

# **BIG PROJECTS BY LITTLE PROGRAMS:**

**Changing Community Perception to Create  
Fundraising Opportunity**

Matthew Thompson



# MATTHEW THOMPSON

- Executive Director - Wayzata Sailing
- Level 3 Small Boat IT - US Sailing
- Accreditation Chair - Community Sailing Committee
- Bachelor of Design, Architecture – University of MN



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# GOALS - LEAVE WITH:

- Ability to embrace Imperfection
- 4 tools to give fundraising campaigns community momentum
- **An understanding of your *personal* ability and influence over fundraising and community perception**

# BACKGROUND

*1950-2004*

- Wayzata Yacht Club
  - created in 1965, founders bought a small marina
  - Racing driven club
  - 120+ keelboats on Thursday nights
  - 1985 members founded sailing school
- City of Wayzata growth
  - Housing units, equity gap
- WYC Sailors not seen as community members
  - Mostly non-residents, not civically involved
  - Blue collar club (today avg. boat price under \$7000)



# BACKGROUND

*2004-2006*

- Moving out & present formation
  - DBA: Wayzata Sailing School
  - Differing goals from founders & partners
  - Purchased our own property
  - "Kids moved out of the house"
- Raised about \$1.2 million
  - 50% of purchase price
  - from sailing families & club members





# BACKGROUND

*2007-2015*

- Retained independence
  - Site was retained, still mortgaged
  - Growth in participation
  - Extended outreach programming
  - Viewed as extension of WYC
  - Supported mainly by sailing community
    - Covered interest, some equipment
- **2015 fundraising reset**
  - Neighbor first policy
  - Wayzata Local - New Board President





# PRESENT CONDITION

2019

- Debt/mortgage retired
- \$3 Million raised since 2015
- Larger footprint locally
  - New branding
  - Business up 30%
  - Project created news – groundbreaking led
- Mike Plant Community Boathouse
  - Building completed
  - Site still In progress (bridge, waterfront)



# PRESENT CONDITION

*2019*



# PRESENT CONDITION

2019



# WS CAMPAIGN REORIENTATION KEYS

1. **Embrace Imperfection** *(especially in people)*
2. **Become a Neighbor** *(the one that has your house key)*
3. **Pilot New Programs** *(try something fun)*
4. **Your Story is important** *(you make your organization unique)*



Campaign Key #1:

# EMBRACE IMPERFECTION

- **Anyone can bring a skill to the table**
- "Pony Express" fundraising
  - Who can help, now?
  - Right person for the right time
- Own the narrative, be honest & acknowledging of issues
- Maybe the person isn't a sailor...



Campaign Key #1:

# EMBRACE IMPERFECTION





## Campaign Key #2:

# BECOME A NEIGHBOR

- **Be informed & present**
- **Connect with neighbors**
  - Non-sailing events
  - Shop local (yourself & business)
  - Be seen (gear, walking, PFDs)
- **Participate civically**
  1. Volunteer
  2. Chamber, Rotary, Civic Events (participate)
  3. Businesses, Civic Events (contribute)
  4. Civic Events (anchor)

Campaign Key #2:

# BECOME A NEIGHBOR





Campaign Key #3:

# PILOT NEW PROGRAMMING

- What are you excited about?
- Create new programs around the people who want to run them
- Energy > Buy-in > Success > "Showcase" Fundraising
- Honest in scope
- Partners used to add equipment/skills

Campaign Key #3:

# PILOT NEW PROGRAMMING





## Campaign Key #4:

# YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT

- **What is your connection?**
- Power in individual moments & stories
- Board / volunteer education
  - Know who knows focus
  - Each story helps create the full picture
  - “Hand-off” Fundraising
- A good story/connection is advocacy
  - Why professional fundraisers can be tough...



Campaign Key #4:

# YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT

# SOCIAL MEDIA MINUTE

## WHAT IS YOUR CONNECTION?

Please take 60-seconds to  
**post a selfie video or an image about your connection to your organization**  
on a social media platform of your choice and tag

@USSailing @wayzatasailing @your organization  
#SailingLeadership

# CAMPAIGN KEYS:

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# YOUR OPINION MATTERS

Please open the **Sailing Leadership Forum app** and complete the **session survey** found in the **menu bar**.

*Thank you for attending this session!*