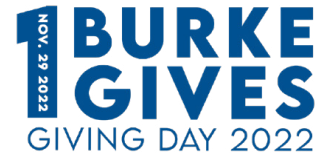




## CASE STUDY

# 1BurkeGives rallies support for rural nonprofits on GivingTuesday





Maureen “Mo” Schwind, executive director and Abigail Taylor, marketing & campaign manager of the Burke County United Way, and Grayson Barnette, marketing & communications coordinator of the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, share how Burke County’s 24-hour Giving Day, 1BurkeGives, encourages an entire community to unite and raise over \$260,000 for local nonprofits on GivingTuesday.

For many people operating in the nonprofit space, the Tuesday following Thanksgiving is best known as GivingTuesday. In Burke County, North Carolina, GivingTuesday is synonymous with a different name, officially declared by local government officials: “1BurkeGives.” 1BurkeGives is an annual 24-hour Giving Day hosted by Burke County United Way aimed to raise awareness and funds for nonprofits dedicated to serving the needs of their vibrant community. Since its inception in 2020, Burke County United Way has helped its local nonprofits raise \$260,000 to support their missions and services through 1BurkeGives. And they are only just getting started!

“1BurkeGives is not about just us. It is about the community and creating an opportunity for others. We are now able to support many more nonprofits and help them raise funds.”

- Maureen “Mo” Schwind,  
executive director,  
Burke County United Way

# Reimagining community impact with a Giving Day

Burke County, North Carolina, a rural community best known for its rolling foothills and abundant natural beauty, is home to nearly 90,000 people. Each nonprofit that operates in Burke County plays a vital role in fulfilling the needs of its residents and often does so with limited resources and funds.

As a philanthropic leader, Burke County United Way's vision is a "community where all Burke County individuals and families are equipped to live independently and thrive." Made up of a team of three highly motivated and dedicated staff, plus a committed Board of Directors, this small but mighty United Way actualizes this vision by not only ensuring that their focus-issued mission objectives are accomplished but also equally engaging in broader community needs by collaborating and supporting their nonprofit colleagues.

Burke County United Way first began developing 1BurkeGives amidst the COVID-19 pandemic as a direct response to the shift in their ability to secure funding for their nonprofits during a time of heightened community need. Mo shared, "COVID-19 changed the landscape for nonprofits. It was very difficult to fundraise because everything was shut down. United Ways are known for our workplace campaigns, and there were many of those that were not going to run. We were really concerned about not being able to meet our budget and not being able to support nonprofits in our community."

The pandemic presented an opportunity for the United Way to reassess its current operations and create a new and modern strategic plan that continued to provide support for their fellow community nonprofits through collaboration and partnership in the opportunity to lift each other up.

"One of the things that we knew going into our strategic planning is that we needed to diversify our funding streams. Our consultant helped us look at different opportunities, and he presented the concept of a Giving Day. After looking at how other United Ways implemented this type of event and the success they saw from it, we realized that we had nothing to lose and a tremendous amount to gain," said Mo.

As a pillar of their new strategic plan, a Giving Day would allow Burke County United Way to rally the community together around the diverse nonprofits that were directly serving the needs of Burke County residents, provide rural nonprofits with the modern technology to raise funds online and increase awareness of the United Way's work within the community.

Mo also shared that, "A Giving Day allowed us to continue to be a community partner and a community advocate. We could support nonprofits and our community in a whole different way."





# Leveraging the momentum of GivingTuesday

To leverage the momentum and excitement of the internationally recognized day of giving, Burke County United Way selected GivingTuesday as the date of their community's very own event.

When asked how Burke County United Way selected GivingTuesday, Abigail responded, "Hosting 1BurkeGives on GivingTuesday allows nonprofits to support one another in a united initiative during a time where our community members are already seeking ways to give back."

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An additional benefit of hosting a Giving Day is that Burke County United Way can also participate in the event to raise funds to support its own programs and initiatives and educate community members on their work, all while keeping the focus of the event on all participating nonprofits. During the most recent 1BurkeGives on GivingTuesday 2022, Burke County United Way raised over \$26,000 through the support of 81 donors. In total, the United Way has raised over \$70,000 through 1BurkeGives in its three years.

Providing the space where nonprofits and the United Way could come together in a meaningful and engaging way was essential to filling the needs of Burke County residents.

