

# Thanks a Million: How to Thank Your Donors So They'll Come Back and Give More



Katya Andresen, Network for Good  
Jocelyn Harmon, Care2

# Why we need this call today

- **Study: 2 million donors to 50 nonprofits** around the world.
- 70% of the nonprofits **didn't send a followup email within one month.**
- **37% did not send a thank you email.**

-eCampaigning Review Study

<http://www.advocacyonline.net/ecr09>

# Agenda

- What is gratitude?
- So what and who cares?
- 4 components of a good thank-you
- Learn from the best
- More resources for you

# What is gratitude?

“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, "thank you," that would suffice.”

– Meister Eckhart

“The deepest craving of human nature is the need to be appreciated.”

– William James

# So what and who cares?

1. **SURVIVAL:** The number one reason that donors stop supporting a nonprofit is the way they were treated by the nonprofit.
2. **SUCCESS:** Your gratitude helps bond a donor to your cause.
3. **DIFFERENTIATION:** Most nonprofits are terrible at it. If you're good, you stand out.
4. **MANNERS:** Saying "thanks" often and well is simply the right thing to do.

# Think about it.

Think about how much time a typical nonprofit spends on generic “outreach,” like newsletters, with the purpose, at least in part, of generating new supporters. If you are so pressed for time, wouldn’t those precious hours be better spent thanking the people who have taken the next step and given you money, no matter how much or through what method?

--Kivi Leroux Miller

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

# 4 parts of a good thank-you

1. Personal
2. Tangible
3. Emotional
4. About the donor, not you!

...and it's done FAST

# Be personal





# Be personal

- Use your email marketing tool sagely.
- Send a handwritten note.
- Pick up the phone.
- Sign it – from a board member, ED.
- Customize, customize, customize!

# The Personal Touch

The typewritten part of the note I received from Ocracoke Child Care is about as short as you can get, something close to “Thanks for the donation. We really appreciate it. This letter is your receipt.” Not much more than that and certainly not remarkable.

But the letter is still on my desk because of what fills up all the white space left under that short official note — this drawing.

-Kivi Leroux Miller



Be tangible.



By <http://www.flickr.com/photos/createdigitalmedia/>

# Be tangible

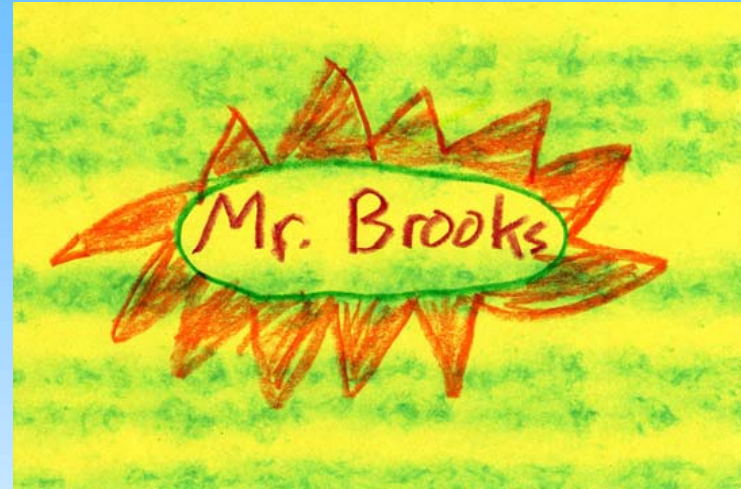
- Connect the thank-you to the ask.
- Show your donors what you're doing with their investments (if they gave before, share their total giving/impact).
- Tell ONE specific story of how your donor's gift is making a difference.
- Invite your donor to tour your facility and meet the people you serve.

# Donors Choose: The Gold Standard

I received hand-drawn thank you cards from the kids I bought a classroom microphone for. About 40 letters, most with drawings -- sweet, funny, heartfelt, real. They also pointed me to where on the web I can hear their recording of "Hot Cross Buns," made with "my" microphone. If you'd like to hear them too, visit the link below. In terms of emotional ROI, I'd say that gift was among the best charitable donations I've ever made.

--Jeff Brooks, TrueSense

<http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpage/s/JRoberts1/files/Taylor's%20Hot%20Cross%20Buns.wav>



# Be creative



Gratitude tag by eekim <http://www.flickr.com/photos/eekim/>

# Be creative.

- Use beautiful stationery.
- Send an e-card (from Care2!).
- Write in your own hand.
- Send a photo or video of your work.
- Let your volunteers, service recipients, other donors speak for you.

