Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Sustainable Funding

Final Report

June 3, 2013 to July 31, 2013

Kelsey Robinson

Summary

This report will discuss the outcomes of the use of online fundraising to raise money for the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter and Kings Community Action Organization (KCAO). A total of $868 was raised for the shelter in a 41-day period (from June 20, 2013 to July 31, 2013). The project was executed by an intern with the organization, after her proposal was reviewed by Jeff Garner (executive director) and Joey Cox (director of Intervention, Prevention, and Supportive Services department).

As many nonprofit organizations and programs tend to be, the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter was in need of a consistent source of funding. A solution for this issue presented itself in the form of online fundraising sites. The decision was that one of these sites would be used to raise money for the shelter and its exposure would be augmented with the use of social media. The crowdsource fundraising site CrowdRise was used in conjunction with Facebook and LinkedIn to create the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative. In addition to using CrowdRise, other methods of fundraising and advertising that were used included flyers about the initiative that were handed out at events, attendance at a book signing with a portion of the proceeds to go to the women's shelter, a discussion about the initiative on an Internet talk show, and two articles in the local newspaper.

The results of the initiative were a grand total of $868 raised, with $160 in physical donations and $708 in donations through CrowdRise. Some of the conclusions reached from the project were that, without a core network of donors, it is difficult to attain recurring donations through an online site. However, CrowdRise can still be used in the future for one-time fundraisers. Other conclusions were that physical donation forms should be passed out to attendees at future events, and a key way to acquire future recurring donors is to create a method of credit card processing through PayPal or another website.

Introduction: Creating Alternate Funding for the Shelter

The Barbara Saville Women's Shelter was established in 1982 by KCAO and named in honor of the late Barbara Saville, a KCAO employee who was an advocate for victims of domestic violence. The women's shelter provides a safe and secure living environment for women and children who are seeking refuge from domestic violence or are homeless due to unforeseen circumstances and situations.

The intern has worked for KCAO in the past as a volunteer at Preston Green Preschool, and has a passion for helping others, which is why she searched out an opportunity to help the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter. The purpose of this endeavor was to create a campaign to earn both in-kind and monetary donations for the shelter over the course of approximately 2 months, from June 3, 2013 to August 1, 2013.

The primary goal of the project was to create a sustainable online monetary donation fund for the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter by August 1, 2013. In addition, the project would attempt to include the option of donating items to the shelter's business office or KCAO's main office. In addition, the secondary goal was to create a 2-month online fundraising initiative through social media and a fundraising website with the target of raising $5,000 for the shelter's needs by July 31, 2013.

The intern was provided with a physical space in the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Business Office on 1208 N. Douty Street in Hanford, as well as a computer and printing capability. Before beginning research, the intern completed the necessary background and employment clearance, and was introduced to key staff at KCAO. This included Joey Cox (director of the Intervention, Prevention, and Supportive Services department), Margarita Alcala, Stacy Mustin (staff at the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter), Elena Avila, and Alma Loza (staff at the shelter business office). During the first week of employment, the intern researched the history of KCAO and the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter, and was also given a tour of the shelter and an overview of the shelter's purpose.

Implementation: Choosing the Fundraising Engine and Creating the Initiative

1. Researching Social Media for the Project

To begin the project, research was done on different methods of sustainable fundraising and fundraising websites, as well as projects that had been undertaken in the past by the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter.

The five fundraising sites that were originally considered for use were CrowdRise, Fundly, Givezooks!, Rally, and Razoo. All five had diverse and differing methods of raising money for individuals and/or nonprofit organizations. *Figure 1* shows a table that compares and contrasts various aspects of each site, including social media connections, the cost of use, and how the nonprofit organization receives its donations from the site. Also included in the table is information on customization of each site and whether or not the site offers a separate widget. A widget is an application that can be embedded into another site. They can be things such as clocks, advertisements, or, in the case of this project, small boxes that link to the fundraising sites that a visitor can donate through.

The three websites that were first omitted were Givezooks, Rally, and Razoo. Givezooks was oriented more towards aiding nonprofits with fundraising tips, and the site was not fun or engaging for users or donors. Rally did not have enough popularity online based on articles that had been read, and the aesthetic design of Razoo was unappealing and it was difficult to browse the site and find examples of fundraisers. The two platforms that were then debated between were CrowdRise and Fundly. While Fundly was also a strong choice because of its simple interface and friendly atmosphere, CrowdRise was ultimately picked because it was extremely popular, backed by celebrities, and ranked highly in several articles on online crowdsourcing. The conversational tone and inviting nature and the site's promotional offers of prizes to donors were also engaging.

