



Rachel
MUIR

HOW TO WRITE A WINNING FUNDRAISING APPEAL

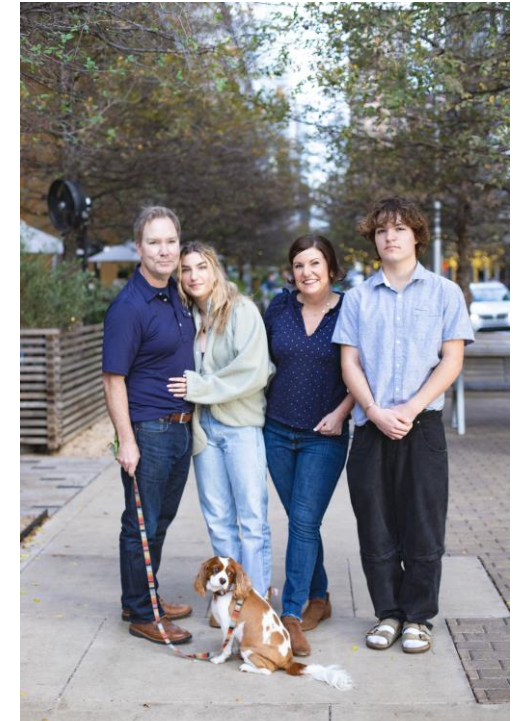
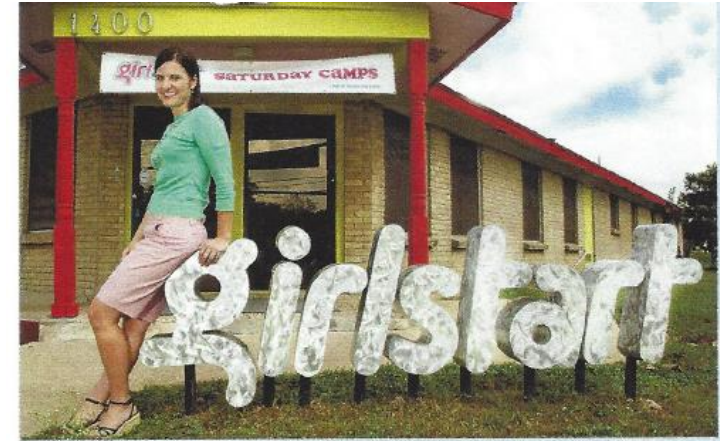
April 18, 2024 TEFN Bastrop, Texas



Rachel Muir, CFRE

- Founder: Girlstart
- Featured on: Oprah,
- CNN, the Today Show
- AFP Outstanding Fundraiser of the Year
- What Rachel does: custom training, board retreats, online classes
- Weaknesses: wine tastings, chips, queso

