

Atlanta Results

Your Monthly Resource for Philanthropic News

Alexander Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

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from the organized desk of
Sandra K. Kidd | Senior Partner

Telling Your Story

I started out as a student journalist, and I find that I still think in terms of what budding newspaper writers are taught to do: Answer these five questions — **Who? What? When? Where? How?** — in the lead of the story. As we move toward the end of 2021, it's a good time to apply these journalism basics to our daily work of philanthropy.

The world gets more complex, the number of non-profits keeps rising, and the clutter in our ever-increasing channels of communications grows. So with a nod to some "old school" thinking, let's get back to the basics of telling your story:

Who? Who does your non-profit serve? Draw your donors a word picture of someone who benefits from your organization's existence. If you feed the hungry, tell us about someone who came in last week. If you provide scholarships to first-generation college students, give us a profile of a success story. Be specific (while omitting identifying details for privacy reasons), and let the soul of the person being served shine through.

What? What does your organization do? Tell your donors, in simple, straightforward language, what you do to carry out your mission. If your organization provides front-line services, this part may be a bit easier than if you are part of a large university system or the United Way. But you should be able to articulate what your non-profit does in a couple of sentences. If you can't, go talk to your colleagues in programs.

When and Where and How? Answering these questions can help you move your case for support from the indeterminate to the well-defined. These questions also help you quantify the impact of your charitable mission, *and* what you could do if you had more resources. How many people do you serve a year — and how great is the unmet need? Where does your work typically take place — and where would you expand if you had the dollars to do so? When are the times you most need help, and has that changed over the years?

My aunt is very involved in a program that provides warm clothing and toys for children during the holidays. Until 2020, they used October and November to make a major push for monetary donations. Last year, when people were not traveling so much due to the pandemic, they decided to make their push in the summer months. The result? They not only met their goal for donations; they exceeded it. It turned out that donors completely understood the need to have the money well in advance of the time it was to be spent on boots and bicycles.

The final question is **Why? This is ultimately the heart of your case for support.** Why does your non-profit matter? Why should donors support your mission? Why do people need the work you do, and what would happen if your organization wasn't here to help them?

I have noticed in the field of philanthropy that we often try to answer this question first: we are mission-driven, after all. My advice to you, however, is to answer this question last. After you have defined the **Who What When Where** and **How**, the **Why** should be clearer.

And once you've written your story, send it in advance to a couple of donors who will give you honest feedback, run it by a trusted funder, or let a colleague in another organization read it over for you.

Whether you're trying to craft your year-end fundraising ask for 2021, or getting a head start on your message for 2022, it's always the right time to go back to the basics.

Alexander Haas wishes you a bright and successful end-of-year fundraising effort.

We Think You Should Know

A Round of Applause to Our Client Partner The Aurora Theatre!

On October 23-24, **The Aurora Theatre** opened the doors to its new home—the culmination of a dream and the result of a long-running public-private partnership with the City of Lawrenceville, Georgia. The new *Lawrenceville Arts Center* (LAC) is a \$35-million investment in arts and the community, with The Aurora Theatre serving as the anchor tenant and manager of the new LAC, following a successful capital campaign to fund its portion of the building costs. Aurora started 15 years ago as a storefront theatre and has been a catalyst for economic growth while also serving as a leader in community engagement and diversity in the arts. Hats off to co-founders Ann-Carol Pence and Anthony Rodriguez and their talented team for a job well done!

Other Metro News

The **Atlanta Gas Light Foundation** awarded a \$50,000 gift to the **Georgia Justice Project*** to expand its ability to reach the estimated 1.5 million people in Georgia who are eligible to have their criminal records expunged. The gift is the third donation in an ongoing charitable initiative sponsored by Atlanta Gas Light's parent company, **Southern Company Gas.** *MetroAtlantaCEO, 11-8*

Chris and Amanda Arrendale, both graduates from Southern Polytechnic State University, now **Kennesaw State University***, established a \$50,000 endowment that will award scholarships to students who have financial needs within the College of Computing and Software Engineering (CCSE). *MetroAtlantaCEO, 11-3*

The **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation** will award \$10 million in grants to a dozen civil and voting rights advocacy groups working to ensure eligible Americans can vote and participate in the democratic process, with a focus on Georgia and the Southeast. Atlanta-area Recipients include: **Asian Americans Advancing Justice, ACLU Foundation of Georgia, Black Voters Matter, Fair Count, GALEO Latino Community Development Fund, Georgia Alliance for Progress Education Fund, New Georgia Project and ProGeorgia.** *Atlanta Civic Circle, 10-28*

MUST Ministries, a nonprofit dedicated to addressing the basic needs of families in crisis across metro Atlanta, received a \$240,000 grant from **The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation** for a new *farmer's market style* mobile food pantry bus. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-28*

The **Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta** announces more than \$1.2 million in grants and investments awarded to fund efforts in community development, education and nonprofit technical assistance, following a previous \$1.06 million in grants for the arts. These \$2.26 million in combined grants support partnerships across the region to bolster organizations and programs that make our region more equitable, our neighborhoods more vibrant and our families more economically prosperous. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-26*

Novelis donated \$1 million to **Habitat for Humanity** in honor of the company's 10th annual *Novelis Volunteer Month*, which takes place every October. Throughout the month, Novelis employees around the world joined together to serve the communities they call home — such as volunteering with local Habitat organizations to help build homes and revitalize neighborhoods, among other activities. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-26*

Georgia Aquarium* CEO **Michael Leven** and former PricewaterhouseCoopers partner **J. Larry Stevens** – were inducted into the *Michael J. Coles College of Business Hall of Fame* at **Kennesaw State University***. They were honored for their commitment to innovation, community service and global engagement, elements at the heart of the College's mission. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-25*

