

# DRIVING PARTICIPATION

WITH BETH BRODOVSKY

## SESSION 135

### THE POWER OF MOMENTUM

WITH DAWN OWENS

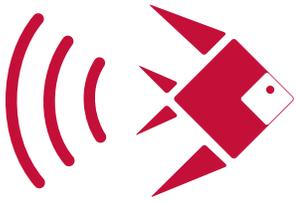
**BETH:** Hello, this is Beth Brodovsky and welcome to Driving Participation. Today I have with me Dawn Owens. Dawn is the Founder of The Link of Cullman County and she does some really, really interesting work, and they're at a very unique moment in time where they are up for I don't know if you'd call it an award, but for a grant and I guess Dawn's gonna talk a little about that and about this whole idea of how you build momentum for your organization in general and specifically when something unique or different is going on. Dawn, thank you so much for joining me today.

**DAWN:** Oh, Beth, thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here!

**BETH:** I am thrilled to be able to do this with you, and Dawn and I met a few weeks ago at Sandy Rees's inspired donor conference and we hit it off primarily when we both realized we were both from pretty much the same neighborhood, even though we live very far apart now. It's one of those small world moments, and so I'm thrilled to have you on today to talk a little bit about this, but the one thing that we didn't talk about is how you ended up starting your organization. It's really nice to be able to have an actual founder of an organization on the call with me. What brought you to creating this organization?

**DAWN:** For me, this has been definitely a calling more than a career aspiration. There was never a time in my life ever that I aspired to be a nonprofit anything. I mean, you know I wanted to be engaged in my community in some way, but this was not quite what I thought it would be and so for me this has definitely been a faith walk coming across with this opportunity. We started off, my husband and I were living in Ohio. He's originally from Alabama and as you just heard, Beth and I grew up in familiar neighborhoods in Pennsylvania. The thought of moving





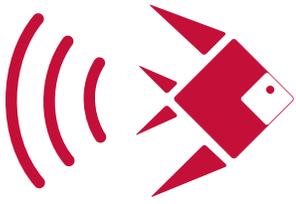
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South was not high on my priority list, being a bit of a Yankee, but my husband being the Southerner he was and I had fallen in love with him, convinced me that it would be part of his kind of goals and bucket list really ultimately to start a local church in our community, in his community and we had come to visit quite a few times in Alabama and I really started to have a heart for the community there, but never again did I think that I'd be doing what I'm doing today. Just a little bit of my background, I started off with a master's degree in student affairs and higher education and loved working with college kids on campus and then felt like I kind of wanted to switch gears and ended up working for a vendor of higher education institutions called Hobsons in Cincinnati and basically they help colleges and universities recruit students and use an online platform to be able to do that. So I'm sharing some of that with you because it will be helpful for you to understand possibly why momentum is also so important to me. So as you can tell, those things and nonprofit ministry work don't really go together. At least I didn't think so, but we ended up moving. The church concept didn't quite work the way we hoped it would and ended up taking some time to consider what our next steps were. I felt like I got a vision for an organization that would help with the needs of individuals in our community. We had a real heart for the poor. As we moved here, part of the vision of the church was to be used to break the cycle of poverty and so when that closed, it didn't work, our hearts were broken because we wanted to be part of alleviating poverty in our community. So getting this vision, I really thought my husband was supposed to do that because he's from here. Who is gonna listen to a Yankee? But God had other plans for that and long story short, He took me through some pretty significant challenges, health challenges in my life that made me really have to reflect on what direction I was going in next, finding myself unemployed for the first time, temporarily disabled and so in that time of reflection and prayer, I realized that this was really my passion and if I was going to see what I was hoping to happen in the community, I was probably going to have to be the one that did it. So trembling, I took steps forward. That's the only way I could explain that.

**BETH:** I love that and that's such a big thing, is that people think that people that





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start things are just like braver than everybody else or that we have the answers to things, but it's really not like that. I wish I knew what that thing was that makes people, even when they are afraid, do it anyway.

**DAWN:** Yeah, it's exactly it. You're afraid, and you do it anyway.

**BETH:** That's really a key thing. It's not that you're not afraid or that you're fearless or you actually think that you have the answers. It's just that you can't not do it. It's hard to explain. I wish I could come up with and find somebody to be like this is what makes it happen.

