

# The Lifetime Donor Attraction System

using  
**WOW**

experiences to create  
perpetual giving streams

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## Introduction

So, why does your organization need the *Lifetime Donor Attraction System*?

Well let's take a look at the statistics. According to donor retention expert Penelope Burk, *"90% of donors who start contributing to a particular cause stop giving by the fifth renewal request."*

And fundraising expert Adrian Sargeant has noted that *"Eight of 10 first-time donors do NOT make a second gift."*

You read that right.

### **Eight of 10 first-time donors do NOT make a second gift.**

Any marketer worth their weight knows that it's far less expensive to market to existing customers than to keep going after new ones. When you think about how your organization's thank you letter following your donor's first gift sets the stage for future gifts, you'll be putting an entirely different spin on composing it.

It's pretty simple really. Saying thank you well - and often - is the most effective fundraising tool you have for building sustainable individual funding!

Direct mail guru Mal Warwick has run his Phantom Donor tests in the past, sending out \$15, \$20 or \$25 gifts once or twice a year to a few of the country's top nonprofit organizations to study what comes back in return. When he was thanked, the typical response time was five to seven weeks. Recent "mystery shopping" tests conducted by marketers haven't shown much improvement. Usually the lack of promptness along with the lack of a thank you of any kind is cited.

Yet, in today's economy is merely sending a thank you letter -- and sending it promptly -- **all** it takes?

Stop to think about it for a minute. Why would you waste *a prime opportunity to engage your donor* on a letter that reads like this thank you letter to Granny written in typical nonprofit-speak?



## Granny's *Little Angels*

Dear Granny,

On behalf of my family and I, I wish to thank you for your generous gift of a pair of socks.

We rely on the generosity derived from birthday presents, Christmas presents, and other gifts from friends and relations which account for 85% of my clothing needs.

I am the only grandchild working towards getting a place at university which is the single greatest means of guaranteeing a future career.

Your thoughtfulness is very encouraging in my work in securing that prized university place

Yours sincerely,

Jack.

Funny, eh?

But really not so funny when you realize that this is how you've been thanking your organization's *friends*, is it? Because that's what someone who has made the decision to give \$10, \$20, \$250 to your organization *is* - **a friend** - and the sooner you learn to treat them as friends, the closer your organization will be to creating lifetime donors.

Why *lifetime donors*?

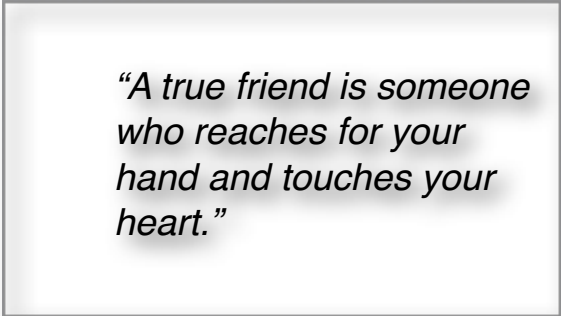
*Lifetime donors* will, in time, become major donors. Today's \$1,000 gift given by the CEO's friend (who disappears once the CEO is gone) has nothing on that loyal donor who has given \$50 a month every month for the past 10 years. *Lifetime donors* become monthly donors. *Lifetime donors* leave bequests. *Lifetime donors* tell their friends and family about the work your organization is doing.

Not convinced yet?

In his timely little book, [The Zen of Fundraising](#), UK fundraiser Ken Burnett tells the story of a postgraduate student who undertook some research into major donors' attitudes to bequest giving. The student identified meaningful long-time donors who had already made the decision to leave a legacy gift and sent them questionnaires.

One question that was asked of donors was whether they had notified the nonprofit of their choice that a bequest gift was coming. The answers were nearly universal. No. The reason why? As one donor wrote: **"May change mind."**

Let's get busy building lifetime donors!



*"A true friend is someone  
who reaches for your  
hand and touches your  
heart."*

It's time for a confession of my own.

I'd already been a terrific fundraiser with a fair number of successful campaigns under my belt for a number of years before I became enlightened to the importance of "knock your socks off" stewardship.

Oh, sure I got my thank you letters out - and you'd better believe they were prompt. But, the majority of my letters read much like our Granny thank you example.

Typical nonprofit jargon.

The kind of letter the reader glances at, reads midway into the first paragraph and tosses into their tax receipt file before finishing. Not the kind of response that you want is it?

Then I had the good fortune to attend a one-day Penelope Burk seminar.

If you're not familiar with Burk's work on donor attrition, you should be. Her book, *Donor Centered Fundraising*, is considered the landmark classic on how to hold onto your donors.

My already good thank you letters became great after reading Burk's book.

Still, it wasn't until I ran across the work of copywriter extraordinaire Lisa Sargent that I became downright rabid about crafting the perfect thank you letter. Lisa's [Thank You Letter Clinic](#), hosted by SOFII, the showcase of fundraising inspiration, is a wake-up call to all nonprofits. In it Lisa dissects the good and the bad of nonprofit thank you letters and shows you how to make yours better. Her prose sings with gratitude. Imagine the joy your own donors would feel receiving a thank you letter like Lisa's.

In 2010 I scheduled a call with Lisa for my readers on the importance of donor stewardship. If you missed it, be sure to read the report featured at the end of this book.



## Writing the perfect thank you letter

### The 10 components of an ideal thank you letter

1. Joy. You want, first and foremost, to make the reader - *the donor, your friend, your supporter* - experience a genuine sense of joy when they open your letter. Envision a tired, working mother arriving home early from the office after stopping by the sitter's to pick up her sick three-year-old. She's just listened to 50 minutes of the news on her commute home, all the while worrying about her daughter's fever and frustrated over the time it's taking her to reach her. Daughter falls asleep in the car on the way home and, after tucking her baby into bed, mom settles in with her mail, off her feet for the first time in hours. Bills, circulars and your thank you letter complete her pile. Your donor opens your envelope and reads ...

**You are creating miracles!**

**Every day, thanks to your support of blah blah blah organization, a lonely, homebound senior will receive the gift of food and friendship blah blah**

Suddenly your donor is a hero. She's making your work possible and you've let her know -- in no uncertain terms. Somehow her life seems a little less exhausting than it did 15 minutes ago.

2. Speed is of the essence. You must get your thank you letters out within the first 48 hours. When your dog has an accident on your living room rug, rubbing his nose in it two hours later isn't terribly effective, is it? What system can you put into place to ensure promptness? 30 minutes a day every day first thing in the morning thanking donors? What will work for your organization?
3. Personalize. Your thank you letter (or any letter coming from your organization for that matter and that includes emails) should be personalized. These days there is absolutely no excuse for the "Dear Friend" letter. No excuses.
4. You should reference the amount in the body of the letter. It's nice to include the date of the gift as well for tax receipt purposes.
5. Reference what the gift was towards. Was it an in memoriam gift? An annual appeal gift? A matching gift appeal?

6. Is the donor's past giving acknowledged? If a donor has given every year for the past seven years you'll want to be sure to let them know how much their continued support means to you.
7. Tax deductible language can be printed in an italic, 8 to 10 point font, centered, below the signature and PS.
8. Don't forget your PS. The PS can be used to drive donors to something new - a Facebook page or a new Twitter account. Perhaps a new blog on your site or your new enews.
9. Point the reader in the direction of a contact person in your offices. "If you have any questions or you'd like to stop by and tour our facilities, please call Mary Ann Development at 555.555.0055. "
10. Never, ever, ever ask for a second gift. Now I may change my mind on this one someday. But I highly doubt it. There are two schools of thought on whether an organization should have what's known as a "soft ask" in a donor thank you letter. You can read the debate, between two well respected fundraisers, [here](#). According to nearly every recent poll, women are increasingly taking the lead in philanthropic decisions. Put simply, women write the checks and are more finely attuned to good etiquette. It simply isn't good manners to include any ask within a thank you letter - and that includes including a business reply envelope. Your thank you letter's sole purpose should be to thank your donor. Period.

Now let's go, step by step, through the finer points of an exceptional thank you letter.



*"Poverty is the worst form of violence."*

-- Mohandas K. Gandhi

Quotations can work well in establishing a theme of a thank you letter.

Dear First Name:

Always personalized.

Thanks to you, Felicia will be the first in her family to graduate from college!

Powerful opening. YOU are helping to end a cycle of poverty!

This year she's graduating from Villanova University and busy creating a future she never dreamed possible. Felicia has applied to nine medical schools with plans on becoming a pediatrician. In 2002 when Felicia began the XYZ inner-city mentoring program, thoughts of becoming a doctor had never entered her head. Her parents had immigrated to the United States from Jamaica.

Overall information on what your gift is helping to accomplish.

\*Considering quality of your printer, photos can be used to create joy.

*"They've supported me in everything I've ever wanted to do," she says, "but they've never been to college."*

References donor's gift amount.

Your gift of \$35 has helped to buy the books, pay the teachers' stipends and grow our summer programming so that kids just like Felicia have a chance.

Let's donor know when to expect to hear from you.

We look forward to sharing the program's success with you in our quarterly newsletter.

In the meantime, if you'd like to schedule a visit to see, firsthand, the difference your gift is making, please contact Mary Development at 555.555.5555.

[fname], our sincere thanks for your support throughout the years.

Reference to donor loyalty.

Warmly,  
John Q. Boardmember, President

PS: XYZ has a new monthly enews. Keep up on Felicia and other kids your gifts are helping by subscribing today!

Drives donor to your new newsletter.

*Tax deductible language here.*

*\*Including a photograph within a thank you letter is optional and not for every group.*

### Who signs the thank you letter?

Typically your board chair or executive director or chief executive officer will personally sign the thank you letter. Simple handwritten notes in the margin or on a colorful sticky note, such as “*Thanks again, Janice! Your support means so much*” are a welcomed addition.

### A word about online gifts

Have you ever walked through your own organization's online giving? Try it. I guarantee you it will be an eye-opening experience.