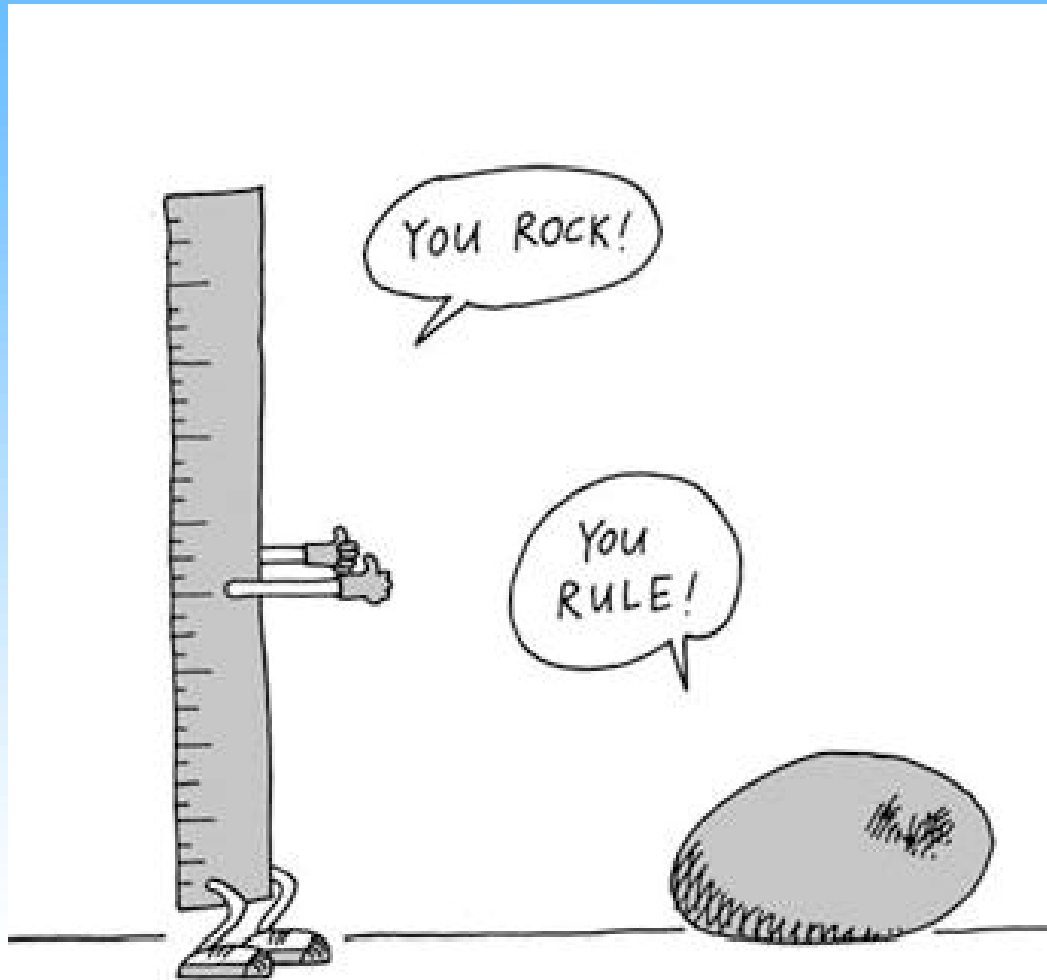
# Creativity in Action



<http://afine2.wordpress.com/2009/12/24/best-videos-of-2009/>



# Make it about them, not you!



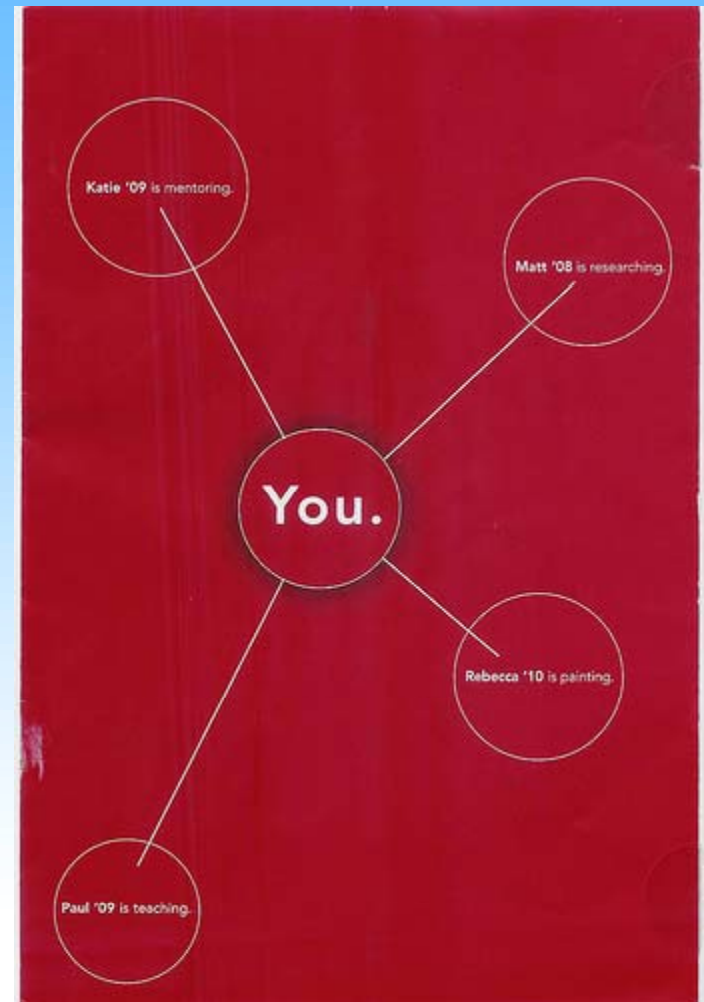
# Make it about them, not you!

