



Inspiration Station

*Creative Virtual Fundraising Ideas from
Real Nonprofits*



Wait, Who Are You?

Abby Jarvis, Nonprofit Education Manager

- + Seven (almost eight!) years at Qgiv
- + Board member and nonprofit volunteer
- + Passionate about turning research and nonprofit best practices into easy-to-understand resources
- + Also an amateur beekeeper, gardener, and writer





Let's Start with Simple Ideas

These take time and energy, but they're pretty basic at their core



Idea #1: Encourage Donor Outreach

The Strategy

“We are working on a project to **call every single donor**—all 2000—before our May appeal goes out. The phone call is **just to check-in**, not ask for money. But it has resulted in gifts. We are talking about how **we're serving more women**, and how we're on the frontlines of making sure they don't get sick and stay out of hospitals.”

- Holly Hight
Downtown Women's Center



The Takeaway

We know donors are motivated by understanding their impact. Calling donors to reiterate how they're making a difference has resulted in donations, **even if they didn't ever ask for a gift.**

Try:

- + Calling donors to check on them
- + Telling donors how their past support is making a difference NOW
- + Focusing on personal connections





Idea #2: Create an Emergency Fundraising Appeal

The Strategy

“We initially did an **emergency online appeal**, which brought in about \$60,000. We then continued to communicate each day with donors and did **one online ask per week**. We've also done **Facebook asks** to help community owned animals who needed emergency surgery. Our **direct mail** is addressing COVID and we also did an **emergency appeal to major donors**.”

- Kelley Likes

Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region



The Strategy

“We have sent out an **emergency appeal** to give to a **COVID-19 Relief Fund** through the church. We accomplished this through the **text giving** option with Qgiv and setting up a **special on-line restriction for a COVID-19 Relief Fund** to help church members and neighbors in our community in financial need.”

- Elena Nicholas

First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland, Florida



The Strategy

“We sent out an **emergency appeal via email and social** that got very strong results (expected \$10K, raised \$37K)...We launched our campaign as a "fix a flat" campaign--talking about how the changes we needed to make the flatten the curve of the coronavirus were also **flattening our spring/summer cash projections**. Then, we basically asked people to help "fix our flat." We're a nonprofit bike shop, so **it played off of our core work**. People seemed to really like it!”

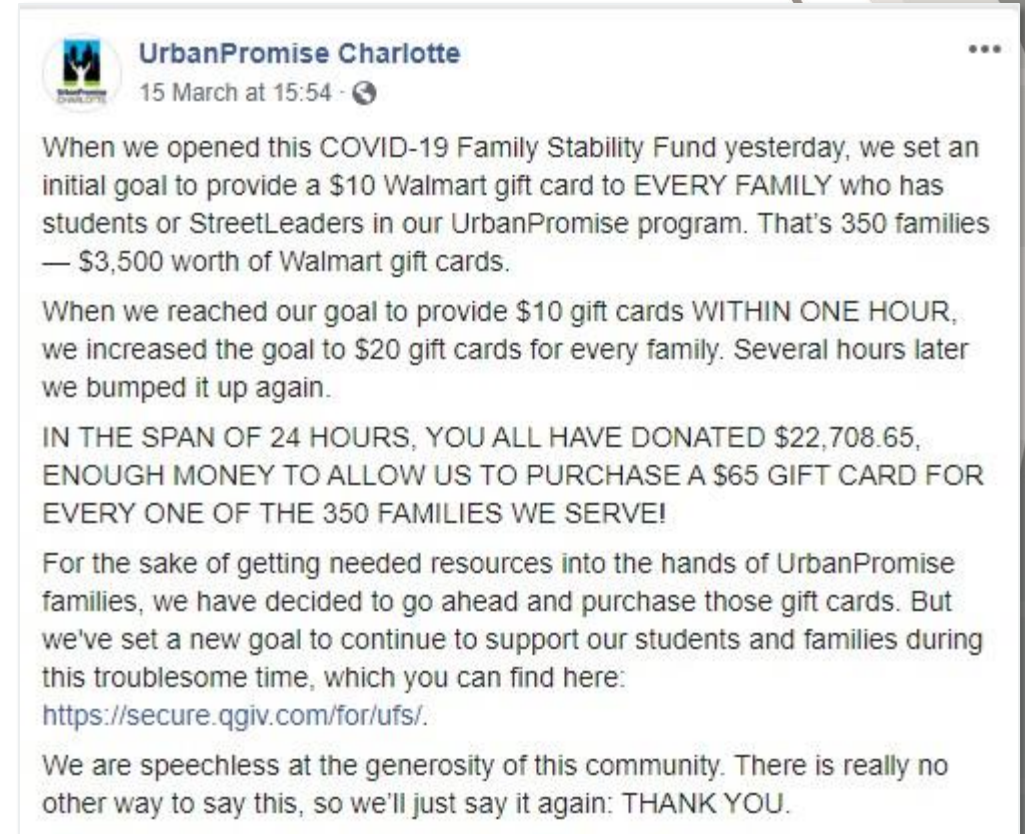
- Emily Gage
Phoenix Bikes



The Strategy

“We are an After School and Summer Camp program and launched a **Family Stability Fund** specifically to support the families we serve. It **raised almost \$35K** which we have been able to use towards food gift cards, rent payments, utility payments, and medical payments for our families. The fund drew in **more than 100 first-time givers** and spurred many of our existing supporters to give **above and beyond**.”

