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THE YOUNG AND THE HELPFUL

Newer volunteers may hold the key to metro nonprofits' futures

BY JEWEL GOPWANI
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

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Metro Detroit's charities -- long reliant on corporate giving and older donors -- may come to depend on younger people like Mary Kay Jerneycic, 36, of Beverly Hills.

Jerneycic, who grew up watching her [parents](#) support the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, is one of eight people organizing a \$50 afterglow to the soup kitchen's annual fund-raising dinner.

The Second Helping Afterglow, slated for Oct. 9, is aimed at younger adults who may not know about the soup kitchen or may not be ready to spend \$250 on a ticket to the main fund-raiser.

"Our goal is to have some of the regular attendees of the afterglow attend the main event, and use this as a stepping stone," Jerneycic said. "When you start hearing some of the stories and seeing some of the good that they are doing ... that's when you get hooked."

Efforts like hers are growing in importance as local charities find their base of donors growing older and shrinking.

The need for young donors also is more pronounced as charities struggle to raise [money](#) amid cuts to corporate giving and high unemployment rates that have curtailed donations.

"There's been a shift of people leaving Detroit or being downsized," said Mariam Noland, president of the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan. "We're going to be looking for new people to get involved."

Non-profits seek new leaders



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As local charities launch programs to attract younger donors, they're also developing another essential element for the future: new leaders.

Charities like the Capuchin Soup Kitchen and the American Cancer Society are enlisting young people to start and foster new fund-raisers that introduce those causes to their peers.

"We're the next generation of leaders," said John Nechiporchik, who is among the organizers of the American Cancer Society's new fund-raiser aimed at people under age 40. "We're young and we're excited and we're passionate about helping," he said.

Nechiporchik leads a group of 35 people who are [selling](#) tickets and organizing the American Cancer Society's new fund-raiser, called More Bull. The \$75 ticket consists of the last two hours of the Cancer Society's Cattle Baron's Ball, which usually costs \$175 a ticket.

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