Think about every step in the donation process. Here's your opportunity to shine!

Where do donors land once they've made a gift?

How can you emulate this wonderful redirect landing page from Best Friends Animal Sanctuary following a gift?

*Thank you so much for your donation of \$25.00 to help the animals!  
Your gift brings new life and new hope to a once-sad little face. And you're also helping to spread the message of Best Friends - that kindness to animals builds a better world for all of us. - option to print receipt on landing page*

Short, sweet, gives a wonderful visual (“once-sad little face”).

The follow up email reads:

*Dear Pamela Grow;*

*Thank you so much for your generous gift and for supporting the mission of Best Friends Animal Society.*

*There are no fewer than 1,700 animals from all over the country at the sanctuary on any given day; most of them are in need of special attention. Your gift of \$25.00 helps make sure we can give them the best care possible.*

*Of course, the work of Best Friends reaches far beyond the sanctuary itself. Best Friends works with communities across the nation to set up No More Homeless Pets programs that will soon bring an end to the killing of abandoned animals in shelters. Check with your local animal shelter to see how you can help further the mission of Best Friends in your own community.*

*Kindness to animals makes a better world for all of us. So thank you once again for caring, and may all good things be yours in return for your kindness.*

*As a thank you for your generosity, you will receive an annual subscription to Best Friends magazine to keep you informed on the good news about animals.*

*Thank you for making it all possible.*

Wow!

While your online giving may constitute a small portion of your overall giving, that won't always be the case. Work now to ensure that your organization's growth in online giving is seamless.

## **‘Wow’ em**

Online retailer Zappos' family core value #1 is: *Deliver WOW Through Service*. And do they ever! If you've ever ordered from Zappos no doubt you've been astounded at their free shipping, their low prices, their exemplary customer service and attention to detail.

Is delivering ‘WOW’ donor service a number one priority with your organization? It should be.

Aside from exemplary stewardship, what are other simple ways that you can WOW your donors?

1. One very simple habit that you can implement into your day today is something I picked up years ago via change agent Hildy Gottlieb. Hildy penned a marvelous little article called [The Sound a Thank You Makes](#). Reading that article made a profound difference in how I approached fundraising and I've made it a point in every fundraising job I've had since reading Hildy's article to schedule 30 minutes into every day to simply pick up the phone and call a few donors.
2. Regularly question your donors. Find out what it is about your organization that they like? What would they like to see more of? Surveying donors [does not have to be a complex process](#).
3. Send them gifts. I can hear you now. "What? Are you crazy? We don't have the funds to send donors gifts!" I'm not talking about anything expensive. I'm talking about going out on a limb doing something fun and WOW-inducing and bold. Something [like this](#).
4. Do you have a limited mailing list? Ask advice of the donors that you do have. Send them packets of information on your agency's work and ask them to pass them along to friends, family or neighbors who might share their interest.
5. Get your board involved, either in calling donors or in writing personal thank you notes. Several of my clients regularly distributes note cards, along with the names, suggested scripts and gift amounts of one or two donors and schedules a small thanking party during board meetings.
6. Welcome kits play an excellent role in educating your new donors to your organization. Typically your welcome package would go beyond a mere thank you letter to include items such as photographs, surveys, a benefits brochure, even a small gift such as a bookmark. Send them in an oversized envelope marked with a bold "Welcome!"
7. Instead of the usual annual report, think about creating a [Gratitude Report](#) like the one Agents for Good developed for their client.
8. Can your clients thank your donors in special ways? [Check out](#) the very special (and much appreciated) way that Sunday Friends is thanking donors.

9. What additional opportunities do you have to WOW your donors? Get creative! Think of different holidays when you could send out a simple card. I like to shower donors with love on Valentine's Day. Sending out a thank you card the week of Thanksgiving creates more of an impact than a Christmas/Hanukkah card because it's unexpected (but oh so appropriate). And don't forget **birthdays**.

I worked for the State of Michigan's House of Representatives for a number of years. One state representative, who shall remain nameless, was such a holy terror that she had long ago given up on hiring an actual staff member and used a temp agency instead. She was heartily disliked by staff and colleagues alike, but beloved by her constituents (she never was voted out of office and served until her retirement). Why? She made it a point to obtain her constituents' birth dates and send out birthday cards to each and every one of them.

Don't have the technology or resources to implement this? Facebook to the rescue! Use the Facebook friends' birthday reminder and spend all of five minutes every morning wishing your organization's friends a Happy Birthday.

### Using social media for stewardship

Yes, you can! Stewarding your donors should play a regular role in your organization's social media.

As Tim Bete notes in his [exceptional presentation on social media](#), "What would happen if you thanked one donor every day for the next year?" Create quick YouTube thank yous! (I recommend that every nonprofit organization own a flip-cam.) You can also thank your donors publicly on both Twitter and Facebook.\

## **Creating Your Stewardship System**

By creating actual systems for thanking your donors, you've taken a proactive step towards nurturing and retaining your organization's donors - a step that will pay off big-time in the long-run!

Whether you're a new organization and you've yet to receive an in-memoriam gift or a foundation grant or even an online donation, you'll want to begin now creating letters for every eventuality. Using a binder for your organization's thank you letters is my favorite method of staying organized. Review your thank you letters

on a quarterly (or at bare minimum twice yearly) basis and update them with your latest accomplishments.

### A Checklist for Stewardship

- ☐ Is your thank you letter mailed within 48 hours of receipt of gift? What procedures can you put into place to make it so?
- ☐ Are you calling donors on a regular basis?
- ☐ Are you showering your donors with joy?
- ☐ Did you reference the gift amount in the body of the letter?
- ☐ Did you use the word “you” more often than not?
- ☐ If they’re a new donor, did you welcome them to your organization’s family?
- ☐ Is your letter personalized?
- ☐ Did you let the donor know when they should expect to hear from you?
- ☐ Did you say thank you more than once?
- ☐ Is your thank you letter hand-signed?
- ☐ Did you include the contact information for a key staff person?
- ☐ Did you include a PS?
- ☐ Are you making it a practice to regularly map out the donor’s experience when they make a gift to your organization?

## Questions, I've got questions!

One of my readers recently wrote in: *“Pamela, I recently accepted a new development director job. The former DD left things in a bit of a mess and I just found a good handful of 35 or so annual appeal envelopes. The checks were deposited but according to our database these gifts were never acknowledged. They came in over nine weeks ago. What should I do? - Lauren G.”*

Lauren, been there, done that and my advice is to look upon this as an opportunity! Draft a heartfelt thank you letter explaining the situation (without laying blame), keep it upbeat and positive, include your contact information and send it out today. Give it another three to five days for the mail to arrive and then pick up the phone and call. Don't apologize to death but do let them know that you appreciate their gift - and it won't happen again.

\*\*\*\*\*

Another reader wrote: *“Pam, I'm the development associate for larger nonprofit and stewardship is a major part of my job. I know the importance of the promptness of a thank you letter but getting my organization's CEO to sign the letters is almost impossible. I sign the majority of the letters with her name but she wants to personally sign for every gift over \$100. Pam, sometimes those letters sit on her desk for over a week, unsigned. There have been numerous times I've had to re-date and re-print all the letters! What do you recommend? - Angela A.”*

Angela, you could handle this situation in a few different ways. I'm assuming that you're getting the thank you's out promptly for all gifts under \$100. I'm also assuming that you've spoken to your CEO about the importance of promptness in donor stewardship. You could make it a point to personally call or email every donor making a gift of \$100 or more within the first 48 hours. Another suggestion would be to draft a new stewardship plan whereby the CEO personally signs letters to donors who have given in excess of \$250. It would reduce the amount of letters sitting on her desk (you would still be tasked with the phone calling). Sometimes you do have to work around situations.

\*\*\*\*\*



*“Dear Pamela: My organization recently began a monthly giving program. Do we need to send out a thank you letter every month to these new donors? - Sandy K.”*

Kudos to you, Sandy, for making the wise decision to implement monthly giving! No, you do not need to send out a thank you letter to your new monthly donors every month. You do, however, need to recognize the impact that they’re making with their monthly gift -- in a very special way. Devise a unique welcome package for your monthly donors. Put it on your schedule to call them two to three times a year and thank them. How else can you express your appreciation? Treat them like the friends they are.

More advice? I asked donor retention expert and copywriter Lisa Sargent for her advice on stewarding monthly donors and here is what she said:

Some "best practices" I'd recommend based on direct experience and personal research:

1.) Don't stop communicating (read as: asking). When donors commit to monthly giving, they somehow enter a kind of donor communications wasteland (at one organization I know of, they actually were taken off ALL mailing lists, for fear that if a stray Ask crept in, mutiny would follow... when in fact, the opposite is true: relevant, regular well-crafted asks have been shown to increase engagement).

To steward sustainers, you can and should keep sending appeals (easy to modify and acknowledge their regular giving status) -- at one organization, they would simply have me remove the hard Asks, add a very soft Ask with no amounts, and add several thank-yous for donors' steady support. It worked well.

Another way to look at Asks: let's say I'm a monthly giver, and your organization has an emergency. As one of your most committed supporters, I'd welcome a chance to help out, but if you don't give me that chance, you won't get the gift. Kapish?

You should also offer the chance to upgrade monthly giving amount...and don't forget bequest appeals!

2.) Send them special versions of your regular communications. One of my clients encloses a one-sheet note from the president especially for monthlies and majors

along with the quarterly newsletter. Of course, it's labeled as such: President's Report for Major Donors and Name-of-Giving Club of CharityName. The letter shares "inside" info -- including stuff like how the builder walked off the job of a capital campaign project leading to a delay, etc. -- and it also says thank you. A lot.

3.) Periodically offer them special opportunities: events, guided tours, president's breakfasts, mentoring opportunities etc. And make it very clear that this is an exclusive event. I've done this with more than one client.

4.) Send special thank yous. One of my past clients had published a number of great coffee table books. They would send surplus editions as thank yous to loyal/recurring/major donors during the holidays.

