

Main Street Foundation holds conference for non-profits on legacy donations

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BRISTOL — In considering what to do with their estate when they die, most people don't name a charity as a beneficiary because no one asks them, fundraisers learned at a Main Street Community Foundation seminar Wednesday.

The local foundation offered a free "web conference" for non-profit organizations about building a legacy program to secure the charity's financial future.

Susan Sadecki, president of Main Street Community Foundation, said its part of her organization's mission to help local non-profits become stronger.

"We know how important your work is," she said to the 17 people who attended.

Sadecki said the seminar was the third of four her organization is offering free to local non-profits this year.

"It doesn't break our bank and we're giving back to the community," Sadecki said.

The foundation shared the costs of the web conference with the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Tunxis Community College provided the space for the event at its Bristol campus.

Presenters Caleb Rick and Greg Lassonde, experts in legacy giving, offered information and suggestions for how organizations can create a legacy society.

They talked about a variety gifts, from stocks and bonds, insurance policies and checking and savings accounts to trusts and gift annuities.

While most Americans make charitable gifts, only a few create a legacy gift, the presenters said, because most are never asked.

They urged non-profit organizers to involve all board and staff members as well as volunteers in the effort, to make the legacy program a priority by focusing on the long term future of the charity.

It's important to involve donors, they said, adding that legacy gifts are not always given by wealthy people. People of modest means who may not be able to make large gifts in their lifetime may be willing to offer more in a legacy program.

People who decide to make a legacy gift do so to show appreciation to a charity that made a difference in their lives, to support an organization or value they care about, to memorialize themselves or someone else or to fulfill a need, according to Rick and Lassonde.

Don Muller, executive director of the American Clock and Watch Museum, said he appreciated the chance to attend the seminar at no cost. He said he'd heard much of the information before, but attending the web conference gave him the chance to think more about how it could help the museum.

The clock museum has 28 members of the Richard K. Ingraham Legacy Society, Muller said, most of them still living.

"It's mostly people who are closely associated with the museum," Muller said.

The Main Street Community Foundation has about 30 members in the Cornerstone Society, its own legacy group, Sadecki said.

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