



Chief Philanthropy Officer Search Second Interview

Candidate: Francesca Capodilupo
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Present: Nancy Coughlin, Debra Ritchie, Karen Brennan (notetaker)

Questions:

1. **Your network is one that is impressively built with political and community connections. How will you go about building a fundraising network of donors in Connecticut, specifically in the Darien and surrounding area?**
 - I'm really big on sort of taking a global approach, especially right when you are kind of getting in on what I would consider to be the ground level in this case. I know that this role is going to have sort of the partnership or coordination with Corey, and that's something I would include in this conversation because that is equally important. I know a lot of his function is to work on expanding the donor base as it would be mine.
 - So I would absolutely bring with me a large class of full spectrum donors. Sort of small donors, mid-level and then what I would consider to be like more legacy or sustainable donors as well. And those folks do come from the Fairfield County area mostly and a little bit from the New York area as well. Certainly, in terms of building an additional donor network for P2P, that absolutely has to be something on the table.
 - You know, so often there's so many moving parts and so many things going on. Nothing can get left by the wayside because you're just focused on so many other things that exist or you're focusing on trying to deal with donor maintenance from whatever perspective or whatever capital campaign, you've got a mid-level campaign here. You have to hit these goals, whatever it is. And so, I think coming at this from a global approach and team-based approaches is really important. But my position really is, you should do both. You can do both. I can certainly do both.
2. **Can you talk about your philosophy around the role of social media in fundraising?**
 - It is important. But it is important to know your audience. I am a very big believer in taking multifaceted approaches to fundraising. Media communications, whatever sort of bucket you want to put it in. Social media is important. It is a main communication tool. It is one of the main platforms by which you're going to communicate your mission, advance your mission, talk about your successes, and engage people. But it is not the only way. I've mentioned texting before, I've mentioned the email programs before, and all of these elements are complimentary. I do believe in the power of social media. I believe in the power of using social media for

fundraising or any form of media, and I do include text mail, all of the email as well in that is about knowing how and when to ask and how and when to create an environment for engagement.

- Now those things can be the same, but they can be very separate. And so, from a long-term perspective, it's about having the ability to sort of navigate when to do one or the other or both. But how you talk about it.
- I mean, you guys see it on paper. Most of my career has been based around, like, political messaging and tied in with that is political fundraising messaging and fundraising messaging overall and knowing how to navigate that to get those points of engagement. Maybe we send like a fundraising text that's really oriented towards getting people to engage and getting people to volunteer. And maybe they get five bucks because we have a turkey giveaway in three weeks.

3. Your background is political and government based, and it's interesting to me that you would be interested in this position as a nonprofit.

- I think that it is a seamless transition. The only real difference is that I'm not asking anyone to vote for Nancy. I mean, if you're running for something, I'll definitely ask people to vote for you.
- But I think what people often, you know, when they hear that someone's a campaign manager or they've been in politics or whatever, they sort of get this image in their mind of like some hyper partisan campaign maniac. But the element that is so often forgotten, and it's very much one of those things like you don't really know until you're in it, is that you're actually running an organization. You're running an organization with a million different arms. You have to manage a budget. Every election has a capital campaign, but you have little capital campaigns within that. You have inflection points, you have fundraisers, you have crazy deadlines, you have all of these dinners that you have to put on, all these kinds of crazy things that all end up doing, all you hope, translating to a successful electoral campaign while at the same time managing all the other moving parts and all of the staff.
- The assets I bring are the network and the ability to hit the ground running, and that is obviously, you know, in partnership with Corey. But that is because I've had almost 20 years of experience doing exactly this. The only real difference, like I said, is not that I'm being hyper partisan. In some ways, it depends on the campaign. But like not being hyper partisan or focused around the one individual. This is about being a little bit more community oriented, but still being focused on those little campaigns and those initiatives and driving that all forward. Using networks similar and in some cases identical to the network that P2P has, but more importantly, the network that P2P is trying to build.

4. Can you talk about your approach to conflict resolution?

- I always come from a place of being well informed. I want to know why the other person believes what they believe. And I sort of want to know what has sort of motivated them to put those differences, I should say, on display for lack of a better term, because so much of this, it is obviously relationship cultivation, but it is about finding that common ground. And we just kind

of did that, in our role playing with Mary, right? We went right in and talked about the food pantry. And immediately, you know, that was sort of like a difficult topic.

