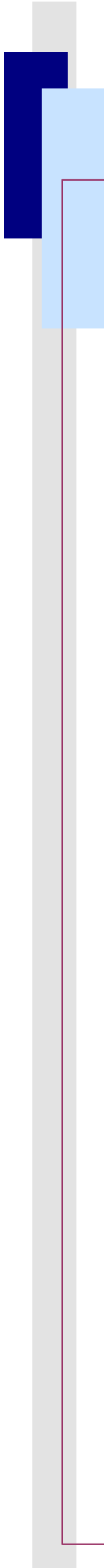


How to Hold A Celebrity
Autograph Auction

HELP FROM HOLLYWOOD



Insider tips, tricks, and techniques to
help you raise tons of money for your
charity or nonprofit organization...



Help from Hollywood: How to Raise Tons of Money for Your Charity or Nonprofit Organization by Holding a Celebrity Autograph Auction

By Jordan McAuley

\$47.00

Copyright

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Jordan McAuley

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Find out which celebrities contribute to
your cause!

www.CelebCauses.com

"He who obtains has little. He who
scatters has much."
- Lao-Tzu

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A Fundraiser's Place In Heaven

A man knocked at the heavenly gates,
His face was scarred and old.
He stood before the man of fate
For admission to the fold.
"What have you done," St. Peter asked,
"to gain admission here?"
"I've been a fundraiser, Sir," he said,
"For many and many a year."
The Pearly gates swung open wide;
St. Peter rang his bell.
"Come in and choose your harp," he said,
"You've had your share of hell."

I. Introduction

Holding a celebrity autograph auction is a great way to raise money for your organization. Celebrities love to donate autographed photos and memorabilia to worthy charity and nonprofit organizations, especially if your cause is close to the celebrity's heart.

In this book, I'll show you step-by-step how to plan, implement, and hold a successful celebrity autograph auction. You'll learn how to:

- Write a case statement
- Attract celebrities to your cause
- Raise funds by mail
- Design your mailing piece
- Budget your event
- Treat celebrities and VIPs
- Pick a date and location
- Develop a timeline
- Issue a memorable invitation
- Write a solicitation letter
- Start a direct-mail donation campaign
- Package your autographed items
- Build and maintain a donor file
- Put your celebrity autograph auction online
- Make your celebrity autograph auction a success!

The main benefit of holding a celebrity autograph auction to raise money for your organization is that it doesn't cost that much. All you really have to pay for is postage, because volunteers can help you write letters and stuff envelopes, and you can usually get the space, food, and drinks donated as well. That's beyond the scope of this book, but there are many other books that will help you (see my list of Recommended Resources in the back of this book).

Sometimes celebrities will send more than just an autographed photo. Organizations (especially charities) have been known to get signed musical instruments, scripts, CDs, posters, guitar picks, drumsticks, books, and more. Waiting to see what you get in the mail can be really fun, just make sure to get started about 3-6 months in advance so you have enough time to get your items.

Some celebrities will response in as little as a few days -- others can take weeks to get back to you.

Celebrities and their representatives know that when they send you an item and you display it at your auction, that's good publicity for them. It makes them look good and helps you as well -- it really is a great trade-off.

II. Writing Your Case Statement

"No one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of another."

- Charles Dickens

According to the Nonprofit Kit for Dummies, a "case statement" is a short document that presents a case for giving to a nonprofit -- a positive story about the organization.

The document can be a brochure, a one-page information sheet, or a glossy folder filled with information sheets presented alongside photographs, budgets, or charts.

It should be professional, factual, and short enough that readers will want to read it all the way through. When making phone calls, it's useful to refer back to your case statement to remind you of important points about your organization. You should also include it with your mailing if space permits.

There are 5 steps to writing a case statement:

1) Write a paragraph of no more than 100 words on the following topics:

- The history of your organization
- Services your organization offers
- Your organization's key accomplishments
- Testimonials, reviews, and/or quotes from others who have benefits from your organization's efforts

2) Write a letter (about 50 words) on each of the topics below:

- Your organization's philosophy or mantra (how and why it provides service)
- How your organization relates to or with other organizations (locally, nationally, and/or internationally)

3) You can also add:

- Photographs of your organization's work

- Charts or maps showing your organization's growth
- An overview of your organization's budget and finances, especially if these are healthy
- Anything else that's informative about your organization, including awards received publications it's appeared in, etc.

4) Finally, you must clearly state how someone can give to your organization by:

- Donating an autographed item to be used in your auction
- Serving as auctioneer or guest speaker at your auction
- Contributing publicity stills, radio blurbs, written testimonials, etc. to help advertise or get attention for your auction and/or the organization.

5) You should also mention what the celebrity will receive after making a donation:

- A mention in your organization's newsletter
- A listing as a sponsor in your auction's program
- A coffee mug, t-shirt, etc. sent as a token of thanks

III. Why People Donate to Nonprofits

"The more you give, the more you get back."

- Zen proverb

This may or may not surprise you, but the most common reason people donate to nonprofits may not be out of the kindness of their hearts.

As I mentioned before, celebrities know that when they donate an item and you display it at an auction in front of a couple hundred people, that makes them look good.

It also gets people talking about the celebrity in a positive light, because the auction is most likely a social event. "Oh look, Eva Longoria donated a signed photo. Did you see 'Desperate Housewives' last night? It's great that she cares about our cause."

In fact, fundraising experts say the most common reasons people contribute to nonprofit organizations are out of "want":

- Wanting to feel generous
- Wanting to change the world
- Wanting to be compassionate
- Wanting a sense of belonging (or acting out a sense of duty)
- Wanting to feel well-being
- Wanting to be recognized

Remember these six reasons when writing your solicitation letter, making phone calls, etc. (More about writing a solicitation letter later).

IV. Raising Funds by Mail

"One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something."

- Thoreau

First, you'll need an accurate source of celebrity contact information. (For insider tips, ticks, and techniques on contacting celebrities, check out my book, "Secrets to Contacting Celebrities" at <http://www.SecretsToContactingCelebrities.com>).

To start out, you'll want to target celebrities who are known to contribute to your cause. You can branch out later, but this is where you should begin because you'll have the best chance of getting responses from stars who have donated to your cause in the past.

To find out which celebrities donate to your cause, visit the Celebrity Causes Database at <http://www.CelebCauses.com>.

Choose your cause from the "All Causes" dropdown box, and the database will list all the celebrities who have contributed in the past either with time, money, donations, appearances, etc.

This is like having access to a celebrity donor file where all of the hard work has already been done for you! Of course, as you start to receive donated items you should start your own celebrity donor file, because the bottom line is if they've contribute in the past, they're also likely to contribute in the future.

Commonly fifty-percent of new donors will make a second contribution. So if fifty-five to sixty-five percent of your new donors renew, you're doing great! Fundraising experts say you can write to potential donors once a month without becoming too annoying.

In time, the celebrities in your donor file will slowly drift away. However, by continually testing and expanding your mailings, you'll be able to replace them with new contributors.

The database only shows you which celebrities contribute. If you want to get access to their best mailing address and representative information, you'll need

to join which is just \$1 for a 7 day trial as of this writing. That's a great deal considering you can find everything you need within the 7 days for just \$1.

This site also offers a couple of benefits you'll want to have including free research requests if you can't find the celebrity you're looking for. However, that's highly unlikely because they have over 54,000 celebrities of all types in their database!

They'll also refund you fifty-cents per return if you get any envelopes in case any of your letters are returned by the post office.

The best place to send your solicitation letter to is the celebrity's publicist. If the celebrity doesn't have a publicist, your next best bet is the manager, and then the agent as a last resort. The publicist is the person in charge of getting the celebrity positive exposure, such as associating them with a worthy cause (your organization!).

The manager gives advice on career choices (they sometimes handle publicity as well), and the agent is responsible for getting the celebrity work such as a movie role, television show appearance, etc.

Make sure you send your solicitation letters on your organization's official letterhead. It's also best to include a 9x12 self-addressed stamped envelope if your funds allow. This makes it that much easier for the celebrity to respond in a timely manner.

In the letter you can simply ask for an autographed photo for your organization's auction, or you can send your own unsigned photo to be autographed (make sure to include a self-addressed, stamped 9x12 envelope if you do this.

(Visit <http://www.AmazingCelebrityPhotos.com> for a great source of unsigned color celebrity photos you can send along with your letter to get autographed.)

Remember -- the easier you make it for the celebrity to respond, the greater your chances will be. Always include a self-addressed stamped envelope. Yes, celebrities make a lot of money. But most of them aren't going to pay to send autographed photos to all their fans.

Some will, but again it will help increase your response to enclose a SASE (it also helps make whoever is opening the mail feel just a bit guilty about throwing your envelope with postage already affixed away!).

V. Six Steps to Assembling Your Mailer

"If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble."

- Bob Hope

A direct-mail solicitation usually involves a mailing envelope, a letter (usually between two and four pages in length), a reply envelope and card, and sometimes a brochure, a copy of a newspaper clipping, or a short, hand-written note in addition to the longer letter.

Some nonprofits include "premiums" (free stuff) as well. Premiums include pencils, pens, letter openers, magnets, etc. They're meant to urge recipients to open the envelope. Remember, the more time a reader spends with the piece, the more likely he or she is to make a donation.

The sections below will walk you through the various components of a direct-mail piece and give you some tips and insider tips for making them more effective.

So how do you begin a direct-mail solicitation campaign? Here's an overview of the steps you need to take:

1. The Envelope

Start with the envelope. Ask what will make the celebrity (or the celebrity's assistant) want to open it? Is there an intriguing headline running across it or is there a photograph on it? Does it mention a free gift? Is the recipient's name printed in large letters?

Using a real live stamp (even a nonprofit bulk-rate stamp) makes will make your solicitation letter look more personal. There are many creative ways to design you envelope so it gets opened -- use your imagination or consult with a direct-mail expert (see my list of Recommended Resources at the end of this book).

