

**CASE STUDY**

# A Night For Austin Live-Stream Benefit success



# A NIGHT FOR AUSTIN LIVE-STREAM BENEFIT RAISED OVER \$600,000 FOR LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS IN NEED

Cybil Guess, vice president of donor relations at Austin Community Foundation, shared her team's experience using Bonterra Donor Engagement's Advanced Form Designer (formerly GiveGab) to collect and distribute funds to seven organizations during A Night For Austin live-stream benefit.

Those in the vibrant Austin music community and throughout the country were gathered around their TVs and smartphones on June 10, 2020, for a live-stream event like no other. **A Night For Austin** was a 2-hour star-packed virtual benefit in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the overwhelming needs it created within Austin, TX. This event included an incredible line-up of talented artists and special guests, including Paul Simon, Owen Wilson, and Willie Nelson, all of who have deep ties to Austin and are passionate about using their talents to give back to this community.

As the philanthropic leader of the Austin community, long-standing [Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer](#) customer, The [Austin Community Foundation](#), had the opportunity to partner with this event's creators, Paul Simon, Edie Brickell, Willie and Annie Nelson, and Luck Productions.

The Austin Community Foundation (ACF) utilized Advanced Forms Designer to provide a seamless donor experience for those looking to give while simultaneously enjoying the musical performances. They were also able to guide the event producers as they carefully selected the organizations that would receive the donations made during the benefit.

**“ It means a lot for us to be able to support this community that has always inspired and provided for us, and we are excited to be doing it alongside an amazing group of talented individuals, organizations, and artists who themselves represent the unique fabric and soul that makes Austin our home.**

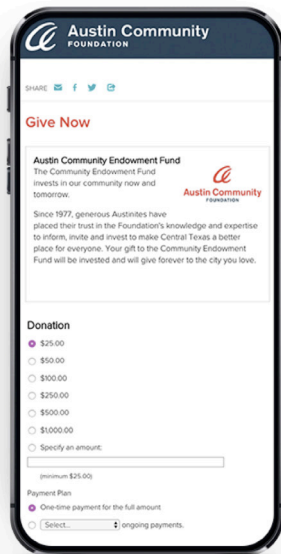
— Matt Bizer, Co-Founder of Luck Productions, [Willie Nelson, Paul Simon Announce 'A Night for Austin' Livestream Benefit](#)

# The Austin Community Foundations fundraising history on Bonterra

ACF first began using Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer in 2016 and has seen tremendous growth since.

*"We've been with Bonterra (and before that Kimbia) for many years now. While we've always appreciated the high level of support and customer service we receive as customers, in recent years, Bonterra has become a real partner in our fundraising efforts. The Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer team is always ready to help us prepare for a campaign or provide creative solutions to help us meet donor and fundholder needs."*

Our Advanced Forms Designer solution provides organizations with sophisticated white-label forms that easily embed within their own websites with simple javascript code. With an extensive offering of customizations and configurable form fields, our customers are able to harness the power and reliability of the Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer solution while creating a seamless experience for donors.



*"The Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer solution is extremely customizable. I've been working in the platform for three years, and I'm still always learning about features and customizations to better suit our needs. I've yet to run into a situation where we couldn't find a creative configuration to meet the fundraising and reporting needs."*

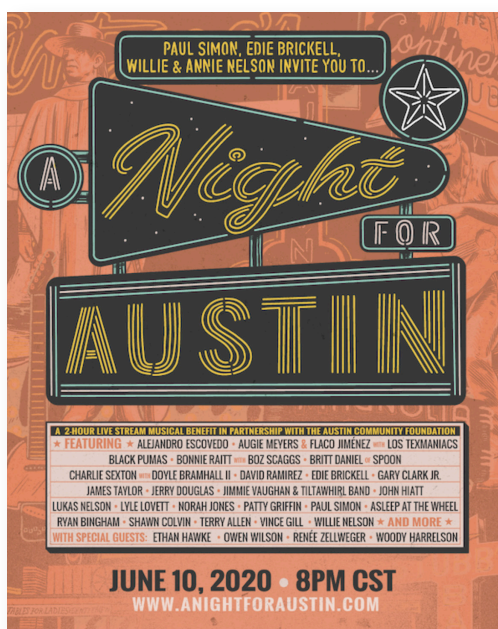
Throughout their time in the Bonterra Donor Engagement solution, The Austin Community Foundation has created completely customized forms throughout their site to collect donations, recurring gifts, membership information, and more! They have worked closely with our team to ensure they are using the platform to the fullest to achieve their fundraising goals.



Our focus is not just on providing organizations with the tools they need to fundraise online effectively. We also emphasize ensuring that our organizations are getting the most out of their product and seeing the direct impact of our services. We pride ourselves on the ability and passion for supporting customers such as the Austin Community Foundation in finding the most efficient way to use our tools.

