

# WISE GIVING™

GUIDE

BBB WISE GIVING ALLIANCE : WINTER/HOLIDAY 2014



FUNDRAISING  
GOES VIRAL

twitter



You Tube™

THE ICE  
BUCKET  
CHALLENGE  
& SOCIAL  
MEDIA





A Publication of the  
BBB Wise Giving Alliance

The *Wise Giving Guide* is published three times a year to help donors make more informed giving decisions. This guide includes a compilation of the latest evaluation conclusions completed by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

If you would like to see a particular topic discussed in this guide, please email suggestions to [give@council.bbb.org](mailto:give@council.bbb.org) or write to us at the address below.

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BBB Wise Giving Alliance  
3033 Wilson Blvd.  
Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 276-0100  
[www.give.org](http://www.give.org)

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BBB Wise Giving Alliance

#### BBB Wise Giving Alliance Staff

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# president's MESSAGE

Over \$100 million was raised for the ALS Association as a result of the ice bucket videos which is the subject of this issue's cover story. We have never seen anything like it in terms of raising money so quickly for a non-disaster related cause. Even I got hooked with the fever and produced video evidence of my drenching. While some claim this viral phenomenon is a once in a lifetime success story, others are seeking ways to create social media innovations for other charities and causes.

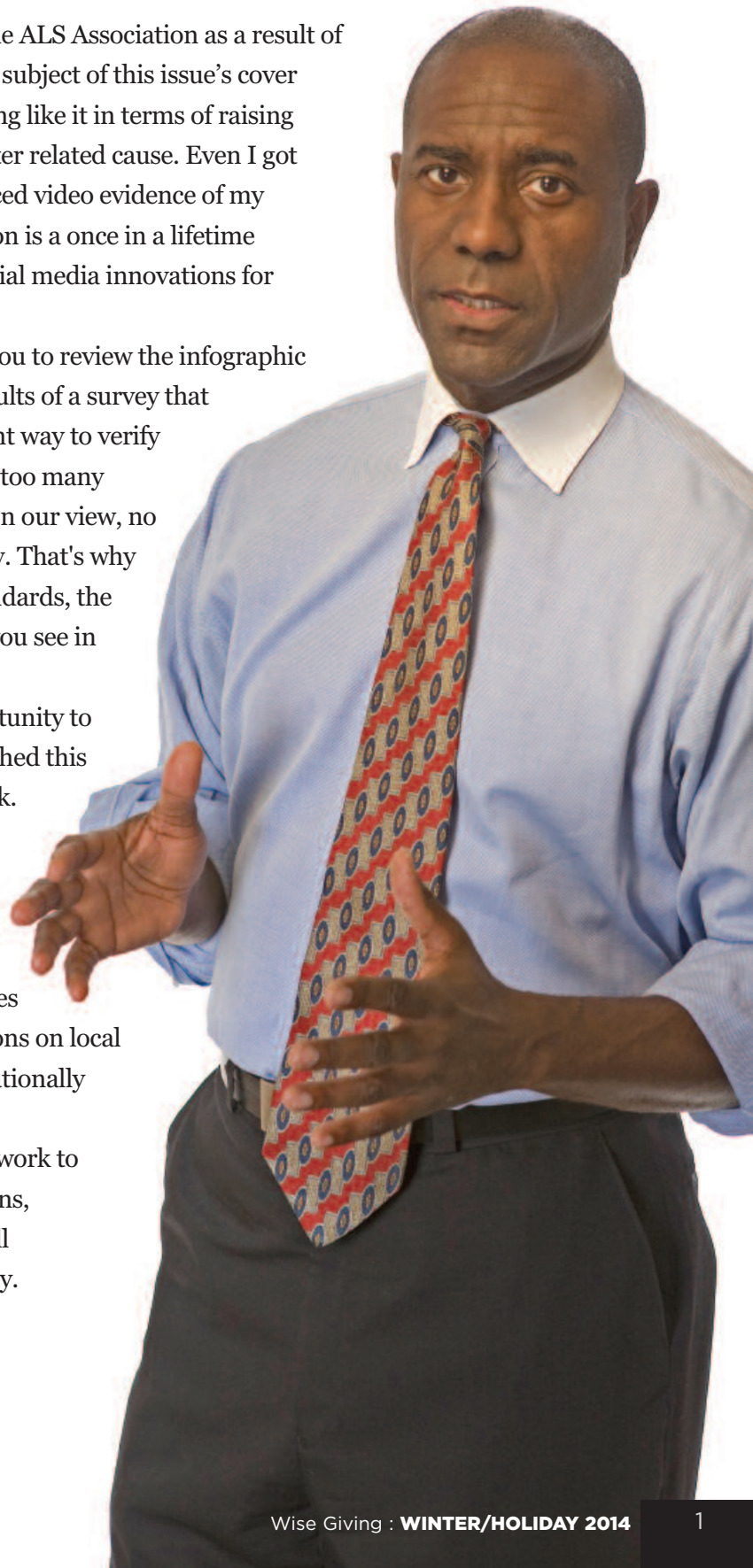
In addition to our feature article, I encourage you to review the infographic that appears on page seven. This illustrates the results of a survey that asked 4,500 Americans "what is the most important way to verify trust in a charity before donating?" Unfortunately, too many people unknowingly focus on overhead spending. In our view, no single measure can signal if a charity is trustworthy. That's why we conduct rigorous evaluations using holistic standards, the results of which form the basis of the conclusions you see in this publication and in the reports on our website.