2. The Solicitation Letter

A direct-mail letter should be clear and timely. It shouldn't be melodramatic, but it should generate an emotional response.

To do so, include anecdotes and stories about real people (or animals, or whatever your cause it about). You want to create some drama, but not too much.

Combine long and short paragraphs broken up with simple one-line paragraphs underlined for emphasis.

This technique draws the reader's attention to the points you really want to emphasize (see how your eye is drawn to the sentence above?) That's what you want to do -- but save it for truly important points -- don't overuse it or it won't be as effective.

When writing direct-mail and discussing your organization's cause, you want the celebrity or celebrity's assistant to understand that your nonprofit has an urgent, yet reasonable and reachable goal. You want the celebrity to believe that by the end of the letter, he or she is joining a winner.

Most direct-mail letters include a P.S. after the signature. In fact, research suggests that most people read the P.S. before they even read the letter's opening line!

3. Compile a list of appropriate celebrities to send the mailing to

Visit the Celebrity Causes Database at <http://www.CelebCauses.com> and select your cause from the "All Causes" dropdown menu to see which celebrities have contributed to it in the past.

4. Test the piece by mailing it to a large, yet limited number of celebrities

Your test should be about 5,000 names, but at least 1,000 to 2,000 names are recommended for a good test. A one percent or greater response is considered pretty good from celebrities, although this varies depending on the celebrities you mail to and your cause.

5. Keep testing

You should keep testing different versions of your mailing piece on different celebrities to find out which one is the most effective for your cause. To get a true comparison, each test group should include about 1,000 to 2,000 names.

6. As donors respond, be sure to treat them well!

Celebrities who respond should now go in your donor file, which is extremely valuable. Guard it. Don't lend it to others. Don't neglect it. And send thank-you letters as soon as possible to acknowledge contributions.

Remember, fifty-percent of celebrities in your donor file will usually donate again in the future.

VI. Budgeting Your Event

"It is every man's obligation to put back into the world at least the equivalent of what he takes out of it."

- Albert Einstein

The whole point of holding a celebrity autograph auction is to make enough money to exceed your total cost -- by a lot hopefully! But how do you make sure this happens? Below are some ideas:

If you're planning an event for the first time, it is very important to start early, as much as a year before the event (I recommend three to six months). You should begin writing celebrities and requesting autographed items as soon as you or your auction committee decides that you want to hold a celebrity autograph auction.

Here's how to budget your event:

1. Figure the Income Side

Try to design your celebrity autograph auction so that it produces income in more than one way.

Here are some ideas:

- Sell tickets to the auction
- Make table or group sales
- Have benefactor, patron, or sponsor donations (where donors receive special recognition in return for contributing higher amounts than a basic table or seat would cost)
- Have food and/or beverage sales at your event
- Sell goods and/or services
- Offer advertising in printed programs, on banners, etc.
- Sell tickets for raffle prizes, door prizes, etc.

Remember, wanting to be recognized is one of the top six reasons people donate to nonprofits -- figure out as many ways as you can to recognize individuals for their donations, and they'll donate more!

2. Capture All Expenses

Events create all kinds of expenses. A great way to save money, however, is to try and get as many of the items for your event donated by local companies in exchange for a sponsorship listing in your program or a banner at the event.

Here are some more ideas:

- Building / Facility / Location (space rental, site use permits, security, portable toilets, tents, clean up costs)
- Advertising and Promotion (posters, invitations, publicity costs, postage, Web site development)
- Production (lighting and sound equipment, technical labor, stage managers, auctioneers)
- Travel and Per Diem (for guest speakers, performers, or celebrities who might make an appearance)
- Insurance (liability should someone get hurt due to your organization's negligence or shipping insurance to protect donated goods)
- Food and Beverages (permits for the sale and/or serving of alcohol if necessary)
- Décor (flowers, awards, tent treatment, name tags, signs, t-shirts)
- Office Expenses (letter-writing, mailing list management, data entry, postage)
- Other Staff Expenses

In spite of your careful planning, certain expenses can appear unexpectedly and cause you to exceed your budget. If you plan to serve food at your event, keep these tips in mind so you can avoid surprise charges:

- Confirm whether or not all service and preparation charges are included in the catering budget.
- If you need to add additional meals at the last minute, find out if your caterer charges extra.
- If meals you ordered are not eaten, you will most likely still need to pay for them. Check your caterer's policy.
- If some of the wine or alcohol you've purchased is not consumed and the bottles are not opened, find out whether or not the liquor store will buy it back from you. It's a good idea to ask in advance and tell the manager

you're holding a fundraiser... keep shopping around until you find one that's willing to buy unopened bottles of alcohol back.

- If wine has been donated to your event, serving it may not be completely free. Find out whether or not your caterer charges "corkage" fees for opening and serving it. Again, shop around until you find one that does not.

Non-food related expenses can sneak on you too. Be sure to:

- Confirm whether or not you're expected to pay the shipping costs for items that were donated to your event.
- Ask whether tax or delivery charges are included with printing costs.

VII. Handling Celebrities and VIPs

"You cannot do kindness too soon, because you never know how soon it will be too late."

- Proverb

Your celebrity autograph auction will depend heavily on donated goods from celebrities. Remember to treat them well so you'll feel comfortable asking them to donate items to your organization again in the future.

This not only includes sending Thank You notes and letters, but if a celebrity is also serving as a host, auctioneer, guest speaker, or is just making an appearance, here are some things to consider:

- Have flowers waiting for them in their hotel room or dressing room.
- Find out in advance what food or beverages they like to have backstage or in the green room.
- Plan in advance a place where they can get away from autograph hounds or other crowds if they want rest and privacy.
- Double-check your sound and lighting equipment with them to make sure they are presented under optimal conditions and the celebrity feels comfortable with them.
- If the celebrity or VIP is elderly or has a disability, double-check that any hotel, restaurant, or event site is fully accessible and that all elevators and other necessary aids are working.

Again, many of the items above such as flowers, drinks, etc. can be donated by a local company as a sponsor. Be sure to let the owner know that the celebrity (mention by name) will be seeing or using their product!

VIII. Picking a Date and Location

"Energy abounds when you volunteer -- do it now."

- Holly Stewart McMahon

Check around your community to make sure you're not planning to hold your celebrity autograph auction on the same date as a program by another non profit. Make sure you do this!

Competing for the same audience on the same date -- or even on dates that are close to each other -- hurts both organizations' results. Also, avoid dates close to holidays as most people will likely be away or with friends and family.

IV. Issuing a Memorable Invitation

"Accomplishment is when you use your extra strength to help someone else, rather than to get to the top first."

- Donald Ernest Mansell

Make your celebrity autograph auction's invitation something to remember. Address the envelope by hand and use real stamps (even nonprofit rate stamps) are better than using a bulk-mail permit.

Real stamps make the invitation look more personal, and are known to get letters opened better than postage meter stamps. An intriguing phrase or logo on the outside may help, also.

If you can afford the increased postage cost, two colors of printing on the outside envelope will help catch your potential guest's eye.

What will you recipients see when they first open your invitation? Most invitations are made up of an outer fold piece, a reply card, and a reply envelope. Want some more attention? Put some confetti or glitter in inside the invitation so it falls out when the envelope is opened.

For theme celebrity autograph auctions like a Halloween celebrity autograph auction, you can put a small rubber spider or bat inside. Something bulky will help get the envelope opened really well, because the recipient will want to know what's inside.

If you have a small number of invitees, roll your invitation into a small mailing tube and fill it with little prizes and surprises.

Oriental Trading Company at <http://www.OrientalTrading.com> has a great selection of inexpensive items you can use to add bulk to your invitations and also to decorate your auction's venue.

Make sure your invitation's reader can easily figure out who is extending the invitation, what the event is, where and how it is being held, at what time, how much it costs, and how to respond to the invitation.

Print the address to which your guest should respond somewhere on the reply card, even though it is also printed on the reply envelope.

Sometimes pieces of the invitation become separated. You want your guest to readily know where to send his or her reply, so make sure everything is included as clearly as possible.

V. Sample Celebrity Autograph Auction Timeline

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other?"

- *George Elliot*

Although events vary greatly in size and complexity, we recommend that you work against a six month schedule. This will give you plenty of time to request autographed memorabilia and receive items back from celebrities.

The timeline below outlines a sample schedule for a celebrity autograph auction:

> 12-14 weeks before your auction:

- Assemble your committee and co-chairs
- Find and confirm a location for the event (or earlier if possible)
- Assign your subcommittee responsibilities in the following areas:
 - Securing auction items
 - Auction operations
 - Food and refreshments
 - Invitations and promotions

> 10-12 weeks before your auction:

- Write up your solicitation letter requesting autographed memorabilia donations from celebrities (see the sample letter at the end of this book for a guideline).
- Send your solicitation letters requesting autographed items for the auction to your list of celebrities.
 - Remember to visit the Celebrity Causes Database at <http://www.CelebCauses.com> to generate a list of celebrities who donate to your cause.

> 8-10 weeks before your auction:

- Write and design your auction invitation
- Make follow-up calls to check on auction items

- Secure the services of an auctioneer
- Solicit food and beverage donations (or meet with caterer)
- Begin compiling your invitation list

> 6-8 weeks before your auction:

- Begin writing your auction's program
 - Assign smaller auction items to your silent auction and bigger items for your live auction, with usually no more than 10-12 items for the live auction to bring in higher winning bids).
- Send your auction invitation to the printer
- Recruit volunteers for the following jobs:
 - Guest check-in on the night of the auction
 - To set up auction tables, decorate, and arrange auction items
 - To act as bid spotters for the live auction
 - To prepare food if not catered
 - To take payments after the auction
- To clean up after the event

> 4-5 weeks before your auction:

- Recruit volunteers to address and mail invitations
- Finalize your auction program to include with your invitation
- Mail and fax media releases to your local news outlets
 - Paul Hartunian offers a great guide on getting free publicity for your nonprofit at <http://www.NichePublicityManuals.com> -- just look for the manual for Non-Profit Organizations.

