



# It's Not You, It's COVID

What every organization can learn from 2020

# Meet the Panel



**MAKE-A-WISH**



**AMERICAN RED CROSS**



**GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK**



**Three unique  
organizations  
with three unique  
pandemic  
experiences**

# 2020 was an unprecedented year – for fundraising

**17%**

New donors  
increased 17% by  
the end of Q3 2020

**7.2%**

Online fundraising  
increased for large  
nonprofits 7.2% by the  
end of Q3 2020

**8.5%**

Revenue increased  
8.5% by the end of Q3  
2020

2020

**COVID RESPONSE**

2021

**COVID RECOVERY**

2022 and beyond

**COVID READY**

**Make-A-Wish**



# Granting wishes since 1980.

It all started with one wish – 7-year old Chris Greicius, who was battling leukemia, wished to be police officer. Over forty years later, tens of thousands of volunteers, donors and supporters advance the Make-A-Wish vision to grant the wish of every child diagnosed with a critical illness.

- A wish is granted every 34 minutes (pre-COVID); roughly 15 wishes granted per day currently.
- For every wish we grant, there are three more children with a critical illness who are still waiting for their wish to be granted.
- Research shows a wish can give kids the strength to fight against and even overcome a critical illness.



## How do we continue to raise revenue and retain donors while most wishes are on hold?

- Roughly 77% of wishes involved travel pre-COVID
- The mission is not directly related to COVID relief



# Messaging Considerations

- Remain relevant despite pauses on certain wishes and reduction in wish granting capabilities.
- Continue to be authentic during a period of high unemployment and uncertainty.
- Strike a positive and hopeful tone that not only motivates supporters.
- Encourage wish kids to remain hopeful about their wishes that are waiting.
- Stay top of mind with donors and audiences when deciding on where to donate





## Solution:

# Messages of Hope Campaign

- Campaign launched via display, paid social, and search in tandem with organic marketing campaign and CTAs (“Send a Message of Hope”).
- Tested an atypical “send a message of hope” CTA across audiences instead of a direct ask, aligned with larger Brand initiatives and messaging.
- Worked with celebrity wish granters to share videos asking fans to send messages of hope to waiting children.
- Launched DRTV as planned to further expand omnichannel messaging, reach, and monthly revenue.

# Messages of Hope



## Learning & Next Steps

- This campaign helped solidify advertising program's audience-centric messaging strategy.
- Continued focus on the mission of Make-A-Wish to grant wishes to every eligible child: the mission has not changed, just the way we deliver it.
- Created opportunities for our audiences to engage with MAW in ways other than donating or volunteering.
- Reinforced our belief that continued investment in new and existing channels to increase both revenue and awareness was worthwhile.



**American Red Cross**



# Sleeves up. Hearts Open. All In.

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.

- 1 60,000+ disaster responses yearly
- 2 About 40% of the nation's blood supply
- 3 Over 417,000 services provided to veterans, service members and civilians.
- 4 Nearly 4.8 million people trained in live-saving skills