5.) Remember to have in place routine communications like renewals, cancellations, tax summaries, etc. Good donor stewardship means following up with a sustainer if their credit card expires, or they suspend payment. Maybe, for example, they'd simply prefer to take 1 or 2 months off each year instead of canceling altogether -- but if you have no follow-up in place, you'll never know.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Recommended Books

[Donor Centered Fundraising](#), Penelope Burk  
[Seeing Through a Donor's Eyes](#), Tom Ahern

### Recommended Resources

[The SOFII Showcase](#)  
[Lisa Sargent's Thank You Letter Showcase](#)





### **Donor Bill of Rights**

*The Donor Bill of Rights was created by the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel (AAFRC), Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). It has been endorsed by numerous organizations.*

Philanthropy is based on voluntary action for the common good. It is a tradition of giving and sharing that is primary to the quality of life. To ensure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in the nonprofit organizations and causes they are asked to support, we declare that all donors have these rights:

- I. To be informed of the organization's mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.
- II. To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.
- III. To have access to the organization's most recent financial statements.
- IV. To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.
- V. To receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.
- VI. To be assured that information about their donation is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.
- VII. To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.
- VIII. To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organization or hired solicitors.
- IX. To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share.
- X. To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.

January, 2010

# The Creating Lifetime Donors Report

How, no matter what your organization's size or budget, you can  
create loyal donors





**Does your organization have a formalized stewardship system in place?**  
**Most organizations put the majority of their effort into *obtaining* new donors**  
**- when they need to focus just as much on donor retention.**

**Following is a direct transcript of a call recorded on October 7, 2009 with Lisa Sargent from Lisa Sargent Communications.**

**Learn how your organization can develop its own stewardship system to keep your donors engaged – and turn them into lifetime donors!**

**Pam:** Hi everyone and welcome. It's Pamela Grow from SimpleDevelopmentSystems.com and I'm so glad to have you here.

Our topic today is something that everyone in nonprofit development can use; **learning how to write effective thank you letters.** I was really rather surprised in my recent survey, *Fundraising in a Tight Economy*, that almost 60% of you spoke to wanting to learn more about how to create an effective donor stewardship system.

But you know it just makes good sense. You work hard to attract donors, you need to work just as hard to keep them. And that is why I'm so excited to have with us today, Lisa Sargent of *Lisa Sargent Communications*. Lisa is a copywriter and creative consultant who specializes in donor fundraising and development communication. She has helped great non-profits all over the world and she specializes in donor thank you letters that are so inspiring that delighted donors have actually written their own thanks in return. Welcome, Lisa.

**Lisa:** Thank you very much, Pam. And thank you for giving me a chance to talk with your listeners about a subject near and dear to my heart, which is donor loyalty.

**Pam:** Lisa how does not having a comprehensive donor stewardship system in place really hurt an organization? What are the latest statistics on donor attrition rates?

**Lisa:** Well one quick thing I should mention before we start is that I'll send along a reference sheet to you so that your callers don't need to frantically jot

down any names or resources that I mentioned so that they can revisit the links or books that I mention when it's convenient for them. (following)

In terms of what happens when there isn't a comprehensive stewardship system in place - that's a tongue twister for both of us - you could really sum it up in just three words, **disillusioned donors leave**. And what they do, of course is they then take their future gifts with them. But really when you said you used the phrase *comprehensive donor stewardship* that's terrific. Really it is about **comprehensive donor stewardship**. The donor numbers they tend to suffer in degrees really when any of three stewardship areas are lacking; **quality**, of course, meaning that you are creative as you talked about, have to be professional and persuasive but also in terms of **completeness** and **consistency**. And what I mean by that is donor stewardship typically among a lot of non-profits they seem to think that its a function that is just reserved for their major or their mega donors. And so by doing that they only look at part of the puzzle. But when you get right down to it stewardship is really about treating your donors right so that you build lifelong relationships with them and that **has got to transcend giving levels**. Over the long-term it is really clear when you look at only the mega-givers are focused on you can look at legacy data is something that I would like to share with you. Something like **90% of all legacy gifts to charities in the United States were made by simple bequests** meaning of course that it was left in someone's will, it's not a fancy annuity or anything like that. Here's the kicker: the average amount was \$35,000. That is pretty sizable. **And they typically come from people who never gave more than \$100 gifts over the years**. Not your major or mega-donors just people who gave consistently. So long-term effect of good donor stewardship would be culminating, and of course the legacy gift.

Now for other non-profit space say well what about the short-term? Long-term that's 20 years from now. And that is where those donor attrition statistics that you asked about come into play so handily and I'll share a couple with you. Your callers, many of your callers have probably heard that on average, for every six new donors they acquire five of their existing donors will leave. But the fall out from poor donor stewardship goes deeper. There is a study called The Fundraising Effectiveness Project, it is still ongoing, sponsored by The Urban Institute and the AFP, Association of Fundraising Professionals, they found in 2008, that **for every \$6.00 raised more than \$6.00 was lost due to donor attrition**.

**Pam:** Really?

**Lisa:** So non-profits are acquiring new donors, but in acquiring new donors any gains that they would get are nearly obliterated due to the losses in both lapsed new donors and lapsed repeat donors. So I have one more one more bit of benchmarking statistics for you; there is a survey called The Target Analytics Survey and they polled a lot of bigger organizations. They confirmed The Fundraising Effectiveness Project's results. Nearly eight in 10 of the non-profits in their survey saw their biggest decreases in first year donor retention. So the bottom line is what you said, obviously you have to continue to acquire new donors but, *recession or no recession*, once you get them it is **much more cost effective to keep the ones you've got** and it is the only way really that you will ever grow your organization.

**Pam:** Exactly. I notice a lot of the work you do actually involves auditing organization's donor acknowledgment systems, but the organizations that I tend to work with and many of my subscribers tend to be smaller organizations and oftentimes they don't even have an acknowledgment system in place. Their thinking seems to be that when a gift comes in they send out a thank you letter. But when things get hectic a lot of times that's the first thing that falls through the cracks. What are the questions that you recommend asking of an organization just starting to implement a formalized donor acknowledgment system?

**Lisa:** Well I think there is a couple parts to that question. When you talk about smaller organizations one of the first things that I would do is if I was at one of those organizations would be to look to your volunteers.

If your resources are really, really short that's when you need to get creative. In many instances, you've got a decent volunteer pool within your community - people who are just dying to help out. And that can go all the way down to, say having volunteers - even your staff - handwrite thank you notes. That is actually done with huge success at Stanford University and I'll give you a link to that.

They give out templates to their students and the students send thank you letters out themselves. So volunteers could do that for you. You could find college kids or retired people who are tech savvy to get spreadsheets up and running and then when your organization grows, if its on Excel its pretty easy to import that data.

But backing up in a minute and talking about questions that I would ask someone just starting the donor acknowledgement system would be, to coin a little bit of Jim Collins' phrases in the great best seller, Good to Great, he says first who then

what. So when you start with the who part of that equation in a donor acknowledgement system you need to look at your staff first, **who is going to claim ownership of that acknowledgement program and then follow that through and say okay if they claim ownership who is responsible for helping this person so someone needs to oversee it.**

Someone needs to track the gifts and the donors who give the gifts. Someone needs to write the letters whether you outsource it or you have somebody do it in house. Now if someone does that then you need at least one other person to edit and proof that stuff because it is always good to have a second set of eyes.

Now, another point you want to consider is donor longevity. How long have your donors been giving and if you don't know how long they have been giving can you find that out and back into that info because **at some point you should absolutely be recognizing longevity, it is huge.**

**Pam:** Oh, absolutely.

**Lisa:** You could also think about things like where they come from and that would be just for tracking demographic of psychographic for your creative people. Then the second part of course is the what and the what would mean gifts. You could start by looking at what gifts you have coming in, any appeals or activities that you have that generate those gifts and as well as the type of gifts like are any of them major gifts, memorial, sponsorship, that type of thing, golf tournaments.

So first look at who can handle the function, look at the donors and look at the thank you or the gifts you have coming in and then you can say okay well these are the lists of thank you letters that we are going to need to get the thanking done.

**Pam:** Awesome. You know this next questions is really a personal situation that I had years ago. You recommend sending an acknowledgement letter within **48 hours** of receiving the donation and I've always been a big believer in that. But what if you are a development director with, let's say a "challenging" executive director? And we are talking about someone who has really good intentions, and they want to personally sign every letter acknowledging any gift over \$250. Great intentions, but you cannot pin that ED down on a regular basis for the life of you and a lot of times because of it you are finding that your letters are going out two, three even four weeks later. Typically what I did in that situation would be to either pick up the phone and call, or send

an email - but I'm wondering what your recommendations for a situation like that would be?

**Lisa:** Well, and I'll list this reference for you as well, if you read Penelope Burke's book, it's fabulous, Donor Centered Fundraising, she actually talks about that how you know, she says, "What is wrong with picking up the phone and calling to say thank you?" Because it really does have big impact. So you did a good thing. But in terms of getting somebody down to try and sign the letter, it's a pretty loaded question. I do have a couple of suggestions though and it's hard because I do sit squarely in the donor centered fundraiser side of camp and I always recommend to all my clients that thank yous come from the top, the President and the Executive Director really should be signing the thank you letters.

Let's say he or she is really swamped you could split up the thank you signing among say the board members or other executive level managers and maybe have the executive director sign at \$500 and up.

Now, the other thing you could try if you could it might be just a matter of saying look, once a week we'll sit together. I'm going to come into your office and I'm not going to leave until it's done. I will buy you a cup of coffee or quantify it for them. Say it's 25 or 30 signatures a week or and if they are a numbers person I will give you a little bit of fuel for your argument. Again, I would say go to Penelope Burke's, Donor Centered Fundraising and specifically chapters five and six where she discusses it from a donor's point of view, her research she surveys just tons of donors about how they felt about being thanked or not being thanked various issues of fundraising. And what happens is that 39% of the donors in her survey, so that's **less than four in ten**, said that they always receive a thank you letter after donating. And it makes a difference to them, a lot of them won't give again. So you can back that up your little argument of getting him to sign the thank you letters by saying look, they are not going to give again and then you are going to face bigger problems down the road.

