*Things to watch for in your annual appeal*

It’s important to watch your wording, however, and be conscious of when a donor is making a “restricted gift.” If you write in your annual appeal, “A gift of $100 buys food for one needy child for a year,” that you should probably use that $100 to do just that. But even then, what’s important is that you not spend the money on, say, childhood literacy. It should go toward the goal you set out for the donor.

But that doesn’t mean the $100 is restricted to go only toward food purchases. Look at it this way: if you couldn’t pay your bookkeeper, or you couldn’t pay yourself, then $100 wouldn’t help much at all. So what you’re doing is putting that $100 toward feeding children. Keeping in mind that it takes a staff and a distribution network to do so, so some of that gift will be directed toward that.

On the other hand if in your appeal letter you simply tell people what things cost, then there’s not so much implied purchase there. “Did you know that the museum’s electricity bill alone costs $5,000?” … “It costs more than $100 to clean every square foot of a contaminated beach.” You aren’t promising to do these *exact* things. It’s not as strong of a sell