

Sustained Giving: Getting Beyond One-Time Gifts

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WELCOME NONPROFIT LEADERS!



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Full-Service Agency Exclusively Serving Nonprofit Organizations



Hospitals



Animal Welfare



Public Media



Arts & Culture



Health & Human Services



Food Banks



Faith



Education





Where are you in your sustainer giving journey?

- ☐ We don't have a program yet but want to start one.
- ☐ We have a program, but it needs stronger results.
- ☐ We have a program and are ready to take it to the next level.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN TODAY?



1

Potential impact of a
sustainer program for your
organization

2

How to identify sustainer
prospects in your file

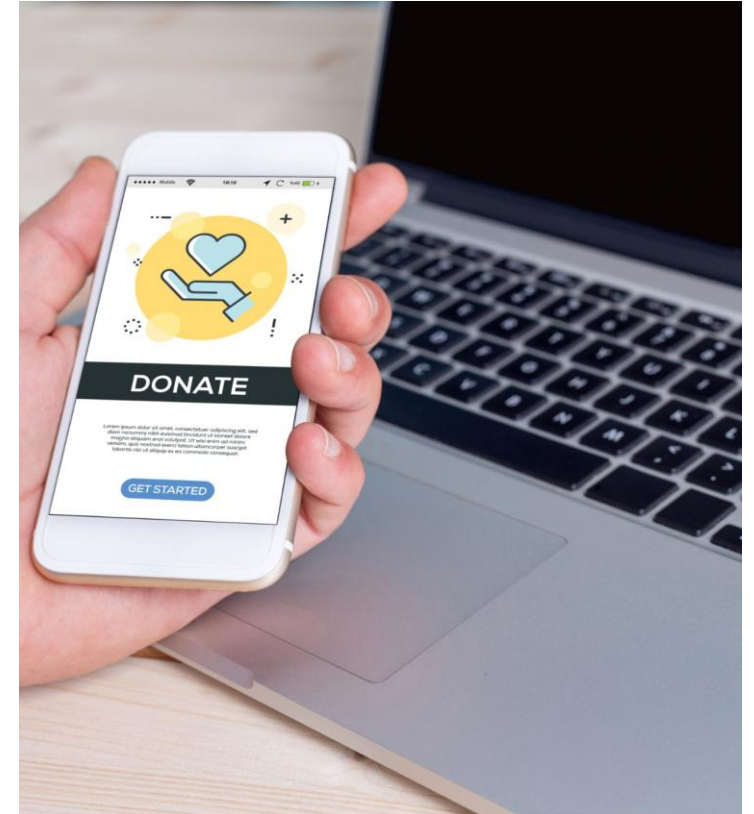
3

Strategies for retaining and
enhancing your programs
growth

WHAT IS RECURRING GIVING?

Recurring or sustainer giving occurs when a **donor chooses to make regular or frequent gifts** to a nonprofit organization **instead of, or in addition to, a one-time or single gift.**

The most popular form of recurring giving is monthly, though some donors will commit to quarterly or annual gifts vs. monthly giving.



SUSTAINER GIVING & THE MACRO ENVIRONMENT



ECONOMIC SIGNALS

- Inflation, tariffs, layoffs, and consumer sentiment
- Stock market volatility and fiscal uncertainty especially among middle-, lower-income, and retired households

PHILANTHROPIC TRENDS

- Dollars up and donors down*
- Retention continues to slip from pandemic surge

CONSUMER TRENDS

- Subscription preference especially among younger generations
- Omnichannel experiences

GENERATIONAL GIVING

HOW DONORS WILL SUPPORT ORGNIZATIONS IN THE FUTURE
Millennials are poised to become strong annual and monthly donors.

Percent Who Say “Very Likely” to do each - Grouped by Generation

	Total Donors	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
One-Time Donation	44%	30%	50%	52%	31%
Donate to Specific Program or Campaign	41%	43%	49% ▲	43%	17% ▼
In-Person or Virtual Event	35%	47%	44%	35%	8% ▼
Become an Annual Donor	33%	28%	42%	34%	13% ▼
Become a Monthly Donor	29%	30%	40% ▲	26%	8% ▼

▲ ▼ indicates significantly higher or lower at the 95% confidence level

Source: <https://institute.blackbaud.com/tippingpoint/>



A dark, moody photograph of a sailboat on the water, with the text 'WHY FOCUS ON SUSTAINER GIVING?' overlaid in white. The background shows the mast, rigging, and sails of the boat against a dark sky and water.

WHY FOCUS ON SUSTAINER GIVING?