**DAWN:** Yes and I think it's just you get to a point where you realize, and I feel like there's almost this sense inside of you. It's like standing on that cliff, that you see that glistening water down below and you think, "It's gonna feel really cool when I hit that water," but I've got to get myself pumped up enough to actually make the jump and you know it's safe, but it's still the fear of "it could happen to me. I could be the one that breaks my neck." Though you saw other people do it, you could have even watched it. It's that adrenaline push that I think a lot of us want to run towards and when I started going through this process, one of the shows that was really big for me during that time was Biggest Loser and they were really trying to push them through their comfort zones, and I feel like for me, once I was able to say I'm not going to be OK with comfortable anymore and take those steps of faith forward, it was there that I found who I truly was in all of that. Honestly, that's been the blessing of my life, knowing that I didn't allow fear to keep me from doing everything that I was purposed for and then now somebody had just put a post up on Facebook about getting over your fears and somebody said, "That's the story of your life," and I said, "Well, not really anymore. Now I have all these faces of the people that I serve on a daily basis behind my eyelids." I don't have a choice anymore. Fear is not an option, but back then it was the "Can I overcome this?" or "Am I going to allow it to consume me?" and I chose overcoming, over consuming.





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**BETH:** Wow! That just gives me the chills because I love to hear those stories because I feel like it applies to so much, nonprofits, for profits, to anybody that has this idea, like something in them. There's that moment in time that you can choose to step forward or like shrink back. It's not easy and like I don't judge anybody that decides that they're not willing to jump off the cliff. I have a friend that says, "Starting something new, everyone should be an entrepreneur. Everyone should be a starter." I have to say, I don't believe that because I don't think it's going to make everyone happy, but there are certain people that if they have that in them and it's sitting there, if you don't do it, it'll eat away at you and it's so hard to imagine what's on the other side. It's almost like having a baby or something. You can't even imagine and if anybody told you what it was really like no one would do it, it's very similar, but it's life-altering, but it's still terrifying.

**DAWN:** Yes, and I don't think you have to start something new all the time. There are different levels of that and everybody has that thing that kind of brings up that level of fear in them, and so you know, it could be I need to meet with somebody that I know that that person could open the door to something else, but I'm letting fear consume me and I'm meeting with somebody and you put it off and you put it off and you put it off and then you finally get the opportunity to meet with them and it went phenomenally well and you're like, "Why did I put that off for so long?"

**BETH:** Right, exactly. I bet there's people doing major gifts all over listening to this and all over the world that probably have to face that fear every day. When I first started my business, I remember there were times I'd put my hand on the phone and then take it off and put my phone back on. It was like this 20-minute ramp-up to make a cold call or to reach out to somebody because I was an independent person. I didn't like to ask for help and I didn't want to call a stranger. Even though I'm a crazy extrovert, it's still scary to pick up the phone and do something new and reach out. It's not like anybody bites your head off. Nobody screams at you. Like there's not a lot of direct negative consequences, but we kind of imagine so much negativity out of it that it stops us. It's crazy! So





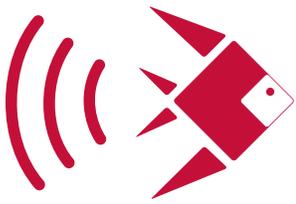
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you've started this organization and you're not an island. You can't just make it work by being on your own. To grow it, you've had to get people involved and buy in and get participation. So as you've turned this from this idea that you had into a thing, how has participation shown up? How does it matter as you grow in a way that helps you thrive?

