

# Connected Giving



MIDWEST FOOD BANK

## Mission To Serve The Hungry

+ Have You Seen Your Website Lately?

iDonate

OCTOBER 2021



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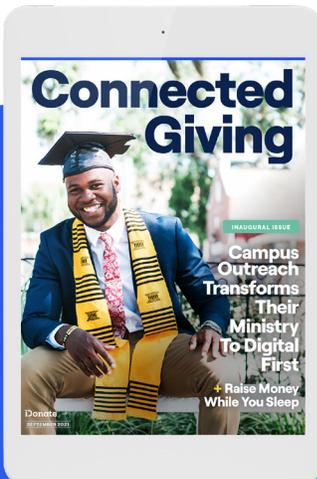
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**Would you like to be featured in an upcoming issue of Connected Giving?**

**We'd love to hear your story!**



Email us at [cgmagazine@idonate.com](mailto:cgmagazine@idonate.com).

## THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

**T**

his month's issue features another incredible organization, Midwest Food Bank. Midwest is comprised of 10 locations around the country, one in Kenya, and multiple locations throughout Haiti, that provide essential food relief services to thousands of people in need every year. They're a highly rated charity that runs an incredibly efficient food distribution operation; perhaps you've heard or seen them as they've been nationally recognized. In our feature story, we've highlighted their significant gains in both online giving and donor retention since partnering with iDonate.

This month's issue also features information on peer-to-peer (P2P) fundraising. P2P can be confusing, as there are so many terms and "use cases" for how the strategy and technologies can be deployed. You'll hear terms like P2P, DIY, Crowdfunding, and many others.

**I like to keep things simple; at its core, it's simply a strategy that allows your donors to become fundraisers for your organization. It's built on a couple of core principles:**

**1** Your donors love your organization and want to see it succeed, and

**2** People give more when a friend asks them. In fact, the average peer-to-peer campaign raises \$391 and the average gift to a P2P campaign in 2020 was \$91 (peertopeerforum.com).

And this fundraising strategy continues to grow. One of my personal passions is to see this technology used by support staff and missionaries to make raising their personal funds easier. Peer-to-peer pages allow them to keep their story and journey fresh for their supporters, make it incredibly easy for their supporters to give, and even keep the nonprofit up-to-date on all of their fundraising activities—as well as the donors they may not yet have a connection with.

If you didn't receive our first issue, you can get it by visiting [idonate.com/webinarspotlight](https://idonate.com/webinarspotlight). Thanks for reading this and learning about how we're serving great clients like Midwest Food Bank. Would love to hear from you at any time. Feel free to reach out directly at [rgary@idonate.com](mailto:rgary@idonate.com).

Let's get connected.



A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Ray Gary'.

Ray Gary  
CEO, iDonate

The mission is clear  
and never-ending—

# To feed to serve hungry.

**No matter the need, no matter the cause, no matter the person, the driving force behind Midwest Food Bank and its efforts to help end world hunger lies within the blessings they share. With millions across the United States and the world suffering from hunger and food insecurity, the action may be easier said than done. But Midwest Food Bank leans on its calling of service to fill a need across the world.**

When it comes to anything monetary, for any nonprofit or charity, transparency is a major factor in staying true to its mission. As the largest faith-based food bank in the U.S., Midwest Food Bank brings in a large quantity of money and food from various sources. In 2020 alone, Midwest Food Bank brought in nearly \$380 million in donated food, vehicles, equipment, and services—a 46% increase from 2019. So then, where does that money and food ultimately go?

Through the quantity of food donations from individual donors, grocery stores with excess food, and food



and  
the

“Midwest Food Bank can turn a \$1 donation into \$30 worth of food.”

manufacturers, combined with the team of volunteers nationwide, Midwest Food Bank can turn a \$1 donation into \$30 worth of food. That food is then sent to food pantries, soup kitchens, programs to feed children, and homeless shelters across the country and the world—all at no cost.