www.rachelmuir.com

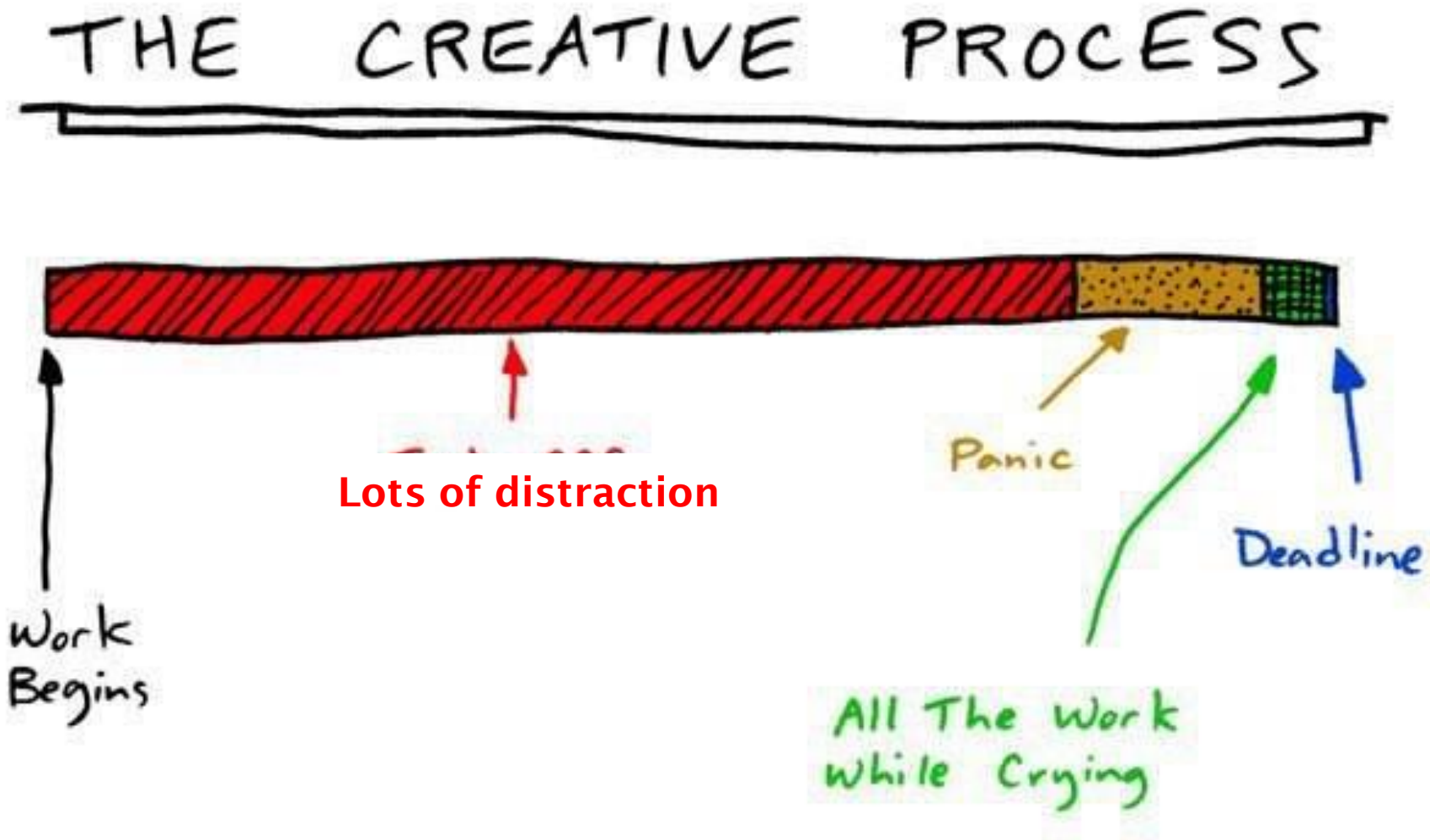


Slides -> RachelMuir.com/handouts

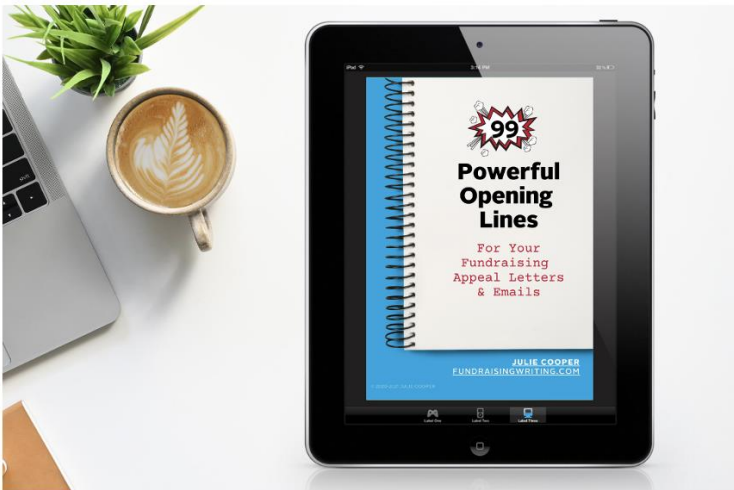


Write Better Fundraising Copy

Does writing an appeal feel like this?



Get this free newsletter -> fundraisingwriting.com



Arrives in your inbox once a week!

A collage of several fundraising writing newsletter emails is shown. The emails feature various headlines and images, including a cartoon bear, a photo of a man in a top hat, a photo of two women with a dog, and a blue jay. The newsletters are from "Fundraising Writing" by Julie Cooper.

FUNDRAISING WRITING NEWSLETTER

INSTEAD OF THIS...

Help us save a dog's life!

WRITE THIS...

Save a dog's life!



Scan the QR code for your appeal checklist

Problem

Solution

Your gift
will solve
it





THE #1 KILLER MISTAKE THAT TANKS

ANY APPEAL

Not having a strong offer

Tell the donor **WHAT** their gift will do

“Your \$100 will pay for a month’s worth of baby formula for a hungry orphan”

How the money will be used

What **OUTCOME** will result from the dollar amount you are requesting

A close-up of a hand raised in the foreground, with several other hands raised in the background, all against a green background. The text "Let's get to know you..." is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Let's get to know you...

How many emails
of your end of year
appeal do you
send?

- 1) Once
- 2) Once, but I resend to unopens
- 3) We send 3, w/diff subject lines over several days/weeks
- 4) We send 4
- 5) We send 5
- 6) We send 6
- 7) We send 7 or more



How much email?



“Most nonprofits think every donor receives every message we send. They don’t!”

Steven Screen, Better Fundraising



TACTICAL TIPS TO WIN THE FUNDRAISING JACKPOT

1

Tear Down the Great Wall of Text



1



Maximize readability

Want help? -> LeagueofExtraordinaryFundraisers.com



She woke up on her 45th birthday and couldn't walk. YOU can help.

Dear <FIRST NAME>,

When Susie woke up on her 45th birthday, she had forgotten how to walk.

Susie will never forget that day. Or the days that followed – a blur of confusion and fear.

First the family doctor. Then a neurologist. **When they took her to a private room to talk, Susie felt cold inside.** She knew: this is what it looks like when you get bad news.

What now?

Is my life essentially over?

How to boost readability

- **14 -15 point serif font**
- **1.5 line spacing**
- **Short sentences & paragraphs**
- **Simple syntax**
- **Strategic bolding & underlining**

Problem: Great wall of text



PROTECT THE FUTURE LEADERS OF UGANDA

Dear Musana Family,

What a year it has been! 2020 has not been the year anyone expected, but it has been a testament to God's provision. We are forever grateful for the amazing generosity of our friends and family who have given to our COVID-19 Relief and Rehabilitation Fund. Your ability to look outside your own borders during the COVID-19 pandemic, to Uganda, has helped save many lives!

Although schools and businesses have reopened around most of the world, 15 million Ugandan children have remained out of school, losing an entire academic year. This includes the 3,472 students who filled Musana campuses in the beginning of 2020. Fortunately, the government resumed schooling for graduating classes (Primary 7, Senior 4, and Senior 6) in October, which allowed Musana to welcome 291 students back. As we continue to provide psycho-social support to our returning students and listen to the challenges they experienced during the lockdown, we are committed more than ever to provide for those who are still away. **In 2021, it is vital that we safeguard our students' futures and open our doors back up to ALL 3,472 learners. In order to do so, we need YOU.** To abide by government mandates and protect our students and teachers from COVID-19, there is a lot to be done. **We need \$200,000 to secure the future of our children, like Phiona, by getting them back in school.**

Phiona is 16 years-old and has eight brothers and sisters. She comes from a town in Northern Uganda, where her father is a local pastor. Phiona is in Senior 4 at Musana Vocational High School where her favorite subjects are Chemistry and Mathematics. Not only is she the top of her class, but she is also the first girl in her family to go to high school. When school was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Phiona traveled back home to be with her family. She spent the long break helping around the house cooking, cleaning, working in the garden, and utilizing her tailoring skills. It was challenging to be away from school, but Phiona was grateful to have her family's support to finish her education, no matter what. When school openings were announced, Phiona was thrilled to reconnect with so many of her friends. Now, she cannot wait to graduate and become the first female in her family to get a high school diploma! →



ZULEYKA'S STORY

We are Elba and Yaffir Cuadrado, parents of four wonderful children, 3 on earth and 1 in heaven. Life was going great until the week of November 1st, 2017 when our nearly one-year-old daughter, Zuleyka, was rushed to the hospital with a 104° fever. Our journey began when the doctor told us she had leukemia.

Suddenly, we had so many nurses in and out of our room. Zuleyka was so helpless. She started what would be two years of chemo the very next morning. During treatment, her siblings showed her with hugs and kisses letting her know she was loved. Her older sister was even her bone marrow donor – twice. Sadly, on December 14, 2018, Zuleyka was called home. She passed away in my arms surrounded by her loving family. Losing her has been the hardest thing I have ever had to endure as a mother.