Speaking of our website, let me take this opportunity to bring your attention to the new Give.org. We launched this in October and have received very positive feedback. Check out its clean and easy to use format and the division of the homepage to provide separate sections for donors and charities. The charity report search engine is now the most prominent feature and we included a new section that identifies the Better Business Bureaus that produce evaluations on local charities using the same standards as we use for nationally soliciting charities.

Thank you for your continuing interest in our work to encourage donors to make informed giving decisions, especially as the year draws to a close and we are all reminded of the importance of American generosity.



H. Art Taylor, *President*



# Fundraising Goes Viral

## THE ICE BUCKET CHALLENGE & SOCIAL MEDIA

By Edward Loftin

On the Fourth of July in 1939, baseball great Lou Gehrig gave perhaps his finest performance, delivering his “Luckiest Man on the Face of the Earth” speech to a packed Yankee Stadium. Nicknamed the “Iron Horse” for his then-record 2,130 consecutive games played, the six-time World Series Champion slugger was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis at the Mayo Clinic in Chicago on June 19, 1939, his 36th birthday. Commonly known as Lou Gehrig’s Disease in the United States, ALS is a progressive neurodegenerative disease affecting nerve cells in both the brain and spinal cord, causing loss of the ability to initiate or control muscle movement, in some cases leading to total paralysis as the disease progresses. Arguably the best first baseman to ever play baseball, Gehrig lost his battle with the disease that bears his name less than two years after being diagnosed, on June 2, 1941.

When Gehrig last stepped to the plate, television was not yet common in the American home. The computer was a topic for science fiction, appearing in a Robert A. Heinlein short story also in 1939. It is unlikely that anyone attending Gehrig’s speech in the Bronx imagined a world in which people take pictures or videos of themselves at sporting events and post them in an electronic network to be viewed around the globe from a device half the size of a box of Cracker Jack. While life in 2014 may seem like an episode of the *Jetsons* given the technological advancements of the last 75 years, social media is a reality and has become an important vehicle by which charitable organizations can communicate with their stakeholders to raise awareness, promote action and raise dollars.

The ALS Ice Bucket Challenge is one of the most successful and recognizable social media efforts to date. The following article will examine how the Ice Bucket Challenge came about, how the organization is managing the success of the campaign, and some of the challenges the organization faces going forward. We will also discuss #GivingTuesday, a platform that encourages the use of social media to help organizations promote their mission and fund their projects. In addition, there will be a discussion of the challenges charities face when engaging in social media. Finally, we

will provide some tips for both charities and donors as they navigate the relatively new world of communicating via social media.

