



Who We Are

Paula J. Peter

[Paula Peter](#) founded The Solstice Group in July 2002, to utilize decades of experience with a wide range of not-for-profit organizations. She has particular strengths in board development, campaign readiness and management, strategic planning, major gift fund-raising and training. She designs and facilitates board retreats and 360 performance reviews for senior leaders and provides one-on-one coaching services.

Paula began her consulting career in 1991 with Carol O'Brien Associates. As senior associate she conducted feasibility studies and/or development assessments for dozens of clients, including Duke University and Duke University Medical Center; Harvard University, The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, University of Vermont; University of Pennsylvania and WGBH Educational Foundation (in Boston, MA). Prior to consulting, Paula held several positions with Cornell University's division of Public Affairs. Paula is also co-founder of the Ithaca Institute, an organization dedicated to the professional and personal development of advancement officers and not-for-profit leaders.

Paula graduated from Cornell University in 1977 with a degree in history. She is a lifelong learner, having completed: Napier and Associates' Group Leadership Intensive, a facilitation internship program; The Temagami Experience, a program on developing community and leadership skills conducted on a remote island in Northern Ontario, the Hoffman Institute Quadrinity Process, an internationally known program for personal growth; an adult leadership course with Outward Bound in Baja, Mexico; and a course on Leading Nonprofit Organizations conducted by the Gestalt International Study Center in South Wellfleet, MA. She has lectured and presented workshops on board development, campaign planning, starting major gift programs, and how to be a good board member for many groups including the Association for Fundraising Professionals, CASE, SUNY CUAD, Leadership Tompkins (Ithaca, NY) and Duke University's continuing education program (Durham, NC).

She resides in Ithaca, NY with her husband, Michael Ward. Between them, they have four grown children and four grandchildren.

Kathy Cole

[Kathy Cole](#) founded West Wind Consulting Strategies in Fund Raising, LLC in 2002 following a highly successful career in fund raising and institutional advancement. As president, Kathy draws upon her years of direct fundraising and managerial experience in a variety of settings, from large institutions of higher education, including thirteen years at Cornell University, to her work with smaller, community-based organizations.

In addition to her ability to guide a fund-raising campaign to success, Kathy has particular strengths in building effective development teams, developing creative and meaningful engagement strategies for top prospective donors, managing and supporting volunteers, and navigating difficult organizational transitions. Kathy has also developed a network of experienced colleagues and associates with whom she collaborates to bring clients a full range of consulting and support services.

Kathy has been an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) having served as a member of the Board of Directors in both the Finger Lakes and Central New York Chapters. Kathy has also been active with several area community organizations' boards of directors. She has lectured and presented numerous workshops on managing capital campaigns and annual funds, board development and starting and managing a major gifts program. In 2008 she co-founded the Ithaca Institute which provides professional training and development for fund raising professionals. She achieved and has maintained Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) status through AFP since 1994.

Kathy lives on a small farm in Upstate New York with her husband, Chris. She is an avid gardener and outdoor enthusiast who also enjoys camping, kayaking and antique collecting. Kathy and Chris have two grown daughters, Jenna and Jillian, who are the light of their lives.

Maya Gasuk

[Maya Gasuk](#) joined West Wind Consulting Strategies in Fund Raising LLC in July 2010, bringing 23 years of professional fundraising experience. Her experience includes strategic planning, campaign management, volunteer management, change management, and the integration of annual fund programs into major and planned gift fundraising and alumni affairs.

Maya served as director of the Cornell Annual Fund for Cornell University for the past 10 years growing the Annual Fund from raising \$10 million to \$27 million annually. She led a 40-person team along with 120 paid student employees and over 1,500 engaged volunteers to design and implement reunion, parent, leadership giving, alumni regional, and affinity-based personal solicitation programs.

Maya was charged with increasing the annual fund as part of Cornell's Far Above campaign, which included Annual Funds in 16 undergraduate programs in Colleges and academic units. In 2004, she assumed additional direct responsibility for the Annual Fund programs in the College of Veterinary Medicine, Johnson Graduate School of Management, and the Cornell Law School. Through her creation of strategic plans for increasing annual fund revenue, Maya was able to increase revenue from these professional school programs by 50% in five years, increase efficiencies through shared participation initiatives and standardizing work processes among colleges.

Maya has a demonstrated track record of significantly increasing results in each program she has managed during her 19-year tenure at Cornell University, covering a range of giving programs and initiatives. Her analytical and problem-solving skills have enabled her to develop innovative approaches in both program and staff management resulting in extraordinary results. She has successfully implemented changes to volunteer programs in multiple areas to increase accountability and productivity of committees—consistently increasing both revenue and completed work by volunteers. She increased donor participation, giving society membership, and dollars raised in multiple programs assigned to her in her career, and reduced staff turnover from 50% annually to 15% or less annually during her tenure as Annual Fund director.