Zuleyka was called "the child with the golden smile." It didn't matter what she went through, she smiled through it all. Even on the worst days of treatment she could grin and gave out fist bumps. She was a ray of sunshine in our family and our world got a little dimmer when she left. After Zuleyka died, I struggled with depression, anxiety, and constant stress. Not only was I dealing with my feelings but how can I help my children grieve, especially my daughter who thought it was her fault because she was her donor.

Our social workers offered us the chance to go to Faith's Lodge. At first, I was mad! I didn't understand why I should go. I didn't want anyone's pity and certainly didn't want anyone asking me about my feelings. But after two years, I decided I was ready to meet other grieving parents. We requested and received financial assistance and we packed up the family. Immediately upon arrival, I felt at home. I felt like I didn't have to be so tough, and I could finally speak about my situation with other parents who would not judge me. I could finally open up about how hurt I was and the toll my daughter's passing had taken on me for so long. My children connected with other children and felt understood. Our whole family opened up about a lot of things – feelings that we had been keeping from each other. It was the answer to the question I didn't even know to ask. My hope is that other grieving parents have the opportunity to go to Faith's Lodge to heal and meet other parents so they know they are not alone—there are many more like us on the same journey.

~ Elba and Yaffir Cuadrado

The idea of reading this feels like a lot of work.

Don't do this

Kia ora Grace,

Can you see it? You wake to a chorus of tūī, kōkako, korimako. The garden is aflutter with native birdlife, seeking a morning brew of nectar or a tasty wētā snack. The kids are still asleep – they stayed up late to spot the kiwi wandering through their own backyard. This is not just a lovely vision. It's a future that needs us – that needs YOU. And it's why I ask: please will you be a Giving Leader by making a special gift today to establish a matching fund for Forest & Bird's predator-free work. We need to raise \$100,000 by 24 October to help inspire your like-minded, like-hearted peers (all of us 'birds of a feather'). You're a valued member of our Forest & Bird whānau. I know you share my love for the precious biodiversity that's unique to Aotearoa. You deeply appreciate wildlife and wild places – and not just for their scenic qualities.

**SO
HEAVY!**



At this moment, throughout New Zealand, introduced predators are decimating our native birds and other wildlife. In our forests, along our coastlines, by our mighty rivers, and up our mountains, nowhere is safe. We must confront this menace head on. They need us now. Grace, I'm only sending this letter to a select group of dedicated supporters. You are one of these remarkable people. In our recent Supporter Connection Survey, you expressed an interest in

See how approachable this appeal is now?

Kia ora Grace,

Can you see it?

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Do this

**Hit
"return"
twice
on the
keyboard!**

Vary line lengths,
too

See how approachable this appeal is now?

Do this

Kia ora Grace,

1

Can you see it?

4

You wake to a chorus of tūī, kōkako, korimako. The garden is aflutter with native birdlife, seeking a morning brew of nectar or a tasty wētā snack. The kids are still asleep – they stayed up late to spot the kiwi wandering through their own backyard.

1

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2

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2

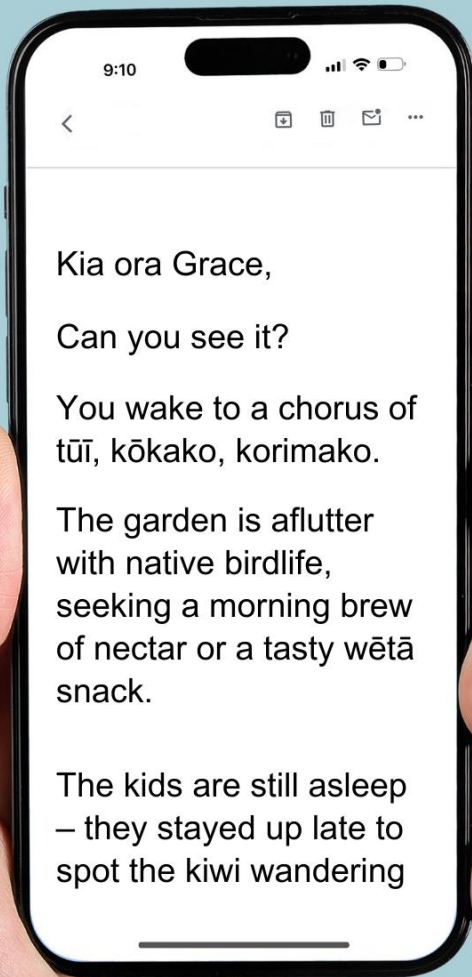
We need to raise \$100,000 by 24 October to help inspire your like-minded, like-hearted peers (all of us 'birds of a feather').

3

You're a valued member of our Forest & Bird whānau. I know you share my love for the precious biodiversity that's unique to Aotearoa. You deeply appreciate wildlife and wild places – and not just for their scenic qualities.

**Hit
"return"
twice
on the
keyboard!**

Do this



Preview all donor emails on your phone too!

(and adjust accordingly)

2

Don't Crowd Your Copy



In your donor communications...

Don't do this



*Make all elements smaller
to fit in a certain space.*

Do this instead



Make your design
accessible and
welcoming.

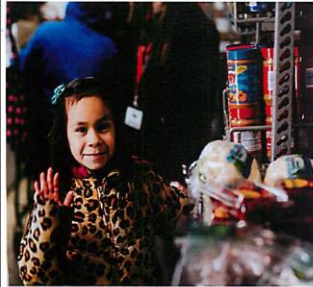


Dear Julie and Brett,

As today's fast-paced lifestyle seems to be highlighting our differences and pulling us apart, sometimes we wish we could just go back to simpler days. We reminisce about when we worked together to help each other through tough times—from parents taking a casserole to a sick neighbor to kids passing on clothes that they can't wear anymore.

In this ever—changing world, the value of community has never been clearer. We see firsthand the incredible impact that comes from standing together. Your support has been the cornerstone of this impact, turning our shared vision into a tangible reality. Each casserole delivered, item of clothing passed on, and hour of tutoring provided is a testament to what we can achieve when we unite for a common purpose.

As a supporter of the center, you know that these times are alive and well in the local area. Neighbors ARE helping neighbors every single day at the center. With amazing volunteers and generous donors like you, we were able to provide vital support to strengthen the lives of 27,166 neighbors last year.



**38,707 Full Grocery Carts | 10,021 Items of Clothing
912 Emergency Payments | 40,102 Books
692 Job Workshop Attendees | 680 Refurbished Computers**

With your ongoing help, we are able to make today brighter and make tomorrow brighter. You help make today better with Emergency Programs, including food pantry, clothes closet and emergency assistance. You help make tomorrow better with Empowerment Programs, such as literacy, computer and art classes. Our tagline truly does say it all—Neighbor to Neighbor. In 1955, we really did start with a group of people who wanted to help their neighbors who were hungry. They handed out bags of groceries through the basement window of a house in Whaston. Today, our guests walk through the food pantry and select their own shopping cart full of food.