“That’s the foundation of our mission,” Chief Resource Officer Jada Hoerr said. “One of our differentiators is that we give all of our food away at no cost. We do everything that we do so that we can give it to the nonprofits and minimize their costs. They have limited funds as well and so we don’t want them to dedicate those limited funds to food but let us provide that for them so they can serve out their programs.”

# History of Midwest Food Bank

This calling and mission began in 2003 when David Kieser and his family read about a need in their local newspaper to fill the shelves of food pantries in McLean County, Illinois.

The Kieser family then turned the barn on their family farm into a distribution site for the food pantries that needed help. As their generosity turned into a success for their local community, the Kieser family still felt more could be done, and not just for those in the area they call home.

Soon after, Midwest Food Bank was born and the Kieser's began seeking the help of volunteers in Illinois. Continued growth saw Midwest Food Bank move into additional warehouses in central Illinois, Indiana, and further into the Northeast United States.

Midwest Food Bank increased their services by starting their disaster relief program in earnest in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans and the Southern region. In the years that followed, the food bank created additional programs, like Tender Mercies which produces nutritious food at just 20 cents per meal, and Hope Packs which provides food for a child to take home every weekend during the school year. Today, Midwest Food Bank operates 10 locations in the U.S., one in Kenya to serve the nations in East Africa, and multiple locations throughout Haiti.

## Disaster Relief

Since the beginning of 2020, we have seen hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, flooding, and widespread power outages ravage many communities around the world.

On top of everything else, the COVID-19 pandemic has seemingly been a nonstop battle. What was already a challenge before has now turned into a race against time. When the resources are gone, where do the people in need turn?





This is the gap that Midwest Food Bank aims to fill. In a normal year, the efficiency of Midwest Food Bank allows them to deliver 20–50 semitruck loads of food to locations that need it most. Through their volunteers and large fleet of trucks, Midwest Food Bank can deliver family food boxes to specified areas within 24 hours at the request of The Salvation Army and other partners. But with 2020 presenting all kinds of unprecedented challenges, Midwest Food Bank had to reorganize in order to safely meet the demand—which was now greater than ever.

Seeing the need for help, volunteers continued to show up year-round. Nearly 18,000 individuals volunteered at various locations throughout the year, totaling over 300,000 hours of service. In fact, there were 450 volunteers for every one full-time employee. In turn, Midwest Food Bank was able to send 179 truckloads of their family food boxes to locations across the country.

Even internationally, Midwest Food Bank saw people step up to assist. With the recent disasters in Haiti, donors from as far as Portugal and Australia used Midwest Food Bank’s online presence to give. This includes food donations, as the food bank’s online giving form has been a driver for those wishing to donate food.

“As soon as the recent earthquake happened in Haiti, because of our online presence on our website and through an easy form to give, we were at the right place doing the things that people were seeking to support,” Hoerr said. “We had truly a global reach to support the people in Haiti.”

# Building Relationships

While the immediacy of giving during a disaster is always needed, a constant push for a nonprofit like Midwest Food Bank is to keep donors and volunteers coming back. An important way to do this is to establish strong relationships with those who choose Midwest Food Bank as their nonprofit of choice.

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In 2020, Midwest Food Bank saw a retention rate of 54% for those who gave in 2019, well above the industry standard of 40%. There is strong hope that percentage can increase for 2021, as 20% of Midwest Food Bank's gifts come during their end-of-year giving campaigns. But how does Midwest Food Bank keep those donors engaged and ultimately start building strong relationships?

They want the donor to feel like they are a part of the family, either through personal emails or hand-written cards as a thank you, or even in the online giving form where donors are able to select whether they want to be a recurring giver.