BECAUSE AS A FUNDRAISING LEADER...



LONG-TERM RETENTION



- Average donor retention rate - 46%.
- Retention rate for recurring donors is 80% in year one and as high as 95% in year five
- **Lifetime value is 440% greater** than one-time donors.¹
- Most monthly donors stay 5–7 years--sometimes longer.

INCREASED REVENUE



- Monthly donors give more annually.
- Average monthly recurring gift is \$51 (\$612 in 1 year)
- Easier and more convenient for donors.
- Direct mail cost savings.
- 1 in 7 remembers organization in their will.
- Can attract more young donors.

MISSION FOCUS



- Lessens cash flow worries
- Allows for more mission focus.
- More reliable budgets for planning.
- Predictable revenue stream.
- Less stress to get large one-time gifts.

CREATES COMMUNITY



- Community of like-minded people.
- Part of a movement.
- Relationship-building among “members.”
- Facilitates a safe space for learning and sharing.
- Ambassadors for recruitment.



What's the biggest barrier your organization faces in growing recurring gifts?

- ☐ We don't promote it enough
- ☐ Our systems make it hard to manage or sign up
- ☐ We struggle to keep monthly donors engaged
- ☐ Leadership hasn't prioritized it
- ☐ Something else

A grayscale photograph of a person standing on a snowy mountain ridge, looking towards a sharp, jagged mountain peak in the distance. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a beanie. The text is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

DEFINING THE ART & SCIENCE OF SUSTAINER FUNDRAISING

A SOLID SUSTAINER PROGRAM BALANCES...



SCIENCE:

- Answers who, what, when, where
- Uses tech tools leveraging 1st/3rd party data
- Quantifies impact
- Plans evergreen and catalytic growth strategies
- Utilizes an omnichannel approach

ART:

- Seeks to understand why people give
- Builds a brand people are proud to represent
- Demonstrates value through impact and benefits
- Creates intentional touchpoints to drive retention
- Serves this special group well





THE SCIENCE: Recruitment Strategy

WHO TO TARGET?



Loyal Donors who have given 4+ gifts in 12 months



\$25+ gifts from new & renewing donors



Just Given (brand new donors)



Young Subscription Lovers typically donors who give less but frequently



Older Donors on a fixed income



QUANTIFY IMPACT



- Consider your organization's outputs and outcomes
- Pick program-related line items in your budget
- Subtract any funds you know are already in place for those line items
- Divide each by 12 months
- Divide by number of units, if applicable

QUANTIFY IMPACT



Example:

- Annual teacher training budget: **\$200,000**
- Major donor has committed **\$20,000**
- Remaining need: **\$180,000**
- Divide by 12: We need to raise **\$15,000 each month for teacher training**
- Divide by 300 teachers in the program: **\$50 to train one teacher for one month**



PLAN

Determine Evergreen Recruiting Strategy

- Ensure quick conversion pathways
- Test in different stages of the relationship.
- Emphasize giving through bank vs. credit card.
- Create a thoughtful onboarding **AND** offboarding strategy.
- Give and emphasize choice.
- Share how people can do more. Then ask.
- Think and measure more holistically.



PLAN

Develop Catalytic Campaign Recruiting Strategy

- Determine timing and duration.
- Create campaign goal, theme, and look.
- Offer an incentive to drive urgency.
- Construct a multichannel approach.
- Provide regular updates during campaign.
- Express thanks, welcome new members post-campaign.



