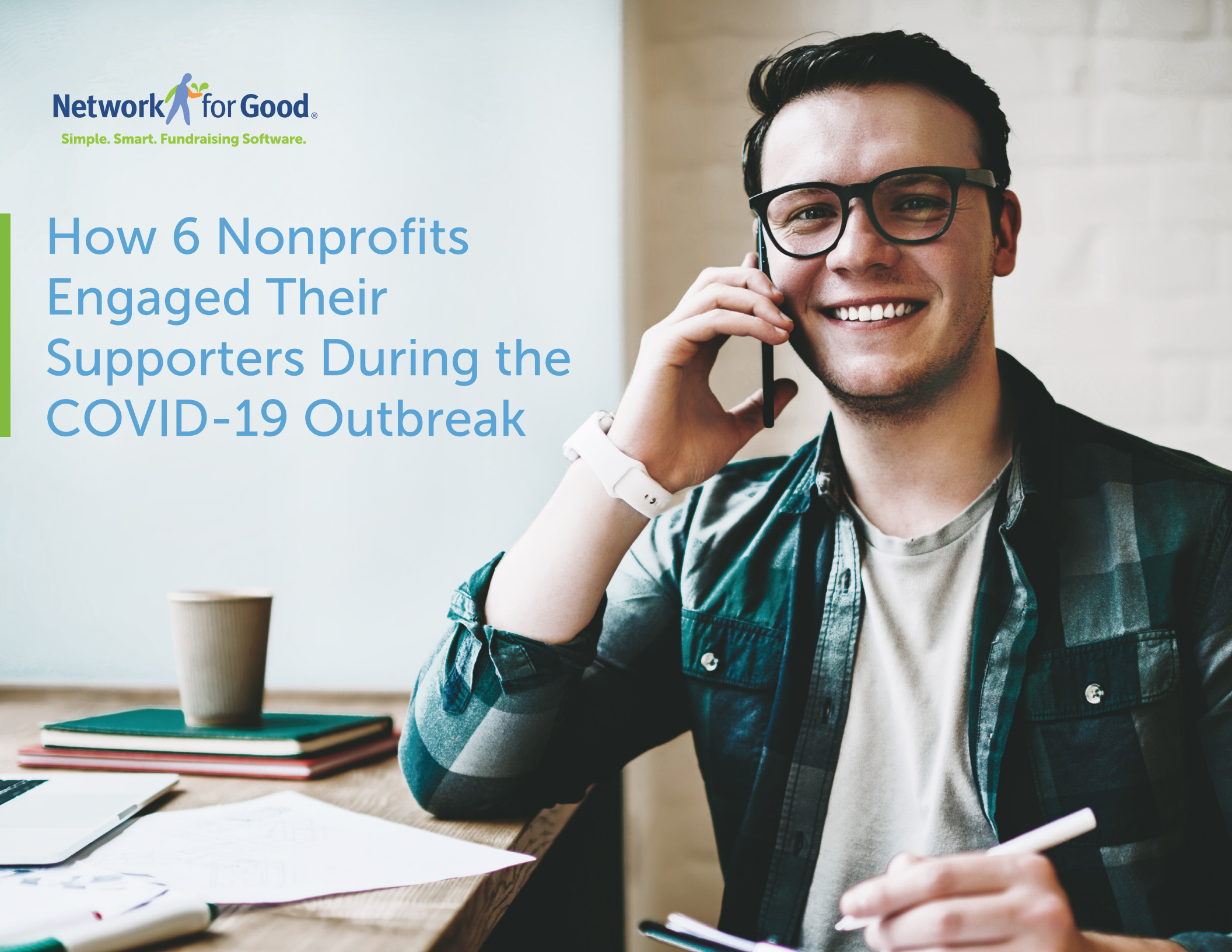


# How 6 Nonprofits Engaged Their Supporters During the COVID-19 Outbreak



Thanks to the digital engagement tools built right into Network for Good's simple, smart fundraising software, our customers were prepared to engage their supporters during the pandemic.