### The State of Social Media

The social media landscape seems to be evolving as rapidly as the rise of the Internet itself. According to Pew Research’s 2013 Social Media Update, 73% of online adults are using social media in one way or another. While Facebook has the most users, 42% of adults are active on multiple social media platforms. Pew’s data show that specific sites are of interest to particular demographics. Women prefer Pinterest, younger people favor Twitter and Instagram, and LinkedIn is popular among the well-educated and those with higher incomes.

Social media has also gone mobile in recent years. According to an April 17–May 19, 2013 Tracking Survey completed by Pew Research Center’s Internet & American Life Project, 56% of adults own a smartphone. Younger people own smartphones in greater numbers, with 79% of those between ages 18–24, 81% between ages 25–34, and 69% between ages 35–44 owning these devices. For charities, these smartphone users represent a target audience to raise awareness and generate funds through social media.

Charities use social media to give program updates, request donations or other forms of support and provide stories about people the organization has helped. However, creative uses of social media are

“**ACCORDING TO PEW RESEARCH’S 2013 SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE, 73% OF ONLINE ADULTS ARE USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.**”

increasing as organizations seek distinction from their competitors. WATERisLIFE, a charity committed to providing clean drinking water, as well as sanitation and hygiene programs, to Haiti, northern Ghana, Kenya and India, took such an approach with a 2012 YouTube clip. The video shows Haitians reading actual complaints people originally posted to Twitter using the popular hashtag #FirstWorldProblems. Mocking the petty by comparison problems posted to Twitter, one segment shows a smiling Haitian man in front of a run-down shack with a rusty corrugated metal roof reading, “I hate it when my house is so big, I need two wireless routers.” The end of the video states “#FirstWorldProblems Are Not Problems” and asks for a donation to help bring clean water to those in need.

The Movember Foundation is another charity harnessing the power of social media. The organization encourages men to grow mustaches for the entire month of November to raise awareness of men’s health issues. Once his mustache has grown, an individual is encouraged to mobilize the support of friends and family through a “Mo Space” participant profile. The profile shows a picture, amounts raised, and rankings. Supporters also have the option to donate, join a Movember team, or give support through Facebook or Twitter. The organization reports that over 4 million “Mo Bros” and “Mo Sistas” have participated in Movember since 2003, raising over \$5 million to help fund projects related to men’s health, especially in the areas of prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health.

## ALS Ice Bucket Challenge



Likely the most memorable event in the history of ALS since Gehrig’s iconic speech, the Ice Bucket Challenge took social media by storm in the summer of 2014. The campaign began organically when Pete Frates, a former captain of

the Boston College baseball team, was diagnosed with ALS and began advocacy and fundraising efforts to fight the disease. Along with his friend Pat Quinn, Frates began the Challenge that quickly became a viral phenomenon, reaping substantial benefits for ALS charities. The main beneficiary of Ice Bucket Challenge donations has been the ALS Association, a Washington,

## MAJOR FORCES IN SOCIAL MEDIA

**Facebook** — 1.3 billion users. Social networking service enables individuals to create profiles and message friends.



**Twitter** — 270 million users. Messages (tweets) of up to 140 characters shared with followers.



**YouTube** — Over 1 billion unique users each month. Video sharing service.



**LinkedIn** — Over 300 million members. Professionals share profiles and messages in social networking service.



**Pinterest** — Between 50 and 70 million users. Visual bookmark service where users share interests in art, crafts, travel, etc.



**Instagram** — Over 150 million users. Sharing pictures and videos through social media platform.



D.C.-based charity that fights the disease by providing research grants, public and professional education, and patient and community service. According to Barbara Newhouse, President and CEO of the ALS Association, the Ice Bucket Challenge raised \$115 million for her organization as of September 30, 2014.

