



# HOW TO LAUNCH & GROW A TRIBUTE GIVING PROGRAM

A Step-by-Step for Nonprofits

Written & Produced by

**NONPROFIT TECH FOR GOOD**

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Nonprofit Tech for Good provides useful, easy-to-understand news and resources related to digital marketing and fundraising. Our programs include:

- Free & Low-cost Webinars
- Certificate Programs
- Guides & Reports
- Weekly eNewsletter

# What is Tribute Giving?

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Tribute giving is when a donor makes a donation in someone else's name to honor that person or to celebrate a special occasion. Tribute gifts are most often made by supporters with a strong belief in your mission who prefer to donate to a good cause rather than spend money on traditional gifts.

Nonprofits began to offer tribute gifts in the early 2000s. At the time, tribute donors would mail a check along with the contact information of their tribute gift recipients to their chosen nonprofit and the nonprofit would then mail the tribute gift recipient an acknowledgement letter or card.

Today, the tribute giving process is entirely online and easy for both the donor and the nonprofit, yet most nonprofits underutilize tribute giving as a fundraising tool. According to the [Global NGO Technology Report](#), only 34% of nonprofits worldwide utilize tribute giving and even then, most tribute giving programs exist solely as a tick box on a nonprofit's primary donation page.

This guide will help your nonprofit launch (or re-launch) a tribute giving program to better serve your donors and to maximize fundraising success.

# Top 5 Tribute Gifts

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According to the [Global Trends in Giving Report](#), 33% of donors worldwide give tribute gifts. The top five occasions they prefer for tribute giving are:

**1) Memorials:** When a donor makes a tribute gift in memory of a beloved family member, friend, or pet.

**2) Birthdays:** Tribute gifts to celebrate someone's birthday.

**3) Religious holidays:** Tribute gifts given in lieu of Christmas gifts, Hannukah gifts, and Eid al-Fitr gifts. Other holidays to consider for your tribute giving program are the Lunar New Year and Diwali.

**4) Weddings:** Most often requested by the couple getting married, wedding tribute gifts are made to the couple's favorite nonprofit in lieu of traditional wedding gifts.

**5) New baby:** Less common as tribute gifts, but for fitting for nonprofits whose mission is to improve maternal health and infants.

# How to Launch a Tribute Giving Program

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The first step to launching a tribute giving program for your nonprofit is to use an online fundraising platform that offers tribute giving. If it does not, then it's time to upgrade to a new fundraising platform. Tribute giving has been in existence for more than 20 years and it should be a standard tool offered by your fundraising platform.

Next, enable tribute giving on your primary donation page. In most cases, tribute giving functions as a checkbox that a donor can select to make a tribute gift:

**Dedicate my donation in honor or in memory of someone**

Type of tribute gift:

In honor of...     In memory of...

Honoree's First Name\*                      Honoree's Last Name\*

  

Recipient's Email\*

Recipient's First Name\*                      Recipient's Last Name

Tribute giving forms should also include a box where donors can enter a personal message for the recipient and if your fundraising platform offers it, the ability to select and send an eCard.

Finally, write a short paragraph of promotional text that your nonprofit can use on your website, in email campaigns, on social media, and in print materials to promote tribute giving to your donors and supporters.

All that said, **a checkbox on your primary donation page and a short paragraph of text is not a tribute giving program.** First, tribute giving will be difficult to promote online and in print. Asking a potential tribute donor to visit your website > click the "Donate" button > select the "Make a gift in honor" checkbox is not ideal. Second, due to the fact that you can not effectively promote your tribute giving option online and in print, its fundraising success mostly depends upon donors randomly discovering the option to give a tribute gift while visiting your primary donation page.

People want to give tribute gifts, so to maximize the fundraising potential of your tribute giving program, you'll need invest more time in setting up your program. Once launched, the maintenance of

your program is minimal. Keep the checkbox on your primary donation page, but also follow these essential three steps to launch a tribute giving program for your nonprofit:

**Step 1.** Create a donation page for each type of tribute gift that you want to offer. For example, if your nonprofit wants to offer memorial, birthday, and Christmas tribute gifts, create a donation page for each where tribute giving is the only option. Be sure to customize the header image and text at the top of each page.