Many of you have been donating your time and money for five, ten or even twenty years.

When given the chance, we all want to step up and make a difference in our community. Through donations of time and money, we can build a sense of pride and accomplishment for ourselves—and our families. By bringing people together across dynamics that could divide them, our organization strengthens the entire community in the process.

Every gift, no matter the size, weaves another thread into this tapestry of community support. Will you join us again in this vital mission? Your contribution today means we can keep the tradition of neighbor helping neighbor not just alive, but thriving. Together, we can continue to change lives and weave a stronger community for all of us. Your continued support is not just a donation; it's an investment in the fabric of our community, a stitch in the quilt that wraps our neighbors with the warmth of your kindness.

As I speak with neighbors like you, it's clear to see that this community cares deeply. Thank you for your past generosity—we appreciate all that you do! If you are able to continue your support, please complete the reply form and mail it back to us in the enclosed remittance envelope. If you'd like to rush us your gift so we can put it to work right away, visit our website and make your gift with your credit card. Please find it in your heart to renew your commitment to our neighbors in need.



In gratitude,

Jennifer Smith
Executive Director

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and compassion towards your neighbors this holiday season.

P.S. All donations stay right here in the county to help with food, clothing and shelter for our neighbors in need. Remember that the generosity of our community members like you is the cornerstone of hope for countless individuals and families. Let's keep the legacy of giving alive. Your donation is their lifeline, so please take a moment to make your gift right now.

Don't do this

Notice the . . .

☹ Small font size

☹ Block paragraphs

☹ Narrow margins

It's easier to read when you let your copy b r e a t h e

Do this



*No student should feel alone.
Support a teacher, support a future.*

July 13, 2023

Dear <Salutation>,

Were you “a good student”?

If so — you might be surprised by Reggie's story.

Imagine this is you: You're 17, a high school senior. Others want to be in school. You don't. It's painful. It's hard. It feels unnatural. It's just not you.

But you've got no choice in the matter. You feel trapped. You can't “escape yourself” either. It's a relentless treadmill. **You feel less-than. Judged. Alone. Scared.** You can see your future swooping in fast. And you don't feel ready.

This is where a good teacher can make all the difference.

Before I tell you about Reggie's story . . . I want you to know you can help.

Just \$45 can transform the life of a student like Reggie by investing in the exceptional training of their teacher. When you support MTR, your generosity creates a ripple effect. You help teachers help students help themselves. You positively impact more than 1,000 children and young people — the number of lives an average U.S. teacher inspires throughout their career.

Day 1:

Fresh out of Memphis Teacher Residency training, Mr. Connor Huie tackles his first day at Compass Midtown with gusto. He begins to make connections with his students. They dive into algebra. They banter a bit. But one student, Reggie, says almost nothing. Reggie might be a challenge.

Days 2-175:

Mr. Huie makes progress with his students. They're grasping concepts and their test scores are improving. They're opening up socially. Except for Reggie. He only stares off into the distance during lectures or smirks when greeted or replies to questions with one-word answers.

Mr. Huie charges ahead, faithfully applying what he's learned at MTR. **This teacher won't give up. Not on Reggie. Not on any student.**

over please →

MEMPHIS TEACHER RESIDENCY | 1350 CONCOURSE AVE STE. 366 | MEMPHIS, TN 38104 | 901-937-4687 | MEMPHISTR.ORG

You are one of MTR's best friends. So I'm hoping you'll come through again for Memphis students. How many eager minds can you help reach their full potential this school year? Please make a gift today.

Days 176-180:

It's the last week of school, and seniors get to leave for lunch. Mr. Huie expects to eat alone in his classroom and catch up on his grading. Imagine his surprise when Reggie appears and says, “Hey, Mr. Huie! It's my last week . . . are you going to miss me?”

Of course Mr. Huie said he would. And then he and Reggie talked. Real talk. All lunch long. This continued every day for that whole last week.

“Our talks together painted a rich tapestry of Reggie's life, dreams, and aspirations,” Mr. Huie joyfully reports. “What began as an unyielding silence transformed into a heartfelt bond, a testament to the power of persistence and faith.”

*** All students need good teachers. All teachers need good training.**

That was last school year. This next one's coming fast. The need is urgent. All students need good teachers who won't ever give up on them.

Will you please help a teacher get the good training they need? You can trust MTR to provide the kind of teacher training that focuses on the head, the heart, and the soul. Educational inequality is one of the greatest social justice and civil rights issues in America today. Won't you please be part of the solution?

Would you consider making a gift today to invest in the training of these teachers? **Every act of generosity creates a world where Christian love is tangible through equal education.** And I can't think of a better way to celebrate our commitment to nurturing a better community right here in Memphis.

For all Memphis students,

David Montague
Executive Director

P.S. Students are headed back to school soon! Grab this opportunity to stand up for equal education in Memphis by making a gift to MTR. Please complete the reply form enclosed and send it back today.

*P.P.S. You can speed up your gift so it reaches us even faster
when you give at memphistr.org/donate* 

 Readable
font size

 Paragraph
indents

 Wide
margins

3



Reversed Text

**Proceed with
Caution**

In your donor communications...

Don't do this



Light text on a dark background for
the body of your message ↩

But for people diagnosed with autism the abrupt changes in routine, inconsistent or eliminated support, and social isolation intensified the challenges associated with this disorder.

The world stopped in March 2020, but autism did not.

Do this instead



Make your body text
accessible.

4

Make the Most Crucial Copy Stand Out



Use emphasis to make the most important copy stand out...

bold

underline

italics

different color

Don't do this



Emphasize copy in your appeal that doesn't lead the donor to make a gift.

Do this instead



Assume donors will only read the copy that stands out. Emphasize the problem, solution, and the donor's forthcoming impact.



Dear Julie and Brett,

As today's fast-paced lifestyle seems to be highlighting our differences and pulling us apart, sometimes we wish we could just go back to simpler days. We reminisce about when we worked together to help each other through tough times—from parents taking a casserole to a sick neighbor to kids passing on clothes that they can't wear anymore.

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In gratitude,
Jennifer
Jennifer Smith
Executive Director

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and compassion towards your neighbors this holiday season.

