



MISSOULAGIVES

# Missoula Gives 2020 Case Study

GiveGab<sup>®</sup>



## Missoula Gives April 30 - May 1, 2020



Missoula Gives 2020 saw its most successful Giving Day yet with record-breaking engagement.

Nikki Robb, Program Manager at The Missoula County Community Foundation, shared her team's experience pivoting their Giving Day strategy for a 100% virtual campaign amidst the uncertainty of COVID-19 with a 26-hour live stream event.

The Missoula Community Foundation is a true philanthropic leader in the online giving space, hosting one of the longest-running annual Giving Days since 2013, Missoula Gives. In 2017, the community foundation transitioned Missoula Gives to GiveGab's giving platform and has seen its results grow and flourish year-over-year.

From 2017 to 2020, their Giving Day has grown 169% in total dollars raised! This year's Missoula Gives campaign held April 30 - May 1, 2020, \$811,294 was raised for their local nonprofits, making it their most successful Giving Day yet.

What the GiveGab team admires most about our friends from Missoula Gives is their passion for finding creative ways to expand awareness and involvement around their day and its impact in their community of Missoula, Montana.

**26  
HOURS**

**April 30-May 1, 2020**  
**MISSOULA GIVES.ORG**

An awesome example that showcases their heartfelt and human approach to their Giving Day can be seen in this GiveGab favorite; the Missoula Gives thank you video:



Missoula Gives has always been viewed as a celebration in the Missoula community with in-person events and a push for nonprofits to engage with their community focusing. Their primary focus of the day is community involvement and highlighting those who work tirelessly to keep their community clean, healthy, and happy.

With their 2020 Giving Day set to take place amidst the unprecedented climate of the COVID-19 pandemic, they recognized that this year's event would be different from any in the past. As their community and nonprofits were faced with the economic hardships from the COVID-19 pandemic and the shutdown of in-person events, the Missoula Community Foundation had a tough decision to make regarding their plans for Missoula Gives 2020.

*“It was clear in Mid-March we needed to make a decision to either call off, postpone, or do things differently for our April/May Missoula Gives event. After some inquiries with our local nonprofits and reading national articles on philanthropy, we knew we needed to move forward with the day so local nonprofits could raise much-needed funding.” - Nikki Robb*

The needs of their local nonprofits were beginning to surge as more individuals in the community were sought their services. Additionally, many of the in-person fundraising events and galas they relied on to cover operating costs were postponed or canceled. The Missoula Community Foundation understood at this moment that nonprofits needed a safe and secure way to raise funds, and they knew this would be possible through Missoula Gives. With the decision made to continue planning the Giving Day, they had to



## MISSOULAGIVES

### Outcomes & Results

**\$811,294** Raised

**3,447** Donors

PHOTO: ERIKA PETERMAN | SOVA PARTNERS

determine the best course of action to build momentum around a 100% virtual fundraising event.

As they began to strategize virtual ways to connect during their Giving Day, they wanted their community's creative and uplifting spirit to shine through. *"We wanted to find a way to celebrate our community and the nonprofits while encouraging people to support neighbors and friends in these tough times."*

With a mission to create engaging content that supporters of the day could follow, the Community Foundation explored the possibilities of doing a 26-hour live stream

marathon accessible through the Missoula Gives website. *"Our primary goal was to create an opportunity for nonprofits to tell their stories and curate interesting local content that celebrated and connected us to our community."*

The Community Foundation had never held a live stream event before, but as a team of passionate and determined people, they had the tenacity to charge ahead with their new Giving Day strategy. With numerous brainstorming sessions with their Project Manager at GiveGab and late nights of research, they realized that orchestrating this live stream event would have an incredible impact on their community when they needed it most. They also quickly realized it would have to be a collaborative effort with everyone on board to make it a success. *"After 2 weeks researching live streaming and virtual events, we began reaching out to community members that could help us with the technical and production aspects of the live stream."*

Nikki was able to work closely with her designated Project Manager and the GiveGab Product team to find the best solution for hosting the live stream event seamlessly through the Missoula Gives site. She needed a platform that was flexible enough to accommodate adding a video section to their site that donors and supporters could watch in real-time. Additionally, they were easily able to create new pages within their site that allowed them to post the live stream schedule and make edits on the fly.