## OVERALL IMPACT OF 1BURKEGIVES 2022

**\$104,252**  
RAISED

**144**  
NEW DONORS

**435**  
DONORS

**30**  
ORGANIZATIONS

**\$113.46**  
AVERAGE ONLINE DONATION

**\$7,157**  
RAISED BY PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISERS



**A Giving Day allowed us to continue to be a community partner and a community advocate. We could support nonprofits and our community in a whole different way.**

**- Maureen “Mo” Schwind, executive director,  
Burke County United Way**

## **Building an attainable and sustainable 1BurkeGives**

The first 1BurkeGives was considered a resounding success with buy-in from the entire community, raising over \$50,000 for 33 organizations in just 24 hours. Over the past three years, Burke County United Way has continued to seek ways to build upon this dedicated day of giving and transform its rural community.

Abigail noted, “Momentum has increased over the past three years, partly because we have been able to add something new to the Giving Day every year. Adding different elements, such as our in-person events in 2022, has raised excitement amongst our participating organizations and their donors, encouraging them to continue to engage with 1BurkeGives.”

As a team of three operating in a rural community, the Burke County United Way is able to grow the impact of its Giving Day and continue to engage its nonprofits and supporters by creating a strategic plan for 1BurkeGives that is both attainable and sustainable. The United Way team does this by leaning on project management and support, leveraging modern and easy-to-use technology, developing community outreach strategies, and most recently, implementing a steering committee comprised of nonprofit leaders participating in the Giving Day.



Through these efforts to build upon the event year-after-year, Burke County sees 1BurkeGives as a community staple that residents look forward to taking part in and helping grow. During the most recent 1BurkeGives on GivingTuesday 2022, 435 donors raised a collective \$105,000 for 30 organizations! This is a 110% increase from their first 1BurkeGives in 2020! It also remains a significant source of new supporters, with over 500 donors self-reported as making their first gift to an organization through 1BurkeGives throughout the last three years.

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As a pillar of their new strategic plan, a Giving Day would allow Burke County United Way to rally the community together around the diverse nonprofits that were directly serving the needs of Burke County residents, provide rural nonprofits with the modern technology to raise funds online, and increase awareness of the United Way’s work within the community.



## Bonterra Giving Days provides outstanding Giving Day support

Our mission is to make it incredibly easy for you to be great fundraisers. We want our partners to love working with us, our employees to love working for us, and our communities to love that we're a part of their communities.



### PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

When they kicked off planning for the inaugural Giving Day, they were immediately introduced to their dedicated Bonterra Donor Engagement's Giving Days (formerly GiveGab) project manager. Burke County United Way met with their project manager on a recurring basis to help them develop goals and strategy, guide them and their stakeholders in understanding how to best utilize the Giving Day technology, and make sure they were following a project plan that would lead to a successful 1BurkeGives. Mo shared, "We were able to be successful with planning 1BurkeGives within a month and a half because of the support our Giving Days project manager was able to provide. They gave us a very specific timeline that we were able to stick to and that was extremely helpful."

Abigail added, "The weekly planning schedule was so wonderfully knitted together for us. The intentional structure provided by our project manager deserves some credit for the program's success. It kept us moving along and focused. We couldn't have done 1BurkeGives without Bonterra's Giving Days solution."

In addition to the project management received by Burke County United Way, stakeholders participating in 1BurkeGives, including donors, fundraisers, and participating nonprofits have access to Bonterra Giving Days' live chat support for any questions when navigating the Giving Day site. This added support significantly reduces the time Burke County United Way spends fielding questions, so they can dedicate more time to strategy and implementation.

## MODERN AND EASY-TO-USE TECHNOLOGY

Burke County United Way first began working with Bonterra Giving Days in 2020 to develop a Giving Day site that had all the features and functionality to generate excitement and engagement around 1BurkeGives and was also user-friendly and easy to adopt by the participating nonprofits.

The 1BurkeGives site also has built-in functionality that incentivizes all stakeholders to become active participants in the event for the entire 24 hours, including peer-to-peer fundraising, matches and challenges, prizes, and a dynamic leaderboard.

And most importantly, the 1BurkeGives site put online fundraising technology in the hands of nonprofits. Burke County organizations experienced a significant shift in how they were able to fundraise in 2020. By participating in 1BurkeGives, these nonprofits can raise critical funds through secure and modern donation forms every year on GivingTuesday.