P.S. All donations stay right here in the county to help with food, clothing and shelter for our neighbors in need. Remember that the generosity of our community members like you is the cornerstone of hope for countless individuals and families. Let's keep the legacy of giving alive. Your donation is their lifeline, so please take a moment to make your gift right now.

Don't do this

Notice the emphasized text in this letter:

1

38,707 Full Grocery Carts | 10,021 Items of Clothing
912 Emergency Payments | 40,102 Books **This is impact, not need**
692 Job Workshop Attendees | 680 Refurbished Computers



2

Many of you have been donating your time and money for five, ten or even twenty years.

Talking to everybody about nothing



3

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and compassion towards your neighbors this holiday season.

This is thanking, not asking



From the emphasized text alone, the donor doesn't know the problem ... or what the organization needs.



Dear Judy,

Poop. 🐾

Everybody does it. Dogs included. (No shame there.)

And sometimes it's not wise for us to simply hold our noses and flush the subject away. Sometimes we just really need to talk about poop. This is one of those times...

You see, collectively, you raised your voice in recent Friends of the Blue Hills surveys and focus groups. The results are in. Your biggest point of Blue Hills pride is that the park is a gem and a privilege. (Agree!)

And one of your biggest points of Blue Hills concern in 2022 is TRASH — especially dog waste.

As you know, dog waste left in the park doesn't just go away or act as a fertilizer. No, dog waste is TOXIC. The toxins get into the water supply, disrupt endangered species' habitats, and impose health risks for people and pets.

To keep your park healthy — we're pulling out all the stops to reduce dog waste pollution throughout the Blue Hills... by using a custom poop app (plus dog snouts and eagle eyes) for "poop targeting, mapping, and collection."

You are a good friend to the Blue Hills. [Will you please give today to keep the trails clean and safe for everyone — and protect the Blue Hills' delicate ecosystem?](#)

You'll be supporting innovation through participatory science that makes the park healthier... and so much more!

Your gift will be DOUBLED by matching funds (thanks to a group of generous donors) if you give right away. [Every dollar you give now will become \\$2 for the Blue Hills!](#)

I'll show you how it works:

- Your gift of \$50 will be doubled to \$100 by matching funds.
- If you can give \$75, that's \$150 to keep your trails clean and safe.
- And a gift of \$250 will turn into \$500 to collect data that powers strategy and action in order to protect the park's delicate ecosystem.

It works for any amount up to \$35,000. The deadline is December 31. So please give today.

DONATE NOW

"Participatory science?" you might ask. (Good question.)

Notice the emphasized text in this e-appeal:

1

As you know, dog waste left in the park doesn't just go away or act as a fertilizer. No, dog waste is TOXIC. The toxins get into the water supply, disrupt endangered species' habitats, and impose health risks for people and pets.

2

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3

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PROBLEM



**SOLUTION
& ASK**



IMPACT

The email
continues...

5

**Only Use
Photos That
Show a Need**



Don't do this

Does your organization do this?

Your copy describes the need.

Give urgently & help families stay warm!

But your photo shows the need met.



The message you are sending to donors:
“The charity already handled the problem. I’m not needed.”

Do this

Does your organization do this?

Your copy describes the need.

Give urgently & help families stay warm!

Your photo shows the need.



Care.org

The message you are sending to donors:

“I’m needed now!”

Emotionally detached



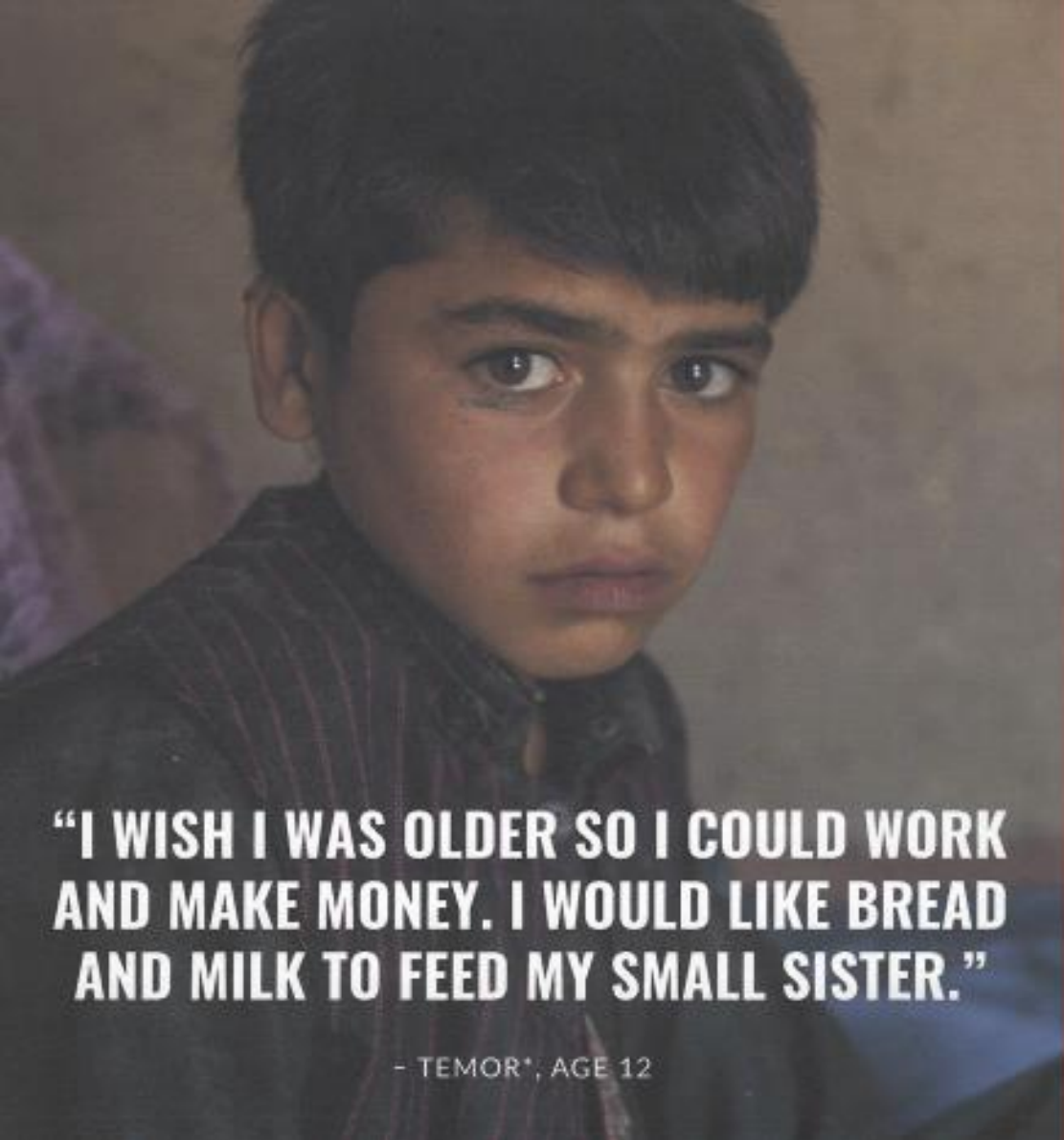
Don't do this

**3.5 MILLION
CHILDREN DIE
EACH YEAR
FROM ACUTE
MALNUTRITION.**

Take action.
Save a child.