Check out these 6 examples of impactful supporter communication to guide your own outreach during this uncertain time.

## What to Say When You're Struggling

We can't underscore enough the importance of nonprofits in delivering essential services during a crisis, whether it's a natural disaster, a pandemic, a recession, or during wartime. You are not alone. As you work to fundraise and communicate smartly and efficiently during a difficult time, Network for Good supports your efforts.

The best crisis communications speak frequently and from the heart. Don't wait to have all the answers – an incomplete response to disaster is better than a delayed or no response.

We've gathered this collection of supporter communications and appeals from our customers in the days following the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States.

**Ready to send your own emails?** Our COVID-19 email engagement plan is ready to go in your Donor Management System. To get started, [just log in](#) and click the green banner at the top of your dashboard to review and customize the email templates.

# Kids' Turn San Diego

[This email](#) sent from Kid's Turn San Diego is more than a simple supporter outreach effort. Recognizing that parents may need help explaining the crisis to their children, the organization provided a framework for reassuring and guiding children through the following weeks.

## What Makes It Great?

- It recognizes that it's a scary time for everyone, not just children.
- It avoids offering health or medical advice, instead deferring to the professionals.
- Full of useful information about how to talk to children about a scary situation.
- Includes resources and templates to guide conversation with kids.



**Kids' Turn**  
— SAN DIEGO —  
*Helping Children Through Family Separations*

At Kids' Turn San Diego, we believe that everyone has their own reality and that no one's reality is the same as anyone else. However, with the Coronavirus (COVID-19), this is a public health reality that is impacting every one of us in some way or another. As of right now, the reality throughout San Diego County is that schools and colleges are closed, and children of all ages will be at home.

This is a scary time for everyone! There are so many unknowns. Here is what we know:

- COVID-19 is contagious through being in contact with the virus and touching your mouth, nose or eyes and it is spread through touching infected areas, people, or things and by being close to someone who sneezes or coughs and their germs jump onto you
- COVID-19 is said to be prevented by washing your hands for 20 seconds (singing Happy Birthday twice) throughout the day and before touching your mouth, nose or eyes and using antibacterial gel of 60% alcohol content when washing hands is not possible
- The CDC recommends avoiding large groups and keeping a six-foot distance from people, so their germs do not jump to you if they sneeze or cough
- Schools and colleges are closed for the next few weeks, at least, and children will be home
- Many companies and jobs are transitioning to working remotely so instead of going to work every day, many parents will be working from home
- It's raining in San Diego and rain oftentimes results in us getting sick with the common cold

Information about the Coronavirus may be very scary for children and they may not understand what is happening, why they don't get to go to school anymore or whether they or someone they love will become really sick.

Children may not know how to be a part of the solution. They may feel powerless and experience anxiety and worry excessively about what is going to happen. This may result in your children wanting to be around you all the time or not wanting to leave your side. In this unpredictable time, it is important to stick to the schedule. When children know what is happening, they feel more stable.

The knowns above are a shared reality for each and every one of us. Our reality is that we are a community that is transitioning through this public health challenge.

But how do we explain this virus or public health challenge to our children? How do we help young ones to understand? [Here is a video produced by Dr. Michelle Dickinson aka Nanogiri](#) that was created to make the Coronavirus easy to understand. The video highlights strategies for helping to protect oneself and our community from the spread of this virus. There is some specific language about who could be most impacted by the virus and the virus creature at the very end of the video may be a little scary for young children, so if you are going to share this video with your children, we encourage you to watch it first.

After sharing the video with your child, talk about it together and give your child the opportunity to say how they feel. Using "I Statements" may help with the conversation. "I feel \_\_\_ after watching that video". Listening to how your child feels, this is your starting point for the rest of the conversation. If you feel the same way, you could empathize with your child, such as "I feel the same way, what can we do together to reduce our \_\_\_ (state your child's feeling)?" This provides the opportunity to develop a wellness plan together. Remember, not all plans will work so be sure to state that you are creating a wellness plan to prevent you from getting sick but not all plans are successful, especially when it is raining like it is and people are more likely to get colds just because of that very reason.