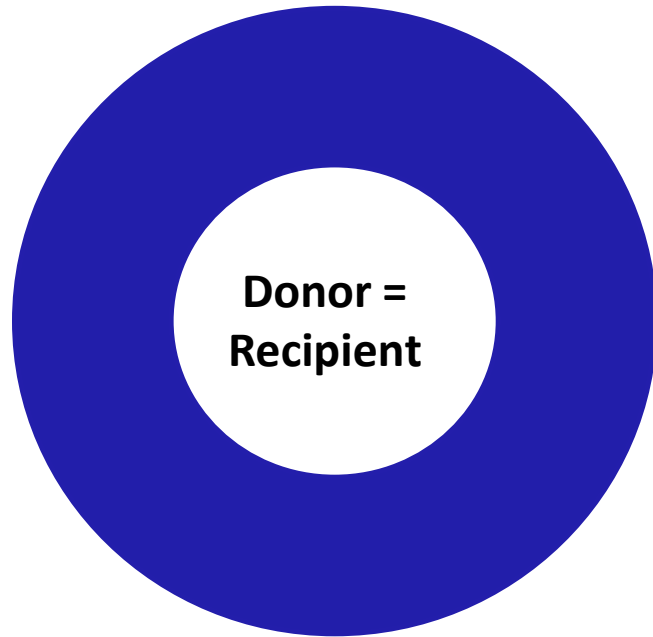
MESSAGING





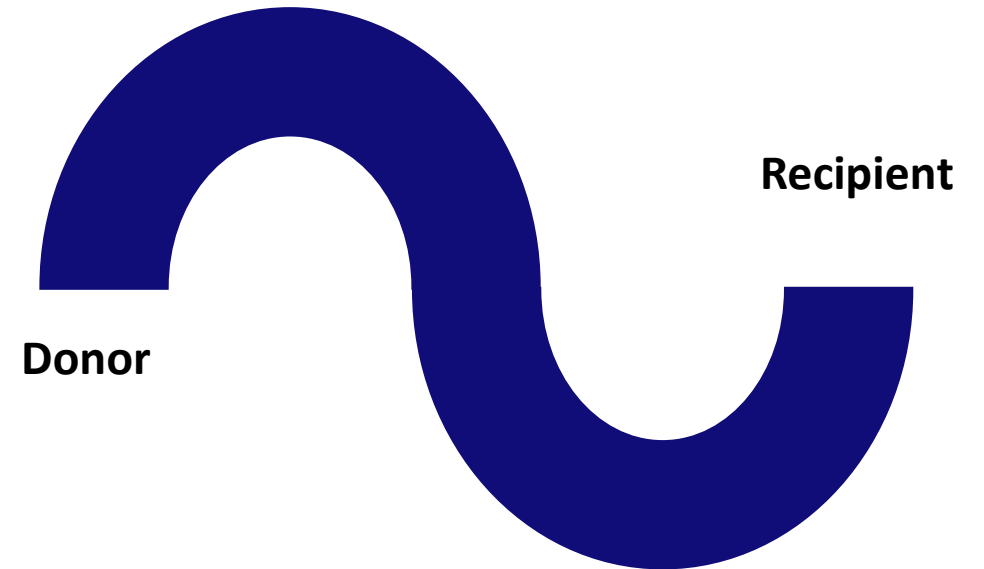
THE ART: Relationship Building & Great Storytelling

UNDERSTAND WHY YOUR DONORS GIVE



Closed Loop Organization

Those who give also get direct benefit from the organization



Open Loop Organization

Those who give do so to benefit others without expecting a direct benefit from the organization



CRAFT YOUR SUSTAINER CASE FOR SUPPORT

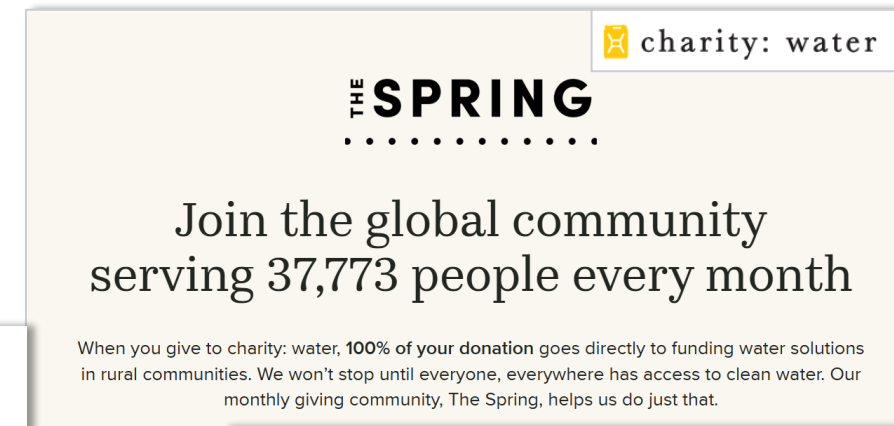
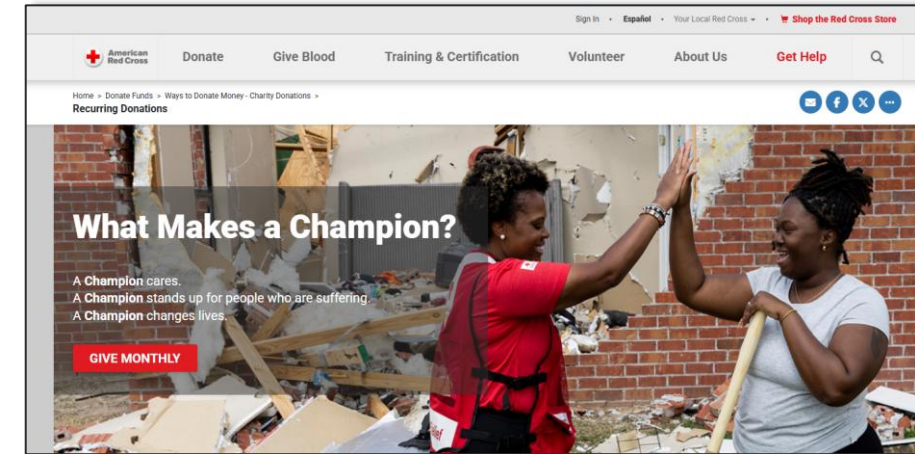
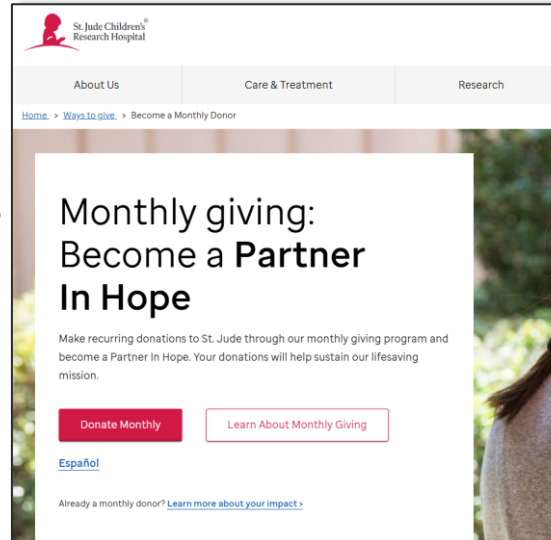
Understanding your organization's Unique Value Proposition (UVP)