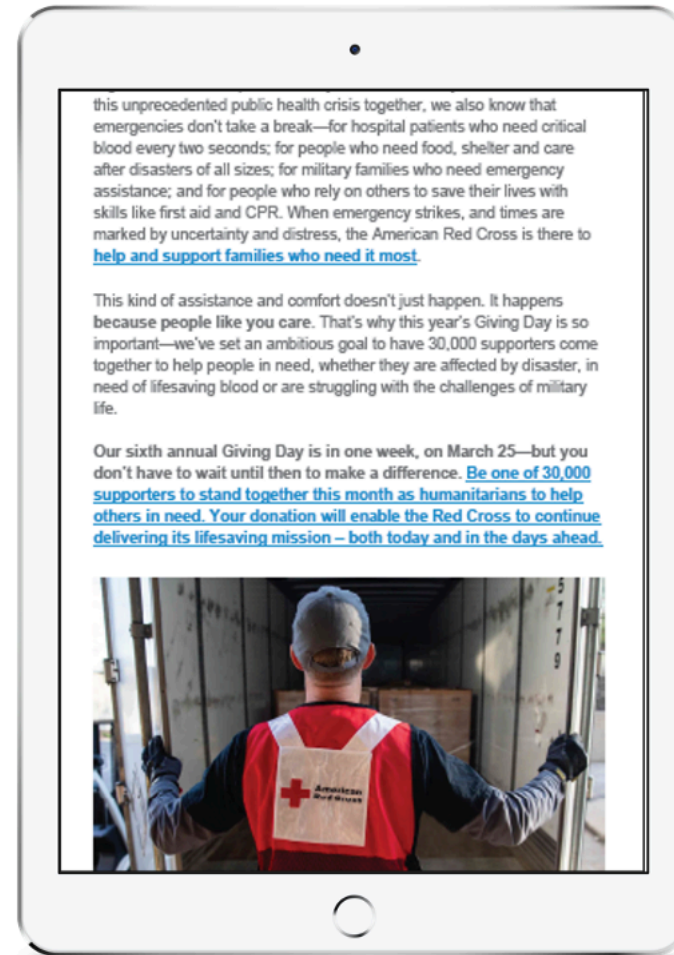


# Mission Response: A Year Like No Other

- 1 Helping families after disasters of all sizes across the country
- 2 Supplying blood products for patients in need of transfusions; collecting plasma from individuals fully recovered from COVID-19
- 3 Providing support to our military including helping to vaccinate U.S. service members in U.S. veterans' hospitals and on bases around the globe
- 4 Teaching lifesaving training classes online

# Campaign Pivot: Emergency Response during COVID

For the annual Red Cross Giving Day campaign on March 25th, the multichannel campaign quickly pivoted from a focus on Red Cross Disaster Relief to the full mission of the Red Cross in the face of the pandemic: *Emergencies Don't Take a Break, and Neither Do We*





# Fundraising Effort Changes – Direct Mail

Due to the long lead time for Direct Mail, the first mailing adjusted at the start of the pandemic was the May 2020 mailing. In this mailing both copy and photos were changed to include pandemic language and social distancing.



**A HUG**



**A MEAL**



**A BLANKET**



**A MEAL**



**A BLANKET**



**A CONNECTION**

Dear *Greeting*,

When disaster strikes and all is lost, it's the power of humanity that restores broken lives—a blanket for a child, a helping hand from a neighbor, a comforting meal, or a simple hug that shows someone cares.

That's because in times of crisis and loss, it's hope that matters most—the hope you provide through your compassionate support of the *American Red Cross Chapter Name*.

Approximately every 8 minutes—every day—the Red Cross responds to a home fire or other disaster. Disasters that can take everything a family holds dear: the security of their own home, clothes, even cherished keepsakes.

Dear *Greeting*,

I know I speak for all of us at the *American Red Cross Chapter Name* when I say you remain in our thoughts right now. Please be assured that our critical relief efforts continue, even amid challenging circumstances created by a pandemic.

No matter the challenges we face, I take heart in knowing that humanity can restore lives upended by emergencies. It could be a blanket for a child, a comforting meal, or a simple act of kindness that shows someone cares.

Approximately every 8 minutes, the Red Cross responds to a home fire or other disaster. Disasters that can take everything a family holds dear. In these times of uncertainty, it's hope that matters most—the hope you provide through your compassionate support.

# Fundraising Effort Changes

As we continue to navigate through a challenging year, our mission remains unchanged. Within our fundraising effort, we've sought to show how our teams are doing everything we can to keep people safe and healthy during this pandemic.



Dear Sheana,

Today is #GivingTuesdayNow — a global day of giving when compassionate people all over the world rally to do good and spread positivity. As individuals, families and communities struggle with life changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are still experiencing unexpected emergencies, like needing lifesaving blood or a safe place to stay in the aftermath of home fires, storms and other disasters. We see this every day at the American Red Cross.

#GivingTuesdayNow is a day to come together to help provide comfort and hope. Thanks to the generous matching gift offer from Canadian Pacific (CP), your gift will be **MATCHED** up to \$150,000 today! **When you make a gift by midnight tonight, you'll make TWICE the impact helping even more families in the face of everyday emergencies.**

**BECAUSE OF YOU ...**

**A senior has comfort and relief.**

**A family has fresh, clean clothing.**

**A mother and child have safe shelter.**

**A child is comforted.**

**A grandmother has the strength to build again.**

◀ **Your impact continues inside.**

Your generosity means we can respond quickly to families in crisis, even in the midst of the pandemic. Our volunteers can remain for weeks—even months—to pick up the pieces.

Because of you, a family has a safe place to sleep after losing their home to a fire. Because you care, a senior has a hot meal and a warm blanket when they have nowhere to turn. Because of your generosity, neighbors find the strength to rebuild when *Spring Local Disaster Name Plural* strike.

**Because of YOU, neighbors have HOPE**

Please charge my donation:      Bank Transfer (Please include a voided check)

Monthly I authorize the American Red Cross to charge the amount below to my account each month. You may cancel or change this amount at any time.