Figure 1

Comparisons of Fundraising Websites

Website	% of donation deducted	Cost	How nonprofits receive $$	Social media connection	Widget, customization etc.	Donation info for donors
Fundly	4.9% processing fee with 3% credit card fee	Free	Account through WePay, funds are withdrawn	Automatically broadcasts to FB, features FB-connected supporters, account can be connected to FB	Video and photo gallery, logos, text content, supporter activity feed, updates and alerts	Tax-deductible (depending), credit and debit
Rally	5.75% processing fee	Free	Bank account can be linked to Rally	Supporters can be invited through FB,	Design can be customized, describe cause	Taken through eCheck, amounts can be

	including credit card		fundraiser	Fan fundraising through Rally	on page, customize donation details	specified, email confirmation is sent to donors, bank account can be linked
Razoo	4.9% fee	Free(?) *Must be listed with Razoo	Received around the 10th, mailed to the organization address	Facebook widget available,	Widget possible with customizable colors	Recurring donations, credit/debit donations tax-deductible receipts thru Network for Good
Crowdrise	4.95% fee plus $1/under $25, $2.50/over 25, includes credit card fees	Free (basic account)	Lump sum per 30 days on the 15th of the month, or as donations come in	Facebook sharing, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, LinkedIn	Photo/video uploading, fundraiser or event pages possible, widget available for other websites	Payment: Network for Good (monthly) or Amazon (real time) Mobile donations, Email receipts, tax-deductible
Givezooks	2% to start	Yes (monthly fees)	From donors to bank account	Yes	Wishlist, campaign, event, grassroots options	Credit card, checks, wires, stock, pledges Donors receive custom gift receipts

Other fundraising platforms that were researched but not chosen were Fundrazr and Causes. Fundrazr works primarily through social networks and not its own power, using Facebook, Twitter, and email to market the fundraiser. Campaigns that are done through Fundrazr can also be shared on websites and blogs, but a PayPal account is required to collect donations. Causes.org was created by Facebook and works in direct conjunction with the site. Organizations and individuals can choose to hold a fundraiser, a petition, or a pledge campaign and market through Facebook to their supporters.

In addition to exploring fundraising sites, the different uses and popularity levels of different social media platforms were researched. This was done because social media sites would be used in conjunction with the fundraiser to spread the word. The sites that were focused on were Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Google+, and LinkedIn. Twitter and Google+ were dismissed immediately. For Twitter, it would take a significant amount of time to amass enough followers to spread the word about the fundraiser. For Google+, the site was oriented more towards video chatting and "communities" rather than forwarding a message about the initiative. Tumblr, a popular blogging platform, was only used to spread the word once, because the site can be unprofessional at times.

Facebook was utilized from the start because of the ease of sharing information and links, and its immense popularity. In addition, all of the fundraising sites that were considered were linked in some way to Facebook, and KCAO has its own Facebook page with 72 "likes" that could be used to forward information about the fundraiser. LinkedIn was also used because it is a professional networking site, and had the potential of forming connections with people who possessed the money necessary to make large contributions.

Ultimately, CrowdRise was chosen for the fundraising site because of its versatility, casual atmosphere, promotions, and social media connections. Facebook and LinkedIn were chosen as the primary social media sites because of their popularity. Facebook was used for its ease of share and networking, and LinkedIn was used for its professionalism.

