

Community Services

Capital News: Volunteer Centre Column 2013 May 23

Is philanthropy the market for love?

I usually devote this column to volunteer topics but today I want to pass long some thought provoking ideas about giving money to nonprofit organizations.

I recently watched a TED Talks video posted on www.youtube.com. Dan Pallotta spoke on the topic 'The way we think about charity is dead wrong'.

Pallotta begins by stating that although business will move the bulk of society forward, there remains about 10 percent of the most disadvantaged left behind; some issues have no money measures upon which to build a market.

He goes on to explain that the nonprofit sector then takes over and "philanthropy becomes the market for love".

This is a startling statement.

Pallotta eloquently speaks about the "dangerous question: What percentage of my donation goes to the cause versus overhead".

He cleverly summarizes that we do not really want our tombstone to read, "we kept overhead low".

So what questions should we be asking?

People who want to change the world ask about the scale of a nonprofit's dreams and how they plan to measure their progress toward those dreams.

People who want to change the world ask what resources are needed to make dreams real, including the cost of overhead.

Pallotta asks, "Who cares about overhead if these problems are actually getting solved?"

The challenge is to develop "generosity of thought" so that nonprofits can expand to meet real, live human need.

And so I ask you.

Are you truly exercising generosity of thought with your financial donation or does your gift have strings attached that tie the hands of nonprofits that are serving the most vulnerable in our society?

If you are looking for a local charity, like Hands in Service whose tagline is Love.Gives.Back., go to www.kcr.ca and click on Community Information Search Central Okanagan.

LINK

TED Talks: Dan Pallotta, The way we think about charity is dead wrong.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bfAzi6D5FpM&feature=youtu.be&goback=.gde_1866345_member_222162377



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