- I mean, everyone has strong convictions, right? And most of the time, you're never really going to do anything the way someone exactly wants to see it.
- So, I can't tell you how many conversations even in the last like six months. Sort of getting stakeholders, donors, whatever it is to a point of being grounded again. And I'll talk about that in the context of this is political. You may have seen Jim called on Joe Biden to step out of the presidential race.
- I was sort of prepared for it to happen. But I got an onslaught of calls for three days. And I had to talk to everybody. Supporters of Jim who were calling me and saying like, I'm so disappointed and my having to say, I completely understand. And you are allowed to be disappointed. But let me tell you why. You can feel how you want to feel, and that's okay. And I'm not going to judge you, because your beliefs and your convictions and your feelings are just as valid as mine and they're just as valid as Jim's. But it's about being able to have that communication.
- Like I said earlier, it's about creating that space to allow for that conflict, to allow for that conversation and work through it. It's always, you know, again, I might be sitting here and being hyper partisan, but I'm happy to talk to someone who doesn't support Jim. I'm happy to talk to someone who doesn't support Kamala Harris. Because at some point, something is going to emerge in the conversation that we can agree on and we can move forward. Now, I might not have changed your mind, but I'm creating that space to do that. I think that it that is one of the most important things you can bring to the table.

5. How would you go about engaging the board in the fundraising process and the same with volunteers?

- From a board perspective, it's about relationships. My approach with the board, first and foremost is going to be like, I want to know about them. I want to know what motivates them. I want to know what they're interested in. I want to know what their priorities are because, again, like, no one's priorities are ever going to align 100%.
- So, it's kind of about finding those things that really motivate the leadership here and how we can advance those goals together. Now, obviously, we all know sometimes at the end of the day, right? The board members are going to tell us, you know, they're going to greenlight something or not. Maybe something gets tabled, maybe, you know, maybe we've got to be a little bit more creative about how we achieve multiple goals at the same time. But I really think that, you know, engaging with board members and bringing them in, I mean, everybody's got to be brought in from a strategic perspective, but sort of being able to collaborate where possible, where it makes sense and driving these initiatives forward, I think it's just such an important thing. And I always come from a place of collaboration and respect.
- And, you know, how can we work together on this thing or on those things and move the ball forward from a volunteer perspective. That's where the fun starts. It really is like when you get someone in the door, you know, they're invested. How can we do more, right? How can we do

more with that? Maybe it is, you know, monetary. Maybe it is something as simple as, like, hey, you really you want to do, like, this micro program? There's four people that are really interested in doing, you know, a micro program or something like that. That's great. Let's go fundraise for it. Let's do it together. You don't have to have these big, huge major capital campaigns to bring in dollars and keep folks engaged while still having an impact. Maybe it's like a \$5000 campaign that a bunch of people can work on together. Maybe it's something as simple as like, let's do some fundraising.

- You know, everybody raises one hundred dollars, low dollar, high dollar, mid dollar. It doesn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Building your network internally as well. Why wouldn't you work to empower the volunteers who want to do more? Maybe in different ways, different and interesting ways and ones like let's go out and do something really interesting that's not a liability to the organization.

6. How do you approach competing work deadlines, prioritization, competing interests with a team that has a lot of different stuff going on?

- Communication is always like the key foundation. I tend to come at things from a little bit more of a coaching perspective.
- So, like you said, clearly defined roles, you have to have clearly defined roles. Everybody kind of has to have their land. But importantly, everyone has to know where their lands and their roles intersect.
- You know, at its most simplistic point of view, it's like, okay, if I'm talking to, you know, so and so who's on my team, and I say, okay, like, we got to work on XYZ. I'm going to expect that if I've said something to said person on my team that affects other folks. That's okay. If I say something to a member of my team, that might apply to someone else in another role. Everyone needs to be on the same footing. But what that means is that you better make sure that if I've said something to you and someone else seems to know, you're communicating about it.
- So that's kind of first and foremost, it's about knowing where to step in and when not to step in. But it is about that prioritization and communication from my perspective, just how I've worked on campaigns where you do sort of have like a billion people doing a billion things that are all number one priority. It is about managing that process. You can have those competing priorities and still make sure that the team or those teams are working to move the ball along. It's about implementing the overall strategic vision and those projects and moving them forward. I'm not necessarily. There are absolutely times where something takes precedence over something else and everyone's got to kind of like converge right on the one project because there's a big deadline and we all got to get it through. But it is about managing those parts and seeing everything from that 30,000-foot level and knowing what is suffering, what isn't suffering. Are we hitting these deadlines and kind of working together to get to a place where we're able to accomplish all of it or as much of it as you can on time? And well, doing it right is important.

Candidate's Questions:

1. I'm kind of curious to know how the strategic planning and implementation aspect of this role ties in with the board and the C suite folks, and how we'll be in the room to sort of create strategy and then go forward and implement it?
2. What are the goals for expanding the donor base? Where are you at now? Where do you want to be?

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