> 3-4 weeks before your auction:

- Address and mail invitations with your auction's program
- Make follow-up calls to potential donors of food and alcohol
- Tour your auction's location and note any special requirements or potential problems

> 1-2 weeks before your auction:

- Prepare your bidder's cards (assign each guest a number to use to record bids)

- Prepare your auction's bid sheets (assign a minimum bid for each item)
- Confirm your auctioneer
- Confirm volunteers to work on the day of your event

> 1 week before the auction:

- Visit your venue to make final decorating arrangements
- Purchase decorations
- Create attendance lists for the check-in table
- Arrange for a drop-off location of auction items

> Day of your auction:

- Decorate the venue
- Set up your auction tables with the silent auction items and bid sheets
- Set up the refreshment/drink tables

Set up the check-in tables

Be sure your volunteers are in place and understand the tasks required

Final checklist and tips:

- Ask the auctioneer or MC to encourage bidding on the silent auction items
- Set a firm time for closing the silent auction bids and announce the time remaining at five minute intervals
- Be prepared at the end of the auction for buyers who will want to pay and receive their items all at the same time
- HAVE FUN!

You may think that nobody can rain on your parade, but you'll want to have emergency back up plans anyway. What if your celebrity becomes ill or cancels at the last minute, a blizzard shuts down roadways, or your permits are not approved on time?

You'll need to quickly move, replace, reschedule, or cancel your celebrity autograph auction. The faster you can communicate changes, the better everyone will feel about sticking with you and supporting your cause.

VI. Putting Your Celebrity Autograph Auction Online

"You give but little when you give out of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give."

- Kahlil Gibran

If you don't want to hold a live celebrity autograph auction, you can hold your auction online on a Web site like eBay (<http://www.eBay.com>).

Why would you want to hold your celebrity autograph auction on eBay? For several reasons:

- eBay currently has more than 222 million users, all of whom could be donors.
- Over 10,000 nonprofits have already registered with eBay.
- To date, more than 40 million dollars have been raised for nonprofits through items sold on eBay.
- eBay makes holding an online auction easy with their Giving Works program at <http://givingworks.ebay.com/nonprofit>.

You can fundraise through eBay Giving Works in two ways:

Community Selling:

Anyone can sell items on eBay and donate part or the entire final sale price to your nonprofit organization. Donations resulting from the sales of eBay Giving Works items will be collected and distributed to you, and tax receipts will be issued to the seller on your behalf.

Direct Selling:

Your nonprofit organization can list items for sale on eBay. You collect the proceeds from the buyers, and you are responsible for providing a tax receipt, if applicable.

The Direct Selling method is the one that's probably best for your nonprofit.

First you'll need to certify your organization with MissionFish*, the dedicated solution provider for eBay Giving Works. It's free and easy, just go to <http://www.missionfish.org/ForNonProfits/fornonprofits.jsp> to get started.

* eBay has selected MissionFish to power eBay Giving Works. MissionFish is a nonprofit with five years of experience helping organizations fundraise through ecommerce. Their valuable service and support includes: managing the nonprofit directory for eBay Giving Works; verifying that nonprofits are eligible for this program; collecting and disbursing Community Selling donations; providing Community Sellers with tax receipts; tracking donations online; and offering free marketing tools to help nonprofits succeed.

You'll also get these free benefits when you register your organization with MissionFish:

- Community selling - let eBay sellers donate proceeds from items they sell to your organization!
- Direct selling - turn just about any good or service into funding for your mission by selling on eBay! The eBay Giving Works ribbon  will help your items stand out.
- Special events - put your special event auction online, and find more buyers than can fit into a ballroom!
 - Learn how by joining them for an Event Planning conference call at http://www.missionfish.org/ForNonProfits/fornonprofits_event.jsp .
- Toolkit for the Social Sector - eBay offers a variety of tools to help your nonprofit fundraise while keeping costs down. eBay Giving Works, PayPal and Skype can help your organization do more.
 - Learn how it works at <http://www.missionfish.org/toolsforall/SocialSectorToolkit.pdf>

For more information about fundraising on eBay, visit their FAQ for Nonprofits page at <http://givingworks.ebay.com/nonprofitFAQ> .

VII. Sample Celebrity Autograph Auctions

"It is better to light one candle than curse the darkness."

- Confucius

The Discovery Fund for Eye Research held a "Seeing Stars" celebrity autograph auction on eBay using addresses from the Celebrity Causes Database at <http://www.CelebCauses.com> and raised over \$28,000!

Check it out at http://www.discoveryfund.org/auction_update.html to see some of autographed items they received.

VIII. Sample Solicitation Letter

"We must be the change we want to see in the world."

- Mahatma Gandhi

The solicitation letter below raised over \$31,000 for a nonprofits celebrity autograph auction. We had to hid the non profit's name and address, etc. for privacy reasons, but feel free to customize the letter for your own use.

We recommend sending your solicitation letter to the celebrity's publicist, production company, manager, and agent in that order of importance. Of course, it wouldn't hurt to send your letter to all of them to cover your bases.

Remember to check the Celebrity Causes Database at <http://www.CelebCauses.com> for a list of celebrities who are known to already donate time or money to your cause. These are the celebrities you'll want to target first.

[Your Organization's Name]
[Your Full Address]

Date

Dear Friend:

[Your Organization's Name] would like to invite you to support our [#] annual [Your Event's Name] featuring an exclusive [Something Special]. We ask that you consider donating to our live or silent auction which we hope will raise over \$[Amount] that night to support the mission of [Your Organization's Name].

[Your Event's Name] will be held on [Date] at [Location]. The committee has secured several auction prizes that promise to make this auction very memorable -- and your item would be an excellent addition.

Our mission is to [your mission statement]. [Your Organization's Event] provides [What You Provide] to [#] [People You Help]. Each dollar we raise helps us fund [Your Beneficiaries]. Your assistance will undoubtedly help us reach even more people in need.

Thank you for considering supporting the [Your Event's Name]. I have enclosed a tax-deductible receipt for your convenience. Items may be mailed to my attention at [Your Address] or call or email me for our Federal Express number. If you have any questions above the event or to discuss our request, please feel free to contact me at [Your Phone Number] or [Your Email Address].

Warm Regards,

[Your Signature]

[Your Name]
[Your Position]
[Your Organization's Name]

IX. Sample Thank You Letter / Tax Deductible Receipt

"Continually give, continually gain."
- *Chinese proverb*

[Your Event's Name]

On [Date], [Your Organization's Name] will host the [Your Event's Name] event. [Your Event's Name] will be held from [Start Time] to [End Time] at [Location].

On behalf of [Your Organization's Name] and the [Beneficiaries] we serve, I want to thank you for your generosity. Your donation of an auction item or goods or service for this event will support [Your Organization's Name] programs for [Your Charitable Cause]. This document will serve as your tax deductible receipt.

Once again, thank you for your support. You are helping us [Your Mission Statement].

Item or Service:

Value \$:

Contact Person:

Business Name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Restrictions:

Please include any brochures or additional information about your donation to inform potential bidders about the item. Items may be mailed to [Your Name], [Your Organization's Name], [Your Address]. Or, you can call [Your Name] at [Your Phone Number] or email [Your Email Address] if you would like our Federal Express Number.

_____ I am not able to provide a service or item, but would like to help out by making a contribution to help [Your Organization's Name]

If you have any questions concerning the [Your Organization's Event] or [Your Organization's Name], please call [Contact Name] at [Your Organization's Name] at [Phone Number] or [Your Name] at [Your Phone Number], [Your Position].

[Your Organization's Name]'s tax id is [Your Tax ID #] and your item is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

X. Success Stories

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal."

- Albert Pike

* All of the organizations below used Contact Any Celebrity's online database at <http://www.ContactAnyCelebrity.com> to get their celebrity contact information.

"I could not do what I do without researching your Contact Any Celebrity database for addresses. I am the donations coordinator for the Bakersfield's AIDS Project. I got the idea to have a celebrity auction and raise money. I have been writing to celebs and asking them to sign an autograph card and return it in the SASE and forward a picture. I have gotten a great response and am having our 2nd annual celebrity auction in October. I am having things framed as I type. Thank you so much. I could not have done it without you!!!"

- Andrew Beasley, Bakersfield's AIDS Project, Bakersfield, CA

"After reading Jordan's advice, our organization decided to ask Dolly Parton's production company for a donation. Her assistant sent us a beautiful wig that Dolly no longer uses. We were able to raise \$100 just from that one item. We raised \$30,000 from the fundraiser which pays for 1/2 year expenses for Help Animal Lives Today in Kingman, Arizona. Thank you for your inspiration on asking a celebrity for a donation.

- Lisa Bennett, Kingman, Arizona, <http://www.halt.com>

"I have enclosed the letter I used to solicit celebrity items for our black-tie event which raised over \$31,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society."

- Sally Blume, Chicago, IL

"I use Contact Any Celebrity frequently to contact spokespersons and am really pleased that your info is up to date and thorough. I've used similar services before and the information was very seldom accurate."

- Kathleen Boylan, Chicago, IL

"During the few months that our non-profit organization has been a member of Contact Any Celebrity, it has proven very helpful in finding contact information for several celebrities that we are interested in asking for participation from."

- Bridget Campbell, The Chicago Lighthouse for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired, Chicago, IL

"I just had to drop you an email to let you know what we got today. First, we got a lithograph picture of a bird in a tree, numbered 355 of 400 from The Duchess of York, "Fergie." This is autographed. We also got an Anton Breton souvenir fiddle autographed by Charlie Daniels with a certificate of authenticity and a B&W picture that is also signed. We were so excited!!!! That is the best thing we have gotten so far and feel that will bring a lot of money. I sent out 1800 letters to different celebrities, musicians, businesses and NASCAR drivers. We ended up with 219 items and were very successful. We ended up raising over \$6400, \$1400.00 dollars over my goal. It was GREAT!"