- Ashley Sullivan
UrbanPromise Charlotte

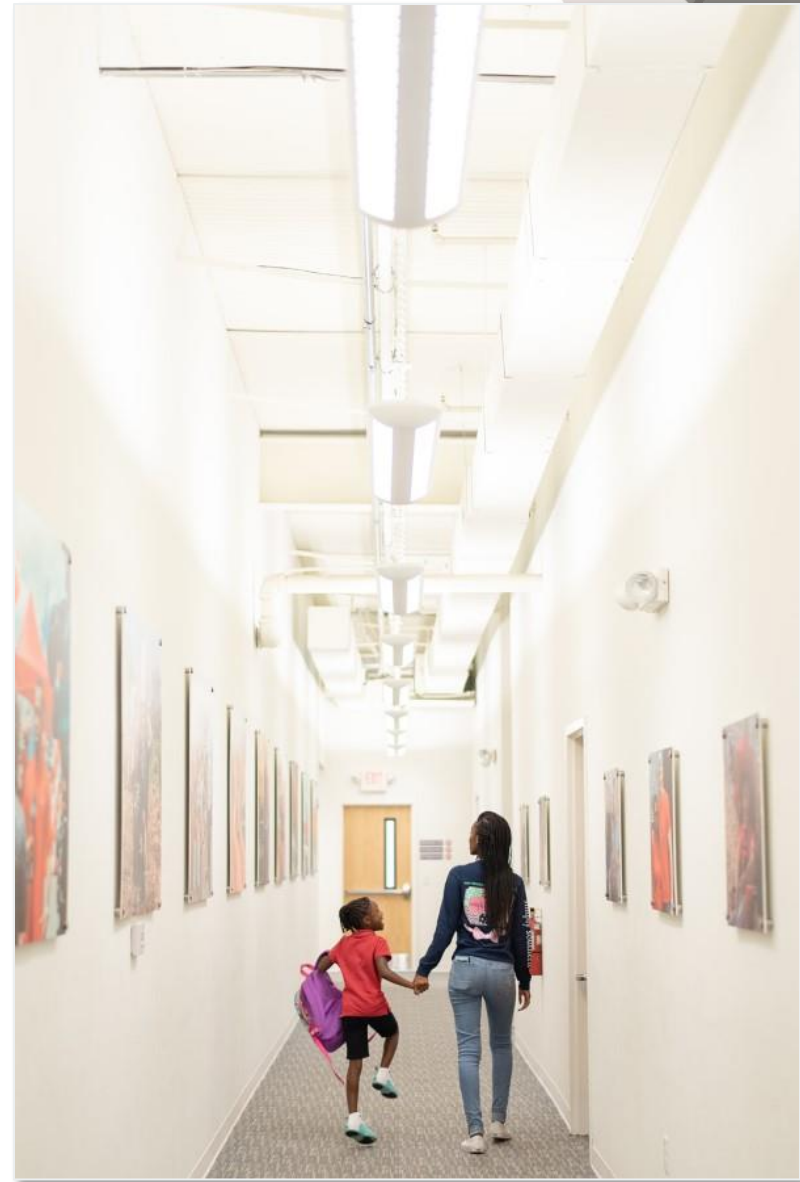


The Takeaway

Donors want to help you! Put together an emergency appeal that explains why you need help and what donations will accomplish.

Try:

- + Segmenting appeals
- + Updating at LEAST as frequently as you ask
- + Putting a creative spin on your appeal
- + Offering several giving avenues

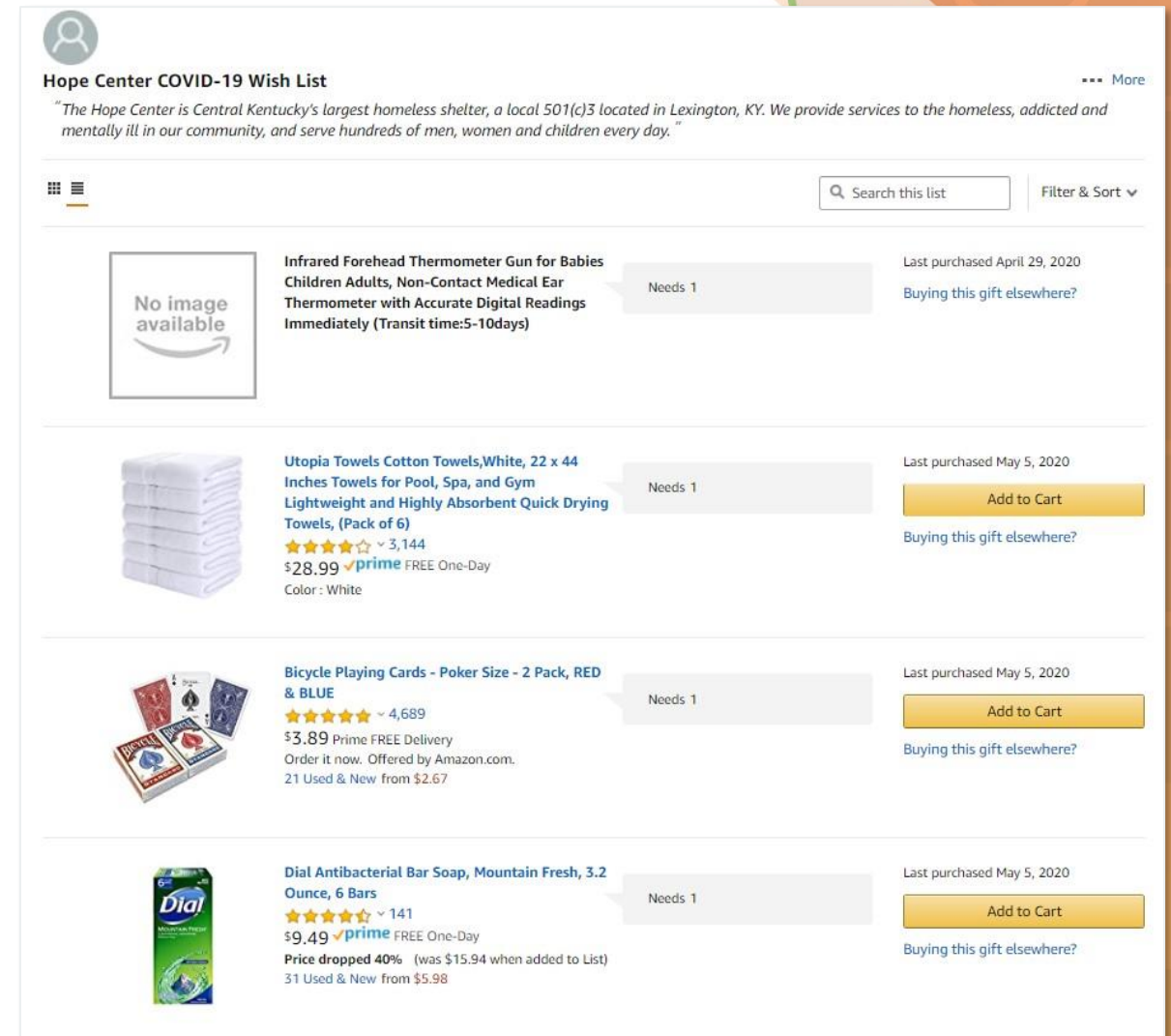




Idea #3: Facilitate In-Kind Donations

The Strategy

Taking in-kind donations while maintaining social distancing measures is tough! Many organizations reported that they've made their Amazon wish lists public and sharing them on social channels and their website.