One-time gift

Gift Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
(to receive Red Cross alerts, news and information)

American Red Cross  
Chapter Name  
Disruption Processing Center  
Mailing Address  
City State Zip

Letters included that mention Red Cross in your will or trust, or a beneficiary of a retirement account or other planned gift.

Contributions to learn more about disaster, or emergency relief (see [http://www.redcross.org](#)).

Please cross our address above through the return envelope window ▶

Thank you! Your gift enables the Red Cross to help people prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters big and small. Your gift to the Red Cross is tax deductible. Please retain this form.

# Learnings & Next Steps

- 1 Continued focus on the Red Cross mission: emergencies don't stop, and neither do we
- 2 Find ways to show how mission delivery is being handled safely—for our staff, our volunteers, and to the people they serve
- 3 Look for opportunities to be helpful: sharing tips for staying safe and increasing focus on mental health
- 4 Show gratitude at every opportunity
- 5 Continue to focus on our collective power of humanity: when we roll up our sleeves together, we can change lives



**Greater Boston Food Bank**



## Who We Are

Greater Boston Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief organization in New England and among the largest Food Banks in the country. Last year, we distributed nearly 100 million pounds of nutritious food to people who struggle to have enough to eat.

We are committed to increasing our food distribution to provide three meals a day to every person in need in Eastern Massachusetts while supporting healthy lives and healthy communities.

# Food Banks Meet Rising Demand

- 1 66% increase in food insecurity
- 2 Average distribution of 2.5 million pounds/week (vs. 1 million pounds prior)
- 3 March 2020-present have been brought the highest monthly distributions in the organization's 40-year history
- 4 New distribution methods
- 5 Launch new distribution sites

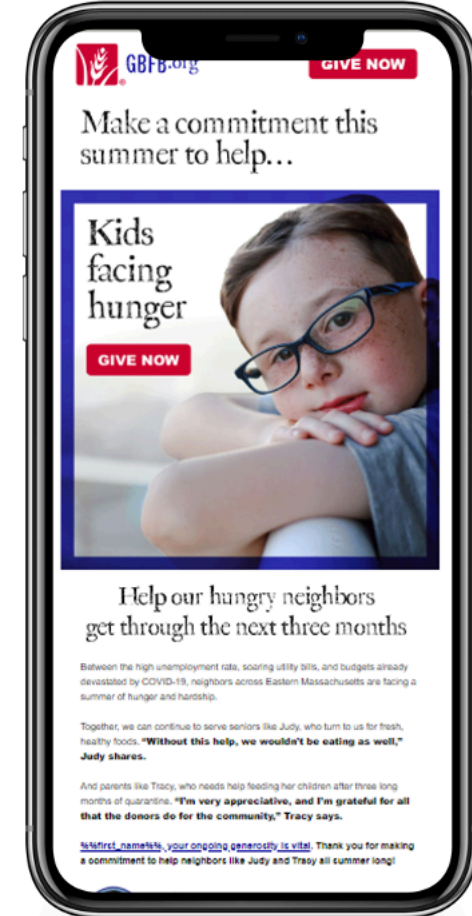




# Messaging and Communication

- 1 Adjusting copy in all digital media and print
- 2 Communicating the need as well as the impact of donations
- 3 Creating an integrated campaign for #givingtuesdaynow
- 4 Creating a multichannel sustainer conversion campaign
- 5 Our partners at One & All conducted real time market research to understand donor behavior during the pandemic

# Digital Creative





# Organizational Impact

YEAR OVER YEAR	GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK FY20
Revenue	<b>230%</b>
Revenue per Active Donor	<b>9%</b>
Retention Rate	<b>10%</b>
Active Donors	<b>202%</b>
New Donors	<b>811%</b>





# Channel Specific Impact

Our overall operating revenue year to date has seen a 289% increase year over year. Three months into the year, we've already hit our annual direct response fundraising goals.

10/1-12/31 YOY REVENUE GROWTH	
Acquisition	<b>425%</b>
Cultivation	<b>195%</b>
Email - Year End Impact	<b>108%</b>
Digital Media	<b>177%</b>

# We're Still Learning

- 1 Being ready to make quick decisions when faced with challenges
- 2 Ensuring stewardship and conversion efforts are prepared and convert donors to ongoing support
- 3 Adjust for budget constraints due to the 811% increase in new donors
- 4 Prepare for a shift in giving behavior and possibly donor fatigue as we pass the year anniversary of the pandemic
- 5 Conduct research to learn as much as we can about preferences of supporters during uncertain times



Thank you.