2. Scope of Work and Utilizing CrowdRise for KCAO

To raise money for a cause on CrowdRise, it must be done as an individual or a nonprofit organization in the name of a charity (exhibit 1) or an event (exhibit 2). Money can be donated to a charity such as the Red Cross charity itself, or donated to a fundraiser *for* the Red Cross, such as a blood drive being held in a certain city. The intern created her own page (exhibit 3) so money could be given to a few causes as an individual to understand the donation process. In addition to creating a personal page on CrowdRise, the intern also researched the financial and billing information for CrowdRise to ensure that the payment methods were safe and secure.
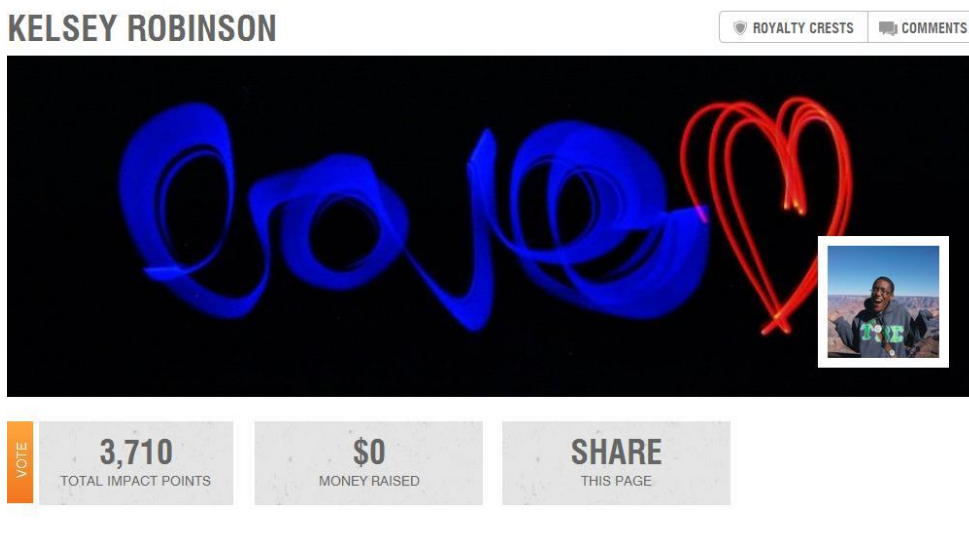
Exhibit 1

Exhibit 2

Exhibit 3

On June 24, 2013, the nonprofit organization page for Kings Community Action Organization (exhibit 4) and the fundraising page for the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative (exhibit 5) were created. The Barbara Saville Women's Initiative initially aimed towards a goal of $10,000, but at the halfway point of the fundraiser this was lowered to $5,000 because donations were not as frequent as anticipated and the likelihood of reaching $10,000 was low. The goal was also lowered because $10,000 was felt to be a high, intimidating number to reach for potential donors who wanted to contribute to the fundraiser. The text shown on both the women's shelter and KCAO page was edited multiple times, and pictures were added and re-

ordered to make the pages more appealing and emotionally riveting, and to help explain the mission of the organization.

Exhibit 4

Exhibit 5

Multiple, diverse activities were done by the intern to spread the word about the fundraiser and earn money using alternative methods. These activities included:

- Creating physical monetary donation forms (attached, document 1),

- Creating flyers to advertise the initiative (attached, document 2), which were posted on the West Hills College Lemoore campus and passed out at the Thursday Night Marketplace in Hanford,

- Being a guest on the online talk show "Talk to Me" with Ernestine Hill,

- Giving a speech at a local book signing for Dr. Minnie Boyer Woodruff, who gave a portion of the proceeds of that night's book sales to the shelter

- Sending a press release about the initiative to the Hanford Sentinel and Fresno Bee newspapers

- Being interviewed for an article on the initiative for the Hanford Sentinel, which was published on July 29, 2013

Frequent posts on Facebook and LinkedIn were also utilized to forward the message about the fundraiser. A post with text asking that people donate to the fundraiser, and occasionally mentioning a promotion on CrowdRise, was made 1-2 times per week from June 3 to July 30, and a similar post was made on LinkedIn once per week. In-kind donations for the women's shelter were also searched for over the course of the project. Local business have been approached in the past about donations, however, responses were minimal or produced intermittent support.