The two most influential factors are:

- **Appeal:** How badly do I, as the donor, want what you're offering? Is this a problem that matters to me? Will giving to this cause make me feel good?
- **Exclusivity:** Could I get this somewhere else? Is someone else doing the same work better? Would doing something else make me feel just as good?

BRAND

- Brand Your Program.
- Quantify Monthly Giving Impact.
- Offer Exclusive Benefits.
- Showcase brand prominently in all communication channels.



Make an impact for mental health all year round!

Join the NAMI National Table of Hope



NAMI National was founded by a small group of families gathered around a kitchen table, determined to create a better world for their loved ones facing mental health conditions. Today, that table has grown into a nationwide movement of families, individuals, and advocates like you uniting to make a difference.

Be a GEM and help people in need afford their medication each and every month

PAN GEMs are a generous and caring group of people advocating for a nation in which everyone can get the healthcare they need. People like you, from across the country, giving their best monthly gift to help people afford their out-of-pocket costs for treatment.

Become a GEM





OFFER GREAT BENEFITS

The purpose of benefits:

- Recognize
- Add value
- Increase loyalty/engagement

Tangible premiums:

- Impact reports, on-topic books, membership gear, annual calendar, product/event discounts

Non-tangible benefits:

- Conference calls/Facebook chats, private online group, webinars, special “behind the scenes” access

Surprise & delight



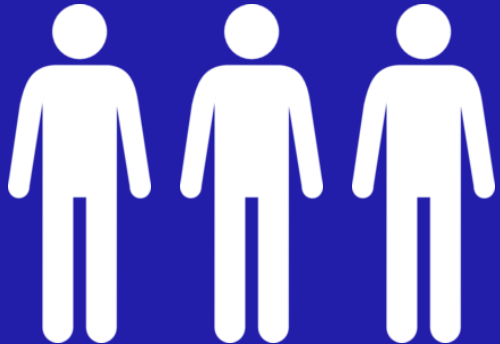
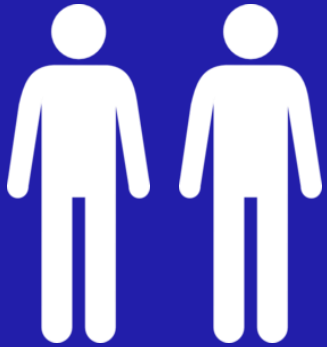
RETAIN



- Immediate thank-you.
- Dedicated staff person(s).
- Cultivation with higher personalization.
- Special content and communication.
- Annual contribution summary.
- Upgraded ask for greater impact.
- Planned giving information and appeal.