This past year, we encouraged people to come together in person to celebrate 1BurkeGives. We made it easy for people to make their gifts on their phones with QR codes while hanging out with us. I think that kind of adding those little elements has just made it a little more exciting for people to look forward to the event.”

- Abigail Taylor

## MARKETING, OUTREACH, AND ENGAGEMENT

During the first 1Burke Gives in 2020, the United Way focused its outreach efforts on ensuring that local nonprofits knew about this opportunity and the benefits it would provide during this time of heightened need. The team created an entirely digital experience that allowed its stakeholders and community members to support local nonprofits from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

In the following two years, the United Way has developed creative ways for the community to take part in the event digitally and in-person!

The United Way team has also gotten significant buy-in from local businesses each year, offering their support and matching funds. And their local municipality has even proclaimed 1BurkeGives as a day to support nonprofits- 1 Community, 1 Day of Giving.

Mo added, “The energy and the excitement builds because nonprofits and donors are lifting up each other, yielding community excitement. It helps us realize we doing the right thing for our county.”



## Leading growth with a Giving Day steering committee

New in 2022, the Burke County United Way established a steering committee comprised of nonprofit and community leaders to help guide and grow 1BurkeGives. With a small team of three individuals at the United Way, it was essential for them to get additional support from the community, especially as they focused on expanding the day year-over-year.

They also wanted to make sure they continued to have buy-in and support from all stakeholders and to do this, they needed to work with a team that understood the community's ever-evolving needs.

Abigail provides more insight into their vision for the committee, "It was important for us to get a steering committee together of nonprofit professionals who have participated in 1BurkeGives and other stakeholders, including individuals from the tourism association and local businesses, who have a good sense of what is happening in the community. We understood the benefits of having an outside perspective of things so that we could change or add to the flow of the day."

The steering committee has helped organize trainings for nonprofits to help them understand the benefits of participating in 1BurkeGives. In these trainings, the committee shares how to use the tools available to nonprofits to build a campaign and how to speak knowledgeably about the day to their donors. Steering committee members also go out into the community to speak with local businesses about how they can get involved in the event through sponsorships and other opportunities.

"The 1BurkeGives steering committee was set up to really help folks fully understand and take advantage of all the good that comes from taking part in this event. We wanted to really make sure the time commitment and expected return on investment were clear, as well as empower nonprofits of all sizes with the resources they need to be successful. Our committee is focused on educating nonprofits and community members on how they can get the word out, and how they can take advantage of this day. We grow when others grow, and I think that there's a huge community of giving here, especially in Burke County," added Grayson.

By leveraging this additional support from the steering committee, Burke County United Way's small team has the flexibility and resources to continue to innovate and elevate 1BurkeGives without putting extra strain on their limited capacity.

**Through these efforts to build upon the event year after year, Burke County sees 1BurkeGives as a community staple that residents look forward to taking part in and helping grow. During the most recent 1BurkeGives on GivingTuesday 2022, 435 donors raised a collective \$105,000 for 30 organizations! This is a 110% increase from their first 1BurkeGives in 2020! It also remains a significant source of new supporters, with over 500 donors self-reported as making their first gift to an organization through 1BurkeGives throughout the last three years.**

# Participating nonprofits experience Giving Day success

The Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina is a regional trust organization that oversees 65,000 acres of natural resources located in eight counties, including Burke County, and three river basins. They have also experienced incredible fundraising successes through their 1BurkeGives campaign since they began participating in the event in 2021. During the most recent Giving Day, the organization raised \$6,000 from 32 donors! In total, the Foothills Conservancy has raised over \$26,000 to fuel its mission.



“It was really helpful to jump into a GivingTuesday campaign with 1BurkeGives and be able to leverage the resources and momentum that was available to me. Burke County United Way had really done a lot of marketing for us. There was already some information on how we could talk about 1BurkeGives in an educated way. I was able to easily join the Giving Day and participate, even though I had several projects on my plate. It was incredibly easy to participate because the infrastructure was already there for me.”

- Grayson Barnette

To the Foothills Conservancy, 1BurkeGives provides its organization, along with others in the region, the opportunity to take part in GivingTuesday as a community and to take advantage of the platform's technology and media promotions to bring increased awareness to their cause.

It is especially important when hosting a Giving Day centered around rural nonprofits to provide the technology and resources needed for those nonprofits to quickly onboard, understand how they can use the functionality available to them, and utilize promotional assets to get the word out about their participation!