The screenshot shows a public Amazon wish list for the Hope Center. The list title is "Hope Center COVID-19 Wish List" with a "More" link. A description reads: "The Hope Center is Central Kentucky's largest homeless shelter, a local 501(c)3 located in Lexington, KY. We provide services to the homeless, addicted and mentally ill in our community, and serve hundreds of men, women and children every day." The list contains four items, each with a product image, title, price, and a "Needs 1" indicator. The items are: 1. Infrared Forehead Thermometer Gun for Babies Children Adults, Non-Contact Medical Ear Thermometer with Accurate Digital Readings Immediately (Transit time:5-10days) - Last purchased April 29, 2020. 2. Utopia Towels Cotton Towels, White, 22 x 44 Inches Towels for Pool, Spa, and Gym Lightweight and Highly Absorbent Quick Drying Towels, (Pack of 6) - Last purchased May 5, 2020. 3. Bicycle Playing Cards - Poker Size - 2 Pack, RED & BLUE - Last purchased May 5, 2020. 4. Dial Antibacterial Bar Soap, Mountain Fresh, 3.2 Ounce, 6 Bars - Last purchased May 5, 2020. Each item has an "Add to Cart" button and a link to "Buying this gift elsewhere?".

Hope Center COVID-19 Wish List More

"The Hope Center is Central Kentucky's largest homeless shelter, a local 501(c)3 located in Lexington, KY. We provide services to the homeless, addicted and mentally ill in our community, and serve hundreds of men, women and children every day."

Search this list Filter & Sort

Infrared Forehead Thermometer Gun for Babies Children Adults, Non-Contact Medical Ear Thermometer with Accurate Digital Readings Immediately (Transit time:5-10days)

Needs 1

Last purchased April 29, 2020

[Buying this gift elsewhere?](#)

Utopia Towels Cotton Towels, White, 22 x 44 Inches Towels for Pool, Spa, and Gym Lightweight and Highly Absorbent Quick Drying Towels, (Pack of 6)

Needs 1

Last purchased May 5, 2020

[Add to Cart](#)

[Buying this gift elsewhere?](#)

Bicycle Playing Cards - Poker Size - 2 Pack, RED & BLUE

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[Buying this gift elsewhere?](#)

Dial Antibacterial Bar Soap, Mountain Fresh, 3.2 Ounce, 6 Bars

Needs 1

Last purchased May 5, 2020

[Add to Cart](#)

[Buying this gift elsewhere?](#)

The Strategy

If you're asking for in-kind donations, be very specific about what you need.

Donors want to help, not burden nonprofits with unneeded supplies.

IMPORTANT DONATION UPDATES REGARDING COVID-19

In order to maintain the health and safety of all Hope Center clients, staff, volunteers and donors, we are only accepting drive through donations until further notice. Acceptable items and drop off locations are listed below. *If an item is not listed, we cannot accept it. This includes clothing and furniture donations.*

- **Emergency Shelter – 360 W Loudon Avenue – 859-252-7881**
 - Needs: Toiletries, hand sanitizer, sack lunch supplies – meat, cheese, bread, granola bars, over-the-counter medicine (Ibuprofen, Tylenol, alcohol-free cough syrup), towels
- **Men's Recovery Center – 250 W Loudon Avenue – 859-225-4673**
 - Needs: Toiletries, razors, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, towels
- **Women's Recovery Center – 1524 Versailles Road – 859-252-2002**
 - Needs: Toiletries, feminine hygiene products, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, towels

Call the front desk when you arrive and a staff member will come get the donation from your car. Thank you for giving hope and providing for our clients as we adapt to these new circumstances.

The Takeaway

Give donors avenues to support your organizations with in-kind donations!

Try:

- + Making an Amazon Wish List to share with donors
- + Explaining what you need and why you need it
- + Accepting in-person gifts safely





Idea #4: Switch Up the Language

The Strategy

“We decided early on that our communication would be our new motto: **Be humble. Be helpful. Be Communicative.** Which isn't far off from what we were doing before. But now we really emphasize our appeals with ‘**If you have the means to give**’ to not make anyone feel guilty. That's the last thing we want to do.”

-Caryn Morris
Pet Alliance of Greater Orlando



The Strategy

“We are changing communications to **90% positive** to help people engage.”

- Brooke Fornea
Brother Wolf Animal Rescue



Friends,

Since COVID-19 started, **over 200 new foster families have opened their hearts to homeless animals!** Brother Wolf has remained committed to serving the animals who need us even during these challenging times. And thanks to our dedicated fosters, **over 300 animals have experienced the joy of a loving home, even in the midst of a global pandemic.** Fostering has been life-changing for both the animals and their foster parents...



"As a healthcare worker, I know how important it is to provide care for our community's most vulnerable members in times like these. This is why I signed up to foster through Brother Wolf during COVID. Rosie and Athena both have a great spirit about them that draws you right in. They love to play and in true puppy clumsiness fashion, they roll down the hill in my backyard daily. Fostering has been a great experience!" - Connie S.

"When the COVID-19 crisis started, I read an email from Brother Wolf about needing foster parents and my husband and I decided to help. We learned about an older dog named Cooper who needed a peaceful foster home until his forever home came along. He was restless and so I slept on the couch next to him his first five nights. On the sixth he snuggled up peacefully in my lap and a wonderful adoptive home was found for him. Fostering was a joy in helping him find his forever home." - Rebecca and Harvey S.



"My family and I have been homeschooling and working from home due to COVID, so we decided it would be the perfect time to foster a kitty. Purrrmaid is nine-months-old and has swimmers syndrome, which means her back legs splay out when she moves. We were a bit nervous, but it turns out that she gets around great and even climbs up to relax in the recliner! Purrrmaid doesn't know she's special needs; she is just as curious, sweet, playful and fast as any other cat. She follows us everywhere and has kept our family laughing and smiling." - Denise K.

THANK YOU to all of our fosters, volunteers, donors and supporters.

Together we save lives!

P.S Want to support kittens?
Check out our cozy fundraiser happening right now!



The Strategy

“We tried to keep the original messaging... and not string in too much ‘Now more than ever’ or Coronavirus language since so many big corporations were using that approach, which seemed disingenuous. Our approach was, ‘**the need existed before the virus**’ (affordable housing) and still exists, so we will continue to fundraise.”