STAFF NEEDED TO SUPPORT YOUR SUSTAINER PROGRAM



Minimum

1 full time staffer to own and manage program

Good

Additional staff to support unique data needs including segmentation, file hygiene, preferences, moves management, prospecting, attribution.

Optimal

The above plus an additional digital practitioner or partner, skilled in digital fundraising, automation and omnichannel marketing

SERVE



- DON'T SET IT AND FORGET IT!!
- Understand demographics and preferences.
- Help donor feel known by organization.
- Create/communicate opportunities for additional impact.
- Listen and exercise sensitivity to requests.
- Surprise and delight in meaningful ways.
- ALWAYS be gracious—even if donor leaves.

Program Example

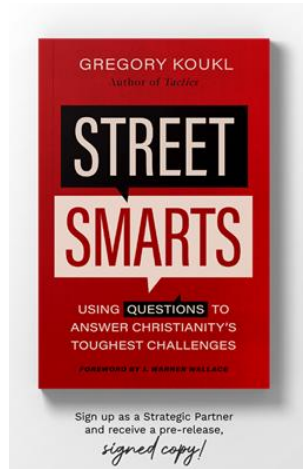


Stand
to Reason

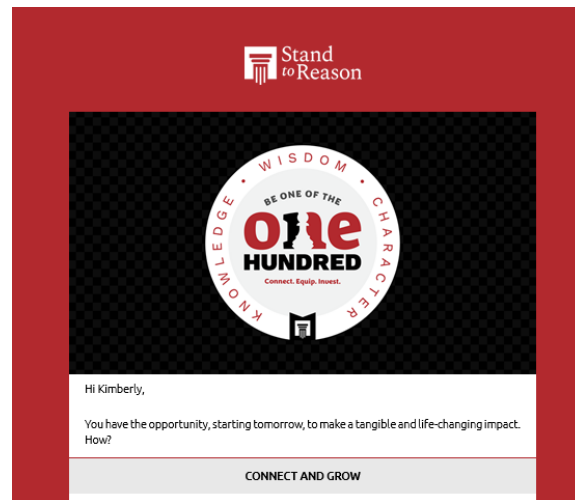
Clear Thinking Christianity

31-DAY CAMPAIGN

PREMIUM



EMAIL



BANNER



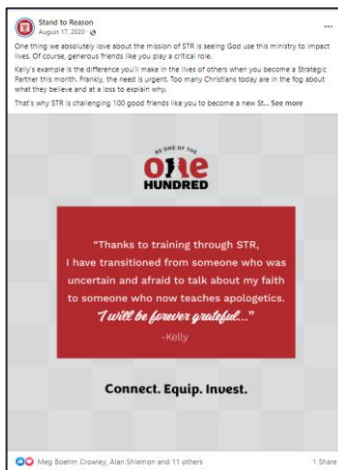
POSTCARD



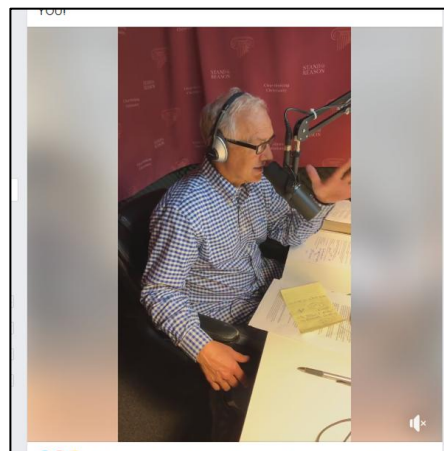
31-day
campaign
August 1-31



SOCIAL MEDIA



ON-AIR RADIO PROGRAM



RETAIN

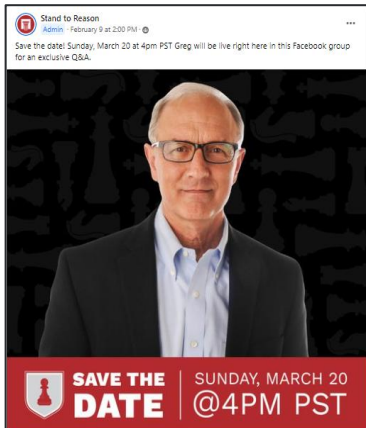
EXCLUSIVE ONLINE AND IN-PERSON EVENTS/CONTENT