**DAWN:** When I read this question, I felt like it was everything. There's no way I would even have a title called founder and executive director if I didn't have participation as part of that process. It is everything and then making sure that that continues and I don't become an island is part of it, too, and even in the idea of what we're gonna talk about today, with momentum, if you don't have anybody following you, you're just on your own through that process. So for me, especially because I was here not knowing anybody, I had to very quickly try to find individuals who were even considering what the needs of those who are in poverty are within my community. I have a pretty small community. Cullman County is about 80,000 people. The city, we're growing, but it's around 18,000 almost 19,000 now and to say that it's a small world sometimes, you almost have to chuckle because it's not a small world. Everybody knows everybody. As they like to say in the South, someone is always kin to somebody else. So you just never know who you're really talking to at times that might have a connection for you in another way. So participation, what that looked like for me in the beginning was having meetings. I call them community meetings asking people to come share their thoughts. I had this picture in my mind of what I thought the organization needed to look like, but that was also bringing my ideas from really a Northern perspective into a Southern town. So I had to be very thoughtful of making sure that whatever it was that I was dreaming up because my paradigm was that. I wasn't here long enough to say, "I get it here. I understand what everybody is going through," so I needed to hear what everyone was going through and figure out who the right individuals within those meetings were to connect with and try to get the word out a little bit further through that. Now, you know, how participation happens is like I said. If we don't have participation, we might as well close the doors, walk away and say we're done because from





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the people that we serve to our volunteers to the donors to our sponsor, you have to have participation and the more participation you have, really the more successful you are. So really trying to figure out how you can get more participation is what the question really needs to be.

**BETH:** Right. I think it's so interesting because you have such a unique situation of like you recognize that Northern sensibility and Southern, that culturally there might be some differences and then you came in and you started this thing. Not only not knowing anybody, but into a small town where everybody else knew everybody. Do you have any idea or thoughts on what was the thing that even let somebody take your call without going, "Who are you and why don't I know you?" What is it that was in the beginning help flip the switch from you are a stranger in a strange land and you don't belong here and why should we help you to being able to have somebody say, "We'll give you a shot"?

**DAWN:** Well, I think there were probably two factors going on and for me because I look at things from a faith perspective, one of them was just a God thing because I feel like my vision came from him. So regardless if I was going to pursue it or not, I really truly believe that he had the vision for this community. So if it wasn't me, it would be someone else, but in that, knowing me and the way that most people would describe me, I tend to be a very passionate person and so when people started to hear what I was passionate about and heard that passion extended to people in our community that most people didn't want to bother with anymore, that started to pull some heart strings I think and when that happened, they then said, "You need to talk to so and so," and then that person would say, "You need to talk to so and so." So what presented itself was the ability for momentum to begin and that network to start happening. I didn't know the next person I was talking to, but the person I just talked to introduced me to the next person who then introduced me to the next person. So once you can go someplace and say, "I already spoke with so and so and they suggested me talking to you about this to get your feedback," and most of the time I went with that perspective. It was, "I want to hear what you think about this topic,"





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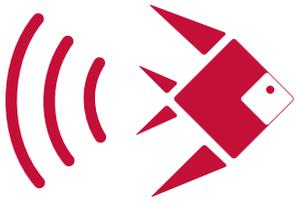
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rather than me going and saying I have all of these things that I'm gonna tell you about. People are more likely to share with you when you're going to go asking questions than coming with knowing it all.

**BETH:** Right. I have a plan. Right. It's not like you went in and met with people and said, "Here's what I need you to do for me." You know, I love how you told that story because I mean when people think of momentum and sometimes when I think of momentum, you think of the big bang that happens at the end. You think of the success, the splash, the thing that shows up or look at all this buzz on Twitter or look how much money this thing raised in the end and it's hard sometimes to look back, far enough back to see that it started at one person taking your call and then referring you to another person. It's a tiny thing. I read this book once that had this really great story that said would you rather have a million dollars today or one penny doubled every day for 30 days and most people would answer, "I'd rather have a million dollars today." Of course I'll probably get the math wrong for the story, but ultimately the end of the story is the way the math works, one penny doubled every day for 30 days ends up being like \$3 million, but in the beginning it doesn't look like that. It's a penny. It seems so tiny and it's such a great, I think the book is about tenacity and like starting small and doing the same things every day. So how did you begin to grow from there? In your organization, what is the impact of momentum, like this ramping up and having in the work that you're doing?

**DAWN:** For us, it's been pretty much everything just like the participation piece and early on, I listened to a video by a gentleman named Andy Stanley and he talked about momentum and how momentum was essential to really having a successful and healthy organization and bringing people along in that process. To me, momentum is really catalytic and it just gives us this incredible opportunity to effect change in a good way. So I knew early on that I had to figure out ways in which I was creating momentum for the people that were starting to follow us and then there were times where that momentum was self-created, but then there was momentum that just kind of fell into our lap and we had the





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opportunity to really, I just lost the word. Capitalize.

