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2018 NCSHA AWARD ENTRY SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING: COMBATING HOMELESSNESS

Building Fundraising Networks for Homeless Service Providers

An Important State-Wide Housing Need

Combating homelessness requires a broad network of nonprofit service providers capable of responding to the unique needs of their community. Many nonprofits rely heavily on federal funds to support their homeless service programs and housing operations. With minimal administrative staff, most service providers have limited experience and capacity in philanthropic fundraising. The need to create more stable and diverse funding for homeless service providers has been a focus of Idaho Housing. This need became especially apparent when a nonprofit in north central Idaho, Sojourners' Alliance, experienced a devastating fire in their men's shelter and main office building. Fortunately they were able to salvage files and run their office operations out of the director's home. This displaced a number of clients to local motels, costing the organization tens of thousands. Sojourners' Alliance is the only homeless service provider in the region, leaving a huge gap in services for this rural area of more than 80,000 residents, including the University of Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe, and vibrant agricultural communities.

Idaho Housing was able to respond to this critical statewide need because of the creation and ongoing administration of the "Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge," an annual online fundraising campaign to build philanthropic networks and resources for nonprofit homeless service providers throughout Idaho. The December 2017 campaign allowed Sojourners' to rebuild as well as address many other critical needs (see sidebar and news article).

An Innovative Approach

On-line fundraising platforms are not anything new. However, using one to connect statewide homeless service providers together in a coordinated effort to prevent and respond to homelessness is unique. Giving service providers social media tools, advertising materials, video promotions, and valuable financial incentives to stimulate philanthropic giving was an innovative and game-changing step. Matching local donor gifts, with a 25 percent match on every dollar, not only encouraged new donors to step forward, but it also encouraged corporate sponsors who saw their contributions leveraged local level. at the



Supporting Idaho Nonprofits "The 2017 Avenues for Hope Campaign brought in more than \$42,000 for us, which is the biggest fundraising event we have ever had in the history of Sojourners' Alliance.

The financial windfall from this campaign enabled us to sustain our operations after experiencing a fire in our shelter and office December. We are grateful for Idaho Housing's willingness to establish and lead a legitimate fundraising event. The support we've received has been amazing!"

- Steve Bonnar, Executive Director, Sojourners' Alliance in Moscow, ID



Proven Track Record of Success

Since inception in 2011, the Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge has continuously increased comuunity donations, corporate sponsorships and nonprofit beneficiaries.

The cumulative benefits include:

- \$2.2M awarded to support critical housing programs and services.
- Support to more than 50 nonprofit service providers.
- Involvement of over 30 sponsors.
- Thousands of homeless served.



Fundraising Growth

Idaho Housing's goal of diversifying and stabilizing revenue for Idaho's homeless services network is well on its way to success. For example, a Boise day-shelter for the homeless has been able to fund their annual operating budget each year from their Avenues for Hope proceeds, enabling them to serve more than a hundred people each day. This effort provides unrestricted funding that strengthens and enhances operations and services of nonprofit participants.

Effective Use of Resources and Benefits Outweigh Costs

Last year, \$724,305 was raised through donations, challenge grants and sponsorship funds. More than 3,000 people contributed to the three-week campaign through an easy to use, online donation platform. All proceeds go directly to the nonprofits designated by each donor.

There is no charge to participating nonprofits beyond the credit card processing fees as the administration, technology and marketing expenses are covered by Idaho Housing. The software platform costs Idaho Housing less than \$5,000 per year with other costs being picked up as part of IHFA's overall marketing and promotions budget as well as staff volunteerism. Proceeds are unrestricted for the nonprofits to use allowing them to build operational capacity and help meet the greatest housing needs of their community.

Replicable

According to Giving USA, a third of all online giving occurs in the month of December, with 22 percent occurring in the last two days of the year. The Avenues for Hope campaign was designed to take advantage of this trend and runs every year during the month of December. Idaho Housing invested in a software service provider to create a dedicated website for the Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge. The technology behind <u>"Avenues for Hope"</u> allows participating nonprofits to promote a uniquely branded, secure donation page for its organization.

This campaign is replicable through the online fundraising platform that can be customized for various types of campaigns. Idaho Housing created the branding for the campaign, as well as training and tool kits, including rules, questions and answers, graphics, posters, flyers, and sample messaging for emails and social media posts, that can serve as a model for other campaigns.



Effectively Employ Partnerships

Many partners make this campaign possible. The nonprofit participants, the technology vendor, the corporate sponsors, community leaders, thousands of donors, and the Idaho Housing team that helps manage the campaign all have an important role in effectively raising funds for this cause. Unlike traditional fundraising events, such as galas or golf tournaments, the online nature of the donation platform makes it easy for partners statewide to participate and promote this opportunity to their constituents. This not only raises awareness of the funding needs, but provides them an opportunity to share stories of the important housing services they provide in their community.

Achieve Strategic Objectives

"Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge" has helped diversify and stabilize critical funding for Idaho's homeless service providers. It's heightened awareness and increased private funding for homelessness in Idaho. As Idaho's leader in homelessness response, Idaho Housing ensures that the new funding is used to strategically strengthen our statewide homeless services network.

Before the campaign was launched, many partners had limited social media presence, lacked online donation processing capabilities and typically didn't have the staffing or expertise to seek out new fundraising approaches. A secondary objective was to provide feedback and coaching to help our partners achieve better visibility and showcase the important work they're doing in their communities. This helped engage more staff members, volunteers, and board members in advancing the missions of these organizations.