*"We worked with the Missoula Community Foundation to find the best solution for their team to continue with their Giving Day efforts at a time their nonprofits needed them most. Our minds were at ease knowing that their live stream could seamlessly*

*display directly on the Missoula Gives site to generate more engagement throughout their day, and give supporters a clear way to give back.” - Nickie, Project Coordinator at GiveGab.*

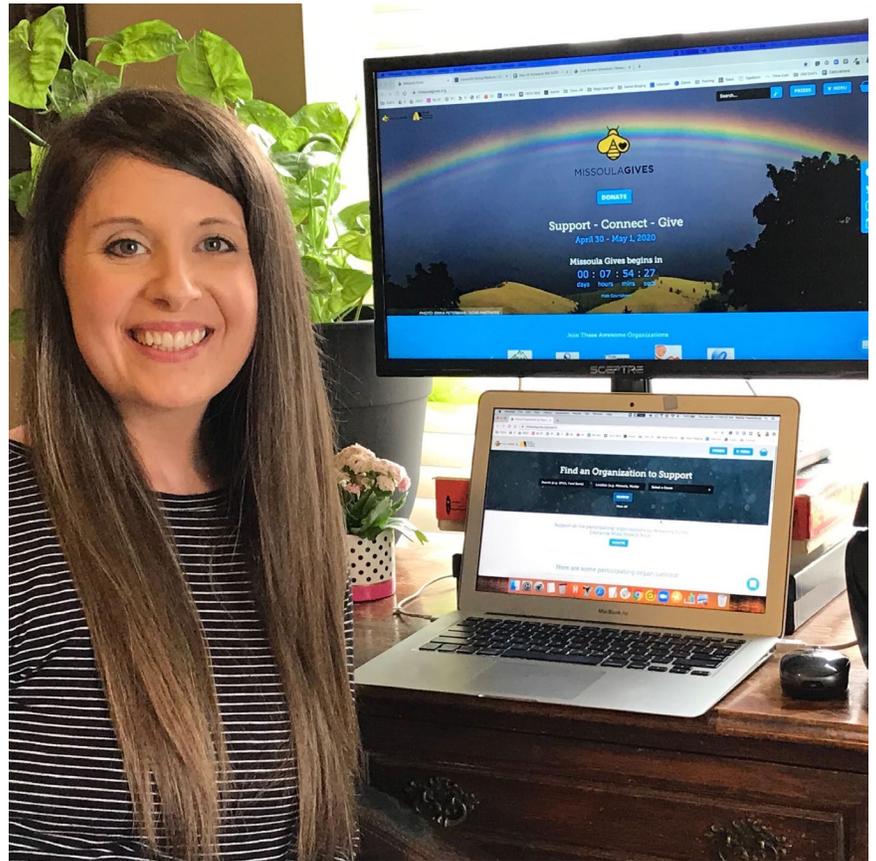
With the technology in place to display their video stream, Nikki and her team then had to focus on filling those 26 hours with fresh and engaging content that would keep their supporters attention throughout the day and inspire them to give back to their local community.

*“We contracted with a few local people to help us make the live stream happen. We had some content from a 30-second ad challenge but began to curate content from both the nonprofits and other local talents with two weeks to go. (We do not recommend this type of timeframe!) We decided it would be best to have both live and prerecorded events for the purposes of putting a schedule together in such a short period of time. With our time constraints, it was impossible to accommodate everyone live.”*

They also put a lot of thought behind the timeframe for their live stream event. Rather than having a continuous stream on their site, they looked at data and trends from previous years and decided not to operate during the hours of 11:00 PM - 8:00 AM. This was to ensure their stream was running while there was the highest traffic to their site. They wanted to make sure all guests on the stream would be seen by visitors on the site.