- Rose Davis

Pickens County Habitat for Humanity



The Takeaway

So much COVID-19 language has been overused! Donors are exhausted and need positivity. If you reference the pandemic or other current events in your appeals or posts, **keep the language authentic.**

Try:

- + Re-writing content that over-uses repetitive pandemic language
- + Avoiding COVID-19 buzzwords and jargon
- + Talking about the pandemic and how it affects your mission candidly, not like a commercial





Idea #5: Send Donors Something Fun to Do

The Strategy

“We've been using email communications to bring special value-added content to our network, and just sent out **a special wildflower bingo contest that will get people outside**, but also supports our local business partners (we purchased gift cards from our main supporters to give out as prizes).”

- Jaime Jovanovich-Walker
Palouse Land Trust

Palouse Spring Wildflower Bingo				
 Arrowleaf balsamroot (Balsamorhiza sagittata)	 Springbeauty (Claytonia virginica)	 Clustered elkweed (Fraseria fastigiata)	 Silvery lupine (Lupinus argenteus)	 Ballhead waterleaf (Hydrophyllum capitatum)
 Camass (Camassia sp.)	 Fairy Slipper orchid (Calypso bulbosa)	 Woodland Shooting Star (Dodecatheon pulchellum)	 Western Meadowrue (Thalictrum occidentale)	 Indian Paintbrush (Castilleja sp.)
 Biscuit-root (Lomatium sp.)	 Skunk cabbage (Lysichiton americanus)	 Creeping Oregon Grape (Mahonia repens)	 Western stoneweed (Lithospermum ruderale)	 Glacier Lily (Erythronium grandiflorum)
 Yellow Bell (Fritillaria pudica)	 Cat's Ear Mariposa Lily (Calochortas elegans)	 Hooker's Fairybells (Disporum hookeri)	 False Solomon's Seal (Smilacina racemosa)	 Wild Lily of the Valley (Smilacina stellata)
 Trillium (Trillium ovatum)	 Mountain Lady's Slipper (Cypripedium montanum)	 Piper's Anemone (Anemone piperi)	 Low larkspur (Delphinium bicolor)	 Early Blue Violet (Viola adunca)

The Strategy

“JA is providing a **virtual terminal** for parents and teachers to gain free access to our **remote learning** standards-based K-12 programs.”

- Josh Lehman
Junior Achievement of North Central Ohio



JA Education Resource Links

Downloadable Activities for Students and Parents

Elementary

- [Kindergarten - 2nd Grade](#)
- [3rd Grade - 5th Grade](#)

Middle School

- [Financial Literacy](#)
- [Work and Career Readiness](#)
- [Entrepreneurship](#)

High School

- [Financial Literacy](#)
- [Work and Career Readiness](#)
- [Entrepreneurship](#)

The Takeaway

We've all been cooped up for a while, and many parents are looking for fun ideas to keep kids entertained. You can connect with donors by giving them something fun to do.

Try:

- + Hosting a social distancing-friendly scavenger hunt related to your mission
- + Sending an activity people can share online
- + Posting coloring pages or fun learning resources for kids





Idea #6: Other Fun Ideas

The Strategy

“Our ‘Be a Helper’ push on social media and email gives a list of ways to help without leaving your home. This includes monetary gifts, letters of support for our staff and volunteers who are able to work in the office at this time, lunch for the staff and volunteers, supporting local businesses.”

- Ginny Sigle

Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine



The Strategy

“The first major change in response to COVID-19 was cancelling our in-person annual fundraiser and moving it to an email campaign. We asked our original event sponsors to **consider their sponsorships to be 100% tax deductible donations instead**, and all five committed their money to us. So, we **used that as a ‘match’ amount** for other donors to achieve.”

- Rose Davis

Pickens County Habitat for Humanity



The Strategy

“At the beginning, **space for social distancing was our biggest issue**; we sleep around 650 people each night, but thanks to our relationships and connections, **we worked with Transylvania University** to secure use of one of their buildings to split the Emergency Shelter clients up and give them all more room. **The partnership has been great for both of us** media-wise and has brought in money and supplies.

- Brooke Raby
Hope Center, Inc.



The Takeaway

Every nonprofit is unique. Each one has different challenges, partners, and opportunities. What can you do to raise money, stay visible, and help your community?

Try:

- + Asking event sponsors to help
- + Partnering with local businesses or even other nonprofits
- + Giving supporters opportunities to fill non-financial needs