2021 was the first year that Grayson led the Foothills Conservancy's 1BurkeGives campaign. He spent five to seven hours getting the profile ready and promotions scheduled, which included emails and social media posts.

In his second year participating in 1BurkeGives, Grayson shared that he was “able to cut my time

working on the campaign in half. I was able copy over what we had previously done with updates to our priorities and total acreage. It is fairly simple to participate, and spending less time year-over-year is fantastic, especially when many of us nonprofits have overlapping priorities. And our donors now have a good understanding of the day and are anticipating giving back on GivingTuesday every year.”

While Grayson remains focused on driving new supporters to learn about the Foothills Conservancy, he also sees 1BurkeGives as a day to highlight their partner organizations and encourage people to further connect with those causes. As a member of the steering committee, he understands the power that 1BurkeGives holds in uniting

## FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY OF NORTH CAROLINA'S ROI DURING 1BURKEGIVES 2021

**\$2,183: 1 HOUR**

**5-7**  
HOURS SPENT ON  
CAMPAIGN

**\$13,100**  
TOTAL RAISED

## FOOTHILLS CONSERVANCY OF NORTH CAROLINA'S 1BURKEGIVES CAMPAIGN INCLUDED:

**1BURKEGIVES**  
**PROFILE PAGE**

**5**  
EMAILS

**7**  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
POSTS

the community and taking a holistic approach to the impact this event can have on Burke County residents.

"We developed messaging that really honed in on the community aspect of 1BurkeGives. We didn't just talk about what we were doing. We also talked about the work of our collective partners and encouraged folks to donate to them. We like the cross-pollination of donors between organizations. Especially in the same communities that are doing similar work, because if we're partnering with them to clean a river, we should be sure that donors across both of our organizations know that we're out here doing great work."

- Grayson Barnette

1BurkeGives creates an atmosphere in which nonprofits can easily and securely raise funds to serve their missions, but it also encourages them to work

together to strengthen the community they are all passionate about.

The Burke County United Way and its steering committee understand that the organizations that actively engage in 1BurkeGives and utilize all the tools available to them, tend to see more success from their participation. With three years of 1BurkeGives in the books, there are many organizations that have really leaned into the Giving Day and have created successful campaigns around this annual event.

As they plan for 2023, the United Way hopes to match more experienced nonprofits with those which may be new to 1BurkeGives to provide the mentorship and support they need to invest in the event and launch successful campaigns!



## Advice to United Ways considering a Giving Day

Maureen Schwind, Abigail Taylor, and Grayson Barnette were asked what advice they would give to United Ways operating in rural communities that are considering hosting a Giving Day of their own. This is what they shared:

“ Give yourself enough time (more than the 1.5 months in which we planned our inaugural 1BurkeGives -we now start planning in July) and get your Board and the community involved from the get-go to help shape what the event looks like. Lean on Bonterra Giving Days, because they're the experts and can guide you every step of the way - meeting with your Giving Days project manager, will keep you on task. Plan to work hard, but remember that it should be a fun and enjoyable event for you and your community.

- *Maureen “Mo” Schwind, executive director, Burke County United Way*

“ Your Giving Day doesn't need to be complicated. I think so far we've kept it pretty simple. Make a schedule that works for you to keep the event interesting with things happening throughout the day to keep people's attention, but don't make it too complicated. Use all the tools that Bonterra Giving Days provides you with and listen to their advice, then build off that depending on what you think your community will like.

- *Abigail Taylor, Marketing & Campaign Manager at Burke County United Way*

“ A Giving Day is a really powerful tool. I think United Ways are in a unique position where they have universal name recognition amongst nonprofits, donors, and folks who are invested in nonprofits. The United Way has always embraced the 'as we grow, everyone else does' mindset. The community is all connected, and the interconnectedness that is created from a Giving Day amongst the communities, nonprofits, organizations, businesses, and citizens is really impactful. I think all United Ways should run a Giving Day to strengthen their communities.

- *Grayson Barnette, Marketing & Communications Coordinator at Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina*

# PLAN YOUR GIVING DAY WITH BONTERRA GIVING DAYS

Join thousands of organizations using Bonterra Giving Days to build awareness for their missions, engage with supporters, and raise millions!

Whether you are looking to end a giving plateau, innovate your fundraising strategy, or need a sophisticated platform to make your Giving Day dreams come true, Bonterra is here to help.

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