

WANT TO DO GOOD BY TRAVELLING?

By Carine Nadel



Michelle Cohen

With the economy still precarious many of life's luxuries have been put on the back-burner. Travel and charitable donations in particular have taken a very deep hit.

But what if you could do both? Take a vacation and make a sizeable donation to a charity that is near and dear to your heart? That's where Michelle Cohen and her partner Stuart Paskow of MitchStuart, Inc. come in. Cohen, 60 started out as a professional volunteer for an international charity. She started taking a class in the Art of Fundraising at UCI. That's

when she met and teamed up with Paskow. Cohen explains what they do for non-profit clients and those that have used the program:

"Our company began by creating and running American Airlines AAdvantage Fundraising™. American Airlines AAdvantage® miles are a way to build donor loyalty, attract new contributors, increase the size and frequency of donations, and motivate lapsed donors to give again."

Have you continued to use the same program and just find new and interesting ways to package them up?

"After 9/11 – we created a new program - no-risk Auction Travel packages on consignment for charities (low cost travel at locked in prices). The charities are able to add whatever amount over the reserve to ("Buy it Now") prices or use the trips for auctions to raise funds. This program is called Destinations of Excellence®. These travel packages serve as the cornerstone

of thousands of charity auctions.

We are just about to launch a brand new program called Perfect Places®. It's a new and creative way to build loyalty among current donors, attract new ones, and generate a steady stream of revenue - all without spending a cent or using up valuable staff time.

the program makes it simple for businesses to offer attractive travel packages to employees and customers and turn them into charitable donations."

What has creating this program meant to you and Stuart on a personal note? How many organizations do you work with? "We have an amazing sense of satisfaction to be able to know that we helped shelter the homeless, feed the hungry, keep kids healthy, fund medical research, empower the disabled, protect the environment and more ... and help raise almost a billion dollars for a multitude of worthy causes. It's hard to say just how many companies and charities we

work with! Just to name a few-Marriott, Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and the American Red Cross. We've even been working with Loma Linda University's Children's Hospital."

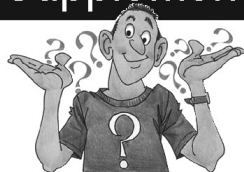
And what do the non-profits feel about this type of travel/fund-raising? One of Michelle's favorite clients explains what it has meant to them:

"Fundraising can be a tough field of endeavor, but for over 9 years Mitch Stuart has made it easier for me to help the organizations I've been privileged to serve. Their travel packages are truly a "no risk" way to position a non-profit event for maximum exposure and prestige in very competitive markets. If you're trying to elevate and bring excitement to an older, "tried and true" fundraising event, the top-drawer Destinations of Excellence travel packages are the simplest and surest way to accomplish that. If you're trying to bring aware-

ness to a new event and start some buzz that will help carry a first year event into the black from the start, I can't think of a better way than to add a destinations of excellence travel package to the mix. The back-end service is superlative: within a week of our events, in each and every case, we've been able to deliver the travel certificates for the prizes won to the highest bidders. Finally, in all these years, I've never heard anything but raves from the Destinations of Excellence prize winners, many of whom have stayed in touch with me and ask "When is your next travel auction?" They come back year after year."

Cyndy Pierce McNamara
Director of Financial Development & Community Support
American Red Cross of the Mid-South
For more information about how to work with MitchStuart or find out more about the charities they work with and what type of travel trips are available, log onto:
www.MitchStuart.com

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