Nonprofit partners have expressed how they value the unique role and leadership that Idaho Housing and Finance Association provides to the nonprofit housing sector. Idaho Housing has been directly supporting efforts to prevent and combat homelessness by sustaining or enhancing resources for nearly 50 shelters and housing-service providers throughout Idaho and has disbursed \$2.2M through the Avenues for Hope campaign.



Building Fundraising Networks for Homeless Service Providers Category: Special Needs Housing, Combating Homelessness

VISUAL AIDS

Campaign Website Header:



Social Media Graphics:











Campaign Website Leaderboard:

All Organizations Prizes

North

Southwest

Southeast

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Ave	Housing Challenge		-	>				Ν
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Organizations \$	Total Gifts 🚽	Total Dollars				
CATCH Inc.	605	\$31,215	1			
Good Samaritan Home	510	\$20,325				
amily Promise of the Palouse	466	\$43,126	HPF			
NeighborWorks Pocatello	338	\$16,258	npr			
Astegos, Inc.	212	\$10,480	Home <mark>Partnership</mark> Foundation			
Corpus Christi House	188	\$34,078				
Sojourners' Alliance	184	\$30,205				
St. Vincent de Paul Southwest Idaho	86	\$19,025				
Bonner County Homeless Task Force, Inc	55	\$39,465				
Trinity New Hope Inc.	44	\$6,750				
The House Next Door	32	\$5,850	SOCIAL MEDIA			
Family Promise of North Idaho	31	\$10,425	f y			
Union Gospel Mission	29	\$13,565				
The Jesse Tree of Idaho	27	\$8,645	Tweets by @AvenuesforHope @			
Community Resource Center of Teton Valley	21	\$17,525	♡ [→ Jan 5, 2018			
NeighborWorks Boise	20	\$6,335	🔐 Home Partnership Fdn			
Home Partnership Foundation	18	\$6,602	@AvenuesforHope WOW, \$724,305 was raised during			
International Rescue Committee in Boise	17	\$6,600	the final weeks of December through the #AvenuesforHope Housing			
First Story	14	\$6,359	Challenge! Congrats to 45 nonprofits,			
Aid For Friends Inc.	13	\$1,000	and thank you to 3,023 donors and 30 generous sponsors! View detailed			
Women's and Children's Alliance	13	\$1,600	results at hubs.ly/H09zRxf0.			
LEAP Charities	11	\$21,666	Strengthening communities. Preventing homelessness. Thank you!			
Moscow Affordable Housing Trust	10	\$3,125	5724,305			
Family Services Alliance of SE Idaho, Inc	9	\$425				
CLUB, Inc.	8	\$1,560	30 Sponsors			
The Mahoney House	8	\$1,175				
Idaho Youth Ranch	7	\$5,665				
Advocates Against Family Violence, Inc.	6	\$325				
Idaho Falls Rescue Mission	6	\$5,635				
South Central Community Action Partnership	5	\$250				



Post-campaign check presentation with nonprofits and sponsors enables everyone to get together to celebrate as well as share best practices:













Media Coverage:



LOCAL

Fundraiser gives you a chance to help prevent homelessness, provide affordable housing



BY SVEN BERG sberg@idahostatesman.co

December 22, 2017 02:48 PM Updated December 29, 2017 05:17 PM

Idaho Housing and Finance Association and its foundation, the Home Partnership Foundation, announced this week that its online fundraiser Avenues for Hope Housing Challenge has raised more than \$240,000 this year.

That's \$100,000 more than at the same time last year, IHFA president Gerald Hunter said in a news release. The goal of the initiative is to raise \$500,000 by midnight on New Year's Eve.

"The need is great during the colder winter months with more than 4,000 Idahoans experiencing homelessness last year," Hunter said. "There's still plenty of time to donate and we encourage Idahoans to come together in the spirit of the holidays and support these nonprofits who work tirelessly to restore the hope of individuals and families within our community."

Money from the fundraiser supports shelters and housing service providers around the state to prevent homelessness and improve affordable housing options. Organizations that receive money include Corpus Christi House and CATCH, Inc., in Boise; St. Vincent de Paul of Southwest Idaho; The Jesse Tree of Idaho; Women and Children's Alliance; and NeighborWorks Boise. A complete list of organizations is available online at AvenuesForHope.org/leaderboards.



Media Coverage:

DAILY NEWS

Letter: What Sojourners' residents face

Dec 27, 2017 🔍 (0)

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Try to imagine sleeping in your nice warm bed in a safe and welcoming home when, suddenly, you smell smoke. You realize that your home is on fire and you have to get out. All your possessions are lost. It will be at least eight months before the building is repaired and reopened. What to do now? Go stay with family or friends? That's great if you have family or friends. Not so with these men of Sojourners' Alliance.

That's the bad news. The good news is that their community and their town care. The five men left homeless again will be staying at a local hotel; Moscow's Best Western Plus University Inn has generously offered to treat them to Christmas dinner; and, this is December, the month when Avenues for Hope holds its annual fundraiser for housing nonprofits. Last year, Sojourners' received \$40,000 in donations and prizes. Please consider a gift to Sojourners' Alliance by going to **avenuesforhope.org**. Your donation will be supplemented in a number of ways by Idaho Housing Finance.

You also need to know that Sojourners' is more than a homeless shelter. Sojourners' is here to help determined men and women get their lives back from homelessness by attacking the root causes of their problems. Sojourners' does this with the help of dedicated, caring staff members: director, Steve; case workers, Cliff and Julia; office workers, Rebecca and Janna; grant writers, board members and other social service providers in the community.

As a member of the board of directors, I say thank you from everyone at Sojourners' Alliance.

Pat Monger

Moscow

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