Stand to Reason Strategic Partners

🔒 Private group · 938 members

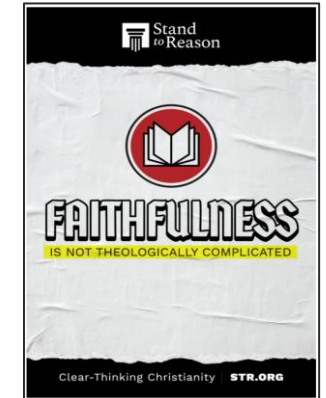
Join group

 Share

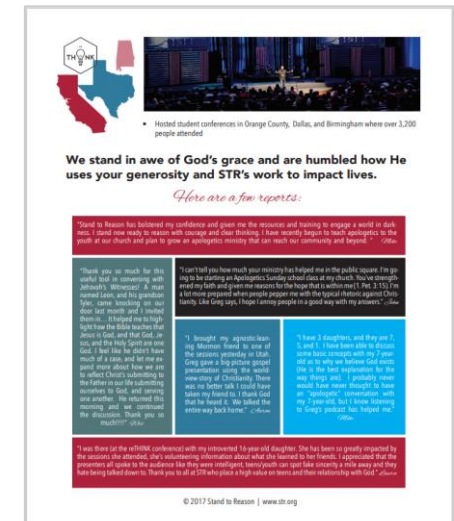
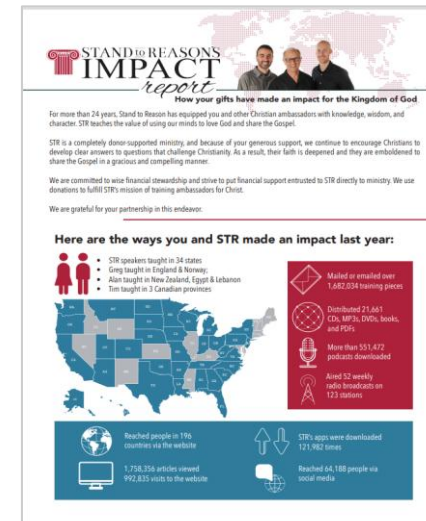
DEDICATED STAFF



“SURPRISE & DELIGHT” EXCLUSIVE RESOURCES



IMPACT REPORT



MISSION IMPACT.

**56%-
63%**
Annual
revenue

From monthly
recurring giving

\$76.10
Average Gift

Versus \$54.66
from start of
partnership

41%
Growth

In monthly donors from
since the first Strategic
Partner campaign in
2019

88%
Average retention
rate

For monthly
donors



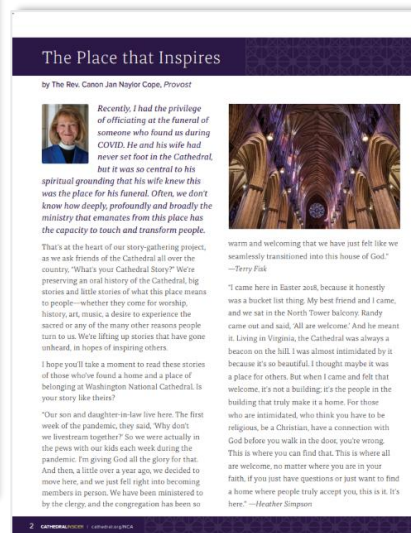
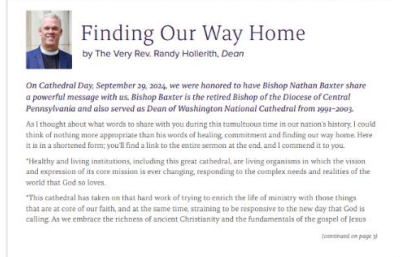
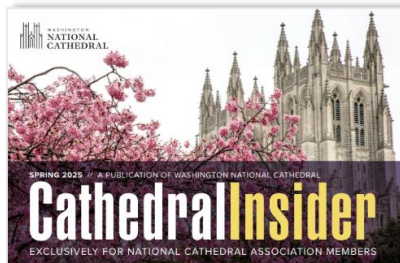
A dark, moody photograph of a sailboat on the water, with the title 'Optimizing Your Program' overlaid in white text. The background shows the sailboat's mast, rigging, and sails against a dark sky and water. The text is centered and has a small horizontal line underneath it.

Optimizing Your Program

STORYTELLING



- Great storytelling keeps long-term sustainers engaged — and prevents donor fatigue.
- Effective donor communication doesn't just inform — it inspires.
- Storytelling deepens a donor's connection by sparking:
 - Curiosity – “What happens next?”
 - Urgency – “I need to act now.”
 - Emotion – “This moved me.”
 - Connection – “I'm part of this story.”