Having served for 13 years as a volunteer rowing coach in her community, she has a passion for teaching and leading teams to greater levels of achievement and satisfaction.

Maya lives in Ithaca with her husband Mark and their Labrador, Yarra.

Jezra Kaye

Jezra Kaye is an acclaimed public speaking coach who teaches people how to communicate with passion, power, authenticity, and ease – in person, via Skype, and through her books, *Speak Like Yourself... No, Really! Follow Your Strengths and Skills to Great Public Speaking* and *Interview Like Yourself... No, Really! Follow Your Strengths and Skills to GET THE JOB*. These books bring you the same down-to-earth, step-by-step coaching insights that Jezra shares with private clients ranging from university presidents to company presidents, and from scientists to celebrity chefs.

A former jazz singer and bandleader, Jezra is also the co-author of *Managing the Unmanageable: How to Motivate Even the Most Unruly Employee*, and the author of a novel, *The Tattooed Heart*, and a book of poems. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Andrea Kihlstedt

[Andrea Kihlstedt](#) is a nationally-known author, trainer, speaker and coach.

She is cofounder of *Capital Campaign Magic*, a service that helps organizations get ready for successful capital campaigns. They work with organizations from the time a campaign is a gleam in the board's eye until they are ready to hire a campaign consultant.

She has written three books on capital campaigns:

- *Capital Campaigns: Strategies that Work* is a complete soup-to-nuts campaign manual that is a standard reference used by consultants and nonprofit development staffers.
- *How to Raise \$1 Million (or More) in Ten Bite Sized Steps* is a short, story-based book, ideal for people who want an engaging quick-read about what's needed to do a campaign and avoid some of the pitfalls.
- *Asking Styles: Harness Your Personal Fundraising Power* (Charity Channel Press) is Andrea's groundbreaking book that describes a simple personality assessment geared to make everyone a more comfortable asker.

Andrea has been in the fundraising profession for nearly 30 years. She has helped dozens of organizations, large and small, conduct successful capital campaigns, raising more money than they ever thought possible. She has worked with social service organizations, health clinics and hospitals, schools, libraries and social change organizations.

Andrea codeveloped the capital campaign course for *The Fundraising School in Indiana* and has done a great deal of training and speaking for both local and national organizations.

In 2010, Andrea cofounded *Asking Matters*. This innovative website provides the information and motivation people need to get out and ask. Asking Matters has created a system that helps people identify their personal Asking Styles and learn how to ask for donations authentically using the style that suits them best.

Andrea is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and Brown University, where she received degrees in Philosophy. She is also a graduate of the Johns Hopkins Fellows Program in Change Management. She has an abiding interest in psychology and she has both taken and taught courses at the Gestalt International Study Center in Massachusetts.

She works in New York City where she lives with her husband and their two cats.

Victoria Devlin

[Victoria Devlin](#) began her formal consulting career in 2007 after over 20 years as a development executive and vice-president at small and large shops. She works independently but often collaborates with The Solstice Group in Ithaca, NY and The Galler Group in Boston and Miami. She is a founder of The Ithaca Institute, which develops and conducts training programs for development professionals and a three-day intensive program for new Vice-Presidents of Development designed to build leadership, management skills, and leadership giving expertise.

At Bates College in Lewiston, Maine (1998-2007), Victoria served as Vice President for College Advancement. She rebuilt a development program, developed best practice policies and procedures, started a major gifts and planned giving program, developed a stronger annual fund, and planned and completed an extremely successful \$120-million campaign. She also developed a program to brand the College and oversaw important changes in alumni communications.

From 1985-1990 and from 1992-1998, she served at WGBH-Boston, a dual licensee and national program producer for both radio and television. She assumed the role of Vice President for Development and Marketing in 1992, managed a staff of 160 professionals and oversaw all areas of development, national promotion, and station relations. Her staff raised between \$65-\$75 million each year. She was instrumental in the planning for WCAI, an independent radio station serving Cape Cod and the Islands, and developed a separate department to serve donors with a strong interest in radio. Under her leadership, giving societies flourished and the major gift program grew by 300%. She planned and managed the first major campaign for WGBH that raised over \$50 million in restricted funds. She also served as Executive in Charge of *Masterpiece Theatre and Mystery*. From 1990-1992, she served as Senior Vice-President for WETA-Washington.

As a consultant, she specializes in helping a development staff and its chief executive become ready to execute a campaign. She teaches and coaches teams: to determine what is the best course for their non-profit to cultivate and solicit major donors, to build a compelling case that encourages donors to stretch, to develop programs and events that provide stewardship, to establish a network of volunteers, and to develop the principles that build donor loyalty and a culture of philanthropy for the long-term.

Vicky lives in Freeport, Maine and is active in community activities and non-profit work. She currently serves on the board of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, and is President of South Freeport Congregational Church.

[the solsticgroup.com](http://the.solsticgroup.com)