

# Museum Results

Your Monthly Resource for Philanthropic News  
from Alexander Haas

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TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

**First Things First**



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[www.fundraisingcounsel.com](http://www.fundraisingcounsel.com)



from the home-office desk of  
**Sandra K. Kidd** | Senior Partner

## Why It's Good to Talk About Planned Giving in the Pandemic

Recently, a long-time community fundraising volunteer asked me if it was okay to talk about planned giving in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. My answer? It is not only okay; it is a good thing to do.

In fact, fundraisers across the country are reporting an increased level of donor interest in planned giving this year, and many organizations are hearing from donors that they are making or revising their intentions to make charitable bequests. Some of the reasons are financially-driven; a stronger stock market has helped portfolios rebound and changes in the way we work may spur decisions about where to live or when to retire.

But what motivates gift planning is not only about economics, it is deeply personal as well. On one level, this is not surprising since the pandemic has touched so many lives. We have also had much time with our own thoughts since mid-March to reflect on what we value most.

In the spring, we advised our non-profit partners to call their donors and volunteers—simply to see how they were doing, and to let them know how the institution was coping. We have heard that these calls, made from home, have allowed fundraisers to connect in meaningful ways with their donors, learning more about their families and where the donors are in their own lives. And our professionals have had the chance to talk about their lives, as donors ask about their children, inquire about the health of parents, and are charmed by a child popping onto the video screen or a pet making a cameo appearance. The result is a new level of personal connections that, nurtured, will grow.

Often, fundraisers feel that they need formal training in order to talk about planned giving with donors. I have long advocated that anyone can start a conversation about planned giving, because planned giving is, at its core, simply about a person's

values.

Leaving a legacy through charitable giving is a powerful and enduring way to support the mission of organizations that matter most to us. So, yes, pick up the phone, set up the video call, or sit six feet apart—and have the talk about planned giving with your donors. It's always the right time to give someone the opportunity to act on what they believe and what they value.

**It starts with an email....**

and ends with 30 minutes of  
fundraising counsel\*

info@fundraisingcounsel.com

\*free time

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## We Think You Should Know

### The Billionaire Who's Now Broke....And Couldn't Be Happier

On September 14, 2020, **Chuck Feeney** completed his four-decade mission and signed the documents to shutter the **Atlantic Philanthropies**. The ceremony, which happened over Zoom, included video messages from Bill Gates and former California Gov. Jerry Brown. He had finally given away all his money to charity.

Over the last four decades, Feeney has donated more than \$8 billion to charities through his foundation. It is said, he estimated that he had set aside about \$2 million for his and his wife's retirement. In other words, he's given away 375,000% more money than his current net worth. And he gave it away anonymously, and went to great lengths to keep his gifts secret.

While remaining under the radar, he was nonetheless a great influence on other philanthropists. When talking to Forbes about Feeney, Bill Gates said, "he's been a huge influence on how Warren [Buffett] and I think about philanthropy."

"I see little reason to delay giving when so much good can be achieved through supporting worthwhile causes. Besides, it's a lot more fun to give while you live than give while you're dead," he said.

Read the article [here](#). *Forbes, 9-15*

The **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** launched an emergency grant program, the Art Museum Futures Fund, to support art museums, many of which face the possibility of permanent closure as a result of the

COVID-19 pandemic. Recipients this round include, among others, the **Asian Art Museum** (San Francisco), the **Brooklyn Museum** (NYC), the **McNay Art Museum** (San Antonio), **Pérez Art Museum Miami** (Miami), and the **Philbrook Museum of Art** (Tulsa). As part of a follow-up round of grantmaking this fall, the fund will award grants totaling up to \$3 million in support of small art museums, which in many cases have limited access to capital to pay for expenses associated with COVID-19, resiliency planning, and/or critical staff and infrastructure. *PND*, 9-21

**Nancy Dorman** and **Stanley Mazaroff** donated \$5 million to the **Baltimore Museum of Art** to establish a center dedicated to the presentation, study, and preservation of the museum's collection of prints, drawings, and photographs. *COP*, 9-18

