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## Sometimes Lobbyists' Advice Really Is Priceless

By Jeffrey H. Birnbaum  
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Katherine D. Brodie's good deed began with sushi and green tea. She and a colleague went to lunch at Sakana Japanese Restaurant near DuPont Circle with a member of the Seneca Nation of Indians. Hundreds of hours of pro-bono lobbying later, Native American museums around the country stood to receive a half-million extra dollars a year.

Brodie and her cohorts at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP pounded the hallways on Capitol Hill until they found allies in the offices of Sens. Michael Enzi (R-Wyo.), Jeff Bingaman (D-N.M.), Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) and Jack Reed (D-R.I.), among others. After many months, they forged a provision in law that allocates to small, underfunded tribal museums a portion of the money dispensed each year by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal grant-making agency.

"We hope that this will have some impact," Brodie said, brimming with optimism. "We wish it was more."

Brodie isn't the only high-priced counselor who labored for free this year to help a worthy cause. Lobbyists are usually reviled as shills for greedy interests. But dozens of them also work without pay to advance projects that embrace the giving spirit. What better time to acknowledge such selflessness than now, the holiday season?

Katharine R. Boyce, a partner at Patton Boggs LLP, persuaded lawmakers to appropriate \$840,000 to tell low-income women about the dangers of alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, the No. 1 cause of mental retardation in children, is completely preventable if women don't drink alcohol while they're pregnant.

Right here in Washington, the Capital Area Food Bank is richer thanks to Piper Rudnick LLP. Lobbying by Karen A. Regan and William H. Minor, and advice from Carl L. Vacketta and William A. Smith II, produced a \$300,000 gift for the food bank in the D.C. appropriations bill. Piper Rudnick lawyers also regularly hold food drives and fund-raising events to help reduce hunger in the city.

The District's struggling school system got a boost because of other Patton Boggs lobbying. The Center for Inspired Teaching, which puts public school teachers through rigorous training, received \$150,000 in taxpayer money because several of the firm's lawyers pleaded its case in Congress.

Kidsave International creates model programs around the world that move orphans into adoption or long-term mentoring situations. Pro-bono lobbying by Van Scoyoc

Associates brought Kidsave International an appropriation of \$400,000 for its on-going work in Russia.

Wesley D. Bizzell, an associate in the D.C. office of Winston & Strawn LLP, successfully lobbied Congress to award \$500,000 to South Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Wilmington to produce a documentary about the Montford Point Marine Corps, the first black troops in the Marines. The schools thought the federal government should preserve the stories of these men who fought for civil rights while also serving their country, and now they will be.

Martha M. Kendrick, a Patton Boggs partner, helped obtain for the Sisters of Notre Dame an appropriation of \$770,000 for the Office of Farm Workers Ministry in Apopka, Fla. With a separate contribution of land and \$290,000 raised from migrant families themselves, the nuns can now build a new community center.

Sarah Groothuis Vilms and Laurence E. Harris, also at Patton Boggs, helped the Women's Sports Foundation win \$100,000 in federal funding for the GoGirlGo! Initiative. The program aims to inspire girls between the ages of 8 and 18 to get involved in regular physical activity and organized sports. Research shows that girls who participate in sports are more likely than inactive girls to stay in school, graduate from high school, get better grades and go to college and are less likely to get pregnant prematurely.

In New York State, criminal penalties will apply for motorists who leave the scene of an accident in which a guide dog has been struck. For that, Empire Staters can thank Tom Shanahan of the Albany, N.Y.-based Shanahan Group, who shepherded the legislation pro bono on behalf of the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind Inc. of Smithtown, N.Y. Shanahan and his wife, Kate, also voluntarily take eight-week old puppies into their home and raise them for a year until they are ready to begin formal training.

The horrific attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, have led to a rush of pro-bono lobbying. Partners at O'Connor & Hannan LLP, led by Frederick T. Dombo III, designed and executed the congressional strategy that persuaded lawmakers in October to establish Sept. 11 as a permanent day of voluntary service, charity and compassion.

The Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA), one of the sharpest-elbowed lobbying groups in town, showed its softer side by mounting what it calls the largest pro-bono legal representation program in history -- Trial Lawyers Care, which provided free lawyers to the Sept. 11 victims' families. Every person eligible for the federal government's September 11th Victim Compensation Program who requested a lawyer -- more than 1,700 people in all -- got one without charge from ATLA and its state affiliates.

And in April, Edelman Communications donated its public relations services to help launch a \$17.5 million fund-raising campaign for the Pentagon Memorial Fund, a

nonprofit organization dedicated to building a memorial for the victims of the attack on the Pentagon.

Even the American League of Lobbyists got into the charitable act. The 25-year-old group decided to put its members' fancy clothes to a higher use. It held what it called a Capitol PurSuit drive and collected more than 7,000 business suits and related items. They were all donated to low-income people who are trying to enter the job market. The league's foundation also raised nearly \$150,000 at its annual Members of Congress vs. Lobbyists basketball game in September. The proceeds paid for eye glasses, braces and tutoring for D.C. kids on Capitol Hill.

To no one's surprise, by the way, the members of Congress won the game. Charity only goes so far.

Thanks to all and, please, keep giving!

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