**Give in Memory**

Honor the memory of a loved one with a tribute gift to [Your Nonprofit].

Honoree's First Name\*

Honoree's Last Name\*

Recipient's Email\*

Recipient's First Name\*

Recipient's Last Name

Your Message

Each donation page also needs a custom URL that looks good on social media and in the case of print promotion, is easy to retype. For example:

[yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving/memorials](http://yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving/memorials)

**Step 2. Create a "Tribute Giving" landing page on your website that features your tribute gifts.** This landing page ([yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving](http://yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving)) is essential for the effective promotion of your tribute giving program.



## Tribute Giving

Honor a lost loved one, recognize someone special on their birthday, or celebrate the holidays by making a tribute gift in their name that will help [Your Nonprofit] make a difference.

-  Memorials
-  Birthdays
-  Holidays

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### The Impact of Your Tribute Gift

- \$25 provides five warm meals delivered to home-bound seniors.
- \$50 pays the annual school fees for a girl child in Zimbabwe.
- \$100 feeds an elephant under care in a sanctuary for one day.



**Step 3. Add your tribute giving program to your "Ways to Give" page.** Most often featured in your website's navigation bar, your Ways to Give page summarizes all the ways that your supporters and donors can give and get involved with your nonprofit. It's also commonly named "Take Action" or "Get Involved."

## Ways to Give

There are many ways to give to [Your Nonprofit]. Learn more about how you can support our efforts to [insert mission statement].



Give Monthly



Tribute Giving



Volunteer



Fundraise



Events



Planned Giving

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Join Our Ambassador Program

Sign up to receive important updates about our work to share with your friends and family on social media!

# How to Grow Your Tribute Giving Program

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The success of your tribute giving program depends upon making your donors and supporters aware that it exists by marketing the program effectively across all your nonprofit's communication channels.

In addition to promotional text for print and online promotion, you'll need to create a series of promotional graphics for your tribute giving program. You can hire a graphic designer or use [Canva](#) – a low-cost and easy-to-use graphic design tool.

**1) Print:** Include your tribute giving program in your print newsletter. It can be a recurring ad or included in a list of ways to get more involved and support your nonprofit. If your nonprofit also features your print newsletter online as a PDF, then be sure to link to your tribute giving landing page in the PDF.

Your nonprofit may also want to occasionally include your tribute giving program in your print fundraising appeals, and once or twice a year, schedule a postcard mailing to your active donors.

**2) Website:** In addition to including your tribute giving program on your Ways to Give page, create a promotional graphic for the right bar of your blog or news section. Most nonprofits underutilize the right bar on their website and often leave it blank, but it is valuable advertising space.

Also, in the months leading up to the year-end giving season, add a pop-up or top bar featuring your tribute giving program. [MailMunch](#) is a low-cost, effective tool for creating pop-ups and top bars for your website.

**3) Email:** Most of your tribute gift donors will likely be a result of email promotion, so it is essential to integrate your tribute giving program into your email campaigns regularly.

Nonprofits should be sending an email newsletter at least once a month. Each month or every other month include a feature of your tribute giving program, and during the holiday months, be sure to call special attention to your holiday tribute gifts.

In addition, once or twice a year send a fundraising email that only features your tribute giving program. Donors and supporters want to give

tribute gifts, but often they have no idea that your program exists. Email is the most effective way to get the word out.

**4) Social media:** The promotion of your tribute giving program should be worked into your social media content calendar every 6-8 weeks. During peak giving months – June, October, November, and December – consider investing in social media advertising to increase the reach of your tribute giving program.

A best practice is to write in advance a series of social media messages that include the URL(s) of your tribute giving program and gifts that can be easily copied and pasted into Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. You'll also need to create a set of promotional graphics for your tribute giving program as well as each type of tribute gift that your nonprofit offers. To stay organized, save the messages and graphics in a folder that is easily accessible.

It's worth noting that to effectively promote your tribute giving program on social media, you'll need to create multiple versions of your promotional graphics because each social network has its own image size recommendations. For example:

## Every tribute gift makes a difference.

Honor a lost loved one, recognize someone special on their birthday, or celebrate the holidays by making a tribute gift in their name.



