

## FUNdraising Good Times: The power of words

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw

Wednesday, 20 November 2013 15:43

---

We recently had the opportunity to attend a benefit dinner for Facing History and Ourselves as the guests of two long term supporters. We had a great time. The event was much larger than we had anticipated and we found ourselves in a beautiful room surrounded by people committed to ensuring that students have the opportunity to learn from history and develop the ability to make ethical choices. As they share on their website, "through a rigorous investigation of the events that led to the Holocaust, as well as other recent examples of genocide and mass violence, students in a Facing History class learn to combat prejudice with compassion, indifference with participation, and myth and misinformation with knowledge." The theme of the benefit dinner was "People make choices. Choices make history."

The evening was an example of a well orchestrated fundraising event. First, as the name makes clear, it was a benefit dinner. We learned that funds raised from the dinner will represent 25% of the annual budget for the Memphis office of this international organization. The event also provided supporters with the opportunity to introduce friends and colleagues to Facing History. The event was choreographed so the reception, dinner, and desserts were in different rooms allowing people multiple opportunities to mingle, socialize and make new friends. Finally the official program and remarks were well-scripted, short, and powerful. Enough time was left for the call to action: everyone was asked to make a gift and gift cards and envelopes were provided at each table.

One of the people speaking at the event was Shelby County Schools Superintendent Dorsey E. Hopson, II. He pledged his support to ensuring students have access to the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum and thanked the organization for its support of local students and our community. During his remarks he thanked the organization for having "the will and the skill."

We left the event with two short phrases to contemplate: "People make choices. Choices make history." And, "the will and the skill." As human beings, and as fundraisers, we find these phrases to be powerful mantras. Each of us can make a difference. We make that difference through how we respond, the actions we take. In our experience, it is "the will" that precedes action. "Will" is that internal process and power that combines thought, heart, spirit, intuition and facts. When it is ignited it manifests in our choices. In the world of fundraising a lot of emphasis is put on fundraising skill. Yes, there are definitely skills associated with fundraising, but they are most effective when combined with "will." We have witnessed people making choices that make history. Their conscience motivates them to action and they then combine their "will" with "skill" and change individual and collective experience.

Learn more about Facing History and Ourselves at [www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)



*Copyright 2013 – Mel and Pearl Shaw*

*Mel and Pearl Shaw are the authors of "[Prerequisites for Fundraising Success](#) ." They position nonprofits for fundraising success. Visit them at*

## **FUNdraising Good Times: The power of words**

Written by Mel and Pearl Shaw  
Wednesday, 20 November 2013 15:43

---

[www.saadandshaw.com](http://www.saadandshaw.com)