To complete the Ice Bucket Challenge an individual must dump a bucket of ice water on their head (the ice water helping people to “wake up” to ALS) and capture it on video. The video gets posted to social media outlets like Twitter and Facebook. While completing the challenge, the participant nominates several other people to accept the challenge, and the nominees are given twenty-four hours to rise to the occasion. Individuals are also commonly asked to donate \$10 to a specified charity if they braved the ice dousing, or \$100 if they declined. Participants were also encouraged to use the hashtags #icebucketchallenge,



#alsicebucketchallenge, and #strikeoutals when doing the challenge. Matt Lauer accepted and carried out golfer Greg Norman's challenge on NBC's *The Today Show* on July 15, 2014. Many believe this caused the "virus" to spread as other notable figures followed Matt's lead. The Ice Bucket Challenge has been completed by athletes, celebrities, business moguls and statesmen, including LeBron James, Bill Gates and George W. Bush.

The ALS Association reported on October 31, 2014 that it would support six different "programs and initiatives designed to expedite the search for treatments and a cure for ALS," and that four of these six are global research cooperative alliances partially funded by the ALS Association. These four are commitments of one to three years to ALS Accelerated Therapeutics, the New York Genome Center, the Neuro Collaborative, and Project MinE. In addition to these research ventures, the ALS Foundation recently approved the doubling of grants to its 43 ALS Association Certified Treatment Centers of Excellence, multidisciplinary clinics that provide patient care, access to potential therapies and clinical trials research. Finally, donations to the ALS Foundation from the Ice Bucket Challenge will help create guidelines similar to those in the Food and Drug Administration's Safety and Innovation Act, with the hope of expediting drug and treatment delivery.

“FOR THE ALS ASSOCIATION, ONE OF THESE CHALLENGES IS THE KIND NOT OFTEN SEEN IN THE CHARITY WORLD: “WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO WITH ALL THIS UNEXPECTED CASH?”

charity:water, and Kiva, among others, aided in the development of the campaign, the first of which took place in 2012. #GivingTuesday is a "global day of giving" that takes place on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, with the goal of using social media to harness partners from charities, governments, businesses and individuals.

While charities decide how to raise funds and donors decide what charity to support, according to Anastasia Dellaccio of the UN Foundation, #GivingTuesday acts as an "amplifying force for good and a megaphone for all our partners to highlight the good things people are doing around the world." #GivingTuesday 2013 had over 10,000 partners in all 50 states and 11 countries, with an average gift of \$142.05 (up from \$101.60 for #GivingTuesday 2012). The campaign's reach of over 2 billion individuals on Twitter, 500,000 tweets, and 1.2 million Facebook "likes" illustrate the powerful role social media plays in the philanthropic sector.

One tool by which people are encouraged to share on #GivingTuesday is the #UNselfie, a digital photo posted to social media platforms with a short descriptor, typically of the reason for giving and the recipient organization. The UN Foundation reports that 7,000 #UNselfies (the "Unselfish Selfie") were posted on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Google+ during the 2013 campaign. Secretary of State John Kerry participated by posting an #UNselfie in support of relief efforts in the aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated portions of Southeast Asia on November 8, 2013.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™  
DECEMBER 2

## #GivingTuesday

Another prominent use of social media to benefit the charitable sector is the #GivingTuesday campaign. The campaign, inspired by the success of Black Friday and Cyber Monday retail events that mark the beginning of holiday sales, was developed by Henry Timms of the 92nd Street Y in New York and Katy Calvin of the United Nations Foundation. Founding partners from organizations such as Microsoft, GlobalGiving,

## New Media, New Challenges

While social media is fast becoming a powerful force in the nonprofit sector, new media also means new challenges. For the ALS Association, one of these challenges is the kind not often seen in the charity world: “What are we going to do with all this unexpected cash?” While having an estimated 60,000 new donors might seem like a “first world problem” for the ALS Association, Barbara Newhouse sees the heightened scrutiny that comes with the Ice Bucket Challenge windfall. In light of the new attention, she stresses the importance of the ALS Association “continuing to be transparent and accountable with donors.” She mentions that website, media and donor updates are made on a daily basis, and a need to “keep it fresh” as the charity engages its 60,000 new donors. Newhouse also mentions the importance of welcoming and thanking new donors for their support.

