Holey Bonding

Posted At : December 2, 2011 4:29 PM | Posted By : Food Bank Staff
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By Margarette Purvis

Last night I witnessed the close of my second full month as the Food Bank's new CEO. I've learned many things that only a 60 day journey could teach and I plan to use them all. I learned that when my assistant asks me to repeat something with a lifted eyebrow she's really saying,*"I don't think you should do that and I'm probably going to secretly change it for your own good."* In the midst of reorganizing programs and teams, I've learned that even when changing for the better, ***change is change and it just scares the socks off of most people***…even the really talented and committed ones.

So, here I am dragging around my new found lessons and being told by staff that I have YET ANOTHER meeting to attend. For the record, I truly LOVE THIS JOB. I love the organization. I love our mission. Heck, I even love my eyebrow lifting assistant. However, the pace coupled with back to back meetings, interviews, and vision setting can often make a girl DREAM of a nap on the sofa. So the thought of yet another meeting requiring a trip on the subway was not EXACTLY how I saw myself spending a Wednesday night.

Nevertheless as a trooper, I gathered my things and applied a bit more lip gloss and went about my merry way. Was I dragging a bit behind my team? Maybe. I was tired and it was late and cold. When we entered the elevator our team's fundraising guru suddenly started giving me some last minute stats on philanthropy. I gave her my raised eyebrow look that means, *'I kinda want to kick you but since you're doing your job…I get that that would be wrong.'* When the doors opened we left the elevator to walk to the apartment of the host of our meeting..and THERE IT WAS. Right outside the apartment door was a clothes rack and pile of shoes. My first thought: "Dear Lord, this is a no shoes zone." I will admit that a mild panic shot through us all. For me, it's been about 5 years since I've been a part of this particular NY phenomenon.**Note to Non- NY'ers: No shoe zones are one measure used by NY'ers to keep a healthy home since NY is a heavy pedestrian city.** However for another team member it was shocking for another reason: she had holes in her socks! Once we gathered ourselves from the exhausting laughter that this moment caused, I passed my socks to her and again, away we went.

Inside the apartment were new faces from varying careers and backgrounds all excited about our upcoming Gala. I will admit that while I expected YET ANOTHER meeting about a business event, I was pleasantly surprised to find something VERY DIFFERENT. Inside the apartment were varying types of New Yorkers discussing a shared passion for a single mission…all while wearing socks. So in less than 60 minutes, a retired banker, a voice over star, a talent agent, a tech guru, a past user of emergency services and a new mom provided my team and me with a little "end of the day jolt." You see in the business of philanthropy, you work tirelessly at HOPING you're making a connection to supporters. Last night, I was blessed by a clear message that said, 'not only are people connecting to our mission…they SHARE IT and happily Join us in trying to meet it.'

So just like that…a long night turns into a great night and a long "to do" list transforms into a pretty exciting walk (in a really BIG) park. So thank you to last night's hosts. We're now considering ending all sayings about *"rolling up our*

sleeves" in exchange for plans to **TAKE OFF OUR SHOES!** You've coined a new custom in our shared village and apparently, it works…REALLY WELL.

Margarette Purvis is the President and CEO of Food Bank For New York City. Follow her on Twitter at @FoodBank_Prez