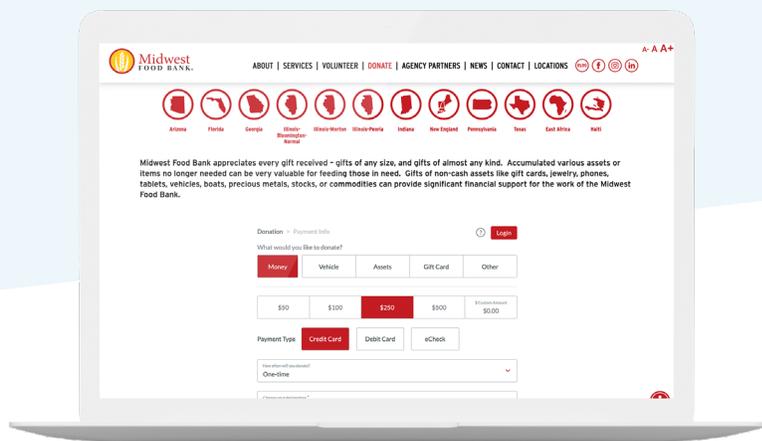




“It was a new feature of the platform in 2020 so we incorporated that and found that we have had incredible success for growing our recurring giving,” Hoerr said. “It’s a simple and formal conscientious ask and is something that would be important for year-end giving.”

It’s crucial for Midwest Food Bank to see through this relationship-building in all aspects of their nonprofit business. While their core focus may be on ending world hunger, their message is one of faith and support, something that aligns with iDonate and the impact we hope to share.

“It’s very clear that iDonate is consistent with the Midwest Food Bank culture,” Hoerr said. “We are a growing organization and as iDonate continues to have enhancements and new features, we want to be on the leading edge and taking advantage of those benefits.”



# Digital Giving – Today and in the Future

**In the digital age of fundraising, donors are looking for a convenient way to give.** Physical checks and phone calls are not enough. Donors may also be looking to give other assets like vehicles or stocks. For a nonprofit like Midwest Food Bank that is able to turn almost every dollar into something more, having an online platform that can handle both monetary and nonmonetary donations is important.

Using iDonate’s online giving platform, Midwest Food Bank has seen its greatest success. In 2018, 39% of the food bank’s total donations came from credit card transactions. That increased to 46% in 2019, and by 2020, that number rose to 59%. Midwest Food Bank has already seen that amount matched in 2021, and expects it to grow even more toward the end of the year.

“Having an online presence and an online donation form embedded into our website made it possible for us to receive the donations easily,” Hoerr said. “We have to keep that donor engaged and so once you have them exposed to an easy process you have

to keep it easy. We still receive an ample number of checks, but the number of online donors is increasing.”

When those donations come in, being able to quickly utilize those funds for the services that need it most is the next step. Even before 2020, Midwest Food Bank and its programs were already in place and growing to serve widespread communities that needed help. As the pandemic set in, the services Midwest Food Bank provides, and an increased emphasis on digital giving, became focal points.

“We have a very faithful base of traditional check writers and so we never want to minimize that base, but as we gain new donors we can imagine that there are going to be many who want that convenience of online giving,” Hoerr said. “As Midwest Food Bank grows we definitely anticipate that digital giving will be a part of that growth.”

All the efforts Midwest Food Bank carries out go back to building relationships with their donors. In their interactions with their donors, whether it be online through a thank you email, a printed newsletter, or



while they are volunteering, Midwest Food Bank is building a reputation as a leading nonprofit in the industry. This is evidenced by Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator that rates the effectiveness and transparency of nonprofits across the country. They give Midwest Food Bank their highest rating of 4-stars, ranking them as one of the top nonprofits in the nation. This positive online presence will allow Midwest Food Bank to continue sharing its blessings with those in need.

“When a natural disaster strikes, people want to help,” Hoerr said. “When they find out what Midwest Food Bank is doing, we have iDonate to provide an easy way for them to be a part of our relief efforts.”