There is also another good book, Tom Ahern wrote a book called Keep Your Donors. And chapter 14 of that book has a lot to talk about with thank you letters. Actually anything Tom Ahern writes including his e-letter is good.

**Pam:** Oh that's funny. I actually just bought that.

**Lisa:** Oh, it's a great one.

**Pam:** On Amazon. Yes, I have been a subscriber to Tom's e-letter for ages and I love it. I love his before and afters. Really awesome stuff.

**Lisa:** Yea.

**Pam:** Okey doke. My next question is you recommend starting the letter off with something other than the standard *thank you for your gift of...* What are some examples of some exciting leads? I took the one-day Penelope Burke seminar and she recommended starting off with a quote. And my Twitter followers know that I'm a huge quote fan, so that was a no-brainer for me. What are some examples of exciting leads?

**Lisa:** Oh, wow. Her book is great. She actually has a couple of really good ones in her donor centered fundraising book. The only thing I would say about leads is that hands down the very best leads I ever read or wrote are super-specific to both the appeal and to the work of the charity. So its really hard to just rattle off three or four boiler plate leads that will work for anyone's non-profit. Because then they tend to really sound like boiler plate leads.

**Pam:** Exactly. I know what you mean.

**Lisa:** And I think that is a lot of the problem with thank you letters these days. But I do have a really good resource for you and its off the reference sheet and its a great resource not only for thank you letter leads but also for your callers and listeners to see before-and-after versions of entire thank you letter rewrites from non-profits all over the world. I have to give you full disclosure because this is my copy writing clinic that I hosted for Ken Burnett over at the website [Sofii](#) You know about Sofii right? It's the showcase of fundraising innovation and inspiration I think, I always get the last two confused. Anyway, with or without my thank you letter clinic it is a fabulous resource for fundraisers and all of your callers I would urge them all to sign up.

**Pam:** Oh I think Sofii is the best.

**Lisa:** Do you? I do too. They just have so many examples, it's like a swipe file online. It just sits there. Its wonderful.

**Pam:** Exactly. And I'm glad you mentioned the swipe file thing. Do you have them? Because I think that so many folks in the non-profit field they have

never even heard of a swipe file. And when I first started out in non-profit development I actually didn't have the time to hook up with AFP or take any of the traditional coursework and I just started out reading a lot of marketing books and I'd also worked in advertising sales. And I really built up nice swipe files in every job I've ever had, for every client I've ever had. And you're right, Sofii is just an awesome resource.

**Lisa:** And swipe files are actually good for all the non-profits. What they can do a really simple way to get started would be to at the very least start with non-profit organizations within their vertical sectors. So animal welfare or international relief, that kind of thing. And they would start by just giving some donations to the competition basically, \$25 here or there. And then you just see what comes in the mail. What are they sending? What does it look like? It's super helpful. And it actually, in a lot of ways I think that your smaller non-profit clients would be really surprised to see, encouraged I guess, to see that they could do as well or better.

**Pam:** Absolutely.

**Lisa:** And Sofii is actually a great place to go because Ken Burnett and all the great people at Sofii they work with all kinds of renowned fundraisers from all over the world. Like you had mentioned Mel Warwick, George Smith who is a fundraiser over in England, he has some stuff on there. It is just wonderful. But in terms of the thank you letter clinic that we did we got amazing feedback from folks, not just folks who submitted their letters but from the broader Sofii community which believe it or not is now about 6,000 fundraisers and they have just written in to say this clinic has been really useful to us. So that is not a pitch it is just I recommend it because your callers may find it pretty helpful.

**Pam:** That's how I found you.

**Lisa:** Oh yay. I'm so glad. What it boiled down to of course, you know since you saw the clinic is that non-profits from the Sofii community were submitted their versions to me of their thank you letters and they let me rewrite them. Then they let me go a step further by taking their before-and-after versions and posting them online for all the world to see along with complete annotations so you will find in various places I point out as you have seen it there are the little editing bubbles that say you know here this part needs to be more you focused or all the various elements that need to go into a good fundraising letter, thank you letter. And then there is also a checklist there I think its like 16 items or



something like that of to me what are the most essential elements of a thank you letter, including the good leads. So they can find all that stuff there online.

**Pam:** Do you think its a good idea to tell the donor when and how they will be hearing from you?

**Lisa:** Absolutely. I think its not just a good idea I think its essential And I think that the thank you letter is probably the best place to start. It doesn't have to be some long, laundry list recitation of every communication that you plan to send them in the next year. It could be something really simple just by saying and we will update you on all the good things your support makes possible in our quarterly newsletters. So there is a couple reasons for it too. If its like its really like priming the pump and I don't mean to have that come out in a derogatory way. What I mean is that they get the thank you letter and they see this little sentence, okay, quarterly newsletters. So then another month goes by or two months go by and in the mailbox pops this newsletter. Well the donor has a little seed planted in their head already and they say, "Oh. Hey, not only did this organization keep their promise to me – they sent their newsletter just like they said they would. But now I'm curious to see what it is." So you have really accomplished two things there. You have improved your chances of getting a newsletter opened and you have proved to them that you are somebody that keeps your promises.

**Pam:** I know that we didn't talk about this before but do you think that a newsletter has to be an eight – 10 page thing?

**Lisa:** Oh goodness no. Absolutely not. I don't think so. And actually if you look at any of Tom Ahern's stuff often times when he is talking about smaller non-profits and such it can even be as simply as a one page letter, could be single sided, double sided, I hate to waste plain paper so you can say double sided and you can just send it out a few times year if you are small. It doesn't have to be a big elaborate newsletter. Another thing that I've done with non –profits when there is a newsletter is to also include a cover letter with that. So something else that can be done.

**Pam:** Do you think you should include – this is a question that we didn't talk about either. But do you think you should include a reply envelope in every newsletter? I know that that's something that has been argued back and forth and I've always believed I that one should never include a solicitation envelope in every newsletter.

**Lisa:** A newsletter I would think that would be perfectly fine and the reason I say this is because I've seen it done – one of the great ways that it worked is if you had a newsletter that is accompanied by a cover letter and that whole packet can have a reply envelope in it. The pain point or really the hot button issue for fundraisers is the ask/no ask issue in a thank you letter. That's the real bone and actually I went head to head with a fundraiser, he's from Australia, Sean Triner this is the part two of that Sofii clinic about ask or no ask in a thank you letter. And I obviously come out in the no ask. I don't think a thank you letter should have a business reply envelope, I don't think it should have an ask and plenty of fundraisers will shoot me down the minute this hits the airwaves and say, “What? She's crazy.”

**Pam:** Oh I'm with you.

**Lisa:** Are you?

**Pam:** Totally.

**Lisa:** The Sofii voters voted for no ask. If you have a good donor stewardship program in place and you have a good donor communication system in place then you are really not in a hurry to cram the asks down their throat. You say okay I've got a newsletter that is going to come out two months afterward, we sort of veered off track. But I'm with you on a no ask.

**Pam:** To put it really bluntly I find it tacky.

**Lisa:** And a lot of donors do too.

**Pam:** How do you recommend that organizations communicate to their donors? Through newsletters, email, social media?

**Lisa:** Well evidence would suggest that all of the above is a good answer. But I know that as you said a lot of the organizations that may listen to this call are smaller. So they might be strapped for staff hours. And we talked about the fact that they maybe don't need to send out a full blown newsletter, eight or 10 pages. But as long as there is some regular communication coming in through direct mail obviously that's essential.

I'm also a huge fan of email because online fundraising is growing by leaps and bounds. And also email newsletters don't cost a lot to send out. And as you and I know there is services like *Constant Contact* that make it super simple to do you don't have to have tech knowledge or anything. Of course, direct mail newsletters or anything coming through direct mail is important as important as email depending on your donor base because some of your older donors still aren't online and they probably never will be. Or they are not that comfortable online. The only thing I would say is that if you do decide to use email you have to be really sure to capture the email addresses of people who come to your website with a sign up box. And I wrote about that in my own email newsletter a couple of months ago. It sits online. You don't have to subscribe to anything its on the archives and I will include that link on the resource sheet.

**Pam:** Oh thanks. Yea I'd like to check that out. Okay maybe you already answered this in your opinion what is the worst mistake an organization can make in a thank you letter?

**Lisa:** I guess there is the ask part but actually there is another one. And I would even say that this might be worse than the ask would be to not personalize the thank you letter. Yea, right? I can think of – believe it or not in talking about the whole swipe file thing because I obviously donate to a number charities. Some that I love just for the pure sake of loving them others because I want to track them and see what they send. I send this \$25 donation to this and it really is a mega national US charity and apparently my little \$25 gift was not enough for them because the thank you that came back started off with, “Dear Friend”. And I thought, oh that's really atrocious.

**Pam:** And the thing is they have absolutely no excuse for that kind of blunder because they have the resources.

**Lisa:** Sure. Of course, of course.

**Pam:** You know, in this day and age *everybody* has got the resources. I have worked with little non-profits that are on 10 year old computers but they still have mail merge.

**Lisa:** That's exactly right, exactly right. You are 100% right, it's so easy. And of course the big mistake number two would be the ask. Or the other one is the ask or the upgrade when you get the thank you and it comes in and they say oh you know, now we want you to give monthly and its right in that thank you letter.

To me I just don't think that's the time or the place to do it. Their absolutely is a time and you can't you know you and I both know its a really fine line that non-profits walk between over solicitation and going dark on your donors meaning that they don't get enough communication from you. But really a **thank you letter should just purely be thank you.**

**Pam:** I agree. How often to you recommend changing the standard thank you letter?

**Lisa:** Well I have updated thank yous as often as quarterly for one of my national non-profit clients. But I would say t the minimum to revisit them in their entirety at least a couple of times a year and it doesn't mean that you may do a complete overhaul of your letter you just look at them to see is anything stale are any of the numbers that you have in there do they need to be updated. And another good trick I will share with you and your callers is that once you get the body copy of the thank you letter down and its looking good and you know that its probably going to stand the test of time for at least 12 months or so a great thing to do is to take the PS and use that to freshen up the content.