Analysis and Results: Assumptions Versus Reality

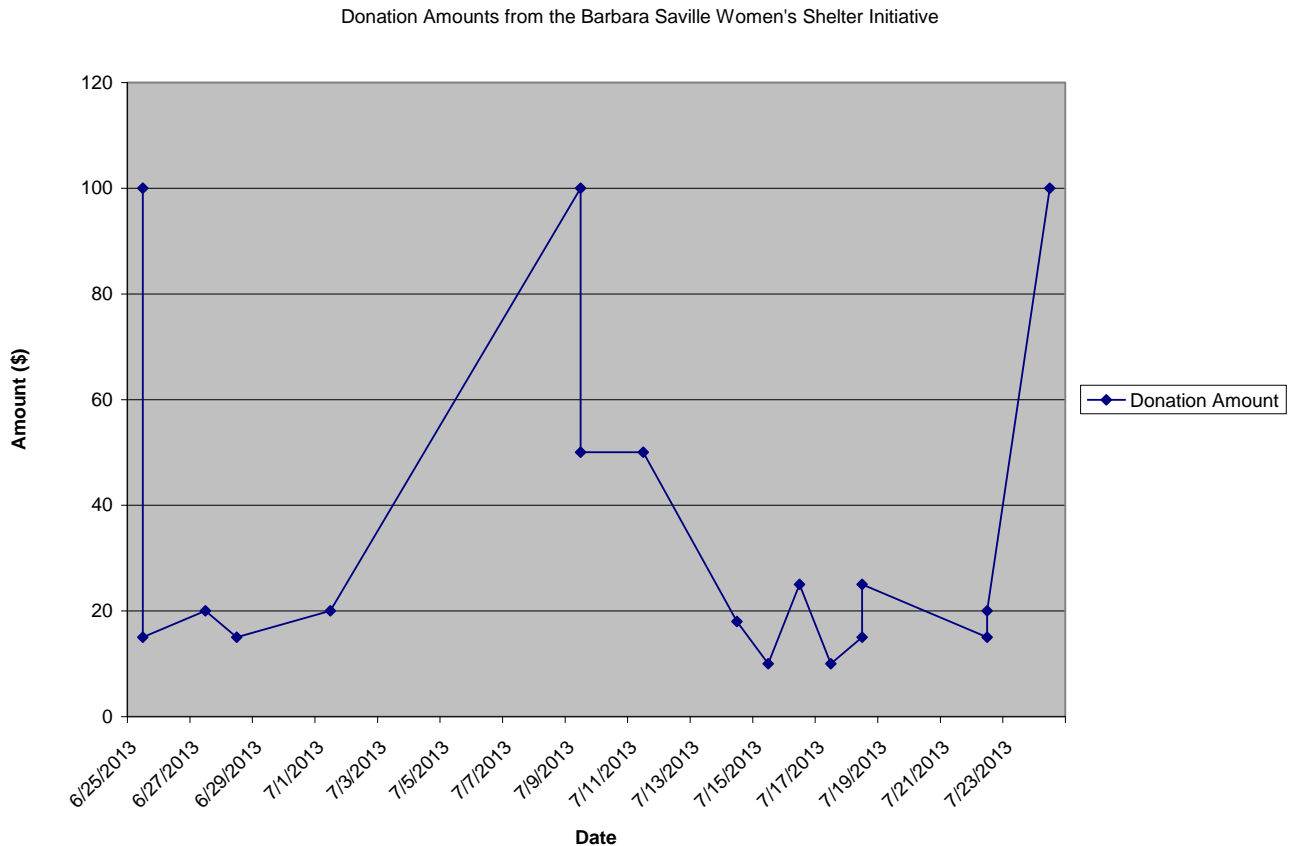1. Prior Assumptions Compared to Results of Online Fundraising

The original assumption about the donation process was that a significant portion of donations (approx. 60%) would come from people who frequent CrowdRise. This was because the popular site has a community of donors, similar to people who commonly use Facebook or Tumblr. Another assumption was that the donations would start being received sooner, and that more people would contribute more frequently. However, neither supposition was true.

Out of the 17 donations given over 38 days, 16 of them were from people the intern knew and asked directly for a contribution, or from the extended connections of those people; only 1 was from a person with no known connection to the project. Attached is a spreadsheet containing the donation information from June 24th, 2013 to July 31st, 2013 (document 3). The average donation amount was $35.76. The most common amount donated was $15 (4 times), and the least common amount was $18 (1 time). The minimum donation that can be given on CrowdRise is $10, and from the results of the initiative, the suggested dollar amount donors will give is between $15 and $20. In addition, each $100 donation was given by an adult with a paying job, while the lower amounts ($15, $10) were given by personal friends of the intern who were college students. *Figure 2* shows a table with the amounts of money given and the frequency that the amounts were donated. *Figure 3* shows a graph with the amount of each donation received throughout the initiative on the date it was given.