- Diane Carter, Logansport, IN

"I am the National Business Manager for A Special Wish Foundation. I use your listings at Contact Any Celebrity daily to get in contact with celebrities. If those celebrities can't meet our children I always ask for an autographed picture of some sort for our wish children. It works every time. So whether you know it or not you contribute to the granting of wishes indirectly. Thank you so much for your listings. The cost is definitely worth it in the long run."

**- Darryl Celler, National Business Manager, A Special Wish Foundation
Tarzana, CA**

"So far Contact Any Celebrity has been a great help to our organization in contacting celebrities for our current fundraiser."

**- Mary Jane Chichester, Executive Director, The Women's Center of Greater
Cleveland, Cleveland, OH**

"We have had tremendous success with Contact Any Celebrity. We are a growing world concert charity organization and information pertaining to our event and celebrities is essential. This site is absolutely wonderful and is essential to the success of any charity event."

- Rob Cipriano, Global Projects International, New York, NY

"Contact Any Celebrity and the Celebrity Black Book have saved me so much time. I have purchased your book and used your service for the past 3 1/2 years. With the help of your addresses, we have raised thousands of dollars for the American Cancer Society for research. I have used other sources and have found that the contacts you provide are usually more current. Keep up the good

work and thanks so much for helping in the fight against cancer!"

- Susan Cronkleton, Logan View Inc., Bellefontaine, OH

"As a teenager I volunteered weekly for three years (1969-1972) in the amputee ward of Valley Forge General Hospital during the Vietnam War. In 2001 I decided to track down as many of these heroes of mine as possible. In a span of two years I located 123 of the vets, 17 of whom have since passed away. At their request I set about organizing a three day reunion for them that took place in July 2003.

I stumbled upon your Contact Any Celebrity web site and I decided to address letters to as many celebrities as possible, asking them to write letters of thanks to Vietnam vets. I wrote to 322 celebrities, including governors and military people. Unfortunately, I only thought of the idea six weeks before the reunion so I didn't give the well-known Americans much time to respond. However, I did receive over thirty letters, including Pres. Bush, Bill Clinton, Sen. McCain, Gen. Schwarzkopf, many governors and wonderful, kind celebrities from that era. They also received a blessing from the Pope! Thanks to your addresses I was able to hear from some directors (Garry Marshall), producers (Aaron Spelling), actors (Robin Williams), TV personalities (Dick Clark, Ruth Buzzie, Joanne Worley, Andy Williams, Pat Boone...who also sent sheet music and a song he wrote about the war, Annette Funicello's husband...who also sent 50 pictures of Annette for the men, Connie Stevens...who sent 120 bottles of her cologne for the vets).

Donald Trump sent one of the most moving letters. Michael Jordan's letter brought tears to the men who loved basketball so much that they had formed their own wheelchair basketball team while at the hospital. Roman Gabriel sent a poem that he had written. The best letter was from Tom Lasorda. It was two pages long and he poured his heart out to the men. Many sent a photo with no letter (Neil Diamond, Cheryl Tiegs, Ann-Margaret, Jennifer Lopez.) Others had their secretaries inform me they had been out of town and didn't receive my letter until after the event or they would have written a letter (Walter Cronkite, Winton Marsalis and Shirley McClain).

It was fun endeavor and I appreciate your company having addresses available for the general public to use. The letters were appreciated by the 90 people who attended the reunion and the soldiers who received them in the mail who were unable to attend."

- Diane Di Ferdinando, Berwyn, PA

"I did a charity fundraiser for an Italian organization last year and used your Celebrity Black Book for the contact information. We had t-shirts made up with our logo on them along with the Italian flag. We sent the celebrities these t-shirts along with a letter explaining the fundraiser/auction with the non-profit number and asked them to sign the shirt and send it back to us in the self-addressed stamped envelope. We sent out 75 packages and received 20 t-shirts back signed and some included autographed pictures and or letters of encouragement. The fun we had auctioning off the ones that came back made for a nice night."

- Therese Diecidue, Boston, MA

"On behalf of the Africa AIDS Fund, I want to thank you for allowing the Fund to use your Contact Any Celebrity database. I am amazed at the data you have collected on top people around the world."

- Dr. Samuel C. Evans, Advisor to the Board, Africa AIDS Fund

"First of all I would like to start out by thanking your company. Your Contact Any Celebrity database source is great and because of it I received really nice items from many celebrities for an auction we are having at our school in March. I would highly recommend your web site to everyone who is looking to contact a celebrity."

- Dawn Engler, Margate, FL

"We truly enjoy your Contact Any Celebrity website. We have sent out over 500 letters and so far, only 12 have been returned. Keep up the great work!"

- Catherine Fletcher, Director of Development, Ozark Food Bank, Bethel Heights, AR

"I have to admit I was a little skeptical at first, right, this is going to give me access to celebrities. I figured at this point I was desperate with nothing to lose. I am planning a fundraising benefit for a child that is suffering from Leukemia and Hypo-eosinophilia. She is in need of a bone-marrow transplant within the next three months. I joined Contact Any Celebrity on Friday evening, spent 12 hours on Saturday emailing, faxing and addressing letters. When I got to work on Monday morning, I had a voice mail waiting for me from Madonna's manager. She stated that she wanted to reach out to my cause, and Madonna was sending me 2 autographed items that could be used for our silent auction. The next day I received autographed items from Jeff Burton and an autobiography from Joe Gibbs. As for Madonna, I received her items today. To you, I send a huge thank

you."

- Donna Gammon, Mechanicsville, VA

"I am involved with our school's major fundraiser and discovered your Contact Any Celebrity site last year which saved me a great deal of time. I found it extremely time-saving and rewarding. I look forward to the same results this year."

- Patti Gottsacker, Cedarburg, WI

"I used your list to get autographs to raise money for the March of Dimes. I was thrilled with the results -- we received many, many photos, a magic set from Lance Burton, goodies from Elizabeth Taylor, the list went on and on. of the letters I sent (approximately 150), we received items from nearly everyone. We had very few returns for "undeliverables." I used most of the items for a silent auction and a few for a live auction. In all, we raised enough money for the March of Dimes to be the second highest fundraiser that year for the Dallas Metroplex."

Judy Habel, March of Dimes, Coconut Creek, FL

"Thank you for all the work you guys put into this Contact Any Celebrity service. It is absolutely invaluable to those of us in the fundraising world. I won't even look at another address service because you guys are just outstanding. Our fundraiser was a great success, even in the face of inclement weather. We will do a second mailing and still plan to do our celebrity auction later in the year. Thanks for your wonderful service!"

- Felicia Harried, Port Gibson, MS

"I use your Contact Any Celebrity service to contact celebrities for a charity event that is held every year in October. I love it, and it saves me a lot of time. You guys are the best."

- Jennifer Hartman, Hattie Larlham, Mantua, OH

"I decided to give your Contact Any Celebrity website a try for a charity auction we are having for a Montessori School in our area. I sent the first batch of letters out on Feb 22. Imagine my delight when a large box with more than \$180 worth of merchandise arrived today. Even if we receive no other donations, the membership fee and the money we spent on postage has been recovered with this one response. I have to admit that I was a little skeptical but thought it was worth a try. All I can say is thank you very much."

- Quan Hoang, St. Paul, MN

"Earlier this year we subscribed to your Contact Any Celebrity service. We were very pleased with your extensive listings of addresses. We sent letters to many celebrities, requesting donations for our Auction for the Community."

- Carol Hook, United Way of Atlantic County, Galloway, NJ

"Thank you so much for your great addresses from Contact Any Celebrity. I hope they do as great as they did last year. I am having our 2nd annual auction for the American Cancer Society in October with the pictures I got from all my favorite celebrities. I received over \$800.00 for last year."

- Kelly Hullihen, Robertsedale, AL

"Your Contact Any Celebrity service is amazing, only 19 returns from 400+ sent out."

- Robyn King, Toys for Tots, New Windsor, NY

"All of my addresses are from your Contact Any Celebrity source. I tried other sources at first but you guys are the only ones that keep most current on your addresses, so it saves me time and money. I work for Animal Services and each year we have a Four Footed Fun Fair and I am in charge of the Celebrity Silent Auction. I send about 600 or more letters to celebrities and famous people and a lot of them respond to help the animals. I get a lot of signed pictures and items (250+) each year. The auction draws a lot of people to our event and any money raised is bused by helping spay and neuter pets. Thanks for the personal touch. It is always nice to contact real people. I just got a great lithograph signed by Carlos Santana, whoopee! I love this job. It is like Christmas. Your service is great. I have not had the need to go anywhere else to get the results I need for all of my fundraising events. I have another one coming up in October and I know I can count on your service to get the job done."

- Judy Knapp, Animal Services, Modesto, CA

"We have now finished our fund raising for Adopt a School in Peru. It was successful in that we raised nearly \$6,000, not bad for a small rural community. We received some wonderful responses including some from celebrities not known for autographing items. Out of over 600 envelopes sent out these were the only ones returned to Contact Any Celebrity for better addresses. Not bad."

- Nancy Kopf, Titusville, PA

"I signed up yesterday for your Contact Any Celebrity service and spent a few hours gathering addresses. I am also on IMDB Pro and it seems like you guys

are a little better at getting "the best" addresses."

- Jenn Lindsay, Brooklyn, NY

"I wanted to say thank you for Contact Any Celebrity because I had the great experience of talking to Jeff Foxworthy's father who does Jeff's mail. I am in the process of opening up a child care center for disabled children in my area and he is going to send me some autographed items to sell to raise money for the proceeds of the child care center."

- Christine Marquardt

"Check this out! I wrote Greg Maddux (Chicago Cubs) about signing some items for a benefit I was having for my brother and I. We were in a car accident and are having a raffle and silent auction. I was sitting at the computer one night and got a call from Greg. He said he would sign anything and everything if I wanted to mail it to him. He signed 9 baseballs, 13 baseball cards, 6 Cubs hats, and a Cubs t-shirt. That was definitely worth the \$14 membership fee it cost me to get his address. Thanks Contact Any Celebrity. It was more than well worth it!"