**Pam:** Oh, interesting. I didn't really think about that. I tend to use quite a few stories and I use them in my thank you letters as well and that would be one thing that I would typically do is to rotate my stories or even update a story.

**Lisa:** Absolutely. Absolutely. And we have done that before too and its great. I mean the only thing you have to be really careful about just as a caveat to that and we have used stories, my clients and I have used stories before – one time I can remember this would be years ago probably five years ago. We used a story and sent it to - I'm trying to think how it worked I think it was some sponsors and the person who had sponsored an animal hadn't sponsored this particular animal and was nice enough to call us and say hey I don't even know who this animal is. We thought oh my gosh. Mistakes happen and that is just something for you to keep in mind and learn from the mistake that we made so that you don't make it yourself.

**Pam:** I think you've already answered this but do you need to thank a donor for something specific for membership renewal, annual appeal gift, memorial?

**Lisa:** Absolutely. I would say yes to all of the above. Your thank yous to me should always be appeal specific and gift specific and it's really kind of

spooky that you ask this question because it is on my list of articles to write about in my newsletter. So your listeners are going to get just a little sneak peak about this concept of – with my clients what I talk about is donor communications flow or for want of a better term, flow-based-communications. And what I mean by that is the best way to explain it really would be to use an example.

Let's say I send you a gift based on a holiday appeal that you send out and I send back this sort of utilitarian cookie cutter thank you. Well as a donor I'm really not grounded back to the original appeal, there is no connection for me if you will. If you take it a step further and say okay let's suppose that you give a non-profit a major gift, say \$500 so your thank you then that comes back needs to be gift specific meaning that it is appropriate to your level of giving hand signed by the CEO a personal note in the margin and then if you go a step further and you say okay, you think about this this person is a donor well the first thing that comes to my mind is major donor giving society, special major donor updates, that kind of thing.

If you can think in terms of overall communications what kind of if then sequence if I send this or if a donor sends this what do they need to receive. First of all you will always send stuff that is specific to an appeal or a gift but it will also help to guarantee that your donor development communications are personal, timely, relevant and specific and as I said with the sponsorship blunder that we made many years ago they also need to make sense.

So let's say I give a gift in your name to a non-profit, you shouldn't also get a thank you letter from the non-profit thanking you for your gift. And I've seen this. I actually did a communications audit for a non-profit several years ago and when I looked at the gift letter I said 'did this person actually give the gift?' and they all looked at it and their faces fell and they said 'oh my gosh no.' This is the person who received it. So instantly we changed that. So analyze them and that is why you always want to revisit those thank yous and look at them with an eye for 'does this stuff even make sense?' from the get go.

Yes. Or I've also seen these memorial letters that – actually in Penelope Burke's book I can't remember if its chapter five or six she has a great lead for a memorial letter. Your listeners should check that out. Like not the on behalf of blah, blah, blah. It says something like 'at a time when you are facing a loss you chose to reach out to others too.' It is just this fabulous lead for a memorial letter.

**Pam:** Oh I'm definitely going to check that out its been a while since I revisited that book.

**Lisa:** It's terrific.

**Pam:** This is a question because I've actually been looking into I'm trying to set up a monthly giving plan for one of my clients so I've talked to a few organizations who have established them and they seem to actually be more common in Canada and the UK than here – in the case of a donor who is on a monthly giving plan do you think that a written thank you letter is necessary every month?

**Lisa:** No. Well and yes. You really have - that I can tell - two official chances to thank this donor, the first time they give and then probably in the annual tax letter that you would send them I would think. And that of course wouldn't be a tax letter that is as dry as thousand year old toast, it would have to have some life to it so you have those opportunities to thank them. That said though I think that you have to immediately again, think about communication flow and have some sort of communication that is sent to these folks regularly that reflects the fact that you know they are giving monthly and you tell them how important they are, how important their regular gifts are and it really can be as simple as modifying a version of your regular quarterly letter or newsletter and all you have to do really is change around some of the language so that it speaks directly to these regular givers, these regular supporters of your organization so two versions will do the trick.

**Pam:** Awesome. I know we are kind of running out of time I had a couple more quick questions and one is where do you usually recommend placing the tax deductible language? In the body of the letter or I've always done it in fine print down at the bottom.

**Lisa:** That's actually how I've always done it. There is one other place I've seen it. This is another great book, relationship fundraising by Ken Burnett he talks about maybe putting it on the back of the letter if you send it out on 8.5 x 11 you can put the tax language on the back and he based that recommendation on an Ox Fam letter that he had received prior. But for me in personal experience I'm with you. I've always seen it and written letters that place it in the footer of the letter in smaller italicized font. So the bottom line for your listeners really is to place it outside of the body of the letter, somewhere unobtrusive because it really its a joy sucker, you know.

**Pam:** True. And you also recommend including a PS and I hardly ever see that in a thank you letter but I'm a huge fan of PS s.

**Lisa:** Oh I'm so glad we talked about PS because I love PS s. as well.

**Pam:** I do too. I think PS's are great but I never see them. I've used them as long as I've been in fundraising but I rarely see them.

**Lisa:** They're **huge**. And the reason that I would recommend them to anybody any of your listeners or readers whatever is because they get read. If you look at, if you go back to Mel Warwick, the fabulous book How to Write Successful Fundraising Letters.

**Pam:** Oh mine is just all dog-eared - that is one of my favorite books.

**Lisa:** Yes, yes. Mine too. He has, I think in the early chapters of the book he talks about, well I'm not going to pronounce it right it's Sigfried Vogala, he has eye tracking studies that he did and statistics prove this out too that PS s get read and often they get read first. Direct marketers know this like something that has been beaten into our heads but they definitely get read and I'll give you another little tidbit a lot of people will contradict me on this but they're wrong. PS s get read in emails too. And I've seen it, I've tried it and it works. So we actually tested it with anchor text, the hyperlink text that people can click through and everybody said to me no, no, no we're not going to try this in the email. And we tried it and we got some kind of crazy click through rate like 9% or something at the bottom and everybody was like wow, we are going to put these in all the time.

**Pam:** Wow. That's good to know too because -

**Lisa:** Yea, yea.

**Pam:** Well we are running out of time now we have actually gone over. Do you have any final thoughts?

**Lisa:** Actually I have one very little 30 second short story that I would share with your callers to let them know that this stuff really matters and it was back five or six years ago. When I started I was brought into this non-profit to update their whole thank you letter series and it was something like 43 letters and these guys were big proponents of Penelope Burke and said look we want you to



write these thank you letters, donor centered, the whole ball of wax. So we did it. And about I would say four, five weeks later I get this email from the President's executive assistant. She says to me 'Lisa you are not going to believe this, we just got a thank you letter from a donor thanking us for the thank you letter!'. And I will tell you that a couple of years later they were still getting letters like that. So really if you follow those principals people notice, they truly, truly notice.

**Pam:** Oh absolutely. And it's typically done so badly that it really sets you apart.

**Lisa:** Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Pam:** It really sets your organization apart. Well thank you so much for joining us Lisa I really have learned so much and our listeners are going to too.

**Lisa:** Oh you're welcome, Pam. And I really would encourage anyone if they want, if they have questions you can relay them to me or they can contact me directly. I'm happy to help. It was really a pleasure talking to you.

**Pam:** Well and I also wanted to let our listeners know that they should subscribe to your newsletter the loyalty letter at [LisaSargent.com](http://LisaSargent.com).

**Lisa:** Thank you, Pam.

**Pam:** Thanks so much, Lisa.

**Donor Retention Resources Hot Sheet:**

## Question #1:

1. Target Analytics Index of National Fundraising Performance, 2008: <http://www.blackbaud.com/files/resources/downloads/cam/TargetIndexResultsSummaryQ42008.pdf>
2. Penelope Burk's blog – another way of looking at donor retention: <http://www.cygresearch.com/burksblog/?p=195>
3. AFP/Urban Institute's Fundraising Effectiveness Project: <http://www.afpnet.org/files/ContentDocuments/2009%5FFEP%5FFinalReport.pdf>
4. Mal Warwick's primer on SOFII.org, "Just the Facts on Legacy Giving." <http://www.sofii.org/active%20site/Members%20area/Article15MalW.html>
5. Bequest report by Lisa Sargent: "The (\$41 Trillion!) Philanthropy Frenzy." <http://www.lisasargent.com/images/PDF/philanthropyFrenzy.pdf>

## Question #2:

1. Mal Warwick's e-news on Stanford's hand-written thank you letters, pg 5: <http://www.malwarwick.com/assets/pdfs/Oct-06finalnewsletter.pdf>

## Question #4:

1. Re: thanking donors.  
Chapters 5 & 6 of Penelope Burk's book, *Donor-Centered Fundraising*.
2. Re: thanking donors.  
Chapter 14 of Tom Ahern & Simone Joyaux's book, *Keep Your Donors*.

Question #5: Lisa Sargent's Donor Thank-You Letter Clinic on SOFII, Part 1: <http://www.sofii.org/active%20site/Members%20area/Article23LisaTQletters.html>

Question #7: Nonprofit website mistakes to avoid when using email newsletters: <http://www.lisasargent.com/enews/May09.htm>

Question #8: Part 2 of Thank-You Letter Clinic on SOFII, debate w/ Sean Triner: <http://www.sofii.org/active%20site/Members%20area/Article24Lisa&Sean.html>

Question #13: *Relationship Fundraising*, by Ken Burnett.

Question #14: *How to Write Fundraising Letters*, by Mal Warwick.

## Philanthropy Calendar

Looking for more reasons to engage, to celebrate and to WOW your supporters?

