

# Connected Giving

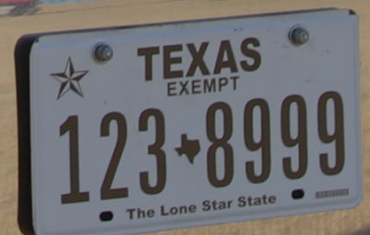
THE SAFE ALLIANCE

**Making  
Personal  
Connections  
One Thank You  
at a Time**

**+ Why Brand  
Consistency Matters**

iDonate

MAY 2022



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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).



PERSONAL TOUCH IN A DIGITAL AGE

W

elcome to another edition

of Connected Giving. We continue to receive great responses to this magazine and we're excited about the momentum of bringing its content to you. We hope in some way it will encourage or even inspire you to continue to change the world with your mission.

This issue's featured organization, SAFE Alliance, brings to light tough subjects that are hard to talk about: sexual assault and domestic violence. According to their website,

- **1 in 3 women will be impacted by sexual assault or domestic violence during their lifetime.**
- **In the US, 3 women are killed every day by an intimate partner.**
- **1 in every 4 girls and 1 in every 6 boys will be sexually assaulted before their 18th birthday.**

Just writing these figures down is unsettling, much less imagining the trauma faced by victims on a daily basis.

SAFE Alliance's goal is to provide hope and healing to those impacted by domestic violence and sexual assault. Not

only is this organization doing a great job of meeting the definition of that mission, they offer a personal touch that few in the industry practice.

SAFE writes a personal handwritten thank you to each of its donors.

We're a tech company; we talk to nonprofits every day about the value of tech and automation. But it's still hard to replace the "blocking and tackling" of addressing your supporters in a personal note. That's one reason why SAFE is a highly successful and fast-growing organization. People are giving and their contributions are changing the world.

We call ourselves "do-gooders" at iDonate because we acknowledge that our mission is to come alongside great organizations like SAFE Alliance and help in any way we can. We're honored to be a small part of the good they're doing in the world, and grateful that organizations like SAFE are willing to take on such tough problems in society.

I hope you enjoy this issue and particularly hope you're inspired.



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

# One Thank You at a Time

It's only two words, two syllables, and takes less than a second to say, but it comes with a deeper meaning and heartfelt expression of gratitude. It doesn't take much to say it, but the value it brings is worth so much more.

Thank you.

These are two words that SAFE Alliance in Austin, Texas put to heart every day. The work they do for the greater Austin community isn't light, so these "thank yous" directed toward their growing list of donors are a significant part of their mission.

SAFE is an acronym for "Stop Abuse for Everyone." Their focus isn't just about tackling one specific issue. It's part of a larger web in which many different forms of abuse are connected. This sort of work requires an immense amount of dedication and belief that every donation gathered is one that can be used for a life-changing moment.

"Our mission is to stop all forms of abuse," Chief Development Officer Angela Glode said. "This includes child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and different forms of racism and depression. We also want to know where and why people are hurt by others, how we help the folks who are hurt in the moment, and how we stop that hurt in the future.

"We work to put that prevention in place and support people to have healthy relationships all the way around."

## Growing Stewardship

The seeds for SAFE's work were sown in the 1970s as the Austin Rape Crisis Center and the Center for Battered Women first opened. Their work was immediately visible and widely acclaimed on a national level. That continued when both entities merged into one to become SafePlace in 1998, and in 2015 joined forces with the Austin





Children's Shelter to further expand their network of services for people of all ages.

Today, SAFE has 33 programs in total. Each one has its own primary focus, but is tied back to SAFE's five-word mission and namesake – to stop abuse for everyone. These programs include services within shelter and housing, face-to-face and digital support, prevention and education, and advocacy.

Every year, SAFE will ultimately serve thousands of men, women, and children across all its services. Between April 1 and September 30, 2021 alone, SAFE helped more than 3,600 youths and adults, logging nearly 11,000 contacts via phone, text, or walk-in meeting through their SAFEline. In their fiscal year of 2020-21, they served more than 6,000 youths and adults with another 21,000+ contacts through their SAFEline.