There was an immense amount of work put into generating an event like this in under six weeks while the world was swiftly going under lockdown, but they worked tirelessly to ensure their Giving Day would still be a success. *“We spent a lot of time on the phone talking through ideas with both nonprofits and local talent. The day before the stream, we met for several hours to curate the schedule. The production team (our E.D., myself, audio tech, and production manager) met on Wednesday evening to do a test run. Then we kicked off the Giving Day the following day at 5 PM.”*

Although, at times, it felt like an impossible mission, they persevered and were able to



completely pivot their Giving Day strategy in a matter of weeks. *“We worked long days and some weekends for the six weeks leading up to the Giving Day to make the pivot from in-person to all virtual. We got all of the prerecorded content for the event two days before the Giving Day. We put the schedule and set together in about 30 hours just before the event.”*



Their live stream event was an incredible success and had a large viewership throughout the day, including many members of the GiveGab Team. It had exceeded all expectations as their final number raised doubled from the previous year. Having at first thought of postponing their day, they were blown away by the perseverance of their community and all that showed their support during Missoula Gives. Because of the continuation and pivot of Missoula Gives, \$811,294 was raised for nonprofits operating in their community at a time they needed it most.

Throughout their almost continuous 26-hour live stream, they had more engagement on their site than ever before, both by participating organizations and their supporters.

Nonprofits were able to get into the spirit of this new 100% online day by submitting videos to be included in the live stream. This gave them a voice during a time they were worried they would be forgotten. This year, organizations received an average of 15 new donors during Missoula Gives, showing the significance that the live stream had in spreading the word about the different needs in their community.

They also saw a significant spike in engagement from supporters and donors who might not have participated in an in-person event during previous Giving Days. *“Having the live stream made our Giving Day more accessible. Because of this, we were able to*



## SESSIONS ON THE SITE

**9,745 SESSIONS**



**15,574 SESSIONS**



*get the Giving Day in front of new people, broadening our reach and helping us to garner more community engagement.”*

They are excited to begin planning for their next Missoula Gives event and hope to incorporate what they learned through this experimental pivot to continue to grow their day and amplify the voices of all nonprofits operating in Missoula County.

*“We feel the live stream was such a success we have to offer up some live content in future Giving Days. We want to find a nice balance of in-person and live streaming events. This more than*

*likely will be a collaborative effort between the nonprofits and us to make it a day of celebration.”*

The Missoula Gives team is most looking forward to having a longer time frame to prepare for future live stream events and to expand on their efforts. In the coming years, they hope to have designated segments to highlight specific cause areas as well as the ability to facilitate a multi-stage set up for in-person interviews. Additionally, the Community Foundation acknowledges that many organizations (such as themselves) did not have a lot of previous knowledge in creating video content for streaming events. They hope to create more resources and training to help nonprofits feel better prepared to take part in virtual activities during future Giving Days.

The following is their team’s advice to Giving Day hosts looking to pivot their in-person events to a virtual live stream:

*“Curate interesting and engaging content and encourage storytelling, hire production help, and give yourself plenty of time to collect content and create a schedule. You need time to market the schedule. Make it easy to access.”*

The Missoula Gives team was able to grow significantly from their decision to go virtual. It allowed them to support a community in crisis while surpassing their fundraising goals more than they could have ever expected. We are incredibly proud that our fundraising platform gave them the power to host a nearly 26-hour live stream event with ease. Although it was planned in a mere 6-week time frame, with the GiveGab team cheering them on, they accomplished extraordinary things during their 2020 Missoula Gives event.

We hope that this case study inspires community leaders to confidently move forward with their Giving Day efforts as their nonprofit members look to them for guidance, direction, and support. Remember, a pivot for your Giving Day doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be impactful.

*“The unpolished look of the LIVE stream made it very relatable for viewers. It felt like a true celebration of our community. We had local officials, business leaders, musicians, artists, nonprofits, and so much more, it was great to feel connected to others in the community that we know. Separately, we came together virtually to share info about what makes our community so special.”*

## Fundraising Results

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**\$811,294**

**Raised**

**3,447**

**Donors**

**138**

**Nonprofits**