As a parent in a divorced family, this time is critical to put all your differences aside, no matter your conflict level or feelings towards each other. This public health challenge requires parents to put their children first and to put all their histories and feelings aside, even if you are only able to make this commitment today and want to see it is temporary for the sake of your children.

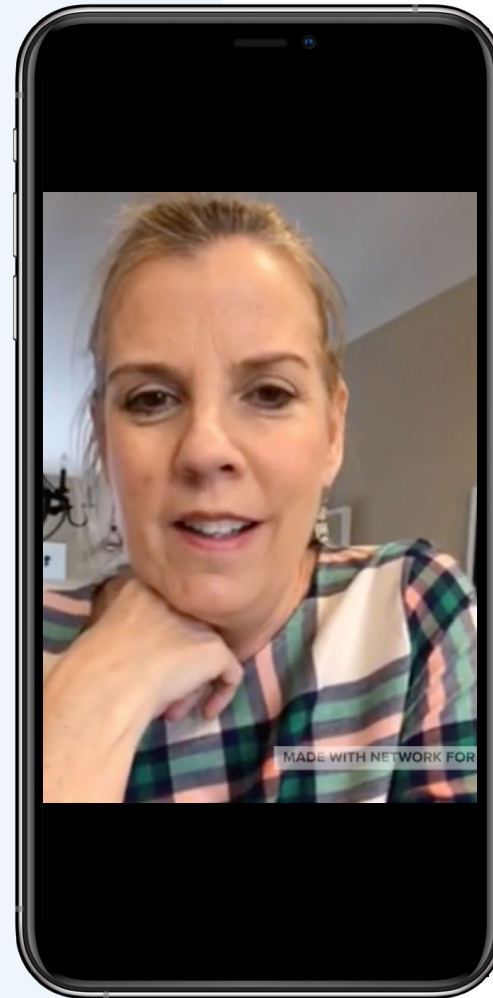
Let's face it, schools are closed for the next two weeks. This means that children will be home. For children of divorced families, they have two homes and most parenting plans probably do not address community health challenges and unexpected school closings. Tension may be high and will probably escalate as parents decide how to move forward. Who will "watch" the children during the day? Will

# Windward Foundation

Windward Foundation couldn't meet supporters face-to-face during a pandemic, but they had a backup plan to stay engaged. Using Network for Good's video acknowledgements tool, the organization maintains a personal connection with donors.

## What Makes It Great?

- Short, authentic videos communicate more hope and encouragement than an email could.
- Putting a face to the organization helps donors feel connected during a critical time.
- The recipient is thanked by name so the thank you feels highly personal.
- Seem particularly relatable because it was unscripted and shot on a cellphone.



[Click to watch the video!](#) Learn how you can [send videos like this right from your cell phone or computer](#) with Network for Good's fundraising software.

# Sierra Community House

Sierra Community House works with populations whose safety and security are at risk during a pandemic. Although [the email](#) doesn't directly ask for financial support, it gives supporters the option to make a gift. That tactic worked! Sierra Community House received a donation of \$10,000 from this email.

## What Makes It Great?

- It explains how their mission is more important than ever.
- It clearly and succinctly communicates change to services.
- Asks for compassion and patience while they adjust to the new situation.
- Gives people the option to donate if they choose.



SIERRA  
Community  
HOUSE

Good morning friends, partners and supporters. I want to take a moment to update you on Sierra Community House's response to COVID-19. We are already seeing the impact on our community with school and ski resort closures, job loss and limited access to basic needs. The ramifications of these disruptions to our lives will have far reaching effects. At Sierra Community House we are concerned about getting food to those who face food insecurity. We are concerned about people's mental health as they face isolation amid increased stress to meet their basic needs. We are concerned about people who may now find it harder to leave an abusive relationship. We are concerned for all of our community members who have lost or experienced a substantial decrease to their income and are worried about paying their rent.