With the high number of youth and adults being helped every year, the majority of SAFE's expenses go toward their programs and services—in 2020, over 85% of SAFE's expenses were for these programs. Because of this, SAFE views their relationship with its donors as vital.

In 2020, SAFE brought in close to \$9 million in philanthropic giving. Of that amount, \$1.8 million was raised through digital, a number that more than doubled since 2019. SAFE has utilized advanced technology tools such as building out comprehensive event pages for its larger events each year, like their Fore the Children Golf Tournament and SAFE Together Celebration Luncheon. They also created separate webpages with their own donation forms for their community groups, like SAFE Young Professionals, a group designed for high school and college-aged professionals in Austin.

As SAFE employs these advanced technology solutions to give donors an easier way to give, getting them to do so can be attributed to SAFE consistently building a closer connection with its donor audience.

"It's called our stewardship strategy, so we're making sure that they're getting all the extra special attention no matter what donation amount they're giving," Director of Development Heather Henry said. "Because we're continually asking people, we're continually thanking them and continually building that relationship with more calls, more personal emails, more personal touches — we're seeing enormous growth."

The key word in that quote is "personal." For SAFE, it doesn't get more personal than a pen and paper.

"I strongly believe in the power of a handwritten note," Henry added. "It's novel these days. I think for a lot of people now it's probably the trend to stop investing in physical mail, but when everybody is doing that, and we continue with personal notes, it becomes special."

And these handwritten notes have continued to pay big dividends.

"We actually had a brand-new donor at the end of the year give \$20,000. We quickly followed up with a handwritten thank you note, and not even three months later she sent in another check for \$50,000," Henry said.



# How to Best Tell the Story

As the handwritten notes bring a personal touch, SAFE makes sure to find time throughout the year for in-person events with the community. Along with their golf tournament and luncheon, every year SAFE hosts their \$1 million Storybook Gala to help raise money. They also host an event called Touch-A-Truck, which gives kids (and even adults) the opportunity to “touch, explore, and climb on just about any vehicle they can imagine.”

Details like the thank-you notes and interactive events are a product of SAFE’s relationship with its donors. By building that base, SAFE can then increase its recurring donor group, or “everyday heroes” as SAFE calls them.

In the last two years, SAFE has doubled its recurring donorship. This is due to the extensive drip marketing campaigns that SAFE continually runs. SAFE uses both print and digital to working together — as they run direct mail campaigns, digital campaigns, integrated social writing, and email follow-ups side by side. Whether it is a physical or digital newsletter, each one will still link back to the same online donation page. All of this is part of SAFE’s commitment to not just getting its own name in the

public eye, but making sure the stories of survival are heard.

SAFE’s communications do more than just ask for money. The solicitation of funds is a natural part of the work, but for SAFE it is more important that they tell the stories of the people they have helped.

“For us, it’s not how they are when they walk in, it’s how they are when they walk out,” Glode said. “More than anything, we tell it through a person’s story and how our full set of services supported them.”

ANGELA GLODE, THE SAFE ALLIANCE  
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

SAFE found their own recipe of digital and direct mail to tell those stories. For all the digital donations that come in, there is a handwritten “thank you” soon to follow. In any communication that SAFE sends out, it is part of their goal to make sure they shed as much light as possible on the effects of abuse and the victims within.



Education, prevention, and advocacy are three major parts of the overall mission. For SAFE, telling the stories of victims and explaining why abuse occurs is impossible without looking at the larger picture. As Glode explains it, abuse in all forms is highly connected.

“Every single program has incredible stories, and so a lot of what we do is to try and tell their stories and talk about how for every person who walks in is going to have a different set of needs,” Glode said. “We want to show this is why these people came to SAFE, this is what was happening, this is what we helped them with, and this is where they are now.

**“Our story is to try and capture that whole journey.”**



# Not “Either/Or” but “Both/And”




Written by Michael Baker,  
Senior Director of Client  
Services, iDonate

Like SAFE, you probably have your own collection of stories to tell. As SAFE has shown, their ability to have each donor engagement lead directly back to their iDonate donation page is a testament to their hard work. They have found a way to make advanced technology work in their own way.

How can SAFE's method work for you? Let's start with a bit of context. For the past 20 or so years, people have been predicting the demise of direct mail as web technology continues to advance and the cost of direct mail continues to increase. We tend to evaluate direct mail and technology against one another as if there is a competition between the two channels to determine which is the most effective means to reach your donors.