**Brent R. Benjamin**, director of the **St. Louis Art Museum** for 20 years, announced he will retire next year. During his tenure, he led a \$160 million campaign to expand the museum. Currently, he is president of the **Association of Art Museum Directors**. *stltoday.com*, 9-14

The **Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta** awarded \$1.2 million through its *Metropolitan Atlanta Arts Fund* to support 28 arts organizations in the city that have been profoundly affected by the Covid-19 crisis. *COP*, 9-8

**Gail Harrity** announced she will depart the **Philadelphia Museum of Art** at the end of March 2021. She has worked at the museum since 1997, and has been president since 2009. *COP*, 9-11

**Gina Range**, vice president of external relations and development at the **African American Museum** in Philadelphia, has joined the August Wilson **African American Cultural Center** as vice president of institutional advancement. *COP*, 9-1

**Joseph Thompson**, who has led the **Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art** since its founding in 1988, plans to step down as director in October. He will remain with the organization as special counsel to the Board of Trustees. *COP*, 9-1

**William Arnett**, the founder and chairman of the **Souls Grown Deep Foundation** in Atlanta, died at age 81. He was a writer, editor, and art collector who spent more than 30 years promoting African American artists from the Deep South. Through his organization, he helped art museums add works by Black artists to their permanent collections and supported related exhibitions, education, public programs, and publications. *COP*, 9-1

**Adrienne Arsht** pledged \$5 million to the **Metropolitan Museum of Art** to back the museum's internship program and support its *MetLiveArts* performance series. The donation will ensure that all the museum's undergraduate and graduate internships will be fully paid. *COP*, 8-1

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Be realistic with your  
year-end appeal goal.  
It may be difficult to predict  
how donors will respond at  
the end of this unusual year.

Set your goal with  
realistic expectations.

**DAVID KING**

Alexander Haas



## News of Interest

### **Majority of Donors are Optimistic**

A nationwide survey of the giving intentions of donors across 44 states finds overall, U.S. donors appear to be optimistic about the economic recovery in the coming months, and more than a third surveyed reported their financial situation was better than last year.

#### **Key Findings**

- Nearly two-thirds expect the economy will rebound by the end of 2020 or by the middle of 2021 at

the latest. Nine percent say they don't expect the economy to recover to pre-pandemic levels for a very long time.

- Six out of 10 mid-level and major donors expected their giving to stay at the same level as last year, and that one in four respondents expected to increase their charitable gifts in the second half of 2020.
- One-in-six donors expected to give less, and fewer than one in 20 anticipated a substantial drop in their giving for the rest of the year.

More than 40% of major donors surveyed said they won't attend a big in-person gathering until there's a vaccine. About 80% of donors expressed a willingness to meet one-on-one with fundraisers, or attend a small event at their church or in someone's home, as long as social-distancing and other measures were in place. *Financial Advisor*, 8-3

### **However, Single Women Reduced Giving Early in Pandemic**

Single women were more likely than single men or couples to decrease their giving during the first two months of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nearly 40 percent of those women said they had done so because they were uncertain how the public health crisis would affect the economy — and by extension, their finances.

Only about 30 percent of single men and 32 percent of couples decreased their giving for that reason.

A new report, conducted in mid-May, tracks with other recent studies that show women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its negative effects on the economy. That is in contrast with the Great Recession, which had a bigger impact on men.

The study cited other reasons single women reduced their giving:

- A third did so because they were uncertain about the further spread of Covid-19, compared with 24 percent of single men.
- Nearly 32 percent did so due to reduced income because of social distancing and business shutdowns, compared with 23.4 percent of single men.
- More than 30 percent did so because of "reduced interaction with community," compared to 24 percent of single men.
- More than half of the people surveyed — 56 percent — said they engaged in some kind of charitable activity during the first couple of months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Read the report [here](#).

### **We Want You to Know**

#### **Transforming Institutions**

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

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