Emotionally rich


Do this instead



“I WISH I WAS OLDER SO I COULD WORK AND MAKE MONEY. I WOULD LIKE BREAD AND MILK TO FEED MY SMALL SISTER.”

- TEMOR*, AGE 12

**GET
FED
UP**

 Save the Children.



Mailboxes are unforgiving places

Most people gladly and with satisfaction throw away most of their DM most of the time.

Here's the good news:

Understanding this = **empathy**.

It lets you switch your point ← of view
to → your reader's.

Ask yourself with each sentence:

Is this interesting? Compelling?

Does it boost a reader's good
feelings about themselves throughout?

Is the problem easy for her to solve?

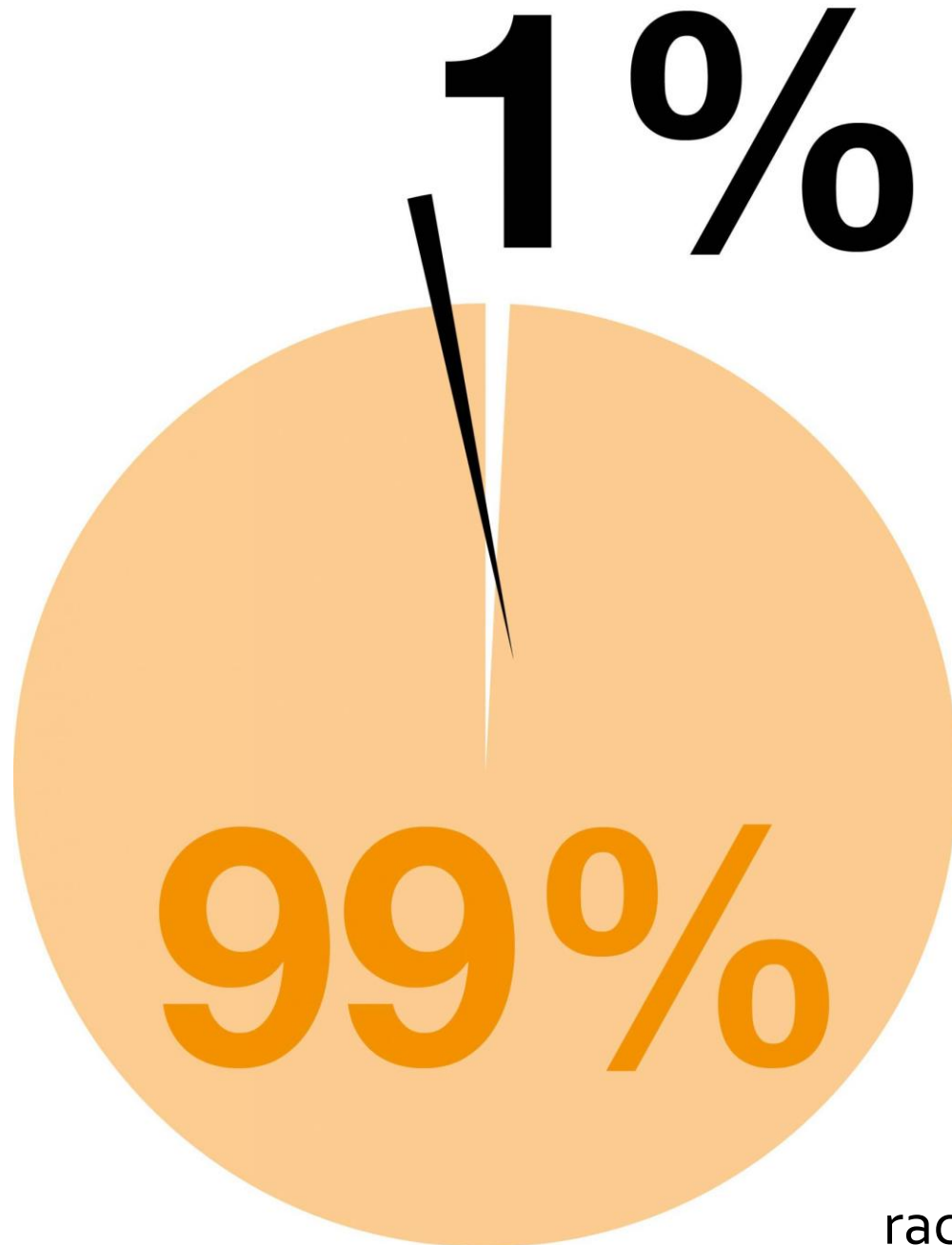


F

I AM BLIND
PLEASE HELP



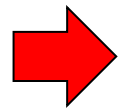
**Spend 99%
of time
connecting
with reader**



**Spend 1% of time
on your mission**

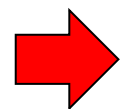
DO: Write to the human behind the giving.

I know you care deeply about babies like Kham.



The next orphaned cat or kitten needs you.
Someone who loves them.

Only someone like you – who believes in Gabe's potential to hear and talk -



All Max and his littermates lack is the compassion of
one person who can change everything: you.

“

It doesn't matter what you want to sell.
It only matters what they want to buy.

Ken Burnett, The Zen of Fundraising

“When you see...


A homeless person sitting on a park bench, or sleeping under a bridge, you wonder what you should do. That’s the kind of person you are.”

Jeff Brooks, [How to Turn Your Words into Money](#)



Hi, my name is _____. I may have talked about my org as the hero in the past.

Today I choose differently. Today I put my organizational ego in time out and the reader front and center.