Let's Get Creative

These require a little more planning but totally pay off at the end

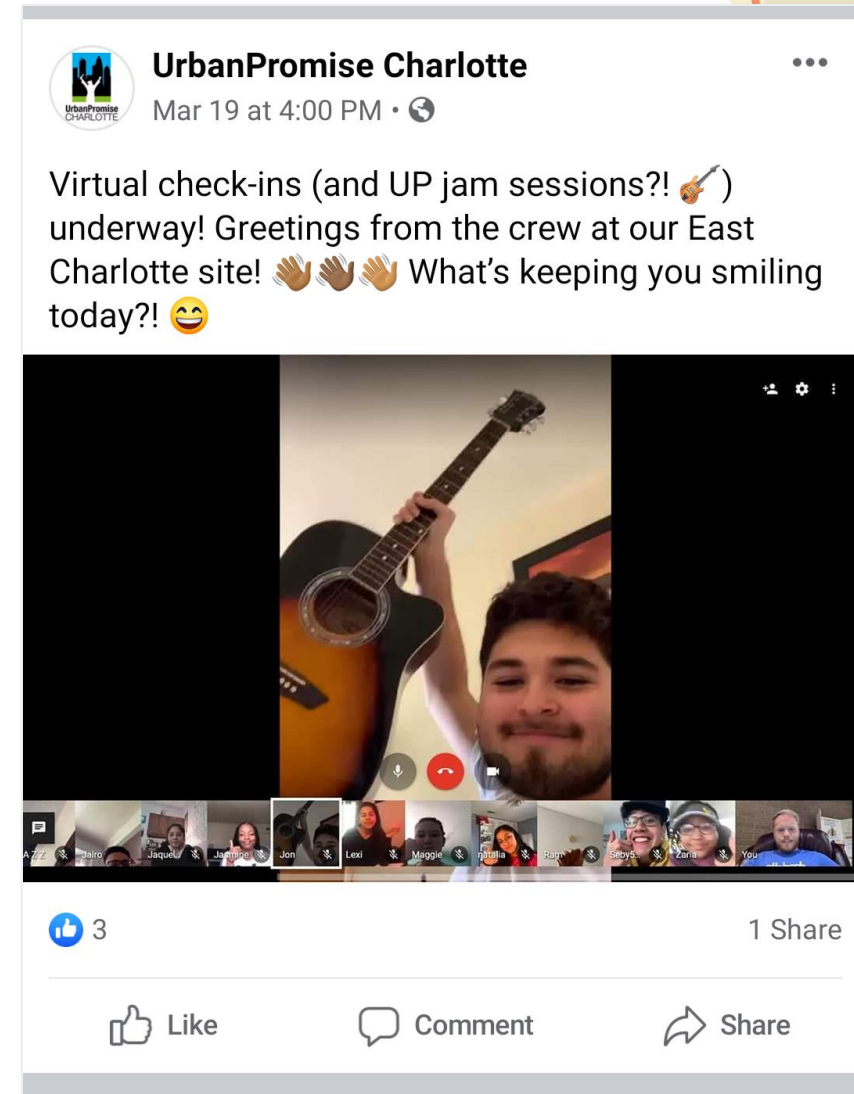


Idea #1: Embrace Zoom

The Strategy

“...We're trying something new this month called "Family Meetings". We invited donors to a 45-minute meeting to hear an update on programming and the Family Stability fund and also to hear from a couple of our students. We hope it will be a fun way for them to also have a chance to 'meet' other supporters they may not know.”

- Ashley Sullivan
UrbanPromise Charlotte



The Strategy

“We have moved to Zoom calls several times per week. We offer **art, music and PE** for our elementary kids. Our teens have been gathering twice a week via Zoom to **play board games**. Since our annual Spring Family camp had to be canceled, we had a **virtual spring camp via Zoom**, as well. Families set up campsites in their living rooms, bedrooms or in their own yards. They joined the Zoom meeting to **play camp bingo, sing songs and more**.”

-Lynn Anne Castleberry

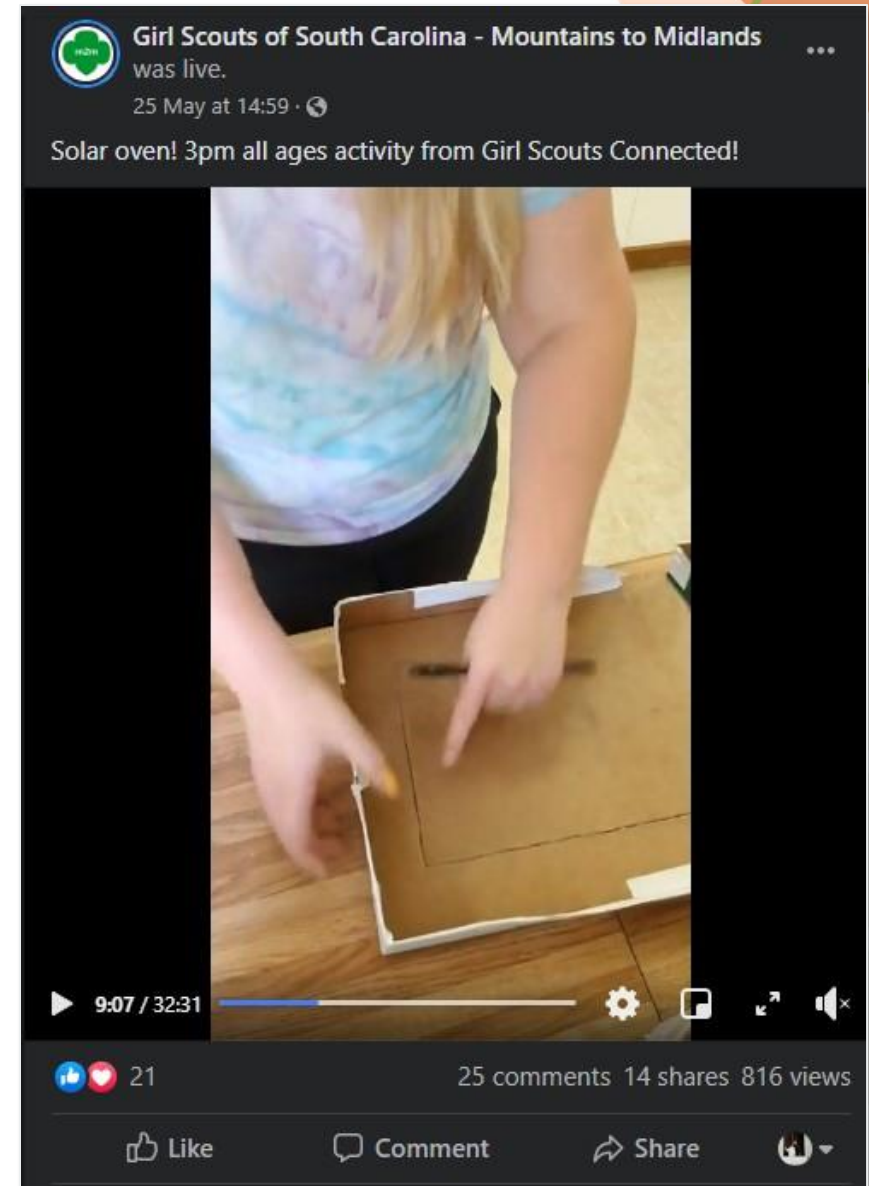
Camp Fire Sunshine Central Florida



The Strategy

“We serve girls in grades K5-12. We are forming some **mega-virtual troops** to keep girls engaged over the summer (our camp programs had to be cancelled).”

- Lee Ann Maley
Girl Scouts of South Carolina –
Mountains to Midlands



The Strategy

“We are hosting a two-day ‘ROCK BY THE STREAM’ this weekend and then a ‘BACKSTAGE Sunday Brunch’ for **our sponsors and pass holders** who **turned their passes into donations**. Our event is a music festival... we sent email to pass holders through Qgiv and regular email. Since most of our sponsors send checks, regular email was the way to go for them. We will likely be holding **more virtual shows**.”

-Beth Gosnell

Rock by the Sea, Inc.



The Takeaway

Zoom and other streaming services have become a staple during the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone is using it! It's a great tool for both fundraising and engagement.

Try:

- + Moving programming online
- + Creating special Zoom groups for donors and sponsors
- + Using streaming video to give donors personalized updates
- + Running a “telethon”





Idea #2: Get (Create)ive

The Strategy

“We have a board member **making masks** to benefit the charities [we support].”

- Beth Gosnell
Rock by the Sea, Inc.

“We think our **t-shirt campaign** was unique and successful.”

- Megan Mathis
Rise Up Malawi



Let's Spread Hope, Not COVID.

Join us in spreading hope and supporting prevention efforts against the spread of COVID19 by purchasing a T-shirt today.

Profits from your purchase will be split 50/50 between RiseUp's prevention efforts in Malawi and World Central Kitchen's "Help Feed the Frontline" in Los Angeles where our organization is based.