With largess also comes the need to rethink the future on a regular basis in light of the new attention the ALS Association has on it. Newhouse says that “taking the time to plan wisely” is a priority for the organization as it tries to figure out how to best spend the unprecedented amount of money raised by the recent social media campaign. She mentions that it is not practical to spend all the money right away on research and emphasizes the need to vet new projects based on merit and sustainability over the long term.

Changing banking procedures for the organization’s investments is another area of concern for the ALS Association. Newhouse claims that once the organization started benefiting financially from the Ice Bucket Challenge, “everybody had something to sell us.” Newhouse again advised a cautious approach to investments, emphasizing the need to take time to try and develop the most sustainable strategies.

The UN Foundation also had some challenges with social media as different segments of the population prefer different social media platforms. Dellaccio of the UN Foundation notes that her organization provides “tools to do things other than tweet,” including leveraging the use of webinars, case studies, workshops and videos to further engage the organization’s followers. She emphasizes that social media can help reach people, but that charities should not forget the importance of one-on-one interaction, stating that social media “will never replace action.”

## Creating Successful Campaigns

Engagement with the charitable sector has evolved, and with it the methods by which the sector communicates with its audience. A charity that hasn’t

given much thought to its social media presence is putting itself at a competitive disadvantage for charitable dollars, awareness and name recognition. It is not a leap to think the mission will suffer as well if nonprofits give short shrift to social media campaigns.

A BBB Wise Giving Alliance interview with Shana Glickfield of the D.C. public affairs firm, the Beekeeper Group, sheds some light on organizational strategies for developing an effective social media campaign. Glickfield, who specializes in new and social media, as well as online community building, cites the importance of organizations having a social media *strategy* and *knowing that strategy*. In other words, it is not enough for a charity to have a Twitter following or YouTube channel if these channels are not being used, or used unwisely. According to Glickfield, use of these platforms must be linked to “real-world outcomes” such as increased web traffic, awareness, or fundraising participation. To avoid the pitfalls of a subpar campaign, once organizational goals for social media have been established, charities should remain cautious of being generic. Specifics are important, so if the goal is to have people sign a petition, make sure this “ask” is obvious and that the organization is collecting data to measure performance.

Glickfield says of interactive social media campaigns, “It’s about giving people an opportunity to be a part of the movement through self-expression.” When people are actively engaged in a campaign, whether sharing a

**A CHARITY THAT HASN'T GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO ITS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE IS PUTTING ITSELF AT A COMPETITIVE DISADVANTAGE FOR CHARITABLE DOLLARS, AWARENESS AND NAME RECOGNITION.**

video of themselves completing the Ice Bucket Challenge or growing a mustache in support of men's health, and if these activities are tastefully linked to the mission of the charity, social media can act as a powerful tool for both awareness and fundraising. While the ALS Challenge might be akin to catching lightning in a bottle, Glickfield points out that the donor cultivation and brand awareness garnered through similar campaigns can lead to charitable donations for organizations that take the time to foster an active and engaging social media plan.

Newhouse of the ALS Foundation also describes some useful advice for charities engaging in social media. She first emphasizes that the organization should be clear about its message. This seems to be especially important in the fast-paced, hyper-connected world of smartphones in which a potential supporter may only look at a message from a given nonprofit for a few seconds before moving on to the next item.

According to Newhouse, social media campaigns need to be rigorously monitored and staffed appropriately. Needless to say, if an organization is intent on raising awareness and funds through social media, an intern "tweeting" or updating the organization's Facebook status once a month is not going to cut it. Newhouse describes social media as a venue in which you should "expect the unexpected and watch for curveballs."