We are committed to doing the best we can to serve our community during this precarious time. Below you will find updates to our services:

### Hunger Relief

We have canceled our normal on-site distributions. We will now deliver pre-packaged, non-perishable (canned and dried goods) boxes of food to all who sign up. To sign up for food delivery please leave a message at: 775-545-4083 or send an email to [food@sierracommunityhouse.org](mailto:food@sierracommunityhouse.org)

### Crisis Intervention and Family Support

All offices will remain open until further notice. For folks needing Crisis Advocacy please call our Crisis Line at 1-800-736-1060.

For suicide prevention and support, please call our 24-hour Crisis Line at 800-736-1060 or the National Suicide Hotline at 1-800-237-8255. For more resources please visit the Tahoe Truckee Suicide Prevention Coalition at [www.tahoelifeline.org](http://www.tahoelifeline.org).

All of our groups, classes and workshops are suspended until further notice. This includes Family Room.

### Legal and Mediation

Legal and mediation support is available by appointment.

Please check our website and social media for updates.

There is a lot fear and anxiety around the unknown. Images of empty grocery stores and road closures abound. But what I am most struck by is the compassion, generosity and resiliency I have seen over the past few days. Social media has dozens of posts



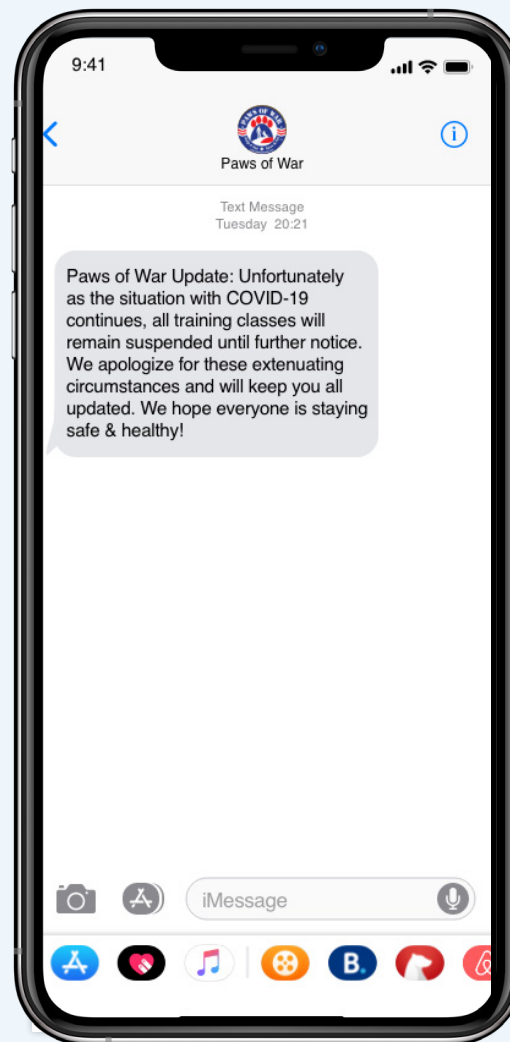
**Remember, the donor journey doesn't stop after you receive a donation!** During disasters, you're likely to get lots of small donations from new donors. With your Network for Good fundraising software, you can see donor history at a glance and find opportunities to grow relationships. Check out all your fundraising stats on the dashboard now!

# Paws of War

Sometimes supporters don't have internet access during a disaster, or they live in rural areas with limited connectivity. Paws of War sent this text message to quickly communicate key information.

## What Makes It Great?

- It's short, sweet, and shares important information without delay.
- Lets the recipient know to be on the lookout for future messages.
- It's sent directly from Network for Good's fundraising software, so no additional tools are needed to text donors and supporters.



If you haven't set up a text-to-give number with Network for Good you can request one today. Log in to your Donor Management System then navigate to Communication > Text Messages. If you need a number assigned to your organization, fill out the form there and we'll get a number set up for you!