**BETH:** I think that's an important distinction. It's sometimes you think of momentum of like I rolled the rock forward and then you just sort of stand back and watch as it grows. There's definitely that aspect of momentum that you kick something off and then all of a sudden it just starts percolating through your community. Sometimes it's things that you don't expect. I've seen this a lot that everybody is like, "You're pushing, you're pushing, you're pushing," and it's like this is what I want to have happen and then somehow like over here on the left where you're not expecting it, something rises, that you can take advantage of, but that natural intuitive momentum just shows up, but you also mentioned a kind of momentum that you're actively pushing forward yourself, this conscious effort of "I'm going to choose this thing and I'm going to work it until it works, darn it." Clearly you kind of need both and it's funny. I never really thought about both of those things being considered momentum, but like concentrated effort put towards one specific thing does an awful lot for an organization.

**DAWN:** Oh yeah, and when you talk about participation, it's the idea that you're actively engaging whoever it is that's listening to you because ultimately you're trying to build a platform for what your passion is, what your cause is, what you're ultimately trying to raise money for. That needs to be paramount in everybody's life and when there's so many different voices trying to come in to that in a variety of different ways, through different mediums, you need to figure out a way to make yours known in the midst of that and so I feel like for us very early on I try to be very intentional about how we were communicating who we are and what we were trying to do in the community and because I'm in a smaller community and I'm not trying to get my voice heard in a network, in a major city, a good amount of the people who follow us end up being within our bounds here. So in the beginning online, I was doing a post nearly every day. I used a wonderful product called Hootsuite so even while I was out talking to people there were posts going up and I started talking about poverty because what I wanted them to start thinking of us as was we are the experts on poverty. They





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may not have known that at first. We may not have even known that at first, but I was trying to make them realize that we were the experts on poverty and so with that, we started to have people ask us more questions and then started to get more involved so that's where I think you've got to be considerate and intentional in how your communicating who you are to build that momentum so people have even a desire to follow you in the first place.

**BETH:** So what are you doing now? Fast forward to the things that are going on in your organization as you've grown and how old are you now?

**DAWN:** We are four years old. We'll celebrate our fifth birthday in March.

**BETH:** Congratulations! Getting to that point is huge! So a lot happens in the first five years and you've grown, you've built up a community. What opportunities are available to you now that you're taking advantage of to continue to keep that momentum moving?

**DAWN:** Yeah, and we're always thinking about where our momentum is and how if it's not something that we know is coming up or that's gonna drop in our laps, we are figuring out ways to create it and we're very intentional about that even now, but what I think you were just asking me Beth is what's happened to us recently is we had applied for a State Farm Neighborhood assist grant and it's been around for a couple of years now and typically the voting was taking place just through Facebook, but they've switched up their mode of voting, which we've been very excited about and so now people can go for it online, but the way that the grant works is you submit as a nonprofit or just as an individual in your community recognizing that there is a need that needs to be addressed and feeling like you want to be a part of the solution of that and asking State Farm to partner with you through this grant and you fill out the application. You have to be one of 2,000 to get that application in and then a board of 18-21 year olds select 200 of those to then go online for voting.





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**BETH:** That's so cool. Eighteen- to 21-year-olds. That's fascinating!

**DAWN:** Yeah, it's really neat, but it also means from our standpoint, I hate to use it this way, but you almost have to make your cause sexy for them to vote so you've got to think like an 18-21 year old.

**BETH:** I was going to say you have to millennialize it.

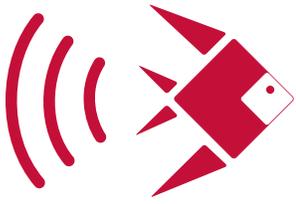
**DAWN:** Right, so our cause right now is giving hope to foster care kids and we're gonna use that funding to re-purpose building that we're in right now and create a safe community place for our foster kids to then also get equipped with life skills that they need in order to be successful and then know that we're here for them even if they age out of the system and have some struggles later on, but we're also hoping that they'll come back and serve with us eventually too. So we've been using that momentum and I will say this. It's been an interesting process for us because this momentum is really exciting. I mean ultimately if we can keep the ball rolling on this, we're gonna win a \$25,000 grant, which is massive, but we already had planned momentum. So what we have had to do is re-plan what we're doing now because you can't have too many messages going out at once, otherwise you will confuse people.