## Why You Should Care About

# P2P Fund



Written by Megan Rouse  
Senior Director,  
Product Management,  
iDonate

If you want to be hip with the lingo, P2P stands for peer-to-peer fundraising—a phenomenon that raises billions of dollars each year. We see P2P in our social media feeds every day with things like Facebook Birthday fundraisers, and we can look to an adorable group that brings in over \$700 million each year with their cookie sales. Yep, I am talking about the Girl Scouts of America. They have mastered P2P fundraising and built a model that many organizations use as an example we can all learn from.

Have you ever purchased a box of Girl Scout cookies? If yes, what made you purchase them? Are you a fan of thin mints? (Personally, I think they are best in the freezer.) Maybe you weren't even thinking about cookies, but the price is reasonable, so why not?

Wouldn't it be easier for the Girl Scouts to focus on mass production and get into as many stores as possible? After all, we all know the organization – wouldn't this help double, maybe even triple their profits if they were accessible to people everywhere?

The thing the Girl Scouts have done better than just about any other organization is they have mastered “the ask”. I am willing to bet the reason you have ever said “yes” to buying a box of cookies (or three) is because of the adorable girl standing in front of you, directly asking you to make that purchase.

This is an example of **the power of social influence** and the reason P2P fundraising is so successful. The power of social influence/the power of “the ask” not only empowers your supporters who love you, but also helps to bring in new people to your organization because they are saying “yes” to their friends and family.

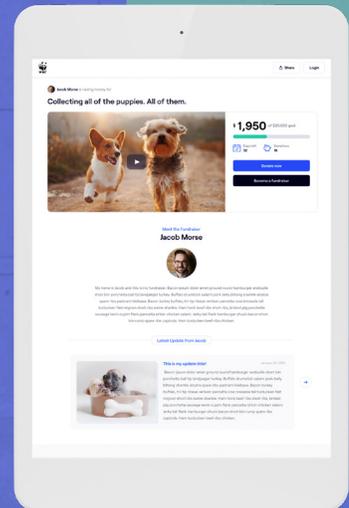
# raising

So, you will need to find the right people in your organization to make the ask, but what is the ask? **Your P2P campaign must have these qualities:**

- **It must be peer-to-peer.** Your fundraisers have to connect with their personal networks.
- **The average human can participate.** While I love the idea of running a marathon, not everyone can finish 26.2 miles. You want an activity that can gain “most” supporters.
- **Connect people to your mission.** Articulate the impact of the organization and how their fundraising is making a difference.
- **Fundraising is upfront, not an afterthought.** While you can probably think of 10 ways to start a campaign, it must be easy to tie into fundraising.

- **Scalable, it can be duplicated and repeated.** You want to build off your success each year.
- **The fundraiser, not the organization, is the hero.** P2P is a platform that allows the people who love you the most to tell their stories.

While it is an involved process to create a new P2P campaign for your organization, the technology part can be simple. iDonate has best in class templates that can help you create a campaign in minutes. We strive to give you the customization you want while providing built in best practices to ensure your fundraisers maximize their efforts. iDonate not only makes your job easier, it also helps you equip your amazing fundraisers to make the task as easy and convenient as possible.



# Intentional & Relevant

Connected Giving orgs intentionally deliver high-touch content, prompts, and responses when relevant. Not just anyone is a viable target donor for your cause. Every nonprofit has a target audience—the donors who are passionate about your cause, align with your mission, and are ready to get involved.

Make it easy for supporters to give with YouTube Giving features (currently available in the U.S.).

*(Youtube Nonprofits)*

## Meet Them Where They Are

How you show up matters. Intercept your donor where they're already going and consider their daily routine. Consider leveraging one of the following channels:

1

### SOCIAL

53% of nonprofits engage with their donors via social channels to better understand their interests and motivations.