The most successful organizations are asking the question differently, though. Rather than trying to determine if technology OR direct mail is better to reach a particular segment of donors, organizations need to realize that the answer — almost across the board — is to use direct mail AND technology.

We notice examples of this approach across the for-profit world. There is a reason that we see TV commercials, print ads, radio ads, social media ads, etc. for major consumer brands. These brands know that their customers consume various types of media, so they make an effort to be where their customers are.



One of the best examples I have seen came from Amazon. Amazon is the largest e-commerce retailer in the world. They have millions of website visits every day. Amazon Prime has millions of subscribers in the US. I use Amazon all the time and you probably do as well.

So what did the largest, most well-known online retailer do to drive additional sales for kids' toys at Christmas time last year? Did they send multiple targeted emails to customers based on their purchase history? Of course. Did they run social ads to drive traffic to their site? Of course. They didn't become the largest online retailer without being experts in digital marketing.

But they didn't stop there. Starting in late 2018, they also mailed a large catalog to millions of parents, featuring many of their most popular gifts. We received a catalog last Christmas. My youngest daughter never would have gone to Amazon.com to see all of those toys, but she looked through that catalog over and over, circling everything she

wanted for Christmas. It was a brilliant strategy by Amazon.

If the largest online retailer in the world still uses traditional offline channels to complement their online marketing, how much more important is it that nonprofits use the same approach? A physical newsletter, brochure, or event flyer can be a great complement to your digital strategy. Your end goal should be to drive your donors to your online donation page. If you give your donor base another avenue to get there, possibly picking up new donors along the way, you just might start seeing your interaction and retention rates go up — just like SAFE.

**Your mission is too important for you to not pursue donors in all the channels they use regularly — including mail, email, social media, and others.**



# Modernize donor giving experiences to increase conversion rates.



If Amazon's systems worked like today's nonprofits, Barnes and Noble would still be a thriving business.

## The future of giving is a world where online donation is easy.

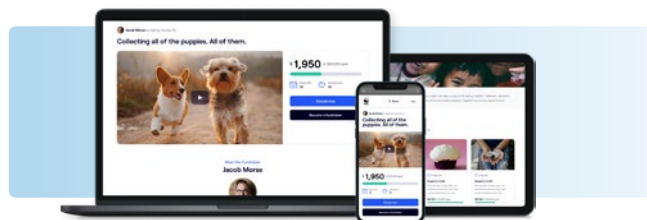
**If your storefront is old and run-down, it may be repelling the very donors you want to attract.** Would Amazon be the number one retailer in the world if its e-commerce engine required you to reenter personal or payment information with every purchase? Would Uber be the leader in ridesharing if you had to call an 800 number like you would for Yellow Cab and pay in cash?

It really is this simple. If you want to grow your cause, make it easy for your donors to give. Provide giving experiences that know them, inspire them, and make it easy for them to give in 10 seconds or less.

At iDonate, we believe in creating great giving experiences for today's donors. That means no more bouncing off your site to another landing page for a giving form. No more long, tortuous information

requests. No more confusing asks that take you to a deep, dark hole, never to be accounted for.

### Just clean, elegant, great giving experiences.



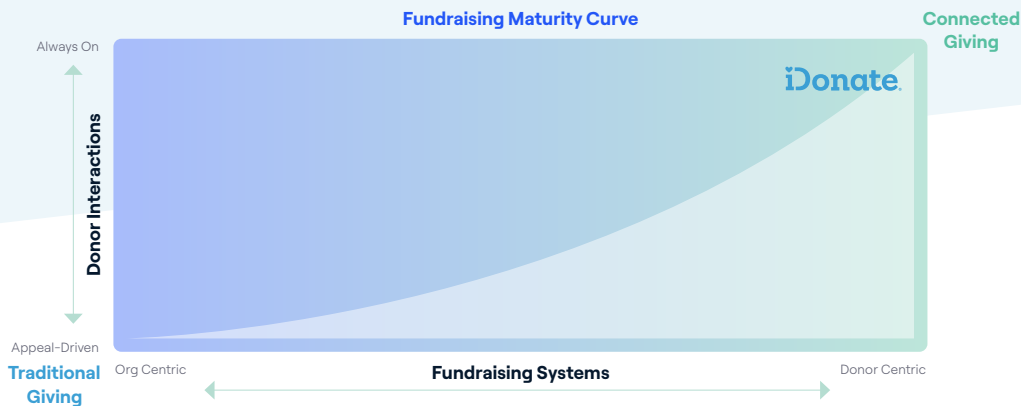
Personalized to your preferences. Connected to a specific need. And thoughtful enough to understand the impact of what you just gave.

