

CASE STUDY

How Heaven on Earth NOW enhanced donor communication and streamlined processes to raise 96% more through Jumpstart



Overview

Founded in 2015 in Baltimore, Md., [Heaven on Earth NOW](#) “loves people back to life” by combating hunger with healthy food and providing household essentials along with a transformational life skills education program to people emerging from homelessness and crises. “One person at a time, one family at a time, we bring heaven down to earth.”

Executive Director, Molly Cottrill co-founded the organization with a healthy food initiative and its “Begin Again” program, which has evolved over the years and now includes Life Skills PLUS, a year-long teaching initiative focused on five learning pillars: money management, safety, wellness, cooking, and cleaning. For the program, they are partnered with Health Care for the Homeless, Baltimore County Department of Social Services, Community Assistance Network, Prologue, Inc., Family Crisis Center, and other organizations that refer clients who have recently emerged from homelessness, secured housing, and are receiving financial housing assistance for a specific period. Heaven on Earth NOW works with each client (families and individuals) and provides a one-time, in-person delivery of new household essentials—mattress sets, kitchen and cleaning supplies, hygiene items, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, bedding, and more for their new residence. Additionally, clients are introduced to Life Skills PLUS, and for one year, they receive a monthly curated box of educational lessons, related tools and goods, and healthy recipe kits, along with encouragement and reinforcement of structure and positivity.

Heaven on Earth NOW also distributes “Good for You Groceries,” which are assembled bags of healthy nonperishables containing about 27 complete meals. They work in partnership with local churches and police departments to disperse them throughout the year in the Baltimore community.



The challenge

As an organization with a lean team that provides a wide range of support to their community, Heaven on Earth NOW needed a streamlined resource to help them track donor and volunteer contact information, fundraise for their cause, and communicate quickly and easily. They host a number of volunteer groups each month, and it became overwhelming to keep track of and communicate with everyone they interacted with. Additionally, the organization was not doing a lot of individual fundraising, relying heavily on grant dollars to sustain their mission.



I would say our effort before was very disjointed. We had a database, but it wasn't a formal—an excel spreadsheet that wasn't updated regularly. We are so busy working with real people—precious human lives—and tackling barriers that make it so very difficult for them to exit the existence of poverty. So for us, that was and still is our highest priority. We write lengthy grants, but we aren't grant writers, and we have a staff of almost all volunteers, so we had very little in place as far as a fundraising plan and database.

Molly Cottrill
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The strategy

In early 2022, the organization was approached by [The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation](#) with the opportunity to participate in Bonterra's Jumpstart program. The program provides nonprofit organizations with the integrated fundraising technology and tools they need to improve their day-to-day processes. They're also paired with a fundraising coach to improve their ability to secure unrestricted funding and reduce grant reliance.

Heaven on Earth NOW worked with their fundraising coach to learn how to effectively utilize Bonterra Donor Engagement's Guided Fundraising solution (formerly Network for Good) to manage their contacts, communicate authentically and effectively, and most importantly, increase fundraising.

“Coaching with Tom Giddens has been crucial to our success, as he has taught us how to use the tools and has ingrained in us to have no fear when it comes to asking for money—it’s the ‘20 seconds of courage’ rule on steroids. As a result, we’ve gotten gifts that we never expected to receive without spending a significant amount of time applying for a specific grant. It’s also shown us the value of breaking big fundraising goals into tiny ones... every dollar counts and the recurring \$10.87 a month adds up! And finally, we accept that our communication with followers doesn’t have to be perfect and, rather, it’s better to be consistent and real in contact.”



Results

According to Molly, the Jumpstart program and integrating Bonterra Guided Fundraising into their daily processes has helped them move the needle on their mission in several ways:

Increased efficiency: By utilizing integrated fundraising software, the Heaven on Earth NOW team has been able to develop much needed protocols for every aspect of their work. Since they run a number of different programs, having the ability to streamline their processes helps them become more efficient, plus they have the ability to measure outcomes more precisely on all levels. These efficiencies have allowed their executive team to focus more on their clients' individual needs and even start a new initiative called "Live Intentionally 365," which is focused on goal-setting and positive habits for their clients.

Renewed focus on fundraising: According to Molly, fundraising used to be a bit of an afterthought for the organization as they focused on supporting their clients. While they raised money, it wasn't part of their weekly tasks—that all changed with Jumpstart. Now, they regularly share stories of impact and news with their contacts via the email functionality built into the Bonterra Guided Fundraising solution platform. This has resulted in an increase in unplanned donations and volunteer interest.

"Jumpstart literally has jump-started our ability to capture individual contact information for people we meet and our volunteer groups at the events we host throughout each month," said Molly. **"We then add each contact the same day—and it's easy!"**

Strategic planning and storytelling: The Heaven on Earth NOW team has dedicated one hour per week to identify and develop a communication showcasing a compelling client success story. They have a goal of sending two of these stories to their database each month to encourage donations. **"It's these messages that awaken people's hearts and make it easy for them to be a part of our movement of loving people back to life,"** says Molly.

Heaven on Earth NOW has experienced tremendous results since Bonterra's Jumpstart program, ultimately increasing unrestricted funding by **96%!**

About Jumpstart powered by Bonterra:

The Jumpstart program provides grantmakers with effective fundraising capacity building support for their grantees to create transformative change. The year-long program pairs nonprofits with a fundraising coach and is provisioned with integrated technology needed to engage community, diversify revenue, and sustain their programs.

Ready to create
lasting social
change?

Get in touch today.

**SCHEDULE A JUMPSTART
CONSULTATION**