An ornate oval mirror with a silver frame reflecting a bright, hazy landscape. The mirror is positioned on the left side of the image, and its reflection shows a bright, hazy landscape with a horizon line. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

**YOUR
COMMUNICATIONS
ARE A MIRROR
BEING HELD UP IN
FRONT OF YOUR
DONOR**

TOOL TO MAKE IT EASY



www.rachelmuir.com

rachel@rachelmuir.com

Optimize your written communications with this free Donor-Centricity and Readability Tool.

Paste your text below, and we'll analyze the reading level using the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (equivalent to the US grade level of education). We'll also analyze how donor-centric the content is.

Analyze

Best Practices

The "You" Test

Ideally, you should use twice as many "you" words as "we" words.

[Learn more](#)

Reading Level

The text should be between a 6th and 8th grade reading level and should be easy for most adults to read.

This is based on the Flesch-Kincaid

bloomerang.co/comms-audit-tool

Truth bomb



Emphasize what donors care about, not what your org cares about.

Fact: No donor is scanning your letter looking to hear how good your org is at its job

But they are looking for things they care about i.e. "I know you care about unicorns, and the local herd is in real trouble!"



**REPLY DEVICES RULE.
EVERYTHING ELSE DROOLS.**

Want help? -> LeagueofExtraordinaryFundraisers.com

URGENT HELP for AUSTIN'S FAMILIES

YES, Kelly! I want to help those trapped in abusive situations find hope and heal. Please accept my tax-deductible gift of:

\$20 when matched = \$40

\$25 when matched = \$50

\$40 when matched = \$80

Other amount \$_____ will be doubled!

Rachel Muir
4905 W Frances Pl.
Austin, TX 78731-5529

8367-A H10213JB



004866
P2

My check is enclosed made payable to
The SAFE Alliance.

I prefer to charge my gift (*please see reverse*).

I prefer to give through my donor-advised fund.

I would like to make a monthly sustaining gift
(*please see reverse*).

SAFE | stop abuse for
everyone

To give online, go to safeaustin.org/urgent

H1021

Reply device essentials: check box, heading w/call to action, pre-print donor name, 14 pt, necessary info only, use QR code and/or url

Grab your appeal checklist ->

RachelMuir.com/checklist



Have a CLEAR OFFER (Problem donor can solve)

Grab your appeal checklist ->

RachelMuir.com/checklist

Offer = Tells the donor what the money will do

Here's what YOU can do right now:

- **Your \$50 gift** provides a Pedaling with Parkinson's group class.
- **Your \$100 gift** provides a Dance for Parkinson's group class.
- **Your \$500 gift** provides *three* yoga classes for a Parkinson's group.

Movement therapy classes are SO important to every person living with Parkinson's. And **these are our most expensive and challenging programs to fund.**

We don't receive any federal or state help to meet these needs. Nor are we affiliated with any national group.

Only if YOU help can we bring Parkinson's-appropriate movement to every person who needs it in every corner of the Carolinas.

We ask you urgently: **Please make your special gift before the end of the year.**

You can get more young people serving NOW:

- **Your \$30 gift** buys supplies for one family volunteer activity with a local nonprofit.
- **Your \$120 gift** enrolls a child and their caregiver in the 5 week Little Helpers program for kids ages 3-5.
- **Your \$300 gift** hires and trains one Activity Leader – a professional who organizes service and ensures a rewarding, safe, fun experience.

Will you add more service events to our 2023 calendar?

I know how much you care about our kids, our families, and the most urgent needs of our community. Right now, you decide whether we can answer the call in 2023.

YOU can fuel the next generation of heart-led service. With profound ripple effects for years to come.

No offer? No reason to give

Which call to action works best?

1. "Please, make your year-end gift to Save the Penguins today."

2. Please, stand with penguins today.

3. Please, stand up for your values today.



Focusing on
process (instead of
outcomes)

No emotion

Everyone on the list
getting asked the
same amount

Costly appeal mistakes to avoid

Trying to educate
people into giving

A general ask but
no description of
what gift will do
(that's the offer)

That carrot is your subject line



Subject lines to steal right now

- Personalized: “Can we count on %firstname%?” “We can’t stop _____ without %firstname%” “How %firstname% can save lives”
- Flattery: “I love %firstname%” “A gift for %firstname%”
- Anger: “This can’t keep happening to _____”
- Urgency: “The last day to give” “We’re almost out of time” “24 hours to save the bees”
- Curiosity: “This doesn't happen often...” “How many lives can you save with \$50?”
“You won’t believe this...”
- Brevity: i.e. A single word i.e. “Panic”
- Scarcity: “Don’t miss out!”
- Direct Ask: “Can you help me out?” “_____ still needs your help” “Can we talk about X?” “How many kids will you save today?”

Email subject line tips

- Don't make it *all* about you
- Get inspired by other senders
- Don't end w/ a period
- Test -> www.SendCheckIt.com
- Use conversational tone
- Test A/B subject lines
- Pay attention to the preview text
- Personalize
- Ask yourself: would you open this?

Bookmark it:
SendCheckIt.com

Email Subject Line Tester

How can you stand out in the inbox? Get more opens?
Compare it to **100,000+** other emails sent by marketers like you.

I don't know who needs to hear this but..

Test Subject Now

“ I don't know who needs to hear this but..



99 Points

Very solid subject line that should perform well for you.



BEFORE / AFTER APPEAL MAKEOVERS

Homeless Shelter Appeal Before

✘ Before

Dear _____

You know that 2020 has been a year unlike any other, and with more challenges than ever before.

But when you begin the year in a homeless shelter, that's especially true.

Michele has always been a hard worker, and she has always provided for her children. Which is why when Michele and her daughters became homeless she was completely devastated.

"I felt like I had failed," Michele recalls. "My daughters' father left us, leaving me with all the rent, the utility bills—you name it. I was working two jobs, and it was still not enough to pay the bills." Michele tried everything to make ends meet. She even asked family for help, but no one could step up.

Before long, she fell behind on her rent. The landlord threatened her and then one day, she came home from work to find he had changed the locks—leaving her with nowhere to go.

Michele and her daughters had no choice but to move into a homeless shelter.

I'm writing to you today to share the story of how Michele is turning her life around through Bridge Communities. I also write to you to ask that you consider making a gift to Bridge Communities.

Why? Because you can give a home, safe from the COVID-19 pandemic, and desperately needed healing to Michele and her children.

"I was literally crying every night because I couldn't handle seeing the lives of other people at the shelter. They looked so comfortable there and I didn't want that for myself—I knew that wasn't me."

She had never felt more depressed or hopeless.

"Everywhere I went, I felt like there were so many people thinking, 'Ugh, there's that homeless girl, again.'"