Why should giving to your nonprofit be any less of an experience than buying any other product or service online?

**START**

modernizing your giving experiences. Your donors will reward you for it.

# The future of giving starts with iDonate.



## The future of giving starts with iDonate's Connected Giving platform.

iDonate is the digital giving system your organization has been waiting for. It's the first and only system built on a **Connected Giving platform** that:

- Provides great giving experiences to donors.
- Integrates multiple giving channels under one roof.
- Is built on an enterprise-ready infrastructure that automates connected giving processes; shares data seamlessly; and automates payment processing.

Our customers have already started executing the six accelerators outlined in this ebook and are reaping disproportionate gains in growing giving. They are proactively managing the digital discipline in the modern world.

To find out more about how you can become the next success story, check out iDonate at:

[www.idonate.com/connected-giving](http://www.idonate.com/connected-giving)

[info@idonate.com](mailto:info@idonate.com)   

iDonate customers ARE connected giving leaders, and they have the results to show for it.

**30%**

Revenue Growth

**20%**

Giving Online

**50%**

Retention Rates

**6x**

Reductions in Abandonment Rates

**Lowest Cost-**

of-Ownership on the Market Today

# Brand Consistency

When a brand is consistent in how it looks; the message it conveys; how it makes people feel; and what it delivers day in and day out; people know what to expect and how to engage. When people know what to expect, they begin to trust. For a Connected Giving org, trust-building lays the foundation that makes the connection feasible. Without trust, there is no connection.

## What Makes a Consistent Brand?

A consistent brand representation means that no matter where the donor finds your nonprofit, it looks, feels, sounds, and works the same way.



## Why is Brand Consistency Important?

People trust brands they recognize and know. Trust plays a key role in the purchasing decisions people make and the decision to share with their friends.



**Consistent brand representation across all platforms increases revenue by 23%.** (Lucidpress, 2019)



**It takes 5 to 7 impressions for a person to remember a brand.** (SmallBiz)



**90% of consumers expect to have a similar experience with a brand across platforms.** (TailorBrand)

## The Nonprofit Brand

Nonprofits are facing an uphill battle in creating trust among potential donors.

**60%** of people worldwide don't trust a nonprofit to fulfill its mission. (Captrust)

But, there are ways to begin to establish brand consistency — the first critical step in earning donor trust:

- 1 **Audit all brand touchpoints.** Make note of where the experience is the same, different, and disconnected.
- 2 **Create a donor journey.** Write down how, when, where donors find your nonprofit — and once they find you, what do they do?
- 3 **Create brand guidelines.** A rule book of the dos and don'ts of representing your brand. Everything from colors, to fonts, to sizes, to displays.
- 4 **Recreate brand touchpoints.** The goal is to create touchpoints that follow the donor journey. Remove the ones that are no longer applicable and ensure the ones left are consistent.

Contact the iDonate team at [info@idonate.com](mailto:info@idonate.com) for more information on how your organization can become a Connected Giving org.



# Why Customer Feedback is Critical to an Aligned Brand Experience



Written by  
Michael David,  
Sr. Vice President -  
Product, iDonate



## Why do your donors give?

It probably seems like a rhetorical, maybe even an absurd, question. But do you know? Forget what you know about your internal mission statements, marketing spend, email campaigns, social media presence — even your frictionless giving form deployed on your amazing website. Why do your donors give to you? What makes them click the “give now” button?

In my world as a product leader, we spend lots of time, effort, and money trying to divine what drives behavior and what problems we can solve with advanced technology. There are tools like Google Analytics, tag managers, heat maps, constituent mapping, data process diagrams, and countless other things that we rely on to tell us what users think, feel, and need.