REACTIVATION



- **Include in acquisition and conversion campaign** for other recurring donors using variable copy
 - Remind about impact and benefits to create FOMO
- **Create a call/email/text cadence** for reactivation
 - Especially for expired credit cards
- Once reactivated, **consider a re-welcome handwritten note or email** with a downloadable resource or discount code for product to demonstrate their value to the organization



UPGRADING



- Build a case for upgraded support by using 1-2 initiatives to monetize impact
- Consider a single annual ask for an upgraded gift
- Possible script:
 - Thank for support
 - Recount current giving level
 - Provide case for support for upgraded gift and what it can accomplish, ask for upgraded amount;
 - If objection, ask for lower upgraded amount, thank for current faithfulness.

Monthly Giving Level	Upgraded Ask #1	If 1st Objection, use Upgraded Ask #2	If 2nd Objection, ask for a special single gift of any amount
\$1-\$10	\$5	\$3	Any amount
\$11-\$25	\$7	\$5	Any amount
\$26-\$50	\$10	\$7	Any amount
\$51-\$75	\$12	\$10	Any amount
\$76-\$100	\$15	\$12	Any amount
\$101-\$150	\$20	\$15	Any amount
\$151-\$200	\$25	\$20	Any amount

SINGLE GIFT GROWTH



- To reduce donor fatigue and to ensure profitability (especially for direct mail), consider asking recurring donors for special single gifts NO MORE THAN 4 times per year.
 - Possible occasions:
 - Calendar year-end
 - Fiscal year-end
 - Special campaigns or events (e.g., Giving Day, in-person fundraiser, etc.)
 - Special milestone or emergency/urgent time (e.g., anniversary, launch of a new initiative, sudden uncontrollable funding change, etc.)



FINALLY...



- Clarify and communicate your UVP
- Validate donors' top 3 "whys": convenience, certainty, connection
- Use AI to enhance learning, language, and donor journeys
- Join 1–3 recurring giving programs for insights
- Remove barriers to program success and growth
- Simplify giving and upgrades
- Test and iterate





What's the first thing you plan to do to strengthen recurring giving at your organization?

- ☐ Refresh our messaging or landing page
- ☐ Create a specific recurring donor stewardship plan
- ☐ Launch a new promotion or campaign
- ☐ Get leadership buy-in to prioritize sustainers



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



CONTACT ME!



