

## **Quick Tips from the Judges**

### **Suzanne Brooks – Director, Center for International Disaster Information**

Three things to remember: Cash is Best, Cash is Best, Cash is Best. By far, that key message is the number one priority for CIDI and for this contest. Throughout the humanitarian and relief community, we are constantly relaying the Cash is Best message because there is such a disconnect between what people perceive and what the realities actually are about the kind of help needed following an international disaster.

Unlike in-kind donations – clothes, shoes, blankets, household products, cans, or other food, for example – cash can be distributed immediately and effectively without the need for shipping, storage, or logistical coordination. Cash is then spent in the affected community, giving the local economy the boost it often desperately needs. And cash is always appropriate – both in terms of what is needed in a community and what the community’s culture dictates. Nothing is more frustrating than having tons and tons of goods that are culturally inappropriate or simply unneeded in an area, sitting in storage, eating up funds in storage and distribution costs – especially when there is so much fixable need. I think that when people think about how preposterous it really is to send donated items, it’s obvious that cash makes the most sense. And that’s what we have to show them.

When I score the entries for this contest, I know I have a winner when the Cash is Best message comes through loud and clear. I’m looking for a PSA that makes the audience rethink international disaster relief. I want them to sit back and say, “Wow. That makes sense. Cash really is the best way to help.” And I want them to remember it.

For a more extensive look at why cash is the best way to help, please take some time to read our Guidelines document, which outlines CIDI’s educational outreach.

### **John Stanmeyer -- Photojournalist, *National Geographic* magazine**

Keep in mind your target audience. College students definitely have a specific point of view, but as many of you are studying, it’s often important to separate your personal likes and dislikes from the task at hand. PSAs should be widely appealing – your message should resonate with all people who can make donations – busy professionals, stay-at-home parents, disaster relief workers, busy professionals, international business men and women, retired people, and college students.

And if you use humor, do it with taste. When tackling a subject as heavy international disaster relief, humor can be the best way to do it. But be sure that it’s appropriate and that it isn’t generational – don’t use references that only one generation would understand. To get a sense of what the judges have generally liked and disliked in the past, look at our winners from past years.

### **Tony Stitt – US Agency for International Development, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance**

A common misconception is that CIDI accepts donations – and that just simply isn’t the case. CIDI serves as a valuable resource to the public, providing information and direction on how to help international disaster victims. CIDI does not accept donations at all – monetary or in-kind – but instead, helps to direct relief resources as needed.

PSAs entered into PSAid need to make this clear: CIDI encourages the public to donate money to well-established, professional relief organizations that operate in the affected area.

**Mari Kuraishi - President, GlobalGiving Foundation**

The Cash is Best message is so important – be sure that we can hear it! For broadcast submissions, check the sound quality of your PSA and make sure that we can hear all of your speakers clearly. If we can't hear your message, we can't give you a high score! Likewise, if you have some louder speakers and some softer speakers, adjust the volume accordingly. Be aware of background sound when you shoot, and adjust the natural sound in the background accordingly when you're editing.

**Joseph Clay – First Place, Print Category, 2008 PSAid Contest**

Don't wait until the last minute to upload your video or submit your paperwork. I've been there, and I know as a student that things like paperwork often get put off until the last possible minute. As you can imagine, uploads to the website are heaviest in the hours before the deadline. Don't jeopardize all your hard work by cutting it close – contest coordinators must have all entries and paperwork by 11:59 EDT on March 30, 2009. Contestants without complete paperwork will not be entered into the competition.