This year's **Rainbow Village*** Gala shattered all prior fundraising records and nearly doubled the totals from the last two Galas. By the end of the event, the nonprofit raised \$492,000. In the hours that followed, an anonymous donor came forward with an \$8,000 donation plus \$30 in commemoration of the 30th anniversary. In total, \$500,030 was raised in support of Rainbow Village's vision and the families it serves. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-22*

The Home Depot Foundation renewed its long-standing partnership with **Habitat for Humanity** with a \$2.5 million donation to support the nonprofit. Since 2011, The Home Depot Foundation has contributed more than \$28 million to help veterans and their families improve or build an affordable place to call home. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-22*

Georgia Power awarded a \$50,000 donation to support the **Atlanta Women's Foundation's*** (AWF) social justice efforts. With this donation, AWF will support **YouthSpark**, an independent nonprofit organization with a focus on providing real solutions for vulnerable children and families affected by courts. In addition, Georgia Power will be a lead sponsor of the 2021 *Numbers Too Big to Ignore* Luncheon to provide resources to change the lives of women and girls in our communities. *MetroAtlantaCEO, 10-20*

James M. Cox Foundation awarded a \$3.8 million gift over two years to the **Atlanta Speech School** to support the *Rollins Center for Language and Literacy* and its online professional-development platform. *COP, 10-20*

*Alumni Client Partner

Donor-Advised Funds Saw Rapid Growth in 2020

Donor-advised funds grew by almost every measure in 2020, according to a report from the **National Philanthropic Trust**. And the amount donors sent to charities from those funds reached \$34.7 billion, a 27% increase from 2019. Contributions to donor-advised funds grew as well. The total in 2020 added up to \$47.9 billion, a 20.1% increase from 2019. Total charitable assets held in donor-advised funds grew to \$159.8 billion, a nearly 10% increase over 2019.

The nearly \$48 billion received by donor-advised funds is roughly equivalent to the amount of cash and stock raised by the 85 biggest organizations on the America's Favorite Charities list, and is equivalent to roughly 10% of Giving USA's estimated \$471 billion donated to all charities in 2020.

"It's the largest grant-making increase we've had in a decade," said **Eileen Heisman**, CEO of National Philanthropic Trust, which with \$4.9 billion in contributions last year is the second-biggest sponsor of donor-advised funds, after Fidelity Charitable. "People were using their DAFs to quickly respond to a crisis not just in their backyard, but around the country and the world."

[Read the report here.](#) COP, 11-9

#GivingTuesday November 30

Yes, it's just a few days away, and by this time you should have crafted your plan of attack for this growing in popularity, and results, international day of fundraising. Let's look at some statistics from 2020:

Key findings include:

- Giving in 2020 grew an estimated 5.2% year-over-year when compared to 2019.
- The sector experienced more donor mobility than ever before, with big gains in new donor acquisition largely offset by big drops in donor retention.
- The multi-year trend of fewer donors overall was reversed in 2020. A 1.3% top-line gain in donors was driven almost completely by an 11% growth in small donations between \$101 and \$500, the highest growth for this donor size in five years.
- Key giving moments in 2020 corresponded to upticks in COVID-19, pivotal events such as action for racial justice and election activity, and #GivingTuesdayNow, a day of unity and giving held as an emergency response to COVID-19 on May 5, 2020 and GivingTuesday (December 1, 2020) giving events. These moments were largely driven by many donors giving smaller amounts.

This should encourage you to work harder. Take last year's new donor and show them what an increased gift can do for your institution. Highlight a student or program. Be loud and be proud of the work you do.

The #GivingTuesday website [has a toolkit](#) that offers advice and resources to help pull your program together. It's not too late.

Crypto Donors Are Generous But Find it Difficult Giving to Charity

People who invest in cryptocurrencies were more likely than traditional investors to donate at least \$1,000 to charity in 2020, according to a new survey from Fidelity Charitable. But a significant proportion of cryptocurrency investors remain unsure how, or even if, they can donate digital currencies.

Key Findings

- 45% of those who owned cryptocurrencies donated \$1,000 or more to charities last year, compared with 33% of all investors.

- 34% of investors who own cryptocurrencies said they had donated them to nonprofits. Among those who hadn't, 30% said they were using cryptocurrency for investment purposes only. But 19% said they did not know they could give digital assets to charity, and 10% said it was "difficult" to find charities to accept cryptocurrency.
- Of those who had contributed cryptocurrencies, 46% said it was difficult to find charities that accept cryptocurrencies, while 44% said the process for donating crypto was cumbersome.
- 45% of respondents who owned cryptocurrency knew they could donate it to nonprofits. 30% said it's "probably" legal but didn't know for sure, and 23% said they did not know.
- Millennial investors were more likely than others to own cryptocurrency: One third reported owning cryptocurrency, compared with just 13% of all investors.
- Of the millennial investors who gave at least \$1,000 last year, 88% said charitable giving was "significant" in their lives, compared with only 71% for Generation X investors and 69% of Baby Boomers.

So far this year, Fidelity Charitable said it has seen the amount of cryptocurrency donated to its accounts increase to \$158 million, a nearly five-fold increase over \$28 million in cryptocurrency they received across all of 2020. The digital currencies still represent a small fraction of the more than \$10.7 billion in contributions Fidelity donors put into DAF accounts last year. *COP, 10-29*

We'd Like You to Know

Transforming Institutions

For more than 30 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the Atlanta nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, organizations that help make Atlanta a better place to live.

[Our Metro Atlanta Client Partners](#)

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