**BETH:** Absolutely.

**DAWN:** So we've kind of had to put a back burner on what we had planned for and just solely focus in on this issue.

**BETH:** And that is one of the hard things. You have a plan, you have a strategy going on and then some unexpected thing like this comes up. How do you know how to like stay the course and there's some thing that could be this great opportunity or it could be a massive destruction because you might not win. It's the whole fear thing. You could spend all of your time and energy shifting your time into this whole thing and it couldn't happen. How do you make sure that even in your efforts to do this that still keeps that momentum moving forward





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because you can't control everything. If in fact that you don't get it, that you don't end up being put behind, that it does keep pushing you forward.

**DAWN:** So I think you can think of especially an experience like this from two different perspectives. One is obviously \$25,000 is huge. It can be a game-changer for a lot of organizations so that's extremely important, but honestly the reason why we all exist is because we want to help people or animals or whatever that cause is because we're passionate about that and so really the momentum that we have right now has created a platform for us to become an advocate for foster care kids, which that voice was not being spoken loud enough in our community. So for us, taking the chance on that, we say, "OK, what if we don't win the \$25,000, but what if someone decides to become a foster care parent?" What if somebody chooses to be a mentor to one of our kids that wasn't doing that before?

**BETH:** Just by being able to go after this, it's allowed you to focus on a message that you weren't really able to elevate to this level without the fulcrum of this grant opportunity and I think that's what's so interesting about it is that you didn't just go, "Hey, let's just dump everything we do into this thing." You went out and like first you recognized what you were good at, you recognized what problems you could solve, you recognized one aspect of it that maybe could grow big with some special attention and you found the right grant, the right opportunity to match up and this isn't like a regular grant. This isn't like, "Hey this is your community foundation," like a lot of regular grant stuff is really invisible. It's a normal process, it's a business process. You win it, you get the money, you continue to proceed, but this type of a grant is different. It's very public, it's very participatory. So it's about social media and getting fans and followers and getting people to like you. What kind of things are you doing now that you're in the running for this to promote that this is happening and to get that participation that you need in order to potentially win the grant?

**DAWN:** Right, so we have contacted all of our local media and like I said we're





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in a smaller town so that has been somewhat helpful, but we knew that going into it so we really had to come up with a strategy of our own to make sure that our voice was being heard above everything else and then so the way we started this was I did a Facebook Live announcement and all I called it was “huge announcement” and I ...

**BETH:** I love it!

**DAWN:** Yes, but who doesn't want to know about that. It's the whole idea of inquiring minds want to know. Just interested enough to find out what you're gonna talk about. So I'm not sure how many views we're up to on that, but the last time I checked we were at like 2,300 views.

**BETH:** That's a lot.

**DAWN:** Which is a lot for us to be able to have that many people following us. So I basically made the commitment after that post that we would be doing a Facebook Live post for the next ten days and sharing with them why this \$25,000 grant is so important and really just encouraging people to vote. So Facebook Live was one of them and then having a whole Facebook campaign, Twitter campaign, we use Instagram a fair amount. We have not been real engaged in Snapchat and really we've been going off the idea that you need to use certain media really well and we just haven't been able to figure out how to add the Snapchat in there yet.

**BETH:** I think that that's really smart. If you can't figure out how to do it well, then put a pause on it. There is definitely that feeling of wanting to be everywhere and I'm a big fan of like integrated marketing, infuse yourself so that everywhere somebody turns you show up, but that only works if you can show up well and show up as your best selves and really commit to a platform. If you can't, it's





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better to stick to the ones where you can really shine.

