

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY BUSINESS JOURNAL

Charitable Donation as Unique Sales Force

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Staff Reporter

Motivation

When Marx Acosta-Rubio wanted to fire up his sales team, he didn't turn to engraved knick knacks or store gift certificates for incentives.

Instead he told his team that if they hit their annual sales goal, he would make a donation of \$100,000 to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

"Sometimes people will do more for other people than they will do for themselves," said Acosta-Rubio, president and founder of Onestop in Canoga Park. "I am surprised at how motivating it is for individuals to do something that benefits somebody else, particularly children who are sick, sometimes terminally ill, through no fault of their own."



Champ: Tito Ortiz motivates Nick Lukich, Onestop Consumables Division manager.

He said he chose St. Jude partly because of the mission of the charity, but also because he feels the organization uses their donations very effectively. The institution has a four-star rating from CharityNavigator.org, which shows that more than 75 percent of funds raised go right into the organization's programs.

Then Acosta-Rubio's assistant, Carla Hansen, saw that mixed-martial arts star Tito Ortiz had chosen St. Jude as his charity of choice when he was competing on last season's *Celebrity Apprentice* television show.

They decided to see if they could get Ortiz to come out and inspire the Onestop team; Ortiz agreed and on Aug. 12, he spent the morning in their Canoga Park facility.

"It was so much fun," said Hansen. "Tito is just an awesome guy."

Acosta-Rubio said that they weren't using the charitable contribution as a selling tool.

"We haven't told clients to buy from us because we're going to donate to St. Jude," he said, "it's more for internal motivation."

While Onestop is doing well in its 10th year in business – Acosta-Rubio said sales are up over last year and they've moved up on the Inc. 5000 list again – unless a couple of major accounts that are in development actually come through, they may fall short of their goal.

But he hinted that wouldn't stop the company from making a substantial donation anyway. Just don't tell the sales team.

Inter/Media Silent Auction

On Sept. 4, the Inter/Media Foundation will be holding a day-long silent auction of sports and entertainment collectibles to raise money for The Alzheimer's Association.

From 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the lobby of 15760 Ventura Blvd. will be filled with sports items signed by Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Sandy Koufax, Pete Rose, Kobe Bryant, Jerry West, Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, Joe Montana, Dan Marino, Lance Armstrong, Tony Hawk and Pele'.

On the entertainment side, auction items include Disney and Warner Bros. cartoon cels, Elvis Presley Memorabilia, and signed collectibles from "24," "American Idol," and the "Sopranos," among others.

This is the first of what is hoped to be an annual event, said Robert Yallen, president of the Inter/Media Companies in Encino.

Parking is available in the building, accessible off of Densmore. If you need more information, call (818) 995-1455.

Foodbank Donations

The Los Angeles Regional Foodbank, which distributes food to dozens of agencies in the San Fernando Valley, is getting a lot of support lately.

Wells Fargo contributed \$10,000 in cold hard cash, while radio station 93.9 collected more than 2,000 pounds of food during a 12-hour collection event on Aug. 13.

The Encino law firm of Horvitz & Levy have teamed up with the Foodbank to rally support during September which has been designated Hunger Action Month.

In their Motion to Strike Hunger, H&L issued a challenge to all area law firms to collect food, or donate money, during the two weeks between Sept. 15 and the end of the month. Attorneys and staff from H&L will be at the Foodbank to accept donations on the 15th.

"In this case, the court is the court of good will in the legal community."

Individual attorneys at H&L sent out e-mails to their contacts in the legal community, said Pell and so far several firms have signed up.

The idea was born when Pell and colleague Maggie Thomas were talking at lunch one day about the high cost of food and gas, and how that was affecting the poor and the Foodbank. Both are regular contributors.

A partner in the firm knew someone on the board of the Foodbank and the Motion was born.

It is modeled on a San Francisco initiative that has been in place for several years. Nearly \$1 million in funds and food were donated by law firms this year through that program.

Pell said participation can be as simple as going on the website and making what she called a "virtual donation," by using a credit card.

She reminds us that while food donations are gladly received, the Foodbank can stretch a dollar far better than most individuals, thanks to bulk purchasing.