- Michael Marshall, Sullivan, IL

"We are the Celebrity Autograph Auction benefiting St. Jude Children's Hospital. We've been conducting auctions on eBay for over three years now and have had tremendous success with them. To date we have raised \$60,000 for the hospital and plan on doubling that within the next two years."

- Frank Martin, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Memphis, TN

"I want to thank you so much for the wonderful leads you have provided. I have been working at attaining celebrity autographs for a fundraiser we are having in April. The response has been just outstanding. Here is a list of some of the autographs we have received: Clint Black, Gregg Allman, Paul Anka, Garth Brooks, Joanna Cotton, Jack Pearson, Janis Ian, Trisha Yearwood, Eric Clapton, Patty Loveless, Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, Toby Keith, Alan Jackson, Patti LaBelle, Johnny Neel, Sylvester Stallone and countless others. You are what made this all possible. Contact Any Celebrity is the best."

- Mike Mattera, Eckerd CMN Fundraiser, Rio Grande, NJ

"I subscribed to your Contact Any Celebrity service a few months ago to obtain addresses for a mailing my wife and I did. Thank you for providing us with this service."

- Mark & Ellen Mazzola, Alice Mazzola Breast Cancer Benefit, Round Lake, IL

"I just love your Celebrity Black Book and Contact Any Celebrity web site. I use the site for 2 charity fund raisers, and have made over \$100,000 for the charities. The charities are the Bay County Humane Society in Panama City Beach Florida and the Marty Lyons Foundation. The Marty Lyons Foundation is a "Grant a Wish" foundation for sick children and their families. Every April we have a celebrity golf tournament at Jekyll Island Georgia and use the items that I am able to collect for a live & silent auction. Items that we have received are: Signed photo's from: Madonna, John Travolta, Jimmy Carter, Jeff Foxworthy: Signed scripts from Aaron Spelling and the cast from 7th Heaven, Signed Script from Eddie Murphy (Dreamgirls) just to name a few. I pay for all the letters, items and postage to send out these requests, and I am very happy with the results...All the proceeds go directly to the charities. Some of the wishes that we have granted are: Disney week, meet Adam Sandler, Go to ground Zero & New York, Meet Garth Brooks, Super Bowl Tickets, NASCAR races."

- Tammy McCrary, Panama City Beach, FL

"We contacted Her Majesty Queen Noor for our charity using Contact Any Celebrity and she sent us an autographed book and a lovely letter. So did Jackie Chan!"

- Jennifer McDaniel, Parker, CO

"I subscribed to your Contact Any Celebrity service about two weeks ago and sent letters to various celebrities in search of a National Spokesperson for Surgicorps International. They are a group of plastic surgeons who go on missions to third world countries to perform surgeries. Within 3 days of writing, I received a phone call from Ellen DeGeneres' office. I thought it was incredible that they responded so quickly."

- Diane McGraw, Surgicorps International, Media, PA

"Friends of Strays is a no kill animal rescue/shelter. We do not receive any funding so we must raise all of our +\$90,000 expenses each year. We recently held a dinner/auction and wanted some specialty items. We subscribed to your Contact Any Celebrity service and contacted many of the individuals that are sympathetic to animal causes. I received a great response and many wonderful items were donated which generated funds for us. Without your service, I would have spent so much time trying to track down these celebrities with no guarantee that the address I received was the correct one. Your site and service was SO easy to use and yielded positive results. I most definitely recommend it to anyone and will use it again in the future when I need to contact the celebrities again."

- Cheryl McLane, Friends of Strays, Inc., Princeton, IL

"Two years ago, I signed up for your Contact Any Celebrity service to get celebrity contact information. Your service worked perfectly and I got the information I needed in minutes. The accuracy of your service is "right on the money!" I like your service and will stick with it for a long time."

- Sharon Mills, Marketing & Communication Dept., The Salvation Army, Los Angeles, CA

"I have been using Contact Any Celebrity quite a bit lately. We are having a celebrity auction for our Rotary Club to raise funds for projects ranging from scholarships to eradication of polio to wheelchairs for people who need it but cannot afford them. The site is great."

- Jane Mize, Ennis, TX

"We love your Contact Any Celebrity site and your Celebrity Black Book and we're about to use some of the addresses to do a mailing."

- Stephanie Mohr, Sr. Manager U.S. Development, ORBIS International, New York NY

"We were pretty successful with our plan. Our 6th grade class needed practice in writing letters, and addresses envelopes. If we got back a picture/autograph, or even one of their standard portrait shots, we auctioned it off at our school's silent auction. Someone must have really loved Hilary Duff, because people bid higher for her than Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and plenty of others. Dr. Phil even sent us an autographed book, as well as a doodle. You just never know what you'll get, and who will bid on it. I have referred your Contact Any Celebrity website to a handful of others who needed celebrity addresses. It really was easy to look up the addresses."

- Lisa Nelson, Davis, CA

"I appreciate you and the Contact Any Celebrity service you provide. We have benefited greatly."

- Gretchen Neubauer, The Salvation Army, Indianapolis, IN

"You will no doubt be aware of the Bolton Iron Maiden and the story and our reunion gig and Charity Auction at the Soundhouse Boston. We have just received for our auction fantastic Iron Maiden signed "Trooper" items, CD's, DVD and two tickets to an Iron Maiden concert -- in addition to signed items from international racing driver David Coulthard, Jamiroquai, Rod Stewart, Manchester United Football Club, Bolton Wanderers Football Club, McFly and Steve Winwood using

Contact Any Celebrity."

- Paul O'Neill

"We have used your Contact Any Celebrity website for the last two years for our annual fundraiser. This site has been great and the article "Help From Hollywood" was very helpful. We raised \$25,000 last year, not all were celebrity items but the special items from celebs made for an extraordinary event."

- Patsy

"Just a bit of praise for you guys: We have been members of Contact Any Celebrity for about a year, and we have gotten some neat autographs during that time. The show stopper was an autographed item valued at \$1,500! I got it today, along with a certificate of authenticity from Upper Deck! Unbelievable! Thanks so much for the work you do!"

- Amanda Pearson, Cal-Diego Paralyzed Veterans Association, San Diego, CA

"I used the Contact Any Celebrity site extensively for a silent and live auction I organized for my son's school. I sent out almost 300 letters to various celebrities following the instructions on the website. I think only a handful were "bad" addresses. I was astonished at the response. I received autographed books (Henry Winkler), CDs (George Winston), and many photos (Liz Taylor, Cindy Crawford, Dustin Hoffman, etc., etc.). It was fun to go to the school mailbox everyday. everyone would gather around and ask what I got that day! We raised over \$15,000 altogether and were thrilled. I plan to use the site again for our next event in the spring of '06."

- Carolyn Penharlow, Town and Country School of Vienna, Vienna, VA

"Thanks for a wonderful service -- we really appreciate it. We are fundraising for our horse rescue to save more horses so thanks again for all your help. Great work Contact Any Celebrity!"

- Jeffery Petersen, Fair Dinkum Farm Equine Rescue, Cody, WY

"Your Contact Any Celebrity business helped me out in getting autographed memorabilia for a benefit we did this past November and I give you great ratings."

- Mike Raab, Burgaw, NC

"We used your Contact Any Celebrity website to get addresses for celebrities that supported the following causes: children, teens, foster care & abuse prevention. We mailed 220 letters requesting autographed memorabilia for our charity auction. We received 17 signed photographs which raised \$700. Thanks!"

- Ellen Reed-Fox, Family Resource Center, St. Louis, MO

Here's a partial list of the celebrity items that we received after sending letters using the Contact Any Celebrity database. We also used information from your how-to guide from the website. We found that if we had a person who was interested in a specific area such as NASCAR write the letter and include personal thoughts and comments we were more successful. We raised about \$35,000 from the auction (not all our items were celebrity memorabilia) and people were really interested in the celebrity memorabilia. We are in a rural community of less than 5000 and in the largest low income area in the state of Missouri, which means we picked many a pocket during our event, and having celebrity memorabilia made for an extra fun event."

Autographed Items Received:

- Tom Cruise Autographed War of the Worlds Memorabilia
- Yogi Berra Autographed Photo
- Donald Trump Autographed Photo
- Alec Baldwin Autographed Photo
- John Travolta Autographed Photo
- Tony Hawk Autographed Poster
- Autographed Comic Strip Fox Trot
- Donated by: Bill Breen
- Lesley Ann Down Autographed Photo
- Michael Andretti Autographed Photo
- Jack Nicholas Autographed Photo
- Marty Allen Autographed Photo & VHS
- Dom Deluise Signed Photo & Drawing
- Mike Myers Autographed Photo
- Mark O'Meara Autographed Photo
- Clint Eastwood Autographed Photo
- Kasey Kahne Autographed Photo
- Erin Crocker Autographed Photo
- Steve and Terri Irwin Autographed Photo
- Mike Ferrell Autographed Photo
- Ian Baker Finch Signed Photo & Golf Glove

- Arnold Palmer Autographed Photo
- Shane Battier Autographed Photo
- Ryan Gosling & Rachel McAdams Signed Photo
- Bernhard Langer Signed Photo and Visor
- Al Unser Signed Trading Cards, Hat & Photo
- Jerome Carter Signed Mini Rams Helmet
- Julie Inkster Signed Solheim Cup Sweater
- Robin William Autographed Poster
- Buddy Rice Autographed t-Shirt
- Danica Patrick Autographed Hat
- Bill Engvall Signed t-Shirt & DVD
- Narvel Felts Signed CD Rockabilly's
- Jeff Bridges Signed Book Making of White Squall
- Janet Evanovich Autographed Book To The Nines
- Max Lucado Autographed Book Next Door Savior
- Clive Cussler Book The Adventures of Vin Fiz
- Catherine Coulter Autographed Book Blow Out
- Bob Newhart Autographed Script
- George Lopez Autographed Script
- Lynn Johnson Autographed Book
- Sandra Brown Autographed Book Chill Factor
- Davis Love III Autographed Book How to feel a Real Golf Swing

- Patsy Reublin, Malden, MO

"Excellent customer service I have to say! I have enjoyed using Contact Any Celebrity and as a fundraiser I hope that it will prove really useful."