Kim Richardson

*Associate Vice-President,
Client Strategy*

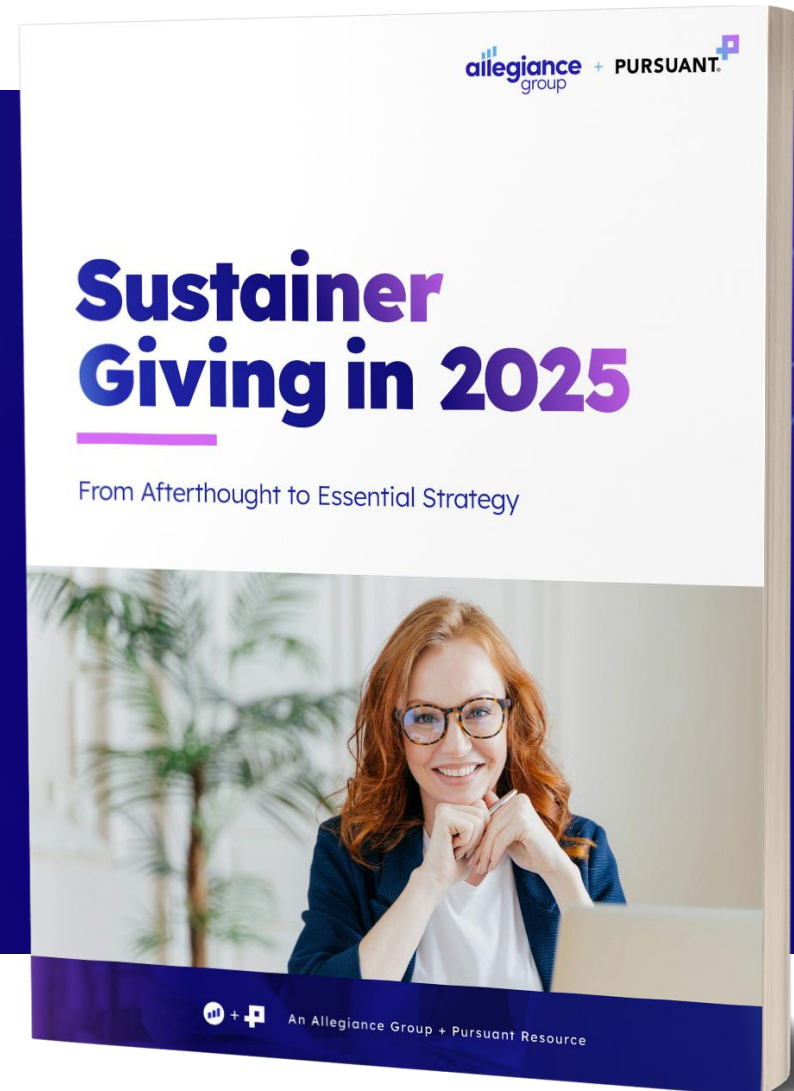


It's Time to Turn One-Time Donors Into Lifelong Supporters

Our latest guide breaks down the forces reshaping donor behavior and shows you how to build a recurring giving program that thrives.



SCAN HERE



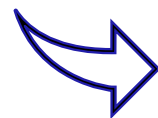
Turn One-Time Gifts into Lifelong Support — in Just 90 Days!

Your cause deserves more than a spike in giving. **It deserves a steady heartbeat.**

Unpredictable revenue can keep even the strongest missions on shaky ground. **Our Sustainer Growth Accelerator uses data-driven targeting, compelling storytelling, and a proven roadmap to launch or supercharge your monthly giving program.**

Turn loyal donors into the steady force that fuels your mission for years.

Scan to See What's
Possible in 90 Days



APPENDIX/ HANDOUTS

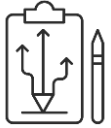
PLANNING FOR SUCCESS.



ACQUIRE



BRAND your program, quantify impact, offer benefits.



PLAN for success, be omnichannel in messaging, giving options, drive urgency, set goals, express thanks.

RETAIN



ENGAGE in multiple ways across all channels creating community.



RETAIN through stewardship. Thank, engage, call, survey, activate passions, be authentic, show impact.

SERVE



SERVE through program evaluation, experience optimization and personalization, listening, caring.



OTHER SUSTAINER RESOURCES

- [6 Recurring Giving Mistakes Every Leader Needs to AVOID](#)
- [Sustainable-Giving-Report-2024.pdf](#)
- [Big List of Donor Level Names - The Nonprofit Fixer](#)
- [2025 Collection MonthlyGiving DonorPerfect.pdf](#)
- [10 places to put a link to your online donation page | 4aGoodCause](#)
- [5 Ideas to Gain Donor Loyalty With Sustainer Giving in 2025 – A Direct Solution](#)
- [Monthly Donor Communication Strategies to Boost Engagement – A Direct Solution](#)
- [Best Nonprofit Tech Stack for Monthly Giving | Top Donation & CRM Tools - positiveequation.com](#)
- [How a pop-up inviting one-time donors to convert their donation to recurring impacts recurring donor conversion on donation pages - NextAfter](#)
- [Free Downloadable Monthly Donor Conversion Request Template](#)
- [How to Start a Monthly Giving Program From the Ground Up | 4aGoodCause](#)
- [Presentation non Profit Webinar](#)
- [Acquire New Donors & Grow Your Monthly Giving Program—Here's How | 4aGoodCause](#)
- [Must-Know Recurring Giving Statistics for Nonprofits in 2025](#)
- [5 Key Strategies to Protect Sustainers During Migration](#)
- [Your Rally Point Episode 6: Best Practices for Text Messaging](#)

OTHER STORYTELLING AND "ART" RESOURCES

- [Emotion-First-Fundraising-Stories.pdf](#)
- [The-Immersive-Ask-Playbook.pdf](#)
- [The-Hidden-Power-of-Villains-in-Nonprofit-Stories.pdf](#)
- [The-Tail-Wagging-Story-Test.pdf](#)
- [Powerful-Details-That-Make-Nonprofit-Stories-Unforgettable.pdf](#)
- [Short-Form-Fundraising-Story-Framework.pdf](#)
- [Storytelling-Openers.pdf](#)
- [Spotting-Stories-That-Raise-More-Money.pdf](#)
- [MGFC 2024 Event Calendar DRAFT](#)

THE MONTHLY DONOR JOURNEY

First Gift - Thank and cultivate

STEP 1



STEP 2



Combine external data within giving behavior to you

STEP 3



STEP 4



Flag monthly donors in database for proper appreciation

STEP 5



STEP 6



Append external data - Get to know your donor!

Push to monthly giving program via communication

Establish upgraded ask cadence.

Consistent, YoY monthly donors fuel Mid-Level & Planned Giving

Monthly Donors = 20%+ annual giving

Thank You!

