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Nonprofits gear up for the fall fundraising season

BY ARLENE GROSS LIBN CONTRIBUTING WRITER // September 5, 2024 // 4 Minute Read

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As the summer ends and we approach the fall and winter seasons, nonprofit organizations switch into high gear as they start planning in earnest for the giving season. In addition to bringing in essential funding to support their programs, fundraising events and campaigns help bring greater awareness to their noble causes and essential work.

LIBN spoke to a few Long Island nonprofits to see how they meet their fundraising goals each year.

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People giving to people



Paige O'Brien (left) at FCA's Long Island Women in Philanthropy Fashion Show and Women's Market event with Jeffrey Reynolds and Loida Santos. Courtesy of Family & Children's Association

Garden City-based Family and Children's Association (FCA) relies heavily on state and federal grants to help support 35,000 Long Islanders at 13 locations throughout Long Island.

"People give to people is at the core of what we do," said Paige O'Brien, FCA's vice president of strategic advancement and chief development officer for the organization, which has an annual budget of \$25 million.

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For the holidays, FCA targets its marketing to specific programs, such as delivering Thanksgiving meals to homebound clients.

Through its gift equivalency requests, FCA lay outs for donors what exact specific dollar amounts will support, such as sending a child to day camp for a week.

FCA's fundraising goal each year is approximately \$2 million, raised through four keystone events, including Long Island Women in Philanthropy in March.

"Our last event is our Fall Harvest gala on Nov. 14. That brings in over \$300,000," said O'Brien, noting that the event also has a cornucopia sponsorship, where larger donors can place their logos on artisanal items, which also helps support local businesses during the holidays. "We truly believe in giving back to our community, giving to our clients. And this is all a shared mission for a better and stronger Long Island."

Much of FCA's budget is supported through state and federal grants.

"We are largely supported by that, which is a blessing and a curse, because that money can go away tomorrow, and that's really scary," O'Brien said. "Because that means if we don't have the fundraised dollars behind that, a program can close and it affects Long Islanders."

Support also comes via New York Community Trust and local family foundations.

"We have a lot of local supporters that we're very grateful for their annual sponsorship," O'Brien said.

Celebrating 15 years



Harmony Healthcare seeks federal and organization grants to help fund programs such as Baby Bundles, which provides indispensable items for newborns. Courtesy of Harmony Healthcare

Harmony Healthcare, which treats the underserved community at six full-service nonprofit health centers throughout Nassau and three school-based health centers, has an anticipated annual budget for 2025 of between \$50 million to \$52 million, notes Amy Fleischer, development director for the organization.

This year they're holding their 15th anniversary celebration "Celebrate On the Sound" at Crescent Beach Club in Bayville in September, where they'll honor those who helped renovate and build new health centers.

As an FQHC (federally qualified health center), Harmony Healthcare turns no one away, regardless of their ability to pay.

"That's where our fundraising comes in--to be able to subsidize this healthcare," Fleischer said. "We gave away almost \$4.5 million worth of free healthcare. Seventy-five percent of our population that we treat is under the federal poverty level; 21 percent are uninsured."

In addition to healthcare, Harmony Healthcare also has a food pantry and works with local food organizations to distribute food at its centers.