*(Salesforce Nonprofit Trends)*

2

### SEARCH

Google AdGrants attracts donors, raises awareness for your organization, and recruits volunteers with in-kind advertising on Google Search. *(Salesforce Nonprofit Trends)*

3

### ENTERTAINMENT



# vant

Develop compelling data visualizations to track and share your organization's impact and programs. *(Google Earth & Maps)*

Nonprofit emails have an average open rate of 20% and an average clickthrough rate of 2.66%. *(Campaign Monitor)*

4

NAVIGATION

5

VOICE

6

MAIL

Google Assistant helps users donate easily to important causes and nonprofit organizations by saying to your assistant or iOS/Android "Hey Google, donate to \_\_\_\_\_." *(TechQuilla)*



## Who is Your Audience?

When identifying your target audience, be as descriptive as possible:

### Demographic

- What generation are they from?
- What is their gender?
- What is their estimated household income?

### Communication Style

- How do they expect you to communicate with them (tone, channel, cadence)?

### Background

- What is their occupation and employer?
- What is their education level?

### What Are Their Objections

- What are they passionate about?
- What are their interests and concerns about the world today?
- Do they align with your nonprofit's causes?

### What Are Their Goals

- How do they want to get involved in your nonprofit?
- What level of change do they want to contribute to?

# The Donor Data Dilemma



The best insights about giving come from the transactions, not what is stored in your database.

**Leverage the insights gained from donors' giving actions, not the records in the database that may be outdated.**

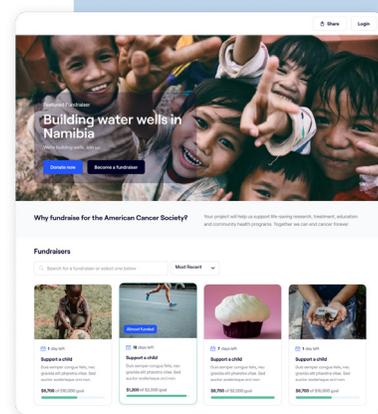
**Your data intelligence is only as good as the information feeding it.**

Many donor databases are filled with lapsed donors and giving data that is decades old. Programs feeding off that data are marketing to last decade's donors. Today's successful fundraisers use real-time data mined from every single digital interaction with their current and prospective donors.

**How good is the data you are making decisions from?**

At iDonate, we believe that giving transaction data is the new system of record. That's because it includes the most relevant, recent, real-time data about the preference for style of gift, time of gift, designation of gift, and history of giving.

By feeding this giving intelligence into their infrastructure, today's successful fundraisers are giving their organizations a significant advantage.



**START**

**raising your digital intelligence with real-time giving insights. You are only as good as the relevance of your data. Make sure it's up-to-date.**

# Fix Your Leaky Pipes



Written by Bill High  
Executive Chairman  
and Founder,  
The Signatry

I remember when I first started in the donor advised fund world. One of our earliest funds was opened by a sharp, shrewd man. He asked me a simple question: Do you have your donor advised fund set up?

Now in truth I'd been planning to set mine up, but it wasn't set up yet. And there was a part of me that offered the rationale, "But I'm not rich..." Nonetheless, his question cut right to the point.

Shortly after that conversation I got my fund set up, and I've used it regularly ever since. In fact, I do all my giving through the account.

I've used it for family giving. I've used it to help individuals in need. I've made sure that both my

donor advised fund and my personal investing reflect the values that I hold. In some cases that has meant selling out of stocks when I did not agree with a company's values.

I also revised my will and trust and made sure that my fund is a beneficiary of my estate. At a much deeper level, I've continued to work at growing in my own personal generosity. It's a work in progress.

I worked to fix my proverbial leaky pipes. Fixing leaky pipes is something I often challenge ministry leaders—whether CEOs, presidents, development directors, board members, or other fundraising staff—to make sure they've addressed.

In my view, it is very difficult to be an effective fundraiser if you are not experiencing the things that your donors are experiencing. Are you stretching in your own generosity? What's your major gift? Do you use a donor advised fund? Does your estate include charitable giving?

“As we fix our own leaky pipes, we'll see greater generosity from the people we serve. I guarantee it.”