**DAWN:** Yes. So there's that and then we send an email out to our donors every day and it reminds them to vote. I usually send an email out before like an hour and a half before the end of the night just reminding people to vote. So it's really through those methods and then we had a State Farm rep that has been really involved with us so she had all these fliers made. So we've gotten a lot of fliers out to the community. Our local community college president is involved with us and so she sent out an email to her staff. Some of it just kind of happened organically. Sometimes we kind of throw out a message like, "Hey, we really want to get our teams voting. Anybody above age 13, so make sure your teams are talking about this and get them voting," and so some of the teams that have been involved with us, I started seeing them posting it a little bit more so it's just almost like people don't always do what you want them to do until you tell them to do it.

**BETH:** Exactly, and sometimes being very clear and saying, "This is what I need you to do," works.

**DAWN:** Yes, so that's really helped with us and my Facebook Live posts, I typically try to let them know at some point during the day who I'm going to be interviewing later in the day. I have interviewed foster parents, I interviewed our literacy coordinator where we have young children that are sometimes in foster care, but at risk in our community and she partners with them and I interviewed a foster child. I interviewed our director of DHR. I interviewed a residential foster care facility. So that's why I'm saying what I'm so excited about this opportunity is yes, \$25,000 is going to be a game changer for us because it's really gonna take care of most of the finances of us re-purposing this building, which was already on our docket for next year, but what I love even more is our community is so hyped up about foster care and understanding the needs of our most vulnerable in our community and so I'm really hoping that is going to get them





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thinking about and praying about how can I be a foster parent? How can I be a volunteer? How can I get engaged? How can I help come along side other foster parents? How as a local church can we do this? As a civic organization? I mean, in a small community, we have 224 kids that were in foster care this past year. That's a lot of kids. So there's many different angles you can look at that. We do minister to the foster kids, but we also really minister to the parents and so our goal in a lot of cases when possible is trying to help re-unify the family and so that's where we also feel like we can play a big role.

**BETH:** I think what's really interesting is you had something you needed to do and using this platform of this grant to bring this story out. So it's basically a success story whether you get the grant or not, but because it is a grant, it gives you like this focal point for you to rally your community and not just say "here, we need to tell you about this problem in our community", but it kind of puts you all in the group together like "here, how can all of us work together to change and make something happen" by them voting, by them sharing, by them talking about it, basically by them helping you win this grant. It's such a little thing to ask people to do. They don't have to give money, they don't have to give a Saturday to volunteer, but they can still feel part of what you're doing and when people feel that they're part of making something happen, that's really where they get deeply involved and deeply committed. It changes your relationship with an organization. I'm the chair on a board of an organization and it wasn't until after the day of sitting around and writing reports and research and like torturous paperwork that we came in and got a tour of the place after everything had been done, all the new facilities, the new computers, the new renovations and then we had this amazing lab that was available for students. The same thing was for students. It was like something clicked in me and I was like "oh my gosh, these kids wouldn't have had the space if we didn't do this work" and like it kind of pulls all of that together when people really feel like, I literally felt that day because of me, this happened and the things that you're doing is really giving your community to have that feeling because of you and you are also really





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smart. Out of all the things you could have chosen, since the board of people choosing are 18-21 year-olds, choosing one of your areas that is about youth and children was probably also really smart. I mean you don't want to say that was a strategic thing. I don't know if it was or if it wasn't, but if you're gonna go after money, even the project that you choose to fund, it's all part of the package of making the best choice in order to give you the best chance to win.

**DAWN:** Right, and that was key in it and honestly it was strategic. We have applied for this three times already. This is our fourth year, so jobs, people getting jobs, a job bus or job training was not interesting to them.

**BETH:** Right, cause they're not there yet. They're not there at that point in their life. So it's really smart and I love how you said this. This was your fourth time. You didn't say, "We didn't win," and just walk away. You kept trying to tweak and adjust and figure out what do we need to do, and that's a key thing. It's very easy. What is it? I've heard an old proverb like an old Samurai proverb that says that the key to success is falling down seven times and getting up eight. I love that. If somebody wanted to take advantage of some of the things that you learned, what piece of advice can you leave somebody with that would help them take action on building momentum in their organization?

