

Writing Sample 1: Copy of article thanking a major gift donor for her legacy giving to TROSA

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Legacy Gift Funds TROSA's Educational Programming for One Full Year

May 9, 2018

At TROSA, we believe in comprehensive recovery and building individuals' skills in order to promote long-term success. That's why we are dedicated to supporting our residents' educational growth and vocational aptitudes. As an example, all individuals without a high school diploma or GED who are receiving treatment at TROSA – approximately 25% of our residents – are required to take GED prep courses with the goal of earning their GED. With this educational foundation, residents have a much greater opportunity for success in gaining and maintaining stable employment and sustained sobriety, thanks to this hard-earned credential and a newfound sense of pride and accomplishment.

We provide these opportunities at no cost to our residents. To make this possible, we rely on the support of donors and community partners who believe in our work and share our passion for helping to rebuild lives. Recently, a generous bequest from Margaret (Peggy) Pickard Sirvis (1924-2017) has funded our education advancement opportunities for TROSA residents for one full year. Thanks to the generosity and friendship of the Sirvis family, our residents can earn their GEDs or take their first college courses. Last fiscal year, 23 residents earned their GED and 55 residents took courses at Durham Technical Community College.

A Life Lived Generously

Margaret had a long history of dedicating her time and resources to empowering her community. She was born and raised in Chapel Hill and graduated from the University of North Carolina with a degree in Group Social Work. A longtime activist, she was dedicated to social justice, working behind the scenes on desegregation efforts and speaking out in opposition to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

While working at a nonprofit in Bridgeport, CT, Margaret met her husband, Genrik S. Sirvis (1918-2005), the son of hard-working immigrant parents from Lithuania. They married in 1945 and welcomed a daughter, Barbara, a year later. They each had a dream—he to be an entrepreneur and she to make the world a better place. Together, they built a small, successful technology-related business in California. Throughout this time, Margaret continued in the spirit of her nonprofit background as a Girl Scout and community volunteer, including service as an Elder and Delegate to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

Margaret and Genrik worked hard and lived modestly. Margaret asked that their remaining income be used to support community agencies that provide services and tools to help rebuild lives. With her legacy gift to TROSA, Margaret is able to give back to an organization that serves individuals in her home community. Her gift is directed to help cover expenses for individuals seeking educational advancement opportunities at TROSA.

One such individual is Bill, a 2016 TROSA graduate who earned his GED while a resident in TROSA's two-year recovery program. As a child and teenager, Bill was quiet and shy, struggling socially and academically. By the age of 12, to "try to fit in and feel like I was a part of something," Bill tried marijuana for the first time.

He was introduced to the drug through his neighborhood friend's father who smoked and drank alcohol. Bill dropped out of school, became a father at the age of 18, and began taking prescription pain pills as a way to cope with his tumultuous life. Bill turned to TROSA's two-year recovery program, graduated, and is now a role model for many at TROSA. As he neared graduation, Bill successfully applied for the competitive position of Staff-in-Training (SIT), which means he now serves in a leadership role at TROSA while receiving one-on-one mentorship to build the skills necessary to become part of the TROSA staff. He credits earning his GED as a major life accomplishment.

Thanks to Margaret, and others like her - those who recognize that individuals can achieve great things when given the opportunity - Bill was given the chance to realize his true, full potential and lead a healthy, happy, and productive life.

Throughout her life, Margaret remained committed to helping others, to making the world a better place. She will be remembered for her commitment to community and for her ever-present smile and warm greeting for all whom she met. She was a TROSA annual fund donor for many years, and this steadfast commitment to her community carries on through her planned gift. We are very grateful for the support of Margaret, Genrik, and their daughter, Barbara. Their generosity will impact the lives of many.

Leave Your Own Legacy

If you are thinking of making a legacy gift to TROSA – thank you. There are many ways to leave a legacy of support, and naming TROSA as a beneficiary in your will is one common way to make a lasting impact. [Please click here](#) to learn more about this and other ways to support TROSA. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Pearson at kpearson@trosainc.org or call 919-419-1059 ext. 1284. Thank you for thinking generously about TROSA!