You'll always have an occasion with this "philanthropy calendar" courtesy of Devin Mathias of [Marts & Lundy](#). Grab your highlighter and make some special days your organization's own!

### General Philanthropy

New Years Day - *January 1*  
 Trivia Day - *January 4*  
 Humanitarian Day - *January 15*  
 International Creativity Month - *January*  
 International Quality of Life Month - *January*  
 I'm Not Going To Take It Anymore Day - *January*  
 Martin Luther King Day - *January*  
 New Year's Resolutions Week - *January*  
 Universal Letter Writing Week - *January*  
 Hunt For Happiness Week - *January*  
 National Have A Heart Day - *February 14*  
 Valentines Day - *February 14*  
 Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month - *February*  
 National Donor Day - *February* (FYI, this is meant to refer to organ donors... just wanted to warn you!)  
 International Networking Week - *February*  
 Celebration of Love Week - *February*  
 Random Acts of Kindness Week - *February*  
 International Friendship Week - *February*  
 National Entrepreneurship Week - *February*  
 Refired, Not Retired Day - *March 1*  
 I Want You To Be Happy Day - *March 3*  
 National Be Heard Day - *March 7*  
 Good Samaritan Involvement Day - *March 13*  
 International Ask A Question Day - *March 14*  
 Education and Sharing Day - *March 27*

International Expect Success Month - *March*  
 International Ideas Month - *March*  
 International Women's Month - *March*  
 Optimism Month - *March*  
 Namesake Day - *March*  
 Daylight Saving Time Begins - *March*  
 Companies That Care Day - *March*  
 Won't You Be My Neighbor Day - *March*  
 Letting Go of Stuff Day - *March*  
 National Write A Letter of Appreciation Week - *March*  
 National Words Matter Week - *March*  
 Make A Referral Week - *March*  
 Act Happy Week - *March*  
 National Card and Letter Writing Month - *April*  
 Golden Rule Week - *April*  
 National Networking Week - *April*  
 National Volunteer Week - *April*  
 National Inspirational News Week - *April*  
 Loyalty Day - *May 1*  
 National Photo Month - *May* (I think most could engage constituents/beneficiaries  
 by requesting photos that either illustrate why someone gives to your organization  
 or the impact giving makes)  
 National Smile Month - *May*  
 Personal History Month - *May*  
 Young Achievers of Tomorrow Month - *May*  
 Mother's Day - *May*  
 Donate A Day's Wages To Charity - *May*  
 Neighbor Day - *May*  
 Memorial Day - *May*  
 National New Friends, Old Friends Week - *May*  
 Loving Day - *June 12*  
 Public Service Day - *June 23*  
 Effective Communications Month - *June*  
 National Safety Month - *June*  
 Say Something Nice Day - *June*  
 Superman Week - *June*  
 Fourth of July or Independence Day - *July 4*  
 Teddy Bears' Picnic Day - *July 10*  
 National Make A Difference to Children Month - *July*  
 Second Half of The Year Day - *July*

Tell The Truth Day - *July*  
 National Talk in An Elevator Day - *July*  
 The Date to Create - *August 8*  
 Happiness Happens Day - *August 8*  
 International Youth Day - *August 12*  
 Best Friends Day - *August 15*  
 Women's Equality Day - *August 26*  
 Happiness Happens Month - *August*  
 What Will Be Your Legacy Month - *August*  
 Friendship Day - *August*  
 National Minority Donor Awareness Day - *August* (Again, this means organ donors)  
 Sister's Day - *August*  
 Eleanor Roosevelt Day - *August*  
 National Garage Sale Day - *August*  
 Simplify Your Life Week - *August*  
 Be Kind To Humankind Week - *August*  
 Swap Ideas Day - *September 10* (Strikes me as a great engagement opportunity)  
 National Preparedness Month - *September*  
 Reunion Planning Month - *September*  
 National Grandparent's Day - *September*  
 National Good Neighbor Day (Always 4th Sunday) - *September*  
 World Heart Day - *September*  
 International Enthusiasm Week - *September*  
 Turn Off Your TV Week - *September*  
 National Keep Kids Creative Week - *September*  
 Guardian Angels Day - *October 2*  
 International Strategic Planning Month - *October*  
 National Go On A Field Trip Month - *October*  
 Photographer Appreciation Month - *October*  
 Make A Difference Day - *October*  
 Financial Planning Week - *October*  
 Peace, Friendship and Good Will Week - *October*  
 National Character Counts Week - *October*  
 Plan Your Epitaph Day - *November 2*  
 World Kindness Day - *November 13*  
National Philanthropy Day - *November 15*  
 National Day of Listening - *November 27*  
 National Inspirational Role Models Month - *November*  
 Origami Day - *November*

National Family Volunteer Day - *November*  
 Thanksgiving Day - *November*  
 Black Friday (Day after Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 You're Welcomegiving Day (Day after Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 Cyber Monday (Monday after Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 World Communication Week - *November*  
 Pursuit of Happiness Week - *November*  
 World Kindness Week - *November*  
 Geography Awareness Week - *November*  
 National Global Entrepreneurship Week - *November*  
 Better Conversation Week - *November*  
 International Volunteer Day for Economic & Social Development - *December 5*  
 Universal Hour of Peace Day - *December 31*  
 National Write A Business Plan Month - *December*  
 National Thank-you Note Day - *December*

### **Animals**

Adopt A Rescued Rabbit Month - *February*  
 National Bird Feeding Month - *February*  
 Love Your Pet Day - *February 20*  
 National Animal Poison Prevention Week - *March*  
 Wildlife Week - *March*  
 International Day of The Seal - *March*  
 Frog Month - *April*  
 Prevention of Animal Cruelty Month - *April*  
 World Habitat Awareness Month - *April*  
 National Week of the Ocean - *April*  
 National Environmental Week - *April*  
 Every Day is Earth Day - *April*  
 Earth Day - *April 22*  
 National Go Birding Day - *April*  
 American Wetlands Month - *May*  
 Be Kind To Animals Week - *May*  
 National Pet Week - *May*  
 International Migratory Bird Day - *May*  
 Mother Ocean Day - *May*  
 National Endangered Species Day - *May*

World Turtle Day - *May*  
 Adopt A Shelter Cat Month - *June*  
 Great Outdoors Month - *June*  
 Carpenter Ant Awareness Week - *June*  
 Fish Are Friends, Not Food! Week - *June*  
 Take Your Dog To Work Day - *June*  
 Independence From Meat Day - *July 4*  
 Don't Step On A Bee Day - *July 10*  
 Cow Appreciation Day - *July*  
 National Homeless Animals Day - *August*  
 National Dog Day - *August 26*  
 National Holistic Pet Day - *August 30*  
 AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Month - *September*  
 World Animal Remembrance Month - *September*  
 Responsible Dog Ownership Day - *September*  
 Elephant Appreciation Day - *September 22*  
 Adopt A Shelter Dog Month - *October*  
 National Animal Safety and Protection Month - *October*  
 Raptor Month - *October*  
 World Rainforest Week - *October*  
 World Habitat Day - *October*  
 National Pet Cancer Awareness Month - *November*  
 Give Wildlife A Break Week - *November*  
 National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week - *November*  
 Turkey-free Thanksgiving (Same day as Thanksgiving) - *November*

### **Community**

National Poverty in America Awareness Month - *January*  
 National Volunteer Blood Donor Month - *January*  
 Youth Leadership Month - *February*  
 International Friendship Week - *February*  
 Day for Women's Rights & International Peace - *March 8*  
 National Agriculture Day - *March 20*  
 Education and Sharing Day - *March 27*  
 National Social Work Month - *March*  
 Absolutely Incredible Kid Day - *March*  
 National Agriculture Week - *March*

Child Abuse Prevention Month - *April*  
 National Child Abuse Prevention Month - *April*  
 National Sexual Assault Awareness Month - *April*  
 School Library Media Month - *April*  
 National Love Our Children Day - *April*  
 National Park Week - *April*  
 National & Global Youth Service Days - *April*  
 International Day of Families - *May 15*  
 Go Fetch! Food Drive for Homeless Animals Month - *May*  
 Birthmother's Day (Saturday before Mother's Day) - *May*  
 Letter Carrier's Food Drive Day - *May*  
 Neighbor Day - *May*  
 National Family Week - *May*  
 National New Friends, Old Friends Week - *May*  
 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression - *June 4*  
 World Day To Combat Desertification and Drought - *June 17*  
 Public Service Day - *June 23*  
 Rebuild Your Life Month - *June*  
 Sports America Kids Month - *June*  
 Student Safety Month - *June*  
 National Trails Day - *June*  
 Father's Day - *June*  
 Universal Father's Week - *June*  
 Father-Daughter Take A Walk Together Day - *July 7*  
 Gorgeous Grandma Day - *July 23*  
 National Make A Difference to Children Month - *July*  
 National Recreation & Parks Month - *July*  
 Social Wellness Month - *July*  
 National Hug Your Kid Day - *July*  
 International Youth Day - *August 12*  
 American Adventures Month - *August*  
 Get Ready for Kindergarten Month - *August*  
 Assistance Dog Week - *August*  
 National Safe at Home Week - *August*  
 Patriot Day - *September 11*  
 Remembrance Day - *September 11*  
 Baby Safety Month - *September*  
 Library Card Sign-up Month - *September*  
 National Childhood Injury Prevention Month - *September*  
 National Organic Harvest Month - *September*