In your world, you might use some of the same tools in the noble attempt to understand what makes a difference when it comes to conversion.

Recently, the folks here at iDonate gathered a group of clients for two days and listened to what they’re striving for, what they need, and what kinds

of things help and hinder them. Our time together was valuable beyond measure, especially for understanding the real world needs of our users and for clarifying the importance of what we offer from a product perspective. I’ll tell you a secret — those conversations ALWAYS tell us more than the fancy tools.

I believe that those same types of conversations hold great value for nonprofits as well. What is it about your cause, your mission, your story, or your relationships that triggers your donors to engage with their dollars? Have you asked them? (And by that, I mean, have you actually had a direct conversation with your donors and asked them?)

## Ask the right questions

We (humans) are really good at biases. One of the most dangerous for our purposes is confirmation bias. A lot of times, this shows up in what or how we ask a question. For example, if you asked a donor with a long history of giving to your organization, “do you believe in our mission?” They would of course say, “yes.” But is that why they give?

We have to make sure we’re asking the right

questions. The right questions are almost never yes/no questions. The right questions have answers that have the possibility/probability to surprise us, challenge our hypothesis, and hopefully spur more questions. The goal of your question asking is to learn — so what value is asking questions you already know the answer to?

**Maybe more insightful question(s) might be:**

- What specifically was it that prompted you to make your last gift?
- What about your giving experience do you like?
- What about your giving experience is frustrating?
- Why is supporting us important to you?

## Ask the right people

Remember those biases? We fall into them in other ways as well. Just like asking questions you know the answer to is valueless, so is asking people who think just like you. Avoid the echo chamber of people who will tell you what you expect and what you want to hear.

There's a great story from WWII of allied forces looking at damaged areas on bombers returning from missions and suggesting that greater armor was needed in those areas most hit. Mathematician Abraham Wald had a different idea. Using his work in "survivorship bias," Wald pointed out that the designers shouldn't be looking at the aircraft that survived. Instead, they should be evaluating the bombers that didn't make it back.

Likewise, just asking our board members and established donors we have relationships with might seem safe/easy. But to find the answers we truly need, we should also be looking to people who don't successfully engage with our organizations.

What's the danger in talking to a lapsed or non-converted donor? They have already decided not to give money to your cause. Ask them why! Learn from them, and at the end of your conversation find a way to make it worth their time, because more than likely it will have been worth your time.

## Don't problem solve — ask more questions

When you're having these conversations, inevitably you will get feedback or answers that you know the solution for. Maybe a donor tells you they couldn't submit a donation for a specific program they are passionate about, and you KNOW they can, because you designed it that way. You MUST resist the urge to solve their problem. Your goal here is to gain as much information as you can to solve problems for ALL donors — NOT solve the problem of one donor.

The fact that your donor got lost in the process should be the information you dive into. Ask more questions like, "How did you get to the form?" "What were you expecting the process to be like?" "What did you do when you had that problem?"

Ask every question you can think of to uncover any little last nugget of mindset, experience, expectations, and the exact problem. After all of that, if you must, let someone else follow up with the solution to their problem.



# Make the Most of Matching Gifts

iDonate utilizes the great work of Double the Donation for the corporate matching gifts option on our giving forms. Their technology allows your donors to see if their generosity can be matched by their own employer.

Corporate matching gift programs are offered by thousands of companies, big and small, across the globe. When an employee donates to a nonprofit cause, the employer offers to financially match their contribution. These CSR (corporate social responsibility) opportunities enable nonprofits to raise more; further connect with donors; and forge corporate partnerships.



## 1. Highlighting Opportunities

Many match-eligible donors never know about these programs and, therefore, never request the company matches that they're entitled to. The unfortunate truth is that upwards of 78% of individuals — nearly 20.3 million — employed by companies that match gifts, have not been made aware of the unique giving opportunities available (Double the Donation).

Thousands of nonprofits are taking it upon themselves to close this knowledge gap and begin collecting those well-deserved corporate matches. The first step in this process involves making every donor aware of matching gift initiatives in the first place — and there are many ways to do that.