*"The thing I appreciate most about our partnership with Bonterra is their trustworthiness. It can be really challenging to find a consistently reliable tech partner these days, so it is a relief to know that Bonterra is always there to provide reliable, friendly, and creative service. Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer is responsive to our needs and requests. They really strive to accomplish our goals, aren't shy about pushing new ideas forward, but are also firm in what they can and can't do-we always know they will try but also know that they won't overextend the tech abilities and put us in a position that compromises quality or functionality."*

## The Austin Community Foundation's role in A Night For Austin



With trust and support always being at the forefront of our partnership, the Austin Community Foundation felt confident when they were first approached by A Night For Austin's event producers.

Since COVID-19 entered the US in mid-March 2020, The Austin Community Foundation has focused its efforts on finding new ways to support its nonprofits during a time when their services were needed more than ever and their resources were drastically limited. The Foundation was determined to get their community past the hurdles created by the pandemic and was ecstatic to be presented with this opportunity to support Austinites through the live-stream.



*“We were contacted by Willie Nelson’s event producers and Paul Simon’s Manager. Both musicians have strong ties to Austin and were motivated to help the community. We had worked on a small part of a project that Paul Simon gave to during Hurricane Harvey Recovery efforts, so he was familiar with us. He had worked with other foundations in Texas throughout the years but was disappointed in a few aspects of the work. Primarily, he wanted the funds to be distributed quickly, and other foundations had challenges turning the charitable dollars into impact quickly, or had limits to the amount of grant dollars that could go out at one time. We were able to identify and resolve those pinch points, so the group invited us to partner.”*

The creators of this event understood the nonprofit community in Austin was in dire need of support. Especially those organizations that focused on arts and music who were no longer able to serve their clients in person or perform for live audiences; their main source of revenue. The A Night For Austin team worked swiftly to ensure that these organizations received this essential funding to preserve their programs and missions. The Austin Community Foundation noted that this event’s planning process was quick, as it was important that no time was wasted in finding the right talents to highlight and organizations to support.

*“It was very fast. The producers contacted us about 3 weeks prior to the event. I think Paul and Willie’s star power and influence made it easy for the producers to get commitments from the musicians. The producers had already developed an online streaming platform, so it was ready to go. I suppose the fact that everyone recorded from their homes also made the quick turnaround possible: no travel, no specific coordination of performances, etc.”*

With the streaming service in place, [Luck.Stream](#), the event producers needed a flexible fundraising tool that it could easily integrate with to ensure a seamless experience for all. It was important that donors were not taken away from the event’s stream to make their gift. Any interruptions from the event may have impacted how the donors gave, as many would not want to risk missing their favorite act by being redirected to a new page.

## Donate Now

Please help us support our community of Austin, Texas by making a donation to the Austin Community Foundation fund.

Donate Now

*"It [Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer] created a seamless experience, which was key for a high-profile event like this one. We didn't lose donations because the audience had to navigate to a form. And the audience didn't have to miss their favorite musician by having to navigate away from the player."*

The producers wanted the fundraising aspect of this event to incorporate the same branding so that everything had a clean, cohesive, and professional look. ACF knew that Advanced Forms Designer would seamlessly adopt the website's existing style, including the typefaces, font sizes, and colors. Since they did not need to implement additional code after embedding the forms, they were able to focus on different aspects of the event.

Knowing that Bonterra would be there every step of the way to ensure that the fundraising experience during the event would be a success, the Austin Community Foundation felt confident.

*"We knew going into it that the Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer solution had the technical capabilities to do what the event organizers and ACF needed. But, because this event was drawing the biggest, broadest audience we had ever solicited, we needed reassurance that everything was going to go perfectly. The Bonterra team really stepped up and provided us with that reassurance. They were able to ask the right questions of the producers to ensure the streaming platform and Bonterra Advanced Form Designer would work well together, handle the volume, and be a user-friendly experience. Their collaboration with us and the producers built confidence and partnership that was priceless. We were nervous! But the collaborative nature of the project put us at ease. Everyone was taking responsibility for their part of the evening."*



In addition to providing the fundraising tools necessary for an event of this caliber, Austin Community Foundation also supported Simon's team in selecting the organizations that would receive the funds raised during A Night For Austin. With a deep

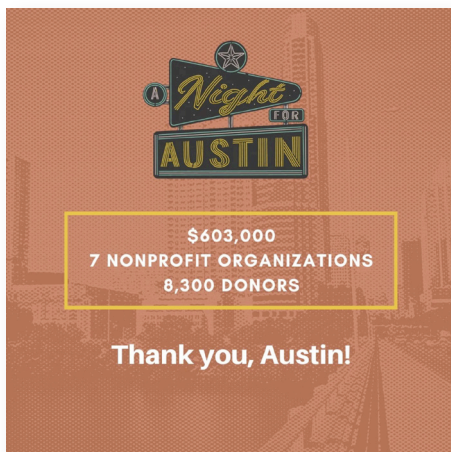
understanding of the nonprofit community in Austin and their immediate needs, ACF offered suggestions of organizations that would benefit most from this type of support and whose missions closely aligned with the event.