- Simone Robinson, Head of Fundraising, InterAct, United Kingdom

"I work for a small, non-profit organization in rural Washington. We offer support and resources to cancer patients. One of our brain tumor patients, Sandy, is losing her battle and only has a short time left. A couple years ago, Sandy and her best friend took a "Thelma & Louise" road trip and more than anything, Sandy wanted to hear from Ms. Sarandon and/or Ms. Davis. I sent emails and within a very short time, Sandy received a very lovely letter from Susan Sarandon. Our entire Brain Tumor Support Group, along with Wellness Pace, is very appreciative of Ms. Sarandon's gracious and timely response. Thank you Contact Any Celebrity. We could not have done it without your help."

- Donna Rolen, Wenatchee, WA

"Thank you for your Contact Any Celebrity service. Since signing up for access to your database I have been very impressed with the results I've gotten. We have mailed out 81 small boxes with Christmas Ornaments in them to have them signed for an auction we are doing in December. We included all they would need, a pen, return postage, etc. MUCH to my surprise the first one was returned in about seven days!! We now have a total of 10 returns, with, hopefully, more to follow. Publicists seem to be the best chance at getting a return. We truly appreciate your great service."

- Gordon Ross, PR Manager, Monroe Assoc. for Retarded Citizens (MARC)

"On behalf of all of us, please accept our thanks for your Contact Any Celebrity database and the assistance it gave us to help fight Cancer."

- John W. Scherer, American Cancer Society All Star Celebrity Dinner & Auction, Douglasville, GA

In August of 1999 I wrote to about 350 celebrities and all 50 U.S. governors as well as a few select U.S. senators using Contact Any Celebrity. I explained that I had a niece named Anne who would be 15 at the end of January, 2000 and I wanted to give her a special birthday gift: a book of autographed photos and/or letters from successful people explaining their idea of what success is.

As these photos and letters were received, they were then forwarded to Anne's grandmother and after elementary school, my sister (who is an elementary teacher) and Anne would visit Grandma and have a delightful "party" opening up each sealed envelope. These Anne and her mother placed in plastic protective sleeves in 2 large binders. Some of the people who sent her photos were Lauren Bacall (Grandma had to explain who she was!), Tommy Lee Jones (Anne's most favorite star), Dick Van Dyke, Carroll Channing, Carol Burnett, and many Christian singers (like Jackie Valesquez) as well as the Veggie Tales characters. When Anne got Tommy Lee Jones' photo, she squealed like a child and almost yelled into the phone to me "You got Tommy Lee Jones' autograph!"). She was so delighted and looked forward to visiting Grandma's house to see what birthday pictures had arrived in the mail.

As Anne received these surprises, she would then write a thank you note which she planned to mail on her birthday (January 31). On January 14, 2000, Anne and my sister were walking and running around her school track when Anne collapsed. My sister Raynette and a registered nurse whom they had just met on the track ran over to her and performed CPR. Some kind people stopped their cars and called 911 and paramedics arrived there in a very short time.

Anne died of an undiagnosed congenital heart defect and could not be revived. At the funeral the two albums were passed around to the family and visitors and were a great comfort to many of Anne's 14 year old friends who did not seem to understand such a sudden death. During this time of selecting Anne's favorite clothing for her to be buried in, selecting the coffin and selecting the music, my sister mailed the thank you notes Anne had previously written. She also enclosed Anne's funeral notice.

Raynette (my sister) received several notes of condolence from these celebrities and governors and senators who were kind enough to realize our loss. In particular, an assistant to George W. Bush and Governor Bush of Florida called my sister to express condolences. (Unknown to our family at the time, the Bush family had a loss many years before when their little sister died).

It is now 2006 and I am very grateful to the many kindnesses of the people who cared enough to respond. As I watch "old" movies on television, I am still touched when I see Lauren Bacall or Tommy Lee Jones."

- Maria Schneider, Atlanta, GA

"I am the founder and sponsor of the CAHS Patriots. This is a group of student volunteers at the Connellsville Area Senior High School who work to promote patriotism and support our deployed servicemen/women. We have used your Contact Any Celebrity database and Celebrity Black Book for the last two years to help us with our annual Collectible/Celebrity auction. We have received responses from a variety of people and have been able to raise a total of \$2,000 over the last two years."

- Linda Shearer, Connellsville, PA

"We used Contact Any Celebrity to find addresses for celebrities who would be willing to donate an item for a children's charity. Living in a small community in Michigan, we have very little access to big name stars, and your website was a great tool for us! We raised more than \$9,000 for our students by utilizing your database!"

- Kathy Simpson, VP Special Events Fundraising, Anchor Bay Band Boosters, New Baltimore, MD, <http://www.anchorbaybands.org>

"I have been using your Celebrity Black Book for the last two years and your Contact Any Celebrity website a year before that. I have a 5 year old son with multiple disabilities. Twice a year we take him to Philadelphia for medical treatment. Because of his illness we can't fly and so must drive the 1600 miles

there and 1600 miles back. Each trip costs an average of \$12,000; so in order to go I need to fundraise for as much of the expenses as possible. I have held three ebay auctions and have been able to fundraise about one tenth of expenses for each trip. Sony Entertainment was very nice. They donated movie posters and DVDs. They also sent some items specifically for my son Edward. George Steinbrenner sent a Yankees hat and shirt. Within Texas The Astros sent an autographed ball, The Rockets donated an autographed poster; The Aeros donated tickets, and The Dynamos donated tickets and autographed items. Some of the coolest items donated by individuals are as follows:

- Evander Holyfield donated a print of his picture "The Corner" Limited Edition and autographed with his thumbprint.
- Harmon Killebrew donated the cutest little baseball glove, signed also with a ball. (Frankly, I hated to sell the glove because it would have fit my son perfectly. But I always want to be honorable with my fundraising and all items go to my son's medical bills).
- William Christopher sent an autographed book, about his experiences raising his autistic son. It shows you what a small world this is, because he had also taken his son to the Institutes as well.
- Dreamworks sent several DVD's and promotional items
- Wheel of Fortune sent several autographed items, VIP tickets to the show, and some promotional show items.
- Bill Amend sent a signed comic strip.
- Several comic strip artists sent autographed originals.
- Individually, we have received many signed photos of various TV and movie stars.
- We have received several signed scripts with pictures. From Alias, Nobody's Perfect, Malcolm in the Middle and Mash.
- There have been many autographed CD's and photos from music stars.
- We have received autographed golf balls, gloves, programs and score cards from a variety of sports figures.
- The illustrator for Harry Potter sent a small sketch of Harry Potter signed.
- Heather Tom's Publicist Tom De La Rosa has contacted me and said he would be sending a donation of items.
- The Hilton company sent several promotional items. Such as leather luggage tags, leather business card holder and some other items.
- A signed hockey puck from the Olympics, from one of the team members from the team.

- Two autographed die cast cars from NASCAR racers. As well as several autographed table displays.
- Kathy Najimy sent two autographed shirts and two autographed pictures.
- The Young and the Restless sent an anniversary keychain, cast picture, and pen.

There were many more neat items, unfortunately with my son's program/medical needs I only have time to do his fundraising after he goes to sleep around midnight. At this time I am going by memory. Your website and book have been an invaluable help to our fundraising efforts. I prefer to use the book so I can highlight through when I send a letter. The nice thing about the fundraising is not only the items we get for the auction, but we have received the sweetest, supportive letters from people who are strangers. I find it touching when we get a donation, but some of the letters truly warm my heart, and help keep me going. It shows that there are wonderful giving people out there who care about the well being of my son."

- Kathryn Smith, Houston, TX

"The Celebrity Charitable Causes Database is a great resource and very easy to use."

- Sandra Sims, Fundraising Coach, Step by Step Fundraising, Wichita Falls, TX

"Contact Any Celebrity is helping our Project Graduation efforts. Thank you."

- Ron Stancil, West Haven High School, West Haven, CT

"As National Chair of an organization that raises funds to provide post high school educations to all the children of every fallen Special Operations soldier, sailor, airman, or marine, reaching out to celebrities for their help is an important part of my job. Contact Any Celebrity (with the length and breadth of its database) has eased that burden immensely! In part, thanks to Contact Any Celebrity, we have received help and contributions from many television, movie, and Broadway stars, as well as many others. Giving us the ability to select a contact from multiple possibilities for each celebrity is a real benefit and has made a tremendous difference in our ability to help these children."

- Richard Steinberg, Las Vegas, NV

"First and foremost, thank you for helping the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation in its quest for a cure. As you may already know, cystic fibrosis (CF) is the most

common fatal genetic disease in the United States today, affecting more than 30,000 children and young adults. Thanks to your extensive list of celebrity addresses, we were able to raise more than \$13,000 for CF research!

We mailed to approximately 1,000 names on your Contact Any Celebrity list and received replies from nearly 200 actors, actresses, athletes and musicians. Some of the more unique items we received are as follows:

- Ally McBeal cast-signed script with a note from Calista Flockhart
- The Simpsons script signed by all the voices with a Matt Groening sketch
- Michael Chang's match-used autographed tennis shirt
- Sean Connery signed Goldfinger replica movie poster
- Randy Travis autographed guitar
- Shania Twain autographed photo

In addition to the many unique items we were sent, we also received personal calls from Lisa Marie, Kyle Chandler, Fred Berry and more. One week after the mailing was sent, we were averaging at least 3 autographed photos a day! Because of the success of this mailing, we conducted a week-long radio auction on the nationally syndicated Steve & DC morning show (which is where we raised over \$13,000).

Thank you for your very accurate and useful service. I will be purchasing your list for the Foundation every year. I will be sure to keep you up to date on the status of future mailings. Keep up the good work!"