Follow us on Instagram @riseup_malawi to learn more about how we are taking action to stop the spread of this virus.

[Shop Now](#)

The Strategy

Because our residents are not able to work because of the lock down, they have created a "Mary's Shelter Line" of **homemade home decor products** that we are selling online and will sell in retail establishments after the crisis."

- Kay Trattles

Mary's Shelter Gulf Coast



The Strategy

“As a media outlet, we've donated some of our **paid sponsorship space** to other nonprofits involved in direct relief efforts.”

- Trinity Laurino
Lkldnow



CORONAVIRUS



COVID-19: Latest Lakeland & Polk news, resources, data

[Donate Now | UnitedCommunityRelief.org](#)



LakelandMom

Donation forms ● Event Registration ● Text Fundraising ● Peer-to-Peer ● Auctions

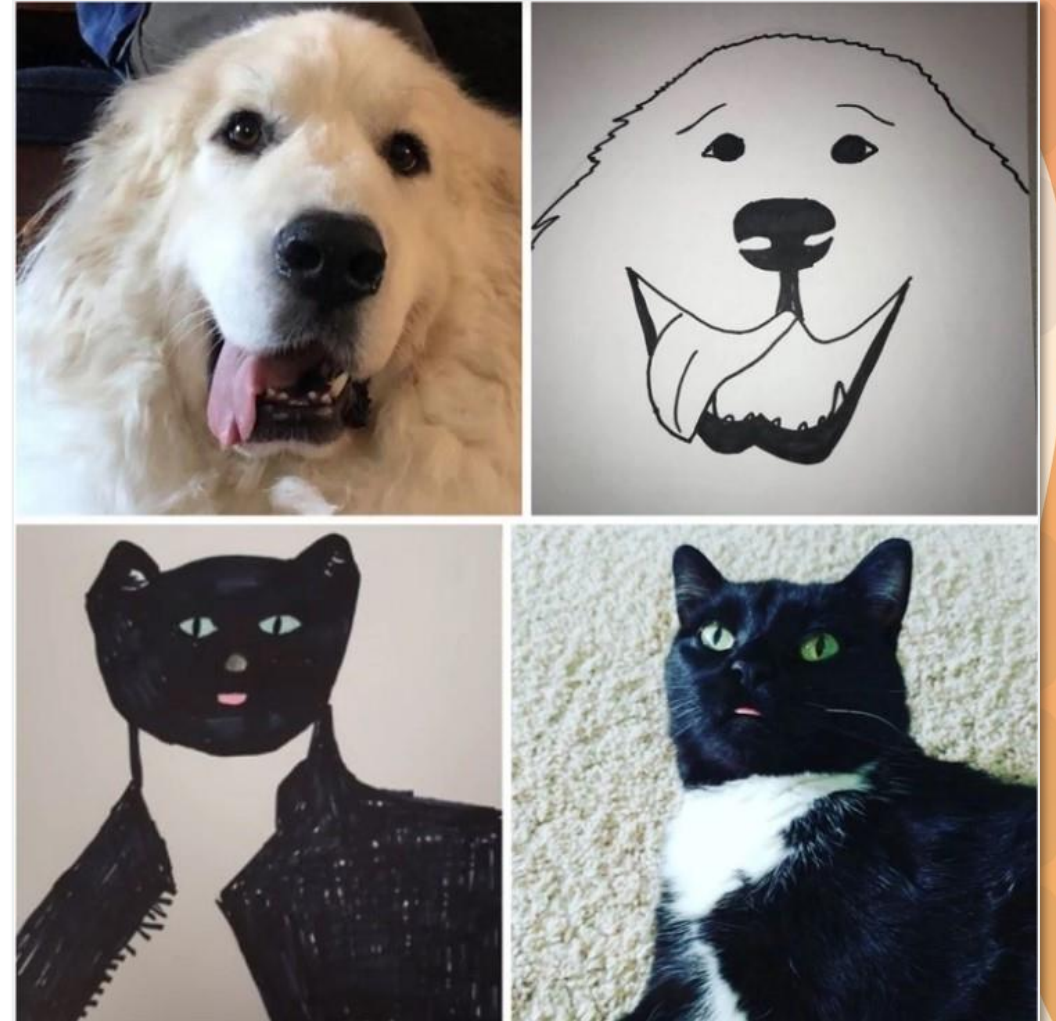


The Strategy

What makes your organization unique? Can you channel that into creating something cool?

Can you:

- + Sell special campaign merchandise?
- + Work with local artists to raise money?
- + Fill a need in your community to raise their visibility?
- + Donate services to other nonprofits?





Dream Bigger

Events and campaigns that are worth the time and effort



Idea #1: Create a New Event

The Strategy

“We **created a virtual event** called Backyard Burlesque. The event was a dance class as well as a cocktail making class with an **online raffle** too!”

- Meghan Pearce
Pearce Family Foundation

The poster features a collage background with images of people in burlesque costumes, a cocktail shaker, and a sign that says 'BURLESQUE'. Text is overlaid in various fonts and colors. The title 'Backyard Burlesque For PFF' is prominent, with 'Burlesque' in a large, purple, cursive font. Event details like date, time, and entry fee are in white text on dark grey boxes. The Pearce Family Foundation logo is in the bottom right.

Via. Zoom

May 2nd, 2020

4:30-6pm

**Backyard
Burlesque
For PFF**

"Backyard Burlesque for PFF"
dance class taught
by Eli Medina!

Homemade cocktail class from
"A Couple of Bartenders"

AND an Online Raffle!