# Washington English Center

Washington English Center sent [this email](#) to notify supporters that their fundraising event was canceled due to pandemic. It's an honest, touching note that recognizes that while they don't have all the answers yet, they will remain in communication with donors and event attendees.

## What Makes It Great?

- A conversational and empathetic tone makes the recipient feel like family.
- It shares a spot of joy in tough times.
- Encourages attendees to donate the ticket cost instead of requesting a refund after they were forced to cancel their event.
- Explains how donations will be used as they shift operations.



**Washington English Center**

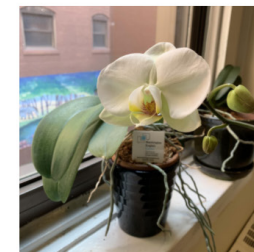
Improving the lives of immigrants through education.

Hello all and greetings on this first day of spring.

How are you doing? Washington English Center's staff miss our students, teachers, volunteers and other supporters and hope you are well. We're all working from home now and the team is focused on setting up virtual instruction for the Spring Term. We will continue to provide affordable English instruction for our students and we will find a way to keep our amazing volunteers involved. Just give us a little more time to work out the logistics!

As you probably guessed, we have to cancel our fundraising event scheduled for May 11, 2020. We're disappointed because Event Chairs Mary Douglas and Joan Kerrigan planned a terrific program for our biggest fundraiser of the year. Despite the cancelation of the actual event, we will share the inspirational stories of our students in the coming weeks. Of course, if you would like to be refunded for your tickets, please contact me [here](#). If you would like to consider your ticket purchase as a donation, I would be grateful. It's hard to consider philanthropy right now, given what's going on, but our students need your [support](#), now more than ever. Your gift will be used to help us make the shift to online teaching.

In the meantime, I'd like to share a photo we used on social media. (If you aren't following us yet, you can keep up with WEC on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).) Our little windowsill orchid finally bloomed as we were shutting down operations to protect our students and staff. The fact that this flower blossomed was a bit of comfort on a difficult day.



We all hope that you are well and are finding joy in the small things, like a warm spring day and a blooming bud.

We are going to get through this together.

Warmly,

Liz Daley  
Director of Development and Communications

# Talbot Interfaith Shelter

Talbot Interfaith Shelter sent [this email](#) notifying supporters that their annual fundraising event was going virtual due to the special circumstances.

## What Makes It Great?

- They keep it positive by focusing on the good.
- Asks attendees to donate the ticket cost instead of requesting a refund to the canceled event.
- Provides much-needed entertainment during a troubled time.



Sometimes it's necessary to communicate quickly with separate groups, like volunteers, event attendees, major donors, or lapsed donors. Leveraging groups in your Donor Management System makes it easy to segment your contacts based on these and other criteria.



# 4 Strategies for Fundraising During a Crisis

## 1. KEEP IN TOUCH.

It's hard to over-communicate during a crisis. Frequent communications through email, website updates, text messages, and social media create a sense of community that is sorely needed when the sky feels like it's falling.

## 2. MAKE THE ASK.

Many nonprofits hesitate to solicit donations during economically turbulent times, but historical data suggests that times of crisis are when people feel the most generous. Don't make the decision for your donors! Share your donation page regularly so that if they want to give, they have the opportunity to do so.

## 3. PRACTICE GRATITUDE.

Donors want to know that their dollars matter. Tell them a specific story of what you did with their money and how it's making a difference. Personal stories help make the impact of a gift more tangible, and transparency is critical in a crisis.

## 4. THINK SUSTAINABLY.

Recurring gifts are key to recession and disaster-proofing your nonprofit. Monthly giving allows you to spend more time thanking and less time asking. It is also exponentially easier to decline a new request for support than to stop your monthly gift to an organization you already support. Focus on gaining this type of supporter.



**Too rushed to start an email from scratch?  
We've got you covered.**

Our COVID-19 email engagement plan is ready to go in your Donor Management System. Simply log in and click the green banner at the top of your dashboard to review and customize the email templates.

**LOG IN NOW**