- Rob Steinmetz, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, St. Louis, MO

"First of all I want to thank you. I am a member of Kiwanis Club of Sesser located in Sesser, IL. It is a small community of about 2500 people and it is a close community where everyone knows everyone else. We have an 8 year old girl in our community that has Chronic Hereditary Pancreatitis. This is a painful and life-threatening disease that she has lived with since she was 1 1/2 years old. Our club started working on a Celebrity/Sports Auction so that we could raise money to help her family with the medical expenses. Getting the addresses we needed was tough at first until we found out about your Contact Any Celebrity service. We now have over 200 autographed items and are receiving more in every day.

A few of the celebrities that we wrote to even included a personal autograph to the little girl herself which has just thrilled her to no end. Especially the photo she got from John Travolta. It's just a kick going to the mail box each day and finding

out what we have. Once again I want to thank you. Without your service I know our even would not be the success that I know it is going to be."

- Kaye Styve, Kiwanis International, Sesser, IL

"Contact Any Celebrity was so much more than I expected. It's more than just a listing of who and what. In other words, it's not like just a "star map." I felt that the contact information was valid and up-to-date, and there's so much information in the database. Everyone I looked for was there. There were also so few returned letters from everyday household names. To get things we can place value on and auction off for a great cause is wonderful. It was great to actually get responses from stars. The service is priceless."

- Heather Thompson, Susan G. Koman Breast Cancer Foundation, Tampa, FL

"Thanks to Jordan's advice about how to hold a celebrity autograph auction, we raised \$4,500.00 for our cause. We sent "A Kid's Journey to Getting Rich" to 200 celebrities and asked them to sign the Financial Literary Books, and held a holiday autograph auction. It was an amazing success."

- Jewell Thorton

"My wife and I have founded the RT Autism Awareness Foundation, Inc. in Rochester, MN. Your site has helped us seek out some autographs etc. from celebrities who's "cause" is autism as well as many others. I appreciate your work. I only pay for your Contact Any Celebrity service and on one else's...if it's not broke-don't fix it right! I'm on this site more as we are getting our silent auction items for our July golf benefit. I guess for our cause-the more celebrities that we know whose cause is "autism" the better. But I'm sure you guys work on that stuff daily."

- Brad Trahan, Founder, RT Autism Awareness Foundation, Inc., Rochester, MN

"Our school raised over \$2,000 by holding a celebrity autograph auction of signed memorabilia. This was only possible by writing and emailing contacts contacting via Contact Any Celebrity. Without the use of the website we wouldn't be able to report such a successful evening. Contact Any Celebrity made it so much easier -- with a database of contacts your fingertips and very easy to use. We reused some of the contacts the following year and still had a great response and made even more money."

- Michelle Trevor, United Kingdom

"I have recently taken part in a fund raising event for patients with bowel cancer at Wexham Park Hospital in Slough. I wanted to raise money for a family room for people affected by the disease. There are 35,000 adults diagnosed each year in England and Wales. That is someone every 15 minutes. I wrote to the managers of Chelsea, Manchester United, and Liverpool football clubs, Rolf Harris and Al Fayed to name but a few using Contact Any Celebrity. They all donated wonderful prizes that I auctioned at the event on 10th June at a Gala night. So far I have managed to raise \$18,000 in an attempt to provide patients and their families with the information and support they need when diagnosed with cancer."

- Sue Tripp, Berks, United Kingdom

"I am the president of the Van Houten Foundation, Inc. The foundation is a non-profit charity (IRS 501C3) that is attempting to establish a battered women and children's shelter in Middlesex County, New Jersey. We will be conducting a sports/celebrity auction on December 10th. I purchased the Celebrity Black Book to assist in sending request letters to the various sports/entertainment celebrities. I was very impressed with the quality of the publication. Thank you for your help and keep up the good work!"

- Dr. Norman J. Van Houten, President, The Van Houten Foundation, Inc., Edison, NJ

"I have sent over 77 letters requesting the donation of items for our 7th Annual Golf and Tennis Tournament using Contact Any Celebrity. So far we have received an autographed guitar by Melissa Etheridge as well as all seven of her CDs, also signed by her. This morning we received an autographed picture of Angelina Jolie, and an autographed book by John Waters containing 3 of his movie scripts. Of the letters I sent, I have gotten 6 back, but was able to update their addresses using your updated database information. One of them was for John Waters and we received something from him almost immediately (within 2 weeks or less). Once I reported a contact being outdated in the database, I received an almost immediate responses indicating that it had been updated, and thanking me for letting your people know. I have been very pleased and excited about the items we have received. I can't wait to see what else we will get and how much we will be able to raise thanks to their donations. Friends of mine who I have told what I was doing were skeptical but now we are showing them this really works! Thanks so much!"

- Gloria Vila, St. Paul, MN



Fundraiser promises 'paws-itively' delicious evening

**By Joelyn Hansen/Daily
Sun staff writer
Wednesday, February 28,
2007 9:36 AM CST**

What do an autographed Paula Dean cookbook, some pottery pieces and a family pool pass have in common?

The answer - they're all among the items that will be auctioned off at the Beatrice Humane Society's fifth annual "Paws-itively Desserts" fundraiser event Friday, March 2, at the Paddock Kensington in Beatrice, starting at 7 p.m.

The list of items for the auction this year is long with numerous community members and businesses donating to the cause, Rita Hydo, Beatrice Humane Society Board of Directors member, said.

There are antiques, gift certificates to numerous businesses, collectibles, pictures, books, bird feeders and other items people from the community have donated that make this auction possible, Carolyn Wiegand, Beatrice Humane Society fundraiser volunteer, said.

"Without local, you can't do it without them," Wiegand said.

New to this year's auction is a selection of celebrity autographed items.

Wiegand said she got the idea of sending out letters to celebrities after watching "Grey's Anatomy" star Ellen Pompei on the Ellen Degeneres Show talking about volunteering at an animal shelter.

Wiegand thought it would be a good idea to try to contact celebrities and ask them for donations and so she went online and found a Web site, www.contactanycelebrity.com, where you could pay for and receive the addresses of different celebrities.

A total of about 200 letters were sent out to different celebrities and a number of items were returned, including an autographed CD and cap from George Strait; autographed photos from Richard Petty, Betty White, Greg Norman and Martina McBride; Thomas Kinkaid prints; an autographed copy of a Dean Koontz book; an autographed Nebraska Volleyball team NCAA 2006-2007 champions poster; and an autographed Paula Dean cookbook. Even Elvira donated to the mix, Wiegand said.

"I was surprised," Wiegand said about the number of celebrities who responded and the items received for the auction. "When you put a stamp on something you don't know what you're going to get."

All of the items up for auction will be placed in the silent or the live auction through the night, Hydo said, with all the proceeds going to the Beatrice Humane Society.

This is the Beatrice Humane Society's biggest fundraising event of the year with the money brought in equaling about a fourth of their total budget bringing in \$20,000 to \$25,000, Hydo said.

This year's fundraiser is themed "Paw-Lynesian Mewau" and will showcase the ballroom as a tropical paradise with a table full of delicious desserts. "I think it will be fun," Hydo said.

Carolyn Wiegand stands among some of the items that will be auctioned off at the fifth annual Beatrice Humane Society "Paws-itively Desserts" fundraiser Friday night at the Paddock Kensington. Numerous items from the community and famous celebrities were donated for the auction. Photo by Joelyn Hansen/Daily Sun staff



XI. Insider Interview

"How the Susan G. Komen Foundation Raised Money for Their Cause by Holding a Celebrity Autograph Auction"

Heather Thompson from Tampa, Florida found that writing celebrities for free autographs and memorabilia was a great way to raise money for her nonprofit organization, the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

We spoke with Heather about her cause and its very successful campaign:

Tell us about the project you're raising funds for.

I was and am attempting to contact celebrities for donations to the Susan G. Komen Foundation 3-Day Walk in Tampa, which raises money for breast cancer research.

What exactly were you looking for from the celebrities?

I request autographs, memorabilia, sponsorships and financial donations. Basically, anything and everything. Items were the real goal so we could auction them off for money.

How did you request these items?

I originally sent out 100 letters to celebrities and then an additional 200. The first 100 were the best responses from the celebrities. I chose the specific names because the Contact Any Celebrity database at <http://www.ContactAnyCelebrity.com> allows searches by cause, so I know if a star is interested in supporting my charity from the get-go.

What were the responses like?

Wow, well I sent out about 300, but this is where I want to point out that it takes work. To get a little, I had to do a lot. Out of the 300 letters I wrote I only got about 30 responses, and I only had five letters returned to me.

How did the celebrities and their representatives' respond?

It was honestly amazing. I was surprised at how personal the responses were. I got phone calls from assistants and personal letters of support from stars.

Who responded?

One of the best I got was from Cyndi Lauper. I got a phone call from her personal assistant and she said that Cyndi wanted to be a little more involved than just sending an autographed headshot. So we sent a 3-Day t-shirt to her and some other items, and she signed and sent them back along with some extra autographed headshots. I received an autographed headshot and personal letter of support from Al Roker. Judith Light sent a script from "Who's the Boss" with her signature on it.

You really got some big names!

I know, but that's not the end. Ryan Seacrest and Dustin Hoffman, to name just a couple, also sent autographed headshots. One of the biggest responses has been from the Tampa Bay Lightning, our NHL Hockey Team and the Stanley Cup Winner. We initially got a signed hockey puck. Then, through a connection, our request was noticed by a player whose mother had recently dealt with breast cancer. We suddenly had promises for team autographed jerseys, hockey sticks and other pieces of memorabilia.

When is your auction?

The auction is actually August 26 at 6 p.m. We are having it at the James Joyce Pub in Ybor City-South Tampa. We also landed sponsorship of the auction from Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer.

Did you find it easier to get support and sponsorship when you had a few celebrity names behind your project?

Absolutely! It helped big time. Without the celebrity names we would have never been able to land a corporate sponsorship at all! And now, we're getting local promotion and beer through Pabst. We also managed to get food. And the pub was donated by a wonderful local business person.

So what did you say in your letters to celebrities that was so effective?