Figure 2

Donation Amount ($)	Number of Times Amount was Given
100	3
50	2
25	2
20	3
18	1
15	4
10	2

Figure 3

Donation Amounts from the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative

2. Results of Methods Used

As research started, it became apparent that it would be difficult to create sustainable funding for the shelter as promised. This was because sustainable funding is more easily done through PayPal or other online payment engines, while crowdsource fundraising is better for one-time campaigns such as marathons or raising money for an operation. Because of this, research was done and arrangements were made for future continuous funding while a one-time fundraiser for the shelter was created.

Over the course of the initiative, it also became evident that simply relying on the power of the CrowdRise community to donate to the cause was insufficient to reach the goal of $10,000 (later $5,000). In addition to the other methods of spreading the word mentioned in the previous section, other techniques were utilized. The intern sent text messages to personal contacts, and posted links to the Barbara Saville Women's Initiative were on Facebook and Facebook pages

such as Kings Community Action Organization, as well as on the professional networking site LinkedIn.

Posting about the fundraiser on Facebook received very little attention. Several Facebook "likes" were received, as well as a few sparing comments, but none of the postings on that site or in LinkedIn had any effect on donations. In addition, while the other ways of reaching out (talk show, interview with local newspaper, etc.) were useful, they did not directly result in any donations. The most effective method of getting people to donate was to ask them directly, whether it was face-to-face or through a personalized text message or email (as opposed to a mass text/email).

Recommendations

1. Conclusions Regarding the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative

Overall, the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative was successful, with $608 raised online in a 5 ½ week period (amounting to an average of approximately $128.73 per week). This amount **does not** include $100 that was donated to the KCAO CrowdRise nonprofit page instead of the individual Barbara Saville Women's Shelter Initiative page. The amount of money raised did fall short of the anticipated goal but the distribution of the donations was rather even, with approximately half of the money donated during the first half of the initiative. It is safe to say that, with more than time spent on the project, more donations would have been acquired. In addition, $110 was raised through the use of the physical donation forms at the book signing for Dr. Minnie Boyer Woodruff, and Dr. Woodruff herself donated $50, resulting in a grand total of $868 raised for the shelter.

One of the most important conclusions reached through the project was that, while CrowdRise is a great resource for fundraising, the site's uses do not apply to sustainable funding. While donations can be made at any time through the main KCAO page for CrowdRise, little attention will be given to it if a fundraiser is not being held under KCAO's name on the site.

However, CrowdRise was still extremely useful and informative. The friendly atmosphere of the crowdsourcing site makes it easy and appealing for potential donors to follow through and contribute, and the donation system is easy to use and only involves 2 steps. In addition, the site also offers promotions such as giveaways (running shoes, CrowdRise apparel, iPad mini, etc.), and allows users of the site to feel like part of a larger community by acknowledging their contributions. Additionally, KCAO will have the names and email addresses of the CrowdRise donors, which will enable them to enlarge their base of donors.

The other methods used to spread the word about the fundraiser (flyers, online talk show, Sentinel article) also attracted positive attention. People in the community who were given flyers reacted with interest, although this interest did not necessarily result in donations. The online talk show guest spot was also a constructive experience and allowed the fundraiser to be advertised on a wider scale, as did the Hanford Sentinel article. The monetary donation forms were also reacted to positively when they were passed out at the book signing. But in spite of the optimistic responses, none of these methods directly resulted in donations.

2. Recommendations for Future Sustainable Funding

In order to achieve true sustainable funding for the Barbara Saville Women's Shelter and KCAO, it is highly recommended that a form of credit card processing be implemented. This will make it possible for people to donate online, and make it easier for people to contribute at any time if they have no cash or checks on their person. Allowing credit card payments to be

accepted would also enable possible donors to make recurring monthly, quarterly, or yearly donations to KCAO, which would result in sustainable funding. It is important that the organization strengthen its pool of dedicated donors who can be counted on to give money to the organization, and these donors can come from Facebook, LinkedIn, and fundraisers put on through CrowdRise and in person.