Memorials



Birthdays



Holidays

**1200 X 675**

Best for Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook

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Memorials



Birthdays



Holidays

**1200 X 1200**

Best for Instagram, Pinterest, and Facebook

# How to Retain Your Tribute Gift Donors

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To maximize the fundraising success of your tribute giving program, you'll need to have a retention strategy in place for your tribute gift donors. To begin:

**1) Thank your tribute gift donors immediately via email.** You may also want to follow up with a print "Thank you" letter or phone call to those who give a significant amount, such as \$500 annually in tribute gifts.

**2) Tag your tribute gift donors in your customer relationship management (CRM) software** so you can easily email or send a mailing to your tribute gift donors to inspire them to give again.

**3) Feature your tribute gift donors in your quarterly and/or annual reports.** In addition to a special thank you, capture two or three testimonials from your tribute gift donors discussing why they chose to give tribute gifts to your nonprofit. You can then feature these testimonial(s) on your tribute giving program page, in email, on social media, and in your print campaigns.

# Your Tribute Giving Program Checklist

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- Use a fundraising platform that offers tribute giving and enable the option to your primary donation page.
- Write promotional text for your tribute giving program.
- Create promotional graphics for your tribute giving program and gifts.
- Create donation pages for each type of tribute gift that you want to offer. Be sure to customize the header images and text at the top of each tribute gift page. Each page also needs a custom URL that looks good on social media and in print. For example: [yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving/memorials](http://yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving/memorials)
- Create a "Tribute Giving" landing page on your website that features your tribute gifts. This page also needs a custom URL. For example: [yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving](http://yournonprofit.org/tribute-giving)
- Add your tribute giving program to your "Ways to Give" page.
- Include your tribute giving program in your print newsletter.
- Optional: Schedule a postcard mailing to potential tribute gift donors.

- Add a promotional graphic to the right bar of your blog or news section.
- Optional: Add a pop-up or top bar featuring your tribute giving program to your website.
- Integrate your tribute giving program into your email newsletter and schedule one or two tribute giving fundraising emails in the next 12 months.
- Integrate the promotion of your tribute giving program into your social media content calendar every 6-8 weeks.
- Write a series of social media messages that include the URL(s) of your tribute giving program and gifts that can be easily copied and pasted into Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Write and set up a thank you email that is automatically sent to your tribute gift donors.
- Optional: Send a print "Thank you" letter or make a phone call to tribute gift donors who give a significant amount, such as \$500 annually in tribute gifts.
- Set up a tag in your CRM for tribute gift donors and send them an email or mailing at least once a year to inspire them to give again.
- Optional: Capture two or three testimonials from your tribute donors discussing why they chose to give tribute gifts to your nonprofit and feature their testimonial(s) on your tribute giving landing page,



in email, on social media, and in your print campaigns.

- Optional: Create tribute gifts that are billed monthly or quarterly.
- Optional: Reach out to local businesses and corporations to suggest your tribute gifts as employee gifts for birthdays, work anniversaries, promotions, etc.
- Optional: Launch a symbolic gift program. Similar to tribute gifts, symbolic gifts are given in lieu of traditional gifts. A symbolic gift donor makes a donation in honor or in celebration of person, but the gifts are meant to fund a specific program. For example, the annual school fees for a girl child in Zimbabwe or the purchase of farm animals for farming family in need. The best example of a symbolic gift program is [Heifer International's Gift Catalog](#).
- Study and learn from the tribute giving programs offered by the [Nature Conservancy](#), [Feeding America](#), and [St. Jude Children's Research Hospital](#).
- Enable tribute donors to share and tag gift recipients on social media. Nonprofits are not currently offering this functionality, and it would require the help of a website developer, but the investment makes sense for today's internet users.

# Earn a Certificate in Social Media Marketing & Fundraising from Nonprofit Tech for Good!

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Our Certificate in Social Media Marketing & Fundraising covers the fundamentals of launching and maintaining a social media marketing and fundraising strategy for your nonprofit.

Participants will learn how to use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter to engage and inspire supporters and donors.

Based on 101 Digital Marketing & Fundraising Best Practices for Nonprofits, the certificate program requires the completion of four webinars. The total cost of the program is \$100 USD.

To earn the certificate, you can attend the webinars live or view the recordings – or a combination of both. Learn more!