In the first batch of letters I decided I needed to be as clear and to the point as possible. I kept it down to two paragraphs. First I said why I was writing and what the cause is that they would be supporting. I gave all of the who, what, when, where and why. I also set a deadline for contact and for items to be sent in. It makes it seem a little more urgent and important if there's a specific date and specific information than not being specific. Listing contact information was very important for me. In the letter I listed my phone number and my email--any way for them to get in touch with me. Later I learned that was a very smart thing to do. Some of the representatives wanted to call and be sure I was legitimate and that I was really working to benefit a charity.

You said you sent out two letters. What was in the second one?

The second batch was the bigger one, and in this one I mentioned that I had already sent one request with no response and that I was extending the deadline. I also listed the support I had already received. It had the desired effect, and I got a second wave of responses and memorabilia.

You mentioned you used Contact Any Celebrity to get your information. What was so helpful about the service?

Well, Contact Any Celebrity was so much more than I expected. It's more than just a listing of who and what. In other words, it's not like just a "star map." I felt that the contact information was valid and up-to-date, and there's so much information in the database.

Everyone I looked for was there. There were also so few returned letters from everyday household names. In this country we seem to value celebrity and fame so high. To get things we can place value on and auction off for a great cause is wonderful. It was great to actually get responses from stars. The service is priceless.

XII. Three Keys to Raising Money for Your Cause

There are many ways to raise money for a cause, one of which is by holding a celebrity autograph auction. These autograph auctions are usually made up of items signed by celebrities that are auctioned off either live or online via a service like eBay. Getting celebrities to send your organization these items is quite simple, but it requires using the right words, persistence, and patience.

Here are some important tips:

The Right Words.

Explain your cause and ask for what you want...nicely. Letter writing is an art form. Scribbling three lines in pencil on notebook paper won't do the trick. The more professional the appearance the better; typed on letterhead is best.

The Rotary Club of Ennis, Texas used Contact Any Celebrity at <http://www.ContactAnyCelebrity.com> to get items from celebrities for an auction to raise money for various children's charities. Their typed letter stated exactly what they were doing and why. The letter also listed the organization's contact information clearly. Some representatives may need to verify that you are a true non-profit organization.

The letter then stated exactly what they were requesting: "We most humbly request your assistance in our efforts by requesting a personal item from you for the auction; if it's signed, that will help even more." The Rotary Club tells us the response has been great, and they are still in the process of receiving and organizing items.

So far autographed photos have come in from Troy Aikman, John Travolta, Rusty Wallace, the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, Richard Petty, Laura Davies, Dustin Hoffman, Gerald Ford, Jennifer Lopez, Dolly Parton, Charlie Daniels, Arnold Palmer, Susan Sarandon, and an autographed cap sent from Lee Trevino.

Persistence.

You may have to ask more than once. Sending your first letter to explain what you're doing and why is a must. Sending a second letter as a reminder is optional, but a good idea since celebrities receive so much mail.

One Contact Any Celebrity user sent out two letters. The first, which was only two paragraphs long, really explained her cause and what she was looking for. It also set a deadline for when items needed to be received. After a few weeks, she sent out another letter explaining the deadline had been extended and outlined the support she had already received from other celebrities. This resulted in her receiving even more items!

Patience.

Celebrities don't always respond within your expected timeframe, so it's a good idea to get started well in advance of your event. Some of Contact Any Celebrity's users have received responses as far out as one year after the initial letter.

Amy Pratt from Plymouth, Indiana wrote to more than 50 celebrities asking for autographs for a personal collection. "The photos came rolling in after a few weeks," she tells us. "The last one we got took over a year, but it's a surprise each time [a new autograph] pops up." Amy received autographs and personal notes from Ben Stiller, John Travolta, Joe Theisman, Brooke Shields, Michael Jordan, Gale Sayers, and Nolan Ryan to name a few.

Another amazing success came from Carolyn Penharlow from Vienna, Virginia who held an auction for her son's school. "I sent out almost 300 letters following the instructions on the Web site. I was astonished at the response. It was fun to go to the school mailbox everyday. Everyone would ask what I got that day!"

Penharlow's school received signed books from Henry Winkler, CDs from George Winston, and many signed photos from stars like Liz Taylor, Cindy Crawford, and Dustin Hoffman. "We raised over \$15,000 altogether and were thrilled," she says.

XIII. How Two Publicists Got Celebrities to Contribute Sketches for the MS Society's "Pictionary Celebrity Auction"

By Bill Stoller, Editor-In-Chief, <http://www.PublicityInsider.com>

I've spent 20 years in the PR trenches, and I've got my share of stories to tell. This month, I'm reminiscing with my pal and former partner Jon Bard about one of our big successes--and how it can help you get major publicity...

Bill: Sometimes, great publicity ideas wither on the vine, because the publicity-seeker thinks "Nah, I couldn't really make that happen. That's way outta my league!"

Jon: Yep--thinking big is what real publicity mavens do. They ignore the naysayers and shoot for the stars. Audacity and brashness are two of the publicist's best friends.

Bill: Which leads us to this month's War Story--the Pictionary Celebrity Auction.

Jon: When it comes to getting publicity in the Features section or on TV, there are a couple of constants. Celebrities and charity. Do something for a good cause and have some star power, and the PR world is yours.

Bill: Now, this is easy enough if you're Disney or Coca-Cola. You throw a big party, have Jennifer Lopez or Michael Jordan show up, set your VCR to CNN and wait for the coverage. But for us mere mortals, generating star power is another story entirely.

Jon: So we came up with an interesting idea for our client Pictionary. As you probably know, Pictionary is a game that involves sketching. Our idea: have celebrities make a Pictionary sketch and then auction them off for charity. The celebrities wouldn't actually have to be there--their star power would be represented in the drawings on display.

Bill: We hooked up with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, who were good folks with a good cause and had some marketing know-how. They also told us they could deliver a few stars--regulars on TV series--to the event. That was

great, but we knew we needed real star wattage to make this succeed. If we were going to score press, we needed some Pictionary sketches from big, big names.

Jon: How does Ronald Reagan, Bob Hope, Muhammad Ali, Roseanne Barr, Steve Martin, and Barbara Bush sound? They were just some of the folks who were kind enough to take a moment to make a sketch and send it back to us.

Bill: And you know what? It was easy. Real easy. Here's what we did: Jon went to the bookstore and got a book. It lists contacts for thousands of celebrities (usually their agents or management companies). We targeted a bunch of big names, and then set about creating a request for sketches.

Jon: The key was to make it as easy as possible for the celebrity to respond. We knew that agents and managers wouldn't forward a request that took too much effort on the part of the celebrity--it's their job to save their clients' time, not waste it. So we made it incredibly simple. WE wrote a nice intro letter talking about the good cause (fighting MS) and asking the celeb to take a moment to help.

We included some paper (with the Pictionary logo on it--very important for getting the product's name out in the media when the artwork was reproduced in print publications), a black marker, and a self-addressed stamped envelope with postage already affixed. All the celeb had to do was make the sketch and pop it in the envelope.

Bill: It would have been easy for us to say "No way will Muhammad Ali respond" and not bother to send him a request. But we shot big. We figured "hey, you never know."

Jon: And it paid off. The star power associated with the event was now massive--and so was the publicity we generated.

Bill: So there's one lesson--shoot for the stars. If you have a big idea and it can be realistically accomplished, give it a shot. Just be sure to think about what you're up against (in this case, the time constraints of very busy celebrities) and be sure to address it (as we did by including the paper, marker, and pre-addressed envelopes).

Jon: And here's a bonus lesson: don't sit on your laurels after a big success. We milked this sucker for all it was worth. The event took place in late 1992, after

the election. Barbara Bush made a sketch that ended up selling for more than the sketch made by first lady Nancy Reagan.

After the immediate publicity rush was over, we took that tidbit to the political media, who ran with it as a humorous "sign of the times" story. Think big--and then keep thinking!

Bill Stoller, the "Publicity Insider," has spent two decades as one of America's top publicists. Now, through his Web site, eZine, and subscription newsletter, "Free Publicity: The Newsletter for PR-Hungry Businesses," he's sharing--for the very first time--his secrets for scoring free publicity. For free articles, killer publicity tips, and much, much more, visit Bill's exclusive new site: Publicity Insider at <http://www.PublicityInsider.com> .

Recommended Resources

"Charity sees the need, not the cause."

- German proverb

eBay

<http://www.eBay.com>

Put your celebrity autograph auction online in addition to or instead of holding a live or silent auction.

Amazing Celebrity Photos

<http://www.AmazingCelebrityPhotos.com>

A great source of unsigned, color 8x10 celebrity photos you can include with your solicitation letters asking for an autograph you can auction off at your event.

Celebrity Causes Database

<http://www.CelebCauses.com>

Simply select your charitable cause from the "All Causes" dropdown menu, and this database will give you a list of celebrities who are known to donate time and money to your cause.

Contact Any Celebrity

<http://www.ContactAnyCelebrity.com>

An online database that contains the best mailing address, agent, manager, publicist, production company, and charitable cause for over 54,000 celebrities with email addresses, phone, and fax numbers.

How to Hire a Celebrity for Your Event

<http://www.HowToHireACelebrity.com>

A one-hour interview on CD and printed transcript that reveals everything you need to know about hiring a celebrity to host, appear at, or be an auctioneer at your organization's event.

Niche Publicity Manual for Non-Profit Organizations

<http://www.NichePublicityManuals.com>

Paul Hartunian's Niche Publicity Manual for Non-Profit Organizations is a great resource that shows you how to get free publicity for your nonprofit using press releases and the media. Includes pre-made press releases, headlines, story ideas, and opening paragraphs.

Secrets to Contacting Celebrities

<http://www.SecretsToContactingCelebrities.com>

Even more insider tips, tricks, and techniques for contacting celebrities and public figures in person, at events, etc.

The Celebrity Black Book

<http://www.CelebrityBlackBook.com>

A print directory containing the best mailing address for over 54,000 celebrities and public figures you can use for sending out solicitation letters requesting autographed memorabilia.