# Have You Seen Your Website Lately?



Written by Barry Waters  
Director,  
Customer Success,  
iDonate

When was the last time you looked at your website? What were you looking for? Of course, it should be pleasing to the eye. We are all drawn to attractive things. But what is your website sharing with its viewers? What do you want your website to do for you?



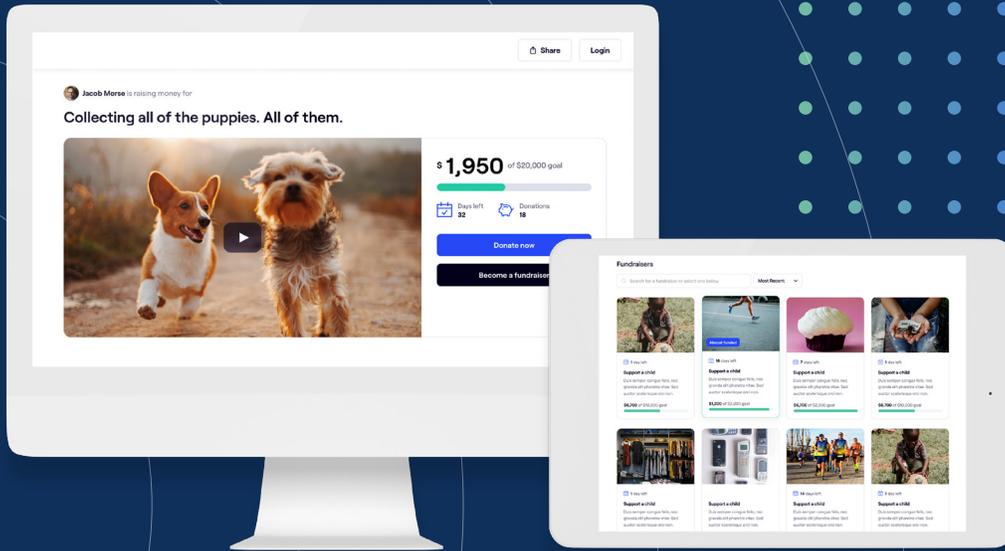
**People coming to your website have an interest in your organization. They want to find out what you're all about. They want to know what you are doing to help those you serve and the results of those efforts.**

In this age of information overload, look at your website and be sure it is saying what you want it to say. Is it easy for anyone viewing the site to understand your mission and your effectiveness? Be strategic about the information shown upon the initial load of the home page. While a scroll or click is not much effort, it is more effort than some viewers are willing to make.

Also consider, everyone viewing your website is a potential donor. How easy is it for them to give? Do you have a donate button on your home page? Is it easy to locate? Once they find your giving form, how easy is it to give? Are there fields on the form you don't really need? It may be worth examining what data is useful. If you are collecting data you don't use from the giving form, consider removing the fields from the form. If your giving form has a mechanism to encourage donors to become recurring donors, turn that on! It's easier to keep a donor than find a new one.

A wealth of information about your organization can and should be available through your website. Just take a quick look at your site and try to view it through the eyes of a first-time visitor. Is there something you see that draws you in and makes you want to know more? Can you quickly see what the organization is doing and is it easy for the first-time visitor to give once they see how important your work really is? Make the site beautiful, but don't overdo it. Remember, sometimes less is more.

iDonate.



# We're constantly evolving and enhancing

the iDonate platform to make your fundraising experience the best it can possibly be.

The latest enhancements to the iDonate platform include refreshed style updates for our peer-to-peer fundraising solution that help you highlight actions to raise more funds through your best advocates. Easily set goals, encourage a little friendly competition with a fundraising goal meter, and inspire giving with personal stories and real-time reactions to donations on a dynamic timeline, right on the fundraising page.

**We've made it easier than ever for your supporters to create, personalize, and share campaigns with their networks...are you ready to raise more?**

Find out how at  
[www.idonate.com/webinarspotlight](http://www.idonate.com/webinarspotlight)