Support our Cost-Free Services ***Make a Gift to TROSA Today***

After over a decade of drug dependency and three years in prison, **Josh decided that he was done relying on drugs for his happiness.** The high cost of treatment was a barrier to access the care he needed - until he learned about TROSA's cost-free, comprehensive services. All he needed was a ride here.

While at TROSA, Josh has taken a variety of life skills classes and vocationally trained in the automotive department, which has given him invaluable skills that he plans on using to pursue a career in the automotive field. On top of that, Josh says that "**because of TROSA, I've learned how to laugh and smile again.**"

Over two years of sobriety later, Josh is a proud graduate of the program. His appreciation for the TROSA community has led him to stay at TROSA post-graduation to serve as a mentor to other residents - he hopes to use his experiences to help others in recovery take their lives back from addiction.

Each day, TROSA serves hundreds of men and women - like Josh - on their recovery journey. We provide comprehensive care, housing, food, education, vocational training, and so much more **at no cost to our residents.** Your support makes this possible. We ask that you make a donation to TROSA today, so that we may continue providing these essential services to our residents.

[Click here to learn more and make your gift today...](#)

Writing Sample 3: Nonfiction essay

Coffee with A Shot of Financial Independence: An Ode to CEF

It is a Friday, ten minutes after the doors are unlocked, and the Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) office is unusually relaxed. Walking in, I pass the main desk, littered with office supplies. Here, Maggie, the woman in her mid--twenties who founded the nonprofit five years ago, does the daily office chores of sorting through emails and file cabinets in a casual green pullover and brown cords. The office is cluttered with mismatched chairs, a desk pushed against every wall, and a circular table in the center of the small room. The walls house a collage of comforting décor: photographs, wooden letters spelling CEF, a Declaration of Financial Independence, a construction paper “Savings Tree”, with a savings goal written on each leaf: a car, a down payment on a house, graduate school. A man pops food in the microwave at the back of the room and the smell of tomato sauce spreads through the office.

“Darryl!” Maggie says to a man walking into the office. They small-talk good--naturedly before Maggie abruptly asks, “Are you any good at making coffee?” Darryl laughs. He isn’t. They continue chatting when another man walks in. “Hey Tommy! How are you? You’re good at making coffee right?”

Along the edges of the room, clusters of people are at work. CEF takes a unique approach to the obstacle of financial insecurity. Advocates, mostly college kids, and members, adults experiencing poverty or homelessness, pair up in an effort to support members’ journey towards financial independence. The idea is to create an atmosphere where relationships thrive and where, instead of keeping a professional distance, advocates and members build friendships and take on obstacles together.

Colloquially called simply “the office”, the space is a big part of what has made the CEF community grow. From nomadic meetings at coffee shops to an established space, the CEF village, as some call it, has taken on new life in the past couple of years.

Between appointments, some of the regular members hang out in the office. Joel, a vibrant, middle--aged man who has a tendency to talk a little too close to people’s faces, launches into colorful conversation, talking too fast for breaths. He talks about his love for impressionist painting—Mozart, Van Gogh—his favorite is *Starry Night*, and the conversation swerves to the school he taught at and attended in New York, his time at UNC’s graduate school, his relationship with his daughter who is moving to Australia soon, and about how he used to teach computer science but can’t figure out how to get an internet block off of his new laptop. Jon, a staff member, walks into the room and Paul prepares to hound him down. Jon tries to avoid the inevitable. “You’re probably going to pump me full of chocolate cake or something!” Jon says.

“This is substantial! It’s a waffle! Look at it Jon, it has your name on it!”

People spill from the cramped office to the hallway, where I sit and watch them fill out paperwork. A man sits down in the chair next to me. He is new to CEF, he’s been coming in for about two weeks now. His name is Robert, came from Tennessee. He once caught an eel; you can catch them on the Potomac and send them to France where they are a delicacy, he says. Miles, a member in his early twenties, walks out of the office holding an empty coffee pot. Robert is delighted to hear that it is free-coffee Friday.