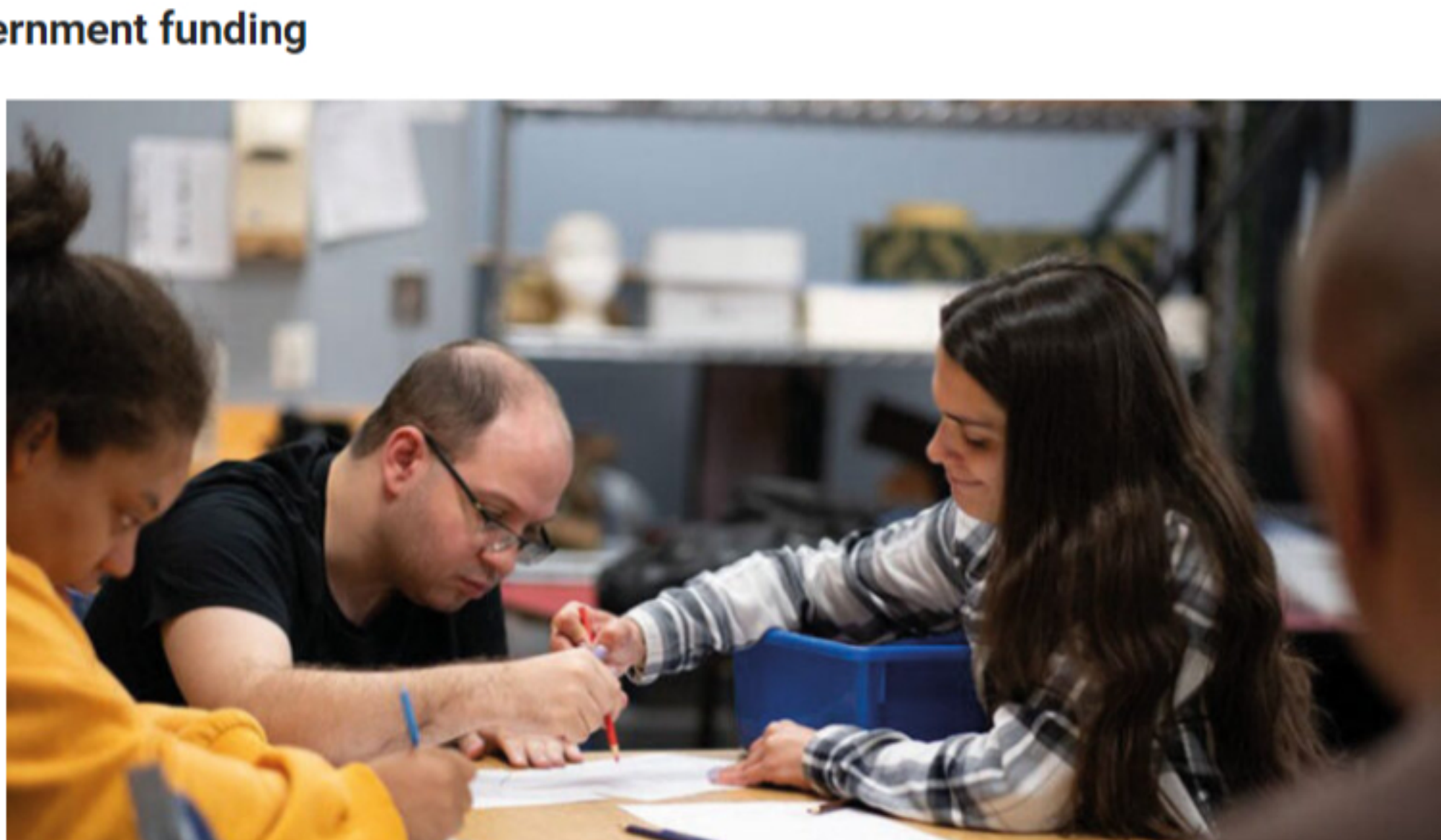
"It's really about all the social determinants of health to keep you 360 healthy," Fleischer said.

In addition to an annual fundraiser, Harmony Healthcare looks for state, federal and organization grants to help fund programs such as their mobile medical coach that goes out to senior centers, and Baby Bundles, which provides indispensable items for newborns.

In addition to in-person events, the organization runs social media and email campaigns, such as a recent buy-a-brick campaign for a new center in Hempstead.

"You do whatever you can. You speak at local functions. You let the people know what you're doing and you try to raise money any way you can," Fleischer said.

Don't rely on government funding



Maryhaven Center of Hope is one of seven human service agencies supporting people with disabilities under one umbrella through Kinexion Network. Courtesy of Kinexion Network

Operating with an overall budget of \$300 million, Kinexion Network of Manorville is a management service organization bringing together seven human service agencies supporting people with disabilities under one umbrella, notes Debbie Kneidl, chief fundraising officer for the organization.

Every affiliate agency hosts its own fundraisers: Independent Group Home Living and East End Disability Associates have golf outings at Westhampton Country Club; Maryhaven Center of Hope has an annual cocktail reception at Old Fields Club.

"We have switched gears for all our affiliate agencies. We no longer hold the typical gala celebrations. We host a three-hour cocktail party," said Kneidl, adding that attendees seem to prefer these types of events, which actually generate more income because they're less expensive to hold.

Each year, Kinexion Network sets its strategic goals for both the organization as well as its affiliates.

"How we really raise that money is we work with individual donors," Kneidl said. "The events are fabulous, but they don't generate the philanthropic need in today's current market to really support, sustain and grow our agency."

In addition to securing state and foundation grants to the tune of about \$8 million, Kinexion Network facilitates an annual end-of-year direct mail appeal for all its agencies highlighting the impact of their programs.

"Philanthropy is incredibly important in the landscape of nonprofits right now," Kneidl said. "State funding does not come through 100 percent. That's for hospitals. That's for every agency."

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