print and digital formats through Pathway, the book distributor, and Amazon. Quantity discounts are available to non-profits who want to share books with teams of management, development staff, board and volunteers. Eskin Fundraising Training is also available for customized virtual training for boards, staff, and fundraising committees. The newest customized service, Fundraising Urgent Care, offers 48-hour turnaround in addressing general strategy and tactical challenges that require immediate responses.

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