- Don't be a Nonprofit Narcissist!
- Make your donors the subject of your communications.
- Give them all the credit.
- List THEIR accomplishments.
- Make them feel proud and part of something bigger.

# Haverford College Appeal

You can almost see the line over to me. Open it up and it says, “Haverfordians make a difference in the world through their support.” It’s about me, people I can help, and the difference we all make. I love this appeal because it connects to the reader literally and emotionally.

--Katya



# Bonus

- Be positive. – Don't be Pollyanna but do imbue all your communications with a sense of hope.
- Again, be timely.

# Learn from the Best

The screenshot shows the Pride Foundation website with a navigation bar containing links for About Us, Ways To Give, Scholarships, Grants, Programs, and Get Local. The main banner features the title 'Breaking Through' and 'GRATITUDE REPORT 2008-2009' over a background image of a small green plant growing through a crack in asphalt. A sidebar on the right lists links for FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PROFILES, DONORS, GRANTS, SCHOLARS, and FINANCIALS. Below the banner are three content sections: 'GRANTS & SCHOLARS' with a photo of three people and a call to action; 'FINANCIAL REPORT' with a pie chart and a call to action; and 'PROFILES' with a photo of a group of people and a call to action.

Stay in touch with our eNewsletter  [60](#) [Blog](#) [Contact](#)

**Pride**  
FOUNDATION

[About Us](#) [Ways To Give](#) [Scholarships](#) [Grants](#) [Programs](#) [Get Local](#)

# Breaking Through

GRATITUDE REPORT 2008-2009

[FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR](#)

[PROFILES](#)

[DONORS](#)

[GRANTS](#)

[SCHOLARS](#)

[FINANCIALS](#)

[DOWNLOAD 2009 REPORT \(4MB, PDF\)](#)

## GRANTS & SCHOLARS

Your contribution to Pride Foundation helps to change lives and build real equality.

[GRANTS](#)

[SCHOLARS](#)



## FINANCIAL REPORT

Pride Foundation increased its funding over the last year—despite the challenging economic climate.

[LEARN MORE](#)



## PROFILES



Listen and be inspired by stories from students, non-profits and leaders working for LGBT equality.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# Learn from the best



*Thank You!*

Dear [[First Name]],

Happy New Year!

I am writing to you today to simply say "thank you."

2009 was an amazing year for animals. As I outlined in my [end of year video](#), IFAW was able to rescue, protect, and care for so many animals in crisis around the world.

Whether you donated to help one of our campaigns, sent an email to an official on our behalf, spread the word about the importance of protecting animals and their habitats, or helped animals in your own community - **I can't thank you enough.**

Our lifesaving work depends on you - without your support we simply couldn't help the many animals we do.

# Learn from the Best

**Saving Shelter Pets** would like to extend a heartfelt “thank you” to each and every one of you who donated and helped us to spread the word about our participation in the contest. We have made some new friends through this experience, and reconnected with some old ones too – and for this we are truly grateful.

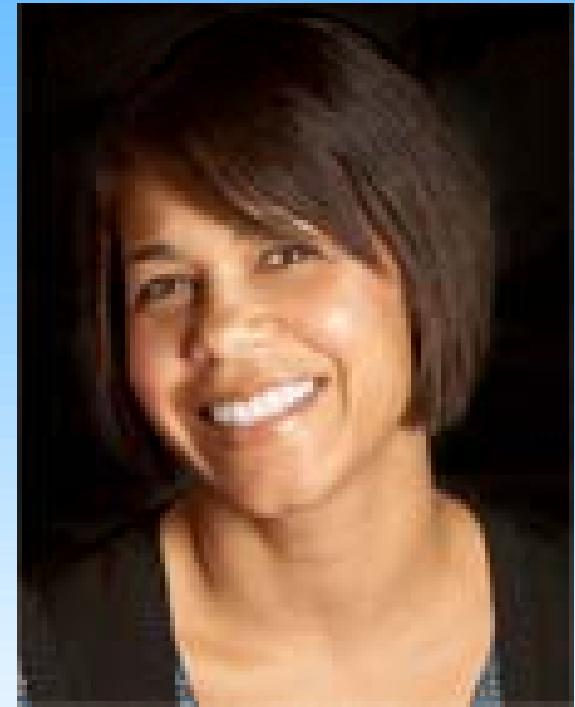
\$5,186 of the 6 Degrees donations has already been used to save over 30 dogs & puppies from death row, including the ones pictured below. [Adorable photos of dogs were included.]

# More resources

- *The Art of Recognizing and Thanking Your Donors* by Terry Axelrod, author of *The Joy of Fundraising*
- *Bring Back That (Supporter's) Loving Feeling* by Katya Andresen in *Nonprofit Marketing Blog*
- *The Fine (Yet Simple) Art of "Thank You"* by Jocelyn Harmon in *Fundraising Success*
- *Kivi Leroux Miller – posts and webinars at [www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com](http://www.nonprofitmarketingguide.com)*



# Connect with Us!



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