

**Acceptance remarks by Peter Hero  
at the Association of Fundraising Professionals Annual Meeting  
on November 17th 2008,  
upon receipt of the AFP Glenn George “Heart of Philanthropy” Award  
in Santa Clara, CA.**

First let me say how deeply honored I am to receive this award.

I first met Glenn George in 1989 when he burst into my office as I was trying to resuscitate a melted down Mac Classic computer and as I recall he immediately hooked me into his project to build a fine Veterans Memorial in downtown San Jose.

Glenn became my dear friend and constant mentor. He was one of the giants among Silicon Valley philanthropists, along with a handful of others like David Packard, Leonard Ely, and Faith Davies. We all stand on the shoulders of these philanthropic pioneers as, over time, they showed the Valley how charitable involvement could be a very cool thing.

Glenn’s spirit lives on in all of you in this room today, and I wish he was here to see how the seeds of civic participation he planted have sprouted and blossomed.

I am told I have just 3 minutes so in that time I want to say 3 things:

First, I hope you realize that today the seating in this room is actually reversed. All of you should be up here and I should be out there honoring you.

For while the community foundation indeed raised money—over \$1.5 billion during my tenure, thanks to Barb Larson, Winnie Chu, Nancy Ragey, and many others—it was you energetic public benefit sector leaders who, with that money, healed the sick, fed the hungry, housed the homeless, educated our young, revitalized our neighborhoods, and celebrated our artists. The foundation may have been a partner and catalyst and funder but you did the hard and often thankless work.

At the same time, over 20 years, your sector transformed this region’s culture. Whether a family, or individual or corporation, today it is NOT ok to be stingy in Silicon Valley!

The second thing I want to say is to urge you to not be too discouraged by this current economic downturn. It too will pass. California has been a boom and bust state since gold was discovered in 1849, and Silicon Valley is not immune.

But I think you can take advantage of these times. Four suggestions:

1. Real estate of all kinds has not been this inexpensive in years. It’s a great time to lower your costs. Find new space for offices and programs. Get more, get it now, get it cheap, and get the longest lease you can.
2. Recruit more volunteers. More people are out of work and they have more time to help others. Our studies have shown that in tough economic times Americans are far more likely to pitch in and to volunteer so now is the time for you to show them how.
3. Similarly, build out your Board of Directors with new recruits. The community foundation, on its website ([www.siliconvalleycf.org](http://www.siliconvalleycf.org)) has just created a fine new e-learning tool to motivate prospective Board members to join public benefit corporation boards. Check it out.
4. Think mergers, collaborations, consolidations, shared program services. Take your ideas to individual donors and foundations. In dismal times these prospective donors are MUCH more open to funding such organizational development/cost reduction proposals. The Red Cross, under Barb Larson’s guidance, is a good recent example.

My third and final point today is to encourage you to make your voices heard as a sector. Join with your colleagues, show up at city hall, pay attention to public policy.

Public benefit corporations are not just well-meaning but marginal “do-good” entities as they are sometimes portrayed.

Instead, your sector is the envy of the rest of the world, as I have found out first hand. You are the citizen counterbalance to government and the private sector. Together you can crack the atom of civic participation and unleash its power to fuel new and sustainable positive social change. Governments cannot do that. Nor, especially, can businesses.

By the way, how often have you heard, “Why can’t these nonprofits just run more like businesses?!” Right?

Well, you can respond, “which businesses? .....Enron, World Com, General Motors, Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers.....?” Remember them? In fact of course you run far leaner and far better than most corporations, doing more with less, and doing it with no access to venture capital either. When the economy sinks you cannot just shut the factory doors and move out of town. You have to stay and in fact are asked to do even more!

How many semi-conductors would Intel make if, each year, every year, it had to go out and ask others for its entire operating budget (and at the same time being challenged to explain how much they spend on administration....), as all of you do, every year, and you do so with enormous creativity, high spirits, persistence, and not a small amount of cunning.

You already know all this.

Our inspiration, Glenn George, also knew these things. If he were here today I think he would be very proud of all you have accomplished. I can imagine him, in his irrepressible way, urging you to never give up, never give in, for the public benefit sector is succeeding, and the future is bright, and what you do is, in fact, what is best about America.

So, thank you again for this splendid award in Glenn’s name.

I am deeply honored.

November 17, 2008