Sports and Home Eye Health & Safety Month - *September*  
     Hug A Vegetarian Day - *September*  
     Family Health and Fitness Day USA - *September*  
     Suicide Prevention Week - *September*  
     Child Passenger Safety Week - *September*  
     National Clean Hands Week - *September*  
 National Farm & Ranch Safety and Health Week - *September*  
     Turn Off Your TV Week - *September*  
     National Keep Kids Creative Week - *September*  
     World Teachers Day - *October 5*  
     World Food Day - *October 16*  
 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - *October 17*  
     National Go On A Field Trip Month - *October*  
     National Reading Group Month - *October*  
     Tackling Hunger Month - *October*  
     International Day of Non-violence - *October*  
     Universal Children's Week - *October*  
     Kids' Goal Setting Week - *October*  
     National Food Bank Week - *October*  
     Teen Read Week - *October*  
     National Food Bank Week - *October*  
     National Parents As Teachers Day - *November 8*  
     World Kindness Day - *November 13*  
     America Recycles Day - *November 15*  
     International Day for Tolerance - *November 16*  
     Family Stories Month - *November*  
 MADD's Tie One On For Safety Holiday Campaign (11/16-12/31) - *November*  
     Military Family Appreciation Month - *November*  
     National Family Caregivers Month - *November*  
     National Home Care & Hospice Month - *November*  
     National Family Literacy Day - *November*  
     Children's Day - *November*  
 National Adoption Day (Saturday before Thanksgiving) - *November*  
     National Family Volunteer Day - *November*  
 World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims - *November*  
     National Young Reader's Week - *November*  
     National Hunger & Homeless Awareness Week - *November*  
     National Farm-City Week - *November*  
     National Family Week - *November*  
     National Game & Puzzle Week - *November*

Day With(out) Art Day - *December 1*  
 National Drunk & Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month - *December*  
 Special Kids Day - *December*  
 Coats & Toys for Kids Day - *December*  
 Tolerance Week - *December*

### **Cultural**

Inspire Your Heart with Art Day - *January 31*  
 International Quality of Life Month - *January*  
 Martin Luther King Day - *January*  
 Library Lovers Month - *February*  
 National African American History Month - *February*  
 National Black History Month - *February*  
 Give Kids A Smile Day - *February*  
 Children's Authors & Illustrators Week - *February*  
 Day for Women's Rights & International Peace - *March 8*  
 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination - *March 21*  
 International Women's Month - *March*  
 Music In Our Schools Month - *March*  
 National Social Work Month - *March*  
 Sing With Your Child Month - *March*  
 Women's History Month - *March*  
 Youth Art Month - *March*  
 Absolutely Incredible Kid Day - *March*  
 Universal Women's Week - *March*  
 Week of Solidarity with People's Struggling Against Racism & Discrimination - *March*  
 Jazz Appreciation Month - *April*  
 School Library Media Month - *April*  
 International Museum Day - *May 18*  
 Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month - *May*  
 Go Fetch! Food Drive for Homeless Animals Month - *May*  
 World Fair Trade Day - *May*  
 International Jazz Day - *May*  
 Stand For Children Day - *June 1*  
 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture - *June 26*  
 Black Music Month - *June*

Gay & Lesbian Pride Month - *June*  
 International Men's Month - *June*  
 International Surf Music Month - *June*  
 National GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender) Awareness Month - *June*  
 Multicultural American Child Awareness Day - *June*  
 Race Unity Day - *June*  
 America's Kids Day - *June*  
 International Clothesline Week - *June*  
 World Population Day - *July 11*  
 Freedom From Fear of Speaking Month - *July*  
 National Make A Difference to Children Month - *July*  
 National Recreation & Parks Month - *July*  
 Smart Irrigation Month - *July*  
 Social Wellness Month - *July*  
 Women's Equality Day - *August 26*  
 National Water Quality Month - *August*  
 National Minority Donor Awareness Day - *August*  
 International Literacy Day - *September 8*  
 Patriot Day - *September 11*  
 Remembrance Day - *September 11*  
 Library Card Sign-up Month - *September*  
 National Organic Harvest Month - *September*  
 National Piano Month - *September*  
 National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15) - *September*  
 Celebrate Bi-sexuality Day - *September*  
 National Museum Day - *September*  
 National Historically Black Colleges & Universities Week - *September*  
 National Keep Kids Creative Week - *September*  
 Celebrate The Bilingual Child Month - *October*  
 Fair Trade Month - *October*  
 Gay & Lesbian History Month - *October*  
 German-American Heritage Month - *October*  
 National Go On A Field Trip Month - *October*  
 Polish American Heritage Month - *October*  
 Universal Music Day - *October*  
 Universal Children's Week - *October*  
 National Carry A Tune Week - *October*  
 Saxophone Day - *November 6*  
 Veterans Day - *November 11*  
 International Day for Tolerance - *November 16*

International Day For the Elimination of Violence Against Women Day -  
*November 25*  
 National Native American Heritage Day - *November 27*  
 National Adoption Month - *November*  
 National American Indian Heritage Month - *November*  
 World Orphans Day - *November*  
 Origami Day - *November*  
 Children's Day - *November*  
 National Adoption Day (Saturday before Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 National Family Volunteer Day - *November*  
 Transgender Day of Remembrance - *November*  
 Day With(out) Art Day - *December 1*  
 Tolerance Week - *December*

### **Education**

International Creativity Month - *January*  
 National Mentoring Month - *January*  
 Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month - *February*  
 Youth Leadership Month - *February*  
 Children's Authors & Illustrators Week - *February*  
 Education and Sharing Day - *March 27*  
 Expanding Girls' Horizons in Science & Engineering Month - *March*  
 Music In Our Schools Month - *March*  
 Sing With Your Child Month - *March*  
 Absolutely Incredible Kid Day - *March*  
 International Children's Book Day - *April 2*  
 International Museum Day - *May 18*  
 National Teacher Day - *May*  
 Teacher Appreciation Week - *May*  
 Reading is Fun Week - *May*  
 Children's Book Week - *May*  
 Student Safety Month - *June*  
 American Adventures Month - *August*  
 Get Ready for Kindergarten Month - *August*  
 International Literacy Day - *September 8*  
 National DNA, Geonomics & Stem Cell Education Month - *September*  
 National Museum Day - *September*

National Historically Black Colleges & Universities Week - *September*  
 National Keep Kids Creative Week - *September*  
 World Teachers Day - *October 5*  
 Class Reunion Month - *October*  
 National Go On A Field Trip Month - *October*  
 National Reading Group Month - *October*  
 Kids' Goal Setting Week - *October*  
 Teen Read Week - *October*  
 National Parents As Teachers Day - *November 8*  
 National Scholarship Month - *November*  
 National Family Literacy Day - *November*  
 National Young Reader's Day - *November*  
 National Family Volunteer Day - *November*  
 National Young Reader's Week - *November*  
 American Education Week - *November*  
 Day With(out) Art Day - *December 1*  
 Special Education Day - *December 2*  
 Human Rights Day - *December 10*  
 National Drunk & Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month - *December*  
 Universal Human Rights Month - *December*  
 Special Kids Day - *December*  
 Tolerance Week - *December*

### **Environment**

Bird Day - *January 5*  
 National Cut Your Energy Costs Day - *January 10*  
 Plant the Seeds of Greatness Month - *February*  
 National Agriculture Week - *March*  
 National Agriculture Day - *March 20*  
 Earth Hour - *March*  
 National Garden Month - *April*  
 World Habitat Awareness Month - *April*  
 National Week of the Ocean - *April*  
 National Environmental Week - *April*  
 National Park Week - *April*  
 Every Day is Earth Day - *April*  
 Earth Day - *April 22*

Arbor Day (Last Friday in April) - *April*  
 American Wetlands Month - *May*  
 Clean Air Month - *May*  
 EcoDriving Month - *May*  
 National Preservation Month - *May*  
 National Wildflower Week - *May*  
 National Bike to Work Week - *May*  
 Mother Ocean Day - *May*  
 National Bike to Work Day - *May*  
 National Endangered Species Day - *May*  
 Great Outdoors Month - *June*  
 National Rivers Month - *June*  
 National Rose Month - *June*  
 Fish Are Friends, Not Food! Week - *June*  
 World Environment Day - *June 5*  
 National Trails Day - *June*  
 World Ocean Day - *June 8*  
 National Recreation & Parks Month - *July*  
 Take Your Houseplant For A Walk Day - *July 27*  
 American Adventures Month - *August*  
 National Water Quality Month - *August*  
 Simplify Your Life Week - *August*  
 S'mores Day - *August 10*  
 National Organic Harvest Month - *September*  
 Pollution Prevention Week (3rd full week in Sept.) - *September*  
 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer - *September 16*  
 International Coastal Cleanup Day - *September*  
 Hug A Vegetarian Day - *September*  
 World Rainforest Week - *October*  
 Alternative Fuel Day - *October 3*  
 World Habitat Day - *October*  
 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and  
 Armed Conflict - *November 6*  
 America Recycles Day - *November 15*  
 Use Less Stuff Day (Thursday Before Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 Buy Nothing Day (Day after Thanksgiving) - *November*

### **Fun**

International Creativity Month - *January*  
 Trivia Day - *January 4*  
 I'm Not Going To Take It Anymore Day - *January*  
 Fun at Work Day - *January*  
 Just Say No to Powerpoints Week - *February*  
 International Goof-off Day - *March 22*  
 April Fools or All Fools Day - *April 1*  
 National Hug Holiday Week - *May*  
 National Dance Day - *May*  
 National Accordion Awareness Month - *June* (Hey, my father played one... I had to include it!)  
 National Horseradish Month - *July*  
 National Ventriloquism Week - *July*  
 National Ice Cream Day - *July*  
 National Lollipop Day - *July 20*  
 Weird Contest Week - *August*  
 S'mores Day - *August 10*  
 Line Dance Week - *September*  
 National Roller Skating Month - *October*  
 National Carry A Tune Week - *October*  
 National Grouch Day - *October 15*  
 NoSHAVEmber (US - Beard Month or Movember (Australia - Moustache Month) - *November*  
 International Tongue Twister Day - *November*  
 Origami Day - *November*

### **Health**

Inspire Your Heart with Art Day - *January 31*  
 Birth Defects Month - *January*  
 Cervical Cancer Screening Month - *January*  
 National Glaucoma Awareness Month - *January*  
 National Volunteer Blood Donor Month - *January*  
 Shape Up US Month - *January*  
 Thyroid Awareness Month - *January*  
 National Lose Weight/Feel Great Week - *January*  
 Healthy Weight Week - *January*