Grab your spot at
pearcefamilyfoundation.com/events

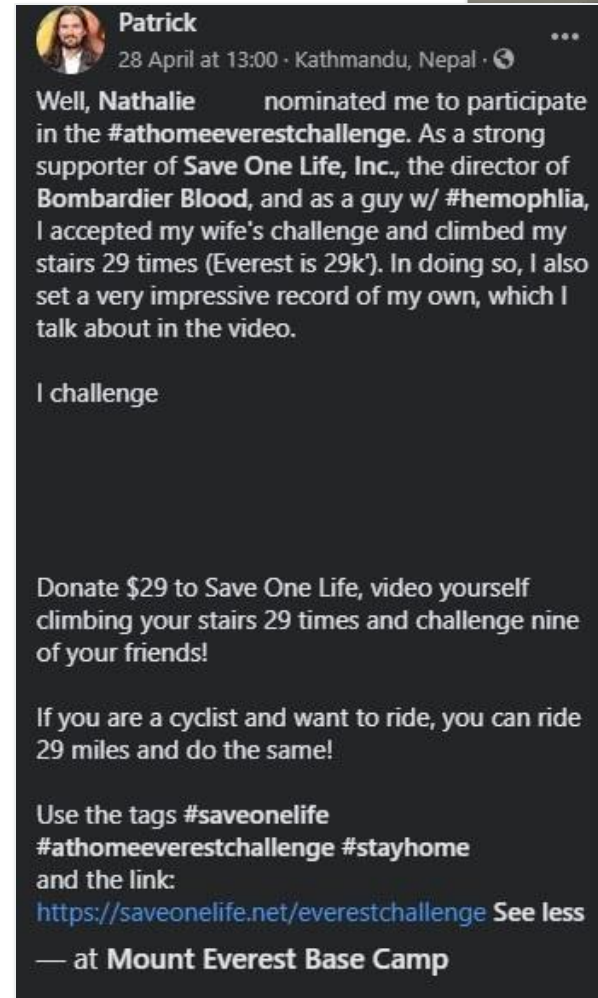
LIQUID CATERERS

PFF
PEARCE FAMILY
FOUNDATION

The Strategy

“We postponed our in-person fundraising events and started a **virtual At Home Everest Campaign**. We aim to raise \$29,029 (the height of Everest) by **asking individuals to donate \$29**, climb 29 flights of stairs in their house and challenge 9 friends on social media. We have a donor **matching up to \$5,000** and have raised nearly \$1,000 in a week.”

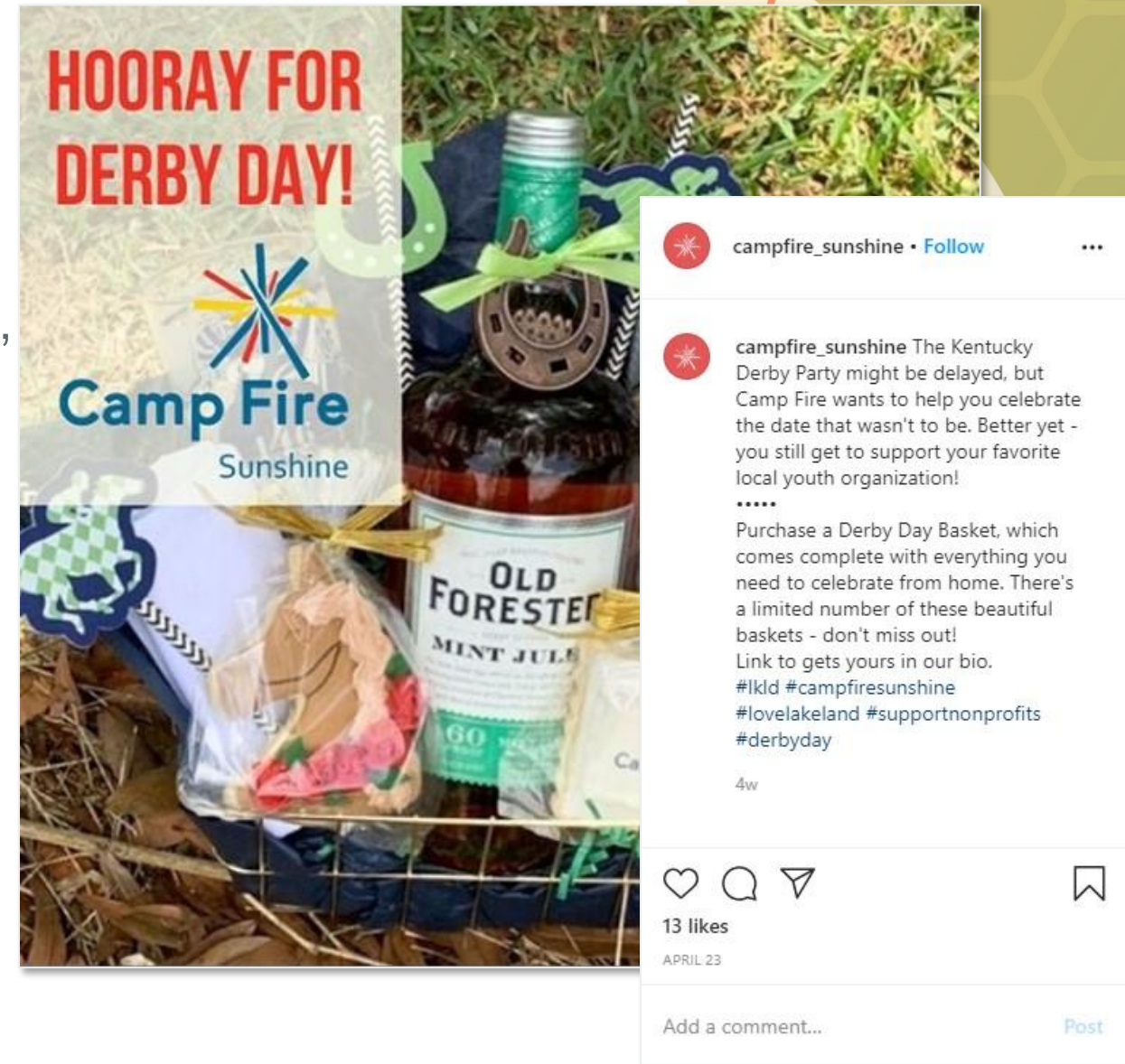
- Heather Case
Save One Life



The Strategy

“Our signature fundraiser, our Kentucky Derby Party, has been postponed until Labor Day weekend. In the meantime, to have some income, and to keep the Derby hype going we have **sold Mint Julep baskets** that we hand delivered by our very own horse jockey. We are also having our **first peer-to-peer event**. The Board member who raises the most will be running up and down South Florida Avenue dressed in a horse costume.

- Lynn Anne Castleberry
Camp Fire Sunshine Central Florida



The Strategy

“Our county established **Project Resilience** - a fund used to reimburse restaurants at cost (to keep them financially solvent & workers employed) for **donating meals to feed those in need** in every municipality in our county. We are the fiduciary agent, taking donations, paying restaurants, & reporting donations to the county. We **receive a percentage of donations** to cover admin costs.”