*"One role ACF played beyond collecting donations was to support Paul and his manager in choosing beneficiaries. Because we had been at the forefront of the city's COVID response and had run a few other funds with similar purposes, we were able to share information about eligible grantees in the community quickly and efficiently. Ultimately Paul and his manager made the choices, but we were honored to be able to provide the information they needed to ensure the dollars raised met the mission they were working to accomplish."*

## Organizations that received donations made during A Night For Austin included:

- [The Central Texas Food Bank](#)
- [Health Alliance for Austin Musicians](#)
- [Six Square](#)
- [PeopleFund](#)
- [Southern Smoke Foundation](#)
- [Red River Cultural District](#)
- [MusiCares](#)





While the entire event team had high expectations about the donations that would come in on June 10, 2020, they were still completely blown away by the event's final results. 'A Night For Austin' went off without a hitch, and thousands across the country tuned in as their favorite acts took the virtual stage.

Incredibly talented artists such as Paul Simon, Willie Nelson, and James Taylor performed their award-winning songs, while iconic actors and actresses such as Owen Wilson and Renée Zellweger shared their love

and appreciation of the region. The event's focus was always on the heightened needs of the Austin community and how the gifts made during the event were essential to keeping these organizations operable.

When the two-hour live stream benefit closed with Willie Nelson's performance of "On the Road Again," Austinites were filled with renewed hope that their community would continue to persevere together as they battled the COVID-19 pandemic that left so many in critical need.

The event's team was astonished to report that \$603,000 was collectively raised by 8,300 generous donors. A Night for Austin made an unfathomable impact on so many organizations that desperately needed its support.

*"The flexibility of the platform combined with the professionalism and service of the Bonterra team is very valuable, and that we couldn't have done it (well) without them. While we have other ways to bring online donations into the foundation, we will always want the Bonterra Advanced Forms Designer solution as an option for our more sophisticated and polished events."*



# Creating community-focused virtual fundraising event

As cities continue to feel the direct impact of COVID-19, there has been an increased need for community events similar to 'A Night For Austin'. They lift spirits and morale during trying times and demonstrate the importance of coming together for a common cause. In 2020 and beyond, it will be more critical than ever to create events that allow all to connect digitally.

We now have the tools to make these virtual events more effective and engaging through live streaming services. This significantly reduces the barriers to entry and operational costs that coincide with in-person events. Virtual events place the focus on the needs of those benefiting from the event and generating the maximum impact.

We have seen many organizations across our platforms, including ACF, find incredibly creative ways to reach donors and supporters online, such as virtual galas, [Giving Days](#), and recorded performances. This new trend will shape our fundraising landscape for the better as donors enjoy the ease, accessibility, and convenience of giving online.

*"We raised over \$600K in 2 hours-all those funds went directly to organizations supporting musicians, venues, and entertainment-related businesses that were adversely impacted by the pandemic and the resulting economic downturn. The event also helped raise spirits and our community and helped everyone watching reconnect with what they love about Austin-even if it looks different this year. One of the producers described it as a giant love letter to Austin and the Austin music scene. I think that captures it perfectly."*

A critical component of any successful community-wide event is collaboration. Events of this size can take an immense amount of time to plan and coordinate. Working with other community leaders allows all parties involved to use their talents and resources to benefit the entire event.

Those in your community have the innate desire to help your organization but might not know the best way to do so. Consider connecting with other nonprofits, small businesses, restaurants, or media outlets. These local businesses can help spread the word about the event and reach larger audiences. By collaborating with others in your community, your event will flourish, allowing you to create more impact and change more lives.



*“Collaboration was key to making this event successful. Everyone had a critical role to play, and if one of those roles wasn’t fulfilled (by the collaborator most equipped to do it well), it wouldn’t have been a success. We needed the producer to use their expertise in creating the concert content, we needed the big-name artists to attract an audience, we needed Bonterra to ensure the transactions experience was seamless and user-friendly, and we needed ACF to structure the fund, relationship, and support the grantmaking and community impact.”*

Our embeddable [Advanced Forms Designer](#) solution allow your organization to quickly and securely raise funds during your next virtual fundraising event. Learn more about our white label service and chat with an expert on our engagement team.

## FUNDRAISING RESULTS FOR 2020



**\$603,000  
RAISED**



**8,300  
DONORS**

**7 NONPROFITS**

**2 HOURS**