## Red Flags for Donors

In order for donors to get the most out of their relationships with charitable organizations via the ever-growing social media landscape, individuals should be proactive in vetting the charities they encounter. Check the Give.org website to see if the organization has been evaluated by the BBB Wise Giving Alliance or your local BBB. Keep in mind that some charities have similar names, so double check to ensure you are giving to the organization you have in mind. Sometimes name similarity is a result of a shared mission; in other cases it may be an intent to deceive.

Don't assume you know the charity's activities based solely on its name. For most organizations, the name of the charity will not reveal the nature and scope of the services that they provide. In turn, not all social media messages provide clarity on the activities that contributions will fund. While this can be related to the spacing limit provided for some messages, transparent charities recognize the importance of describing what they do when asking for donations. In addition, the BBB Wise Giving Alliance considers a description of programs for which contributions are requested to be a vital part of any charitable appeal.

**IN ORDER FOR DONORS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS VIA THE EVER-GROWING SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE, INDIVIDUALS SHOULD BE PROACTIVE IN VETTING THE CHARITIES THEY ENCOUNTER.**

Keep in mind that not all social media campaigns ask for donations. Some are seeking to engage recipients so that they become more familiar with the charity and might be more open to making a future donation. Other charities may want the recipient to take some action (such as sign a petition) to further its cause.

Donor privacy has grown in importance in recent years, especially in the wake of recent data breaches experienced by major retailers. BBB Charity Standard 18 requires all charity websites to include a privacy policy that addresses what information is being collected, how to contact the charity to review this data, how to let the charity know that you don't want your information shared with others, and what security measures are in place to protect donor information.

If the social media campaign advertises that the sale of a specified product benefits the charity, see if the promotion also identifies the actual or anticipated amount of the purchase price that will go to the charity. Such a disclosure is called for by BBB Charity Standard 19.

Gone are the days in which a donor engaged with a charitable organization solely through their annual fund drive or a fundraising event. Social media is on the rise and there are benefits to charities that engage creatively that can lead to exponential growth, earning dollars, name recognition and awareness. Social media offers donors the opportunity to engage more deeply with organizations they care about most. Campaigns such as



the Ice Bucket Challenge and #GivingTuesday are just two examples. In time, other social media success stories will emerge with equal or greater impact. As this magazine goes to press, Facebook just announced campaigns to aid in fighting the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. The news feed on the platform will include

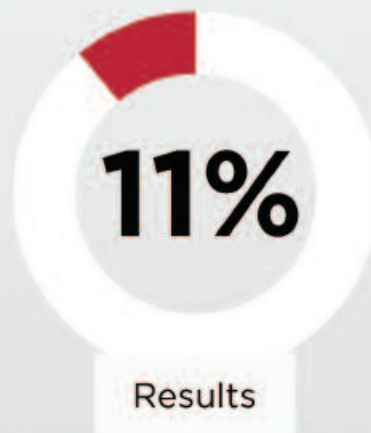
messages to raise awareness and donations for International Medical Corps, the Red Cross and Save the Children. With any luck, the social media giant and the charitable sector can help alleviate the suffering of the worst outbreak of this disease in modern history. ■

## New Study on How Americans Verify Charity Trust

A new study shows that Americans consider finances to be the most important indicator of trust — which BBB Wise Giving Alliance believes is a misguided review of an organization. The survey results shown below were part of a larger Consumer Styles Survey of 4,530 people conducted by Porter Novelli, a communications and public relations firm. As a *Wise Giving Guide* reader, you know you can check the trustworthiness of a charity by reviewing the results of the rigorous BBB WGA evaluations summarized in the magazine and detailed in charity reports accessible on Give.org.

### ARE YOU MISPLACING YOUR TRUST?

Americans would verify trust in a charity by looking at:



**Finances are a poor single-measure of a charity.** Next time you donate, look for a BBB Accredited Charity meeting holistic, rigorous standards – not only finances, but ethics, reporting of results and more. See the whole picture, and then give with trust.