

New 2012 "Men with Guitars" concert: Our newest event, thanks to longtime *Mujeres'* supporter and new board member Steve, was a concert of '50s and '60s music performed at a park clubhouse. Steve invited local musicians to play, booked the hall, and bought beer and wine. Newspaper publicity, flyers around town and e-mails to our supporters brought in a sell-out crowd. The only expenses were the liquor license, the drinks and the hall rental. Everyone raved ... both attendees and musicians alike. This may well become an annual event.

Grants: Grants are tough when economic times are good. When the country is in the middle of the worst recession in decades, grant money dries up. I knew nothing about grants. Nothing. But nothing ventured, nothing gained. Grants take tons of time. If the grant isn't prepared exactly as required, it lands in a round file somewhere and is never even acknowledged. If you want to write grants, this is not the place for advice.

I will tell you two grant stories.

1. I had applied to the Kellogg Foundation and received back a letter of interest asking for much more information. That completed, I sent it and received a reply from Kellogg in Mexico City. The woman sent advice on how to tighten up my proposal and counseled a few changes. I followed her advice. Her recommendations continued over a few days, and I admit I was getting excited. I had never had such hands-on contact and an exchange of messages EVER with a foundation. Finally I had the proposal to her satisfaction and submitted it. In less than 48 hours, I received the generic "no thank you." Disappointment does not begin to address how I felt.

2. Alternative Gifts International showed up on my radar one day when I was researching grants. Publishers of

a catalog showcasing over 30 non-profits, AGI works with organizations and churches to sponsor fairs to garner support for a wide range of organizations. Their premise appealed to me because I like the idea of giving where it's really needed. I love getting cards that say a goat was donated in my name somewhere in Africa, or a donation was made so a girl could go to school. I strongly support the idea that money normally spent on unneeded or unwanted gifts is better spent where it will make a serious difference.

I sent in the proposal to AGI and we were accepted. The first year we shared a page of the catalog with two other organizations. The second and third years we had our own page and the fourth year is just starting with another full page. Proposals have to be sent yearly. But here is the interesting thing: *Mujeres* is a tiny, grassroots foundation, no paid staff, just a working, volunteer board. We represented one of the extremes. The Nature Conservancy was at the other end of the spectrum. Worldwide, hugely respected, tons of paid staff ... TNC is also in the AGI catalog. OK, so a little pride comes in here. We were rubbing shoulders with the big guys! And, one result of "rubbing shoulders" was that a worker with The Nature Conservancy near Tuxtla Gutiérrez in Chiapas gave a workshop on climate change to the women in the cooperative! AGI has been a godsend. Enough said.

You must be ready to jump through hoops for grant monies. The percentage of grants received can be infinitesimal to the number of grants applied for. But still, they can make a huge difference.

Local fundraisers: An ex-student of mine who majored in Spanish was surprised to find my name on the *Mujeres* website