- Su Marcy

United Way of Ulster County




The Takeaway

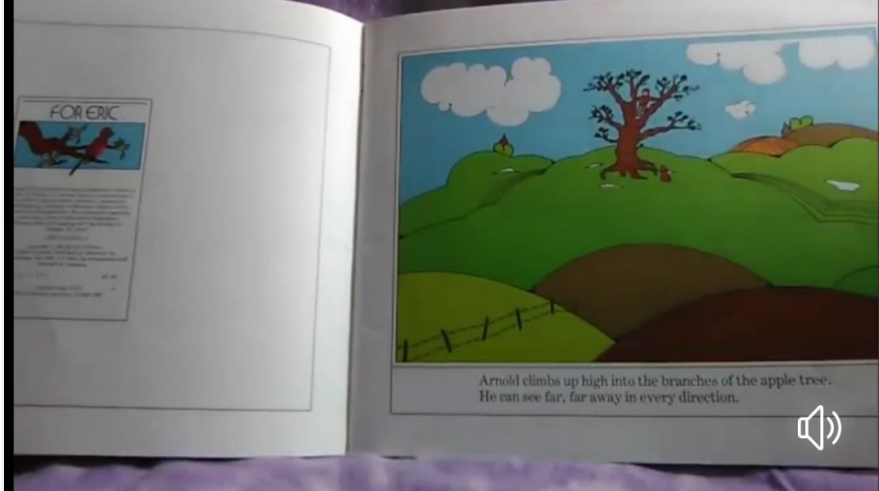
If you have the time and resources, channel your energy into **creating a virtual event** that's **engaging and exciting** for donors.


Try:


- + Building something interactive that donors can do while they're staying at home
- + Supporting local businesses (bartenders, restaurants, etc.) with your event
- + Focusing on creativity and authenticity instead of formality!

**Camp Fire Sunshine** posted a video to playlist **Story Time with Ms. Rhonda**.
Yesterday at 7:00 PM • 🌐

Tonight Ms. Rhonda reads The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree by Gail Gibbons. Enjoy! And test your knowledge at the end with review questions:
<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:559fe5f2-06e5-4ae1-819b-e4bb08dd87db>



 Watch together with friends or with a group START

 4 3 Shares • 63 Views

Idea #2: Pivot! PIVOOOOOT!



The Strategy


We desperately wanted to find a way to **keep our seamstresses employed**, earning fair wages and able to provide for their families.. they began sewing cloth face masks from leftover fabric from the past couple of seasons that we'd planned to sell but couldn't because of shutdowns... We **reworked our NCAA tournament giving campaign** to incorporate making face masks and donating them to vulnerable people groups in Cambodia... We **exceeded our goal of \$44,000** and wound up raising just over \$76,000! We have been blown away!

-Kimberly Watts
Center for Global Impact

"LOOK FOR THE HELPERS. YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND PEOPLE HELPING."

-MR. ROGERS


MATCHING MASK CHALLENGE
CENTER FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

\$5 GIFT = 

+ 1 WEEK OF MEALS FOR STUDENTS

CGI IS LOOKING FOR THE HELPERS.
WILL YOU BE ONE?

NOW THROUGH APRIL 15, EVERY DOLLAR YOU GIVE PROVIDES 1 MASK AND FAIR WAGES FOR A BYTAVI SEAMSTRESS AND WILL BE TRIPLED TO HELP CONTINUE CGI'S WORK IN CAMBODIA.



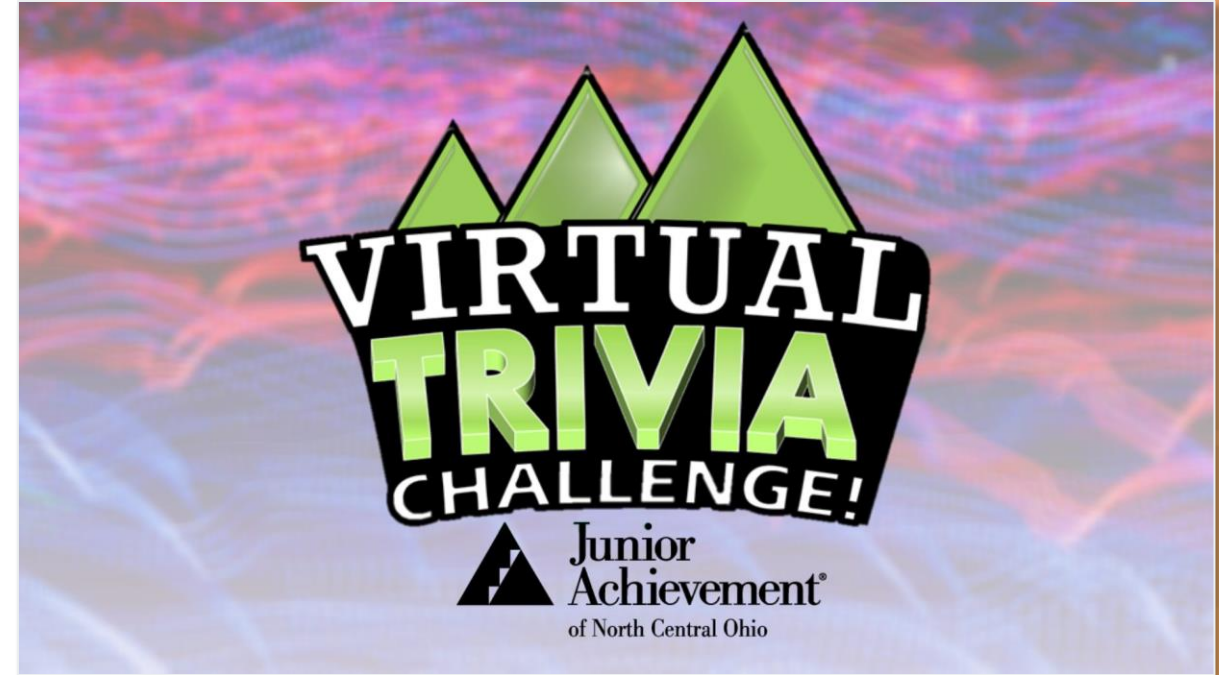
The Strategy

Normally, our P2P fundraiser ends with a bowling celebration event, but we are now going to **host a virtual trivia night** for our participants and for all of our constituents.

Our **Company Program competition has moved** to a virtual event where students will submit their annual reports and infomercial remotely.

- Josh Lehman

Junior Achievement of North Central Ohio



The Takeaway

Can you translate what you've done in the past to a digital event or different style of fundraiser?

Donors know everyone is having to adjust: how can you engage them?

Try:

- + Switching up existing fundraising events and moving them online
- + Looking at your needs to see if any can be combined and addressed
- + Crowdsourcing ideas from staff, board, and volunteers





Questions?
