

# Membership Matters

## Effective & Innovative Practices That Can Work for You!

by Alan S. Bigger

**I**t was Memorial Day weekend 2004, the time 6:00 a.m., the day, Saturday. Three observers sat on a grassy bank overlooking the university football stadium, which at that early hour was closed, locked tighter than a drum. However, an amazing spectacle was unfolding in front of the stadium. At 6:00 a.m., people were lining up outside the stadium, people of all ages, some wide awake and some half asleep, but all in a cheerful mood. This was particularly amazing since it was cold and windy and the

veritable hallowed hall of splendor for football fans. Each adult had paid five dollars admission. It wasn't for a football game or concert, the tickets were too cheap; it wasn't to hear a famous speaker or hear a rock concert, tickets were readily available. No, it was for a student "Trash to Treasure" sale that would eventually generate over \$50,000 for charity and divert over 75 tons of material from the landfill.

What was being sold? The students of the university had consciously donated items that they no longer

needed to the local United Way. These items were sold to buyers at rock bottom prices during a giant yard sale. The hallowed stadium was Beaver Stadium, home of the Nittany Lions of Penn State University.

The reason the three observers were on the bank outside the stadium was because they had heard about the in-

novative program through APPA's Effective and Innovative Practices award program. In addition to generating money for charity, Penn State also received one of five 2004 E&I awards of \$4,000 for their superb idea. It was innovative in that it involved hundreds of volunteers who donated thousands of hours of labor to make the sale happen. It was effective in that the program generated revenues for charities, strengthened the town-to-gown relationship between the university and the local population, and diverted tons of usable items from the landfill for others to use. The concept was also portable,

and the three observers took the idea back to their university and implemented a similar program in 2005. The program was a win-win situation for all. The idea may never have been picked up by other universities and colleges if it had not been for the Effective and Innovative Practices awards program—a wonderful example of a tangible benefit to APPA member institutions and the synergistic impact of membership in APPA.

The Effective and Innovative Practices program began in 2002 with underwriting and sponsorship by Sodexho ([www.sodexhousa.com](http://www.sodexhousa.com)). The program is now in its fourth year and grants up to five \$4,000 awards each year. During the last four years, 20 awards have been made totaling \$80,000. This program would not have been possible nor could it have been so highly successful, if it were not for Sodexho's partnership with and commitment to APPA and its members. The program is thriving and becoming increasingly competitive. In 2005, 25 submissions were received with five institutions being awarded \$4,000 each! Not only are the institutions winners, we are all winners because we can learn about successful programs at other institutions by reading about them at [www.appa.org/recognition](http://www.appa.org/recognition) or in this magazine. We can then take the best of the best ideas back to our own institutions and implement them within our own environments.

What does it take to position an institution to be considered for such an award? In the *Membership Directory 2004-05* on page 14, the elements of the program are outlined as well as on the Web page. Entries are judged based on:

- Institutional benefit
- Innovation and creativity



**6:00 a.m. and people are lining up for Trash to Treasure at Penn State (2004).**

early morning mist was still in the air. The line continued to grow and grow and grow, and by 7:00 a.m., there were well over 1,000 people lined up to get into the stadium. The line wound like a snake more than half the way around the stadium.

At 7:01 a.m., the gates opened and the line surged into the stadium, a

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Over \$25,000 was raised from the sale of student-donated items for local charities, 54 tons of items were diverted from the landfill, and thousands of pounds of food were donated to the local food bank.

- Portability and sustainability
- Management commitment and employee involvement
- Documentation, analysis, customer input, and benchmarking

The program mentioned earlier at Penn State had all of these elements present and the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The program, and all of its elements, were portable and were adapted for use by the three observers from the University of Notre Dame. In May 2005, a program similar to Penn State's was hosted at Notre Dame Stadium, organized and supported by dozens of agencies that worked with the local United Way.

Over \$25,000 was raised from the sale of student-donated items for local charities, 54 tons of items were diverted from the landfill, and thousands of pounds of food were donated to the local food bank. Over 4,000 people attended the event including buyers and volunteers. Thanks to Penn State, the Effective and Innovative Practices awards program, and Sodexo's support of APPA's award programs, Notre Dame and the local United Way were able to conduct the first "From Old2Gold" program.



**Notre Dame logo for the first "From Old2Gold" program (2005).**

The benefits of membership in APPA are many, some tangible such as a cash award for an E&I program, and others less tangible, but very real, such as the synergy when APPA partners with industry leaders and when members share their expertise and ideas with other members. The synergistic impact on the member institutions, the individual members, and the business partners help forge relationships that are the jewels of the profession, yielding ideas and concepts that benefit all. Membership in APPA is a win-win investment for all.

Now it is your turn to visit [www.appa.org/recognition](http://www.appa.org/recognition) and take your wonderful ideas and share them with other APPA members by making

a submission to the Effective and Innovative Practices awards program by February 15, 2006, midnight Greenwich Mean Time. Award winners for the last three years are listed in the Membership Directory and at [www.appa.org/recognition](http://www.appa.org/recognition). Some of the past winners had titles such as "An Army of One," "T.O.P.G.U.N. Journey to Customer Excellence," "Mobile Integrated Facility Management System," and "Biomass Fuel Project." A review of these awards will assist you as you prepare a submission for your institution. We look forward to you sharing your effective and innovative practices with APPA members—thanks to you, we will all be winners! 🏆

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