Share resources on social media. Send an email. Incorporate messaging in a giving appeal. Write a blog post. Include a blurb on a donation page. Reiterate in acknowledgement letters. The list goes on. Just make sure to spread the word.

## 2. Simplifying Requests

At this point, donors should understand what matching gifts are. Yet another critical drop-off point occurs when donors are aware of matching gifts but choose not to pursue them due to the misconception that it takes a great deal of effort. That's where simplifying the matching gift request submission process comes in.





One of the most time-consuming and overwhelming steps for donors is determining whether a gift is eligible for a corporate match and securing that funding. When an organization works to streamline the procedure by providing each donor with personalized employer insights and qualification criteria, the employee will be more likely to complete the process.

Streamlining should include the communication of giving guidelines, complete with donation minimums and maximums, match ratios, qualifying types of nonprofit causes and employee participants, submission request deadlines, and more. And if the company utilizes online request forms, providing direct links to the web page, giving platform, or downloadable PDFs can bring the supporter even closer to their final goal.

### 3. Emphasizing Impact

A donor gives to make a difference for a cause that they care about. They give to organizations they see making a real change in whatever their respective missions may be. And if they don't see the direct effects their own donations would bring, they may not contribute.

When an organization calls attention to matching gift availability, they should stress how these programs can drastically scale up a donation's — and by extension, a nonprofit's — ability to bring real, tangible impact.

#### HERE'S AN EXAMPLE:

**“Jim, your generous donation of \$100 has the potential to double in value, providing \$200 worth of school supplies to children in need — by simply securing a matching donation from your employer. Here's how.”**

Research has shown that emphasizing the prevalence of matching gifts in fundraising appeals has even been known to increase both the likelihood of individuals giving charitably and the size of their gifts (360MatchPro). This is due largely to the idea that matching gifts double the mission impact of their initial donations, leading more nonprofit supporters to give, and to give more.



## Advanced Technology to Amplify Good

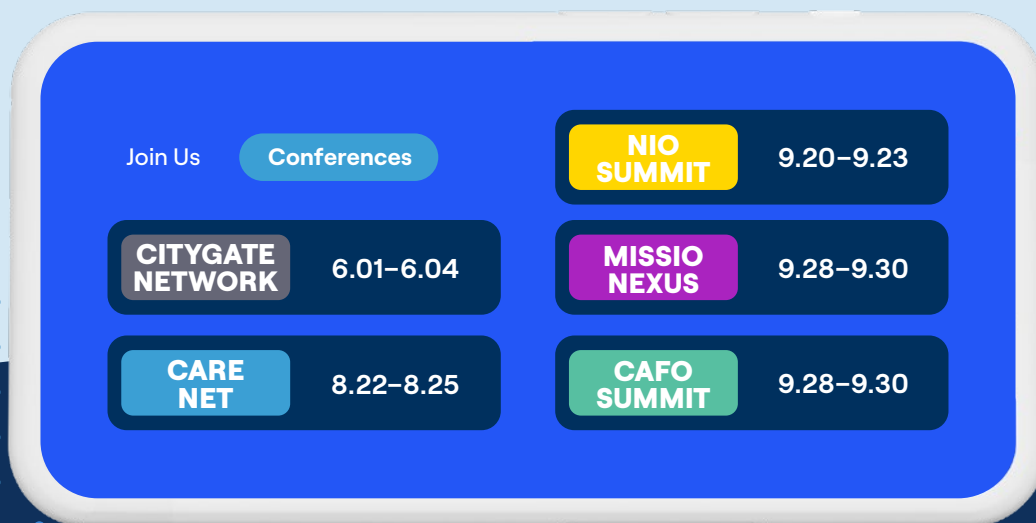
Around here, we see opportunities, not obstacles. Our aim is to activate a more generous world. In support of leading nonprofit organizations, we provide advanced technology designed for the modern digital world.

We have already helped nonprofits everywhere increase and strengthen their digital presence.

## How can we do the same for yours?

Meet the iDonate team at the **Citygate Network Conference**, **Care Net National Conference**, **NIO Summit**, **Missio Nexus 2022**, and the **CAFO Summit** to learn more.

Or, email [events@idonate.com](mailto:events@idonate.com) to schedule a time to meet.



(877) 410.4431

idonate.com

**iDonate**