**DAWN:** I would say you definitely want to sit down and think about what you want to communicate, who you are communicating it with and when that needs to happen and considering the when, kind of looking at your first year and figuring out what is it that we already have planned during that year or what do we need to plan in order to build momentum. So especially from a fundraising standpoint. We realized that there are certain times during the year that become lower funding times for us so in doing that, not that you want to create lots of events, but we have put events in certain time periods because events build momentum. You know, that's another area of participation. It gets people engaged. It's something that they need to attend or be a part of so being





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intentional about what you want to engage them with and what those messages need to be. I mean you can even sit down and think about for each month of the year, wanting to write down this thought right now, what do you want to tell people about? What's most important? To give an example, what we had planned for this month was we were actually going to kick off our campaign this past Monday. We're not doing that now. We're putting that off another week, but we were kicking it off this Monday because in two weeks, homeless and hunger awareness is a national week of awareness. So we were going to get on board with that and start helping our community start to rally around that cause, really focusing in on homelessness because in a rural community, not a lot of people can get their head around what homelessness looks like here, but this year we've had over a hundred people that are homeless and so we've had to revamp that. We're now going to kick off the campaign early next week and start talking about homelessness after that and then kind of leave it to the end of the year. So you've got to be willing to plan and then just like this kind of falling into our laps, not knowing that we were definitely going to be selected for it, now we have to figure out how do we keep the ball rolling because really what could happen is "Yay, everyone voted." It ends on Friday. We don't find out until November 30 so if we don't figure out a way to keep that ...

**BETH:** Momentum.

**DAWN:** Yes, momentum going, what happens? Then the ball just stops flat. So we don't want that to happen. In all honesty, this is the best thing that could have happened to us at this time of year because you're exactly right. They haven't been giving money. We're not even asking them for money. We're just asking them to go and vote, but now we can start to say, "Now you've got a picture of us. How much does this cost? What would this take for you to be a part of that?" It's such a seamless conversation now whereas before we were picking up a dead ball. So like I said, I think if I can give anybody a tip it's that you really do need to be intentional about what your momentum needs to look like and learn





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your audience and be willing to shift to what your audience needs are and not think that just because somebody else does it that way that that's the way you have to do it. You've got to be very mobile in that process and another piece of that is I have learned very early on, it was kind of like I said before, inquiring minds want to know and it's not just they want to know what the organization is doing because I'm a founder. They want to know what I'm doing and so I have learned to try and bring people along with me. In fact, the Facebook Lives are on my page. They're not even on our organization page. We post that to the organization page afterwards, but there's far more people following me than, I mean we've got 4,000 followers on our page, but because of Facebook algorithms, you know how that kind of works. So if we know that people are engaged with me as being a voice and an advocate for the group, we're gonna capitalize on that and then share it over on our page.

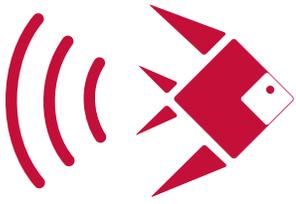
**BETH:** That's really smart. That's something to think about because you're right. Facebook algorithms, they're not getting, pages are not so if you do it on your personal page and share it, that's a great idea, a great way to circumvent that. This was fabulous. I got a lot of great new ideas. I have all kinds of terrific notes here. If people have more questions for you, how can they reach out to you?

**DAWN:** You can email me at [DawnOwens@LinkofCullman.org](mailto:DawnOwens@LinkofCullman.org), and Beth, I'm assuming, you'll have that.

**BETH:** Yes, I'll have that on our show notes page.

**DAWN:** I'm on Facebook. Our Facebook page, our organizational Facebook page is The Link of Cullman County so you can kind of follow along and see you know, you can say they have great momentum or maybe they need to improve in some areas. I'm good with that. Then we also are on Twitter. I'm @DawnMarieOwens and then we've got @LinkingCullman.org account as well and then we've got





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Instagram and we are at LinkingCullman on there.

**BETH:** I will put links to all of that onto the show notes page. Thank you so much for joining me today. It's always great to hear what you're doing and I really, really appreciate you sharing your experience and your knowledge with both me and our nonprofit community.

**DAWN:** Thanks so much, Beth. I'm glad to be here, and thanks to all of you out there who are doing amazing things! We're rooting you here in Cullman, Alabama.

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