But Michele's caseworker at the shelter saw that Michele had determination and grit.

"My caseworker saw how hard I was trying, that I didn't give up, and that I got up and went to work every day," Michele says. "I wasn't looking for a handout."

And just as the pandemic started, Bridge supporters like you gave Michele a hand up, and welcomed her family into the safety of a Bridge apartment.

✔ After



**Deadline: Midnight
December 31**



November 20, 2020

HOW MUCH IS "HOME" WORTH IN HARD TIMES?

Dear <<First Name>>

Can you imagine becoming a homeless mom in the middle of a pandemic?

That's what's happening to too many neighbors right here in DuPage County. 2020 has been devastating for so many. We must have the resources to answer this urgent need, now and into the new year.

I'm writing today to ask for your compassionate help:

Will you make a special year-end gift to give a homeless family hope and shelter of their own?

COVID-19 and an economic downturn have made times harder for everyone. For those who were already struggling, it now means real danger.

Michele is feeling the pain. She has always been a hard worker and has always provided for her children. Which is why she felt completely devastated when they lost everything.



Questions?



Scan the QR code for your appeal checklist

Email me Rachel@rachelmuir.com



Your End of Year Appeal Checklist

- ✓ Does it have a short, powerful opener?
- ✓ Is it conversational?
- ✓ Is it personalized?
- ✓ Is there a reason to give now or sense of urgency?
- ✓ Do you ask for a specific amount?
- ✓ Is there a clear offer? i.e. "Your \$100 gift will save chimpanzees from painful and lonely deaths"
- ✓ Are there at least 3 asks in the appeal, near the beginning, midway and in the P.S?
- ✓ Have you given yourself the *ahern audit*: to make sure you are writing at 6th - 8th grade reading level and are using twice as many "you" words as "we" words?
- ✓ Have you removed any jargon or acronyms?
- ✓ Is the same campaign theme/offer being used across all your channels (email, mail, social)?
- ✓ Does it make use of white space, underlines, bold, and indention to guide the reader?
- ✓ If you used a photo are the subjects looking straight at the camera? Does the photo have a caption? Does the photo reinforce your story or amplify the need?
- ✓ Is the font at least 14 points?
- ✓ Do you use make good use of the P.S. with another call to give?
- ✓ Does your sign off include a signature?
- ✓ Does the email come from an actual person with an actual email address?
- ✓ Do you have a winning mobile friendly subject line?
- ✓ Have you tested your appeal multiple times (and run it through a grammar check)?
- ✓ Is there a live signature in a different color ink in a letter or a scanned signature for email?
- ✓ Does storytelling use descriptive details and make the donor the hero?
- ✓ Are you prepared to properly thank your donors with email thank you autoresponders, letters, cards and calls?

Appeal checklist



ANATOMY OF AN APPEAL LETTER

Why did my baby have to die? ← *Consider a bold 18-24 point font headline at top*

First Name Last Name ← *Use a serif font 12 - 14 points*
1234 Any Street
Anytown, USA 12345

Dear First Name, (NEVER "dear friend") ← *Use a serif font 12 - 14 points*

Opening sentence "It's a terrible thing to outlive your child." ← *Indent paragraphs*

Your story
This should be an emotional story should be about one person or animal and use descriptive details. Ideally this story is about an unmet need and the donor's help is needed to solve the problem. Make the donor the hero of the story. *Write like you talk (keep it conversational)*

Your offer ← *"You" is your donor's love potion*
This is the #1 most important part of your appeal. Tell the donor what their money will do. i.e. "Your \$100 will pay for a month's worth of baby formula for a hungry orphan." Tell how the money will be used and the outcome that will result from the dollar amount you are requesting.

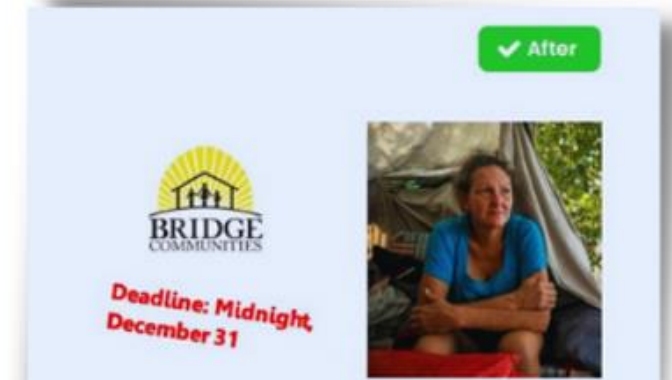
The ask
Convey urgency. If the donor doesn't respond to this will the need go unfulfilled? Tell your donor why their gift is needed now. Make the donor feel like this is a solvable problem. "But there is hope. And it's so incredibly simple. The solution is water. Clean, pure drinking water."

Reinforce the ask & Close
Thank the reader for their attention and reinforce your call to action. *Graphic enhancements work: underlining, bold, highlighting, bolding in the margin (Ideally you can make this look like a post-it note)*
"For all you do, please know that you have my deep heartfelt thanks."
"Every meal makes a difference and your monthly gift will feed hungry kids all year long"
"You are Billy's best hope of not going to bed homeless tonight"



Sign off
If this letter is coming from a person, it must use their name. Use a signature in blue ink. Use a closing that reinforces the offer if you can, i.e. "For the love of dogs"

P.S.
Reinforce your call to action. Add a deadline if you have one. "Just \$20 a month can feed one hungry child for a year"

Appeal templates



✓ After



Deadline: Midnight, December 31

November 20, 2020

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Michele is feeling the pain. She has always been a hard worker and has always provided for her children. Which is why she felt completely devastated when they lost everything.

Before/after appeal makeovers

A woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a bright green short-sleeved top and a gold necklace with a circular pendant, is sitting on a brown leather couch. She is looking slightly to her right with a pleasant expression. In front of her is a dark laptop. To her left is a colorful geometric patterned pillow, and to her right is a white pillow with the text 'GOOD VIBES' in bold black letters. The background wall has a light-colored, repeating fan-like pattern. A white speech bubble with a black outline is positioned above her head, containing the text 'THANK YOU!' in bold black capital letters.

THANK YOU!

Coaching, guides & templates ->
LeagueofExtraordinaryFundraisers.Com

“Start where you are.
Use what you have.
Do what you can.”
– Arthur Ashe



Want to work with Rachel?

**Epic
Fundraising
Examples**



April

**How to Find
New Donors**



May

**Makeover My
Board**



June

👉 LeagueOfExtraordinaryFundraisers.com 👉