The most efficient option for receiving donations is PayPal. While a donation button for CrowdRise currently exists on the KCAO website and donations can be taken from there, this icon can be replaced with a PayPal "donate now" button. Many other nonprofit organizations use PayPal to accept and process credit card donations, and PayPal offers discounted rates for 501(c)3 organizations; the transaction fee for registered nonprofits is 2.2% plus $0.30 for donations under $100,000. Exhibited below is a sample of PayPal pricing for nonprofit organization, and the bulk of PayPal's nonprofit information can be found at this link: https://www.paypal.com/webapps/mpp/donations.

Exhibit 6

Pricing   ✕

We offer affordable pricing on our PayPal business accounts and our ultra-convenient PayPal Here credit-card reader.

PayPal Business Accounts			PayPal Here credit card reader
Online payments	Nonprofit fee per transaction Discounted charity rate[1]	Standard fee per transaction	• 2.7% per card swipe[2]
$0 to $100,000	2.2% + $0.30	2.9% + $0.30	• 1% cash back with debit card[3]
$100,000+	1.9% + $0.30	2.2% + $0.30	

View all merchant fees

About the PayPal Here Card Reader and App PayPal Here makes it easy to accept donations on the go with your mobile phone. It also:

- Accepts cards, checks, and PayPal.
- Offers live phone support
- Lets you manage multiple users.

View PayPal Here Details

[1]Discounted rates are available to 501(c)(3) charities. All other nonprofits pay our affordable standard rates. To qualify for discounted rates, sign up for a PayPal Business account, selecting Nonprofit Organization as the business type and Charity as the category. Later, you'll be asked for documentation of your 501(c)(3) status. Some products might have additional monthly fees.
See all pricing details.
[2]Excluding keyed-in and scanned credit card transactions; US only
[3]1% cash back on eligible purchases when funds are withdrawn to a PayPal merchant debit card

Overall, the donation button through PayPal and the page that would follows it (where donors will fill in their credit card and payment information) should have several qualities:

- Donation button should be large and clearly visible on the KCAO homepage

- Donation button should be **separate** from the "Give" button that already exists on the KCAO homepage

- Options of a recurring donation (monthly, quarterly, yearly) should be available

- Donors should be able to specify a department/program for their donation (Migrant HeadStart, Domestic Violence Prevention, etc.)

- No more than 2 pages following the donation button (credit card and billing information, followed by confirmation page)

Another recommendation for sustainable funding is reserving a space in the Thursday Night Marketplace for KCAO in the coming years, and/or identify an annual fundraising event. KCAO having a more visible presence in the community could have multiple advantages. Potential clients for KCAO can learn about the services the organization offers, and potential donors could either donate there by using a donation form or sign up to give a recurring contribution.

3. Recommendations for Future Use of Online Fundraising and Social Media

CrowdRise is more oriented towards one-time fundraising initiatives as opposed to long-term sustainability. For that reason, a good use for the KCAO page on the site is frequent fundraisers. The KCAO CrowdRise page can be used very frequently in the future, because multiple fundraisers can occur at one time under KCAO's name on the site. A fundraiser on CrowdRise can be held for any reason and any cause, which means an initiative under KCAO's name on CrowdRise could be held to give additional funding to a HeadStart program, or help weatherize the homes of a certain number of families, etc. While the other sites that were considered were ultimately unused, all had different strengths and weaknesses, and it may prove beneficial to look into them in the future, as well as continuing to use CrowdRise.

Expanding KCAO's social network would also help with attaining regular donations. KCAO currently has a Facebook account and a LinkedIn profile, and it would benefit the organization greatly if these outlets were updated more often with pictures and posts about the activities done by the organization. The Facebook account could be updated regularly, and advertised more prominently on the site so that more people on Facebook could "like" the page. A KCAO Twitter account would also be an idea to consider, because it would allow for quick updating and posting, as well as allowing other attendees at events to "tag" KCAO in their own posts.

YouTube is valuable tool in social media as well. Having a YouTube channel would benefit KCAO because the organization could post firsthand accounts of events and projects. Videos also have a powerful emotional impact because they depict people who have been affected by the deeds of the organization and donors have a face to associate their contribution with. Having larger and more active social media avenues would allow KCAO to grow its network of donors, who would then give to the organization through online and in-person fundraisers, and through the donations on the KCAO website.

KCAO is the only comprehensive nonprofit entity serving a population of over 100,000 families. The multitude of services KCAO provides makes it a unique organization in Kings County that has created a major impact in the community over its 50-year history. The potential for acquiring large sums of money exists online.