American Heart Month - *February*  
 World Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Day - *February*  
 National Women's Heart Day - *February*  
 National Donor Day - *February*  
 Rare Disease Day - *February*  
 Women's Heart Week - *February*  
 World Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy Awareness Week - *February*  
 Alzheimers and Dementia Awareness Week - *February*  
 World Day for Water - *March 22*  
 National Doctors' Day - *March 30th*  
 National Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness Month - *March*  
 National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month - *March*  
 National Multiple Sclerosis Education & Awareness Month - *March*  
 National Kidney Month - *March*  
 National Nutrition Month - *March*  
 Save Your Vision Month - *March*  
 World Down Syndrome Day - *March*  
 American Diabetes Association Alert Day - *March*  
 World Tuberculosis Day - *March*  
 World Autism Day - *April 2*  
 World Health Day - *April 7*  
 World Parkinson's Disease Day - *April 11*  
 Malaria Awareness Day - *April 25*  
 Autism Awareness Month - *April*  
 Cancer Control Month - *April*  
 Global Child Nutrition Month - *April*  
 National Child Abuse Prevention Month - *April*  
 National Parkinson's Awareness Month - *April*  
 National Sexual Assault Awareness Month - *April*  
 Physical Wellness Month - *April*  
 World Hemophilia Day - *April*  
 Adult Autism Day - *April*  
 Testicular Cancer Awareness Week - *April*  
 National Public Health Week - *April*  
 World No-Tobacco Day - *May 31*  
 ALS Awareness Month - *May*  
 Arthritis Awareness Month - *May*  
 Brain Tumor Awareness Month - *May*  
 Fibromyalgia Education and Awareness Month - *May*  
 Heal the Children Month - *May*



Lupus Awareness Month - *May*  
 National Allergy/Asthma Awareness Month - *May*  
 National Hepatitis Awareness Month - *May*  
 National Mental Health Month - *May*  
 National Physical Fitness & Sports Month - *May*  
 National Smile Month - *May*  
 National Stroke Awareness Month - *May*  
 Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month - *May*  
 Women's Health Care Month - *May*  
 Childhood Depression Awareness Day - *May*  
 Children's Mental Health Awareness Day - *May*  
 World Asthma Day - *May*  
 Fibromyalgia Awareness Day - *May*  
 World Hypertension Day - *May*  
 National Bike to Work Day - *May*  
 Children's Mental Health Week - *May*  
 Drinking Water Week - *May*  
 National Anxiety & Depression Awareness Week - *May*  
 National Women's Health Week - *May*  
 National Bike to Work Week - *May*  
 Stand For Children Day - *June 1*  
 International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression - *June 4*  
 World Blood Donor Day - *June 14*  
 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture - *June 26*  
 National HIV Testing Day - *June 27*  
 Cancer From The Sun Month - *June*  
 Child Vision Awareness Month - *June*  
 Dairy Alternative Month - *June*  
 International Childhood Cancer Campaign Month - *June*  
 Dairy Month - *June*  
 Pharmacists Declare War on Alcoholism Month - *June*  
 Sports America Kids Month - *June*  
 World Infertility Month - *June*  
 National Running Day - *June*  
 National Cancer Survivors Day - *June*  
 Abused Women and Children's Awareness Day - *June*  
 National Headache Awareness Week - *June*  
 National Sun Safety Week - *June*  
 Men's Health Week - *June*  
 National Mosquito Control Awareness Week - *June*

National Prevention of Eye Injuries Awareness - *June*  
     Stay Out Of The Sun Day - *July 3*  
     Don't Step On A Bee Day - *July 10*  
     Take Your Houseplant For A Walk Day - *July 27*  
 Hemochromatosis Screening Awareness Month - *July*  
     Herbal/Prescription Awareness Month - *July*  
 International Group B Strep Awareness Month - *July*  
     International Women with Alopecia Month - *July*  
 National Make A Difference to Children Month - *July*  
     National Wheelchair Beautification Month - *July*  
     Social Wellness Month - *July*  
 Paddle for Perthes Disease Awareness Day - *July*  
     Cataract Awareness Month - *August*  
     Children's Eye Health & Safety Month - *August*  
     Children's Vision & Learning Month - *August*  
 National Immunization Awareness Month - *August*  
     National Water Quality Month - *August*  
 Spinal Muscular Atrophy Awareness Month - *August*  
     National Safe at Home Week - *August*  
     World Suicide Prevention Day - *September 12*  
 Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month - *September*  
     Baby Safety Month - *September*  
     Childhood Cancer Awareness Month - *September*  
     Gynecology Cancer Awareness Month - *September*  
 (World) Leukemia and Lymphoma Awareness Month - *September*  
 National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month - *September*  
     National Childhood Injury Prevention Month - *September*  
 National DNA, Geonomics & Stem Cell Education Month - *September*  
     National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month (Gov't) - *September*  
     National Sickle Cell Month - *September*  
     Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month - *September*  
     National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month - *September*  
     National Skin Care Awareness Month - *September*  
     Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month - *September*  
 Sports and Home Eye Health & Safety Month - *September*  
     International Eat An Apple Day - *September*  
     Family Health and Fitness Day USA - *September*  
     World Heart Day - *September*  
     National Women's Health & Fitness Day - *September*  
     Suicide Prevention Week - *September*

National Invisible Chronic Illness Awareness - *September*  
     Deaf Awareness Week - *September*  
     National Clean Hands Week - *September*  
 National Farm & Ranch Safety and Health Week - *September*  
     Prostate Cancer Awareness Week - *September*  
     World Blindness Awareness Month - *October*  
     Celiac Disease Awareness Month - *October*  
     Domestic Violence Awareness Month - *October*  
     Dyslexia Awareness Month - *October*  
     Eat Better, Eat Together Month - *October*  
     Health Literacy Month - *October*  
     National Breast Cancer Awareness Month - *October*  
 National Depression Education & Awareness Month - *October*  
     National Domestic Violence Awareness Month - *October*  
     National Down Syndrome Month - *October*  
     National Spina Bifida Awareness Month - *October*  
 National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Awareness Month - *October*  
     Tackling Hunger Month - *October*  
     Vegetarian Month - *October*  
     Inter-American Water Day (First Saturday) - *October*  
     Child Health Day - *October*  
     World Mental Health Day - *October*  
     Mammography Day - *October*  
     Lung Health Day - *October*  
     Mental Illness Awareness Week - *October*  
     World Diabetes Day - *November 14*  
     Homemade Bread Day - *November 17*  
 International Day For the Elimination of Violence Against Women Day -  
     *November 25*  
     National Arts & Health Month - *November*  
     American & National Diabetes Month - *November*  
     Diabetic Eye Disease Month - *November*  
     Epilepsy Awareness Month - *November*  
     Gluten-Free Diet Awareness Month - *November*  
     Lung Cancer Awareness Month - *November*  
     National AIDS Awareness Month - *November*  
     National Alzheimer's Disease Month - *November*  
     National Home Care & Hospice Month - *November*  
     National Impotency Month - *November*  
     National Long-term Care Awareness Month - *November*

National Marrow Awareness Month - *November*  
 Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month - *November*  
 Prematurity Awareness Month - *November*  
 Vegan Month - *November*  
 Great American Smokeout - *November*  
 National Survivors of Suicide Day (Saturday before Thanksgiving) - *November*  
 World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims - *November*  
 National Patient Accessibility Week - *November*  
 World Aids Day - *December 1*  
 World Peace Meditation Day - *December 31*  
 World Aids Month - *December*  
 Colorectal Cancer Education and Awareness Month - *December*  
 National Drunk & Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month - *December*  
 Special Kids Day - *December*

### **Relief/International**

National Poverty in America Awareness Month - *January*  
 Humanitarian Day - *January 15*  
 World Day for Social Justice - *February 20*  
 Day for Women's Rights & International Peace - *March 8*  
 World Day for Water - *March 22*  
 International Day of Remembrance of The Victims of Slavery and The  
 Transatlantic Slave Trade - *March*  
 Global Child Nutrition Month - *April*  
 International Children's Book Day - *April 2*  
 Malaria Awareness Day - *April 25*  
 Heal the Children Month - *May*  
 Drinking Water Week - *May*  
 World Fair Trade Day - *May*  
 International Clothesline Week - *June*  
 National Mosquito Control Awareness Week - *June*  
 World Day To Combat Desertification and Drought - *June 17*  
 World Refugee Day - *June 20*  
 Smart Irrigation Month - *July*  
 International Day of Cooperatives - *July*  
 World Population Day - *July 11*  
 National Water Quality Month - *August*

Be Kind To Humankind Week - *August*  
 International Day of The World's Indigenous People - *August 9*  
 International Day of Peace - *September 21*  
 Fair Trade Month - *October*  
 Global Diversity Awareness Month - *October*  
 Tackling Hunger Month - *October*  
 Universal Children's Week - *October*  
 International Day of Non-violence - *October*  
 Inter-American Water Day (First Saturday) - *October*  
 World Food Day - *October 16*  
 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty - *October 17*  
 World Communication Week - *November*  
 World Kindness Week - *November*  
 Geography Awareness Week - *November*  
 International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and  
 Armed Conflict - *November 6*  
 World Orphans Day - *November*  
 World Kindness Day - *November 13*  
 Homemade Bread Day - *November 17*  
 World Aids Month - *December*  
 Universal Human Rights Month - *December*  
 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery Day - *December 2*  
 Human Rights Day - *December 10*  
 International Human Solidarity Day - *December 20*  
 World Peace Day/Winter Solstice - *December 21*  
 Universal Hour of Peace Day - *December 31*  
 World Peace Meditation Day - *December 31*

### **Religion**

(These are not holidays that are intrinsic to a religion, like Passover or Christmas,  
but other holidays with religious themes)

Church Library Month - *October*  
 National Bible Week - *November*