



Alternative Gifts

INTERNATIONAL



SPRING/SUMMER 2020 *Newsletter*

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RESPONDING TO COVID

10 HEAR FROM
EXPERIENCED MARKET
HOST, LAURA MCFALL

13 EASIEST WAY TO HOST A
MARKET ONLINE



Dear Friends,

As we deal with unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, we are encouraged by so many who have asked us a simple question, "How are things going?" I am grateful for you, our donors and market hosts for continuing to do something kind in these days of uncertainty.

Our daily operations have altered, and budgets have stretched by unexpected expenses related to our new way of operating, but our work continues as there is much to be done! The challenges are greater for those providing emergency direct support services to people in need. Food banks and homeless shelters are under tremendous pressure, so AGI is helping!

We are inspired by the way organizations are rising to this challenge and we are committed to doing our part to help ensure they have the support they need. In the next week or so we will be disbursing funds to several shelter and food bank programs to help them through

this difficult time. We've set up a fundraiser page to give you an opportunity to support this effort, and want to thank you for your donations!

In these anxious times, we want to assure you that we are committed to serving your gift needs. And as a reminder, we have a convenient e-gift option that sends a greeting directly to your gift recipients email inbox. Since many cities are on lockdown, now is the perfect time to send a gift to remind someone you are thinking of them.

Thank you for your support as we weather this crisis. May you/your extended families be safe and well.

Take care,

Surinder Moore
AGi Director

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Dental Care For The Underserved

"I had been without teeth for many years, and my dentures didn't fit right so I couldn't wear those either. I couldn't eat. I wasn't sleeping well. I didn't want to be out in public. Both my physical and mental health were compromised. I went to an America's Dentists Care Foundation (Mission Of Mercy) free clinic, and I left with my dentures properly fitting and working perfectly. I was ELATED that I could move on with my life without pain and embarrassment, as well as eat in a healthy manner again.

Testimonial from an actual patient.

"I couldn't eat. I wasn't sleeping well. I didn't want to be out in public."

DONATE

Click to donate to this cause



ADCF Executive Director Bill Blasing with the patient.



How AGI Is Responding To COVID

When the news of COVID-19 broke, the staff at AGI immediately began connecting with our market hosts and supporters to find out what needs were arising in their area. Many of them expressed that shelters were overburdened and they lacked food and supplies. As a result, we are sending several community pantries and food banks donations.

Support generated for Cause #3 "Shelter &

Food for the Hungry & Homeless" is designated to aid American families and individuals in crisis who may need the support of a local food pantry or shelter. With layoffs and furloughs resulting from COVID-19, many of these types of programs are assisting more people and supplies are rapidly depleting.

[DONATE](#)

The following programs will receive aid from AGI's cause 3:

- Marion County Resource Center (Marion, KS)
- Knights Against Hunger (Wolfeboro, NH)
- Annandale Christian Community for Action (Annandale, VA)
- Sebastopol Interchurch Food Pantry (Sebastopol, CA)
- Cache Community Food Pantry (Logan, UT)
- Metro Caring (Denver, CO)
- Harvest Table (Washington, MO)
- Utah Food Bank (Salt Lake City, UT)
- Food At First (Ames, IA)
- Tomball Emergency Assistance Ministries (Tomball, TX)
- DEAM (Decatur-Area Emergency Assistance Ministry) (Decatur, GA)
- Decatur Cooperative Ministry (DCM) (Decatur, GA)
- South Brunswick Township Food Pantry (Monmouth Junction, NJ)
- Partners for Wichita (Filling the Gap) (Wichita, KS)
- First Presbyterian Church - Community Breakfast Program (Wichita, KS)
- Lutheran Community Services (Wilmington, DE)

Change The Story FOR REFUGEE WOMEN & GIRLS



Women who have attended sessions at Syrian Women's League's Gharsah Center noted that as a result of their participation, they have a better understanding of their bodies and their rights and were incentivized to continue these conversations at home with family and friends. One older participant stated that after attending SWL's sessions on gender equality, she felt more empowered to speak up on behalf of her daughters-in-law and granddaughters by discussing her sons' behaviors, such as their ease at leaving the house for extended periods whenever they wished, unlike the female members.

CHANGE THE STORY FOR REFUGEE WOMEN & GIRLS (CONT. FROM PAGE 7)



"I understand now that the goal of women's empowerment and emancipation is to establish strong bonds within the family, which encourages participation of women in decision-making that pertains to their lives and that of their family members. The prevailing power dynamic hurts women and the family as a whole. I was able to discuss this conclusion with my husband calmly but effectively, while also presenting examples to make the case." - testimonial of participant after the health workshops

Click here to donate: <https://alternativegifts.org/giving/gifting/causes/25-change-the-story-for-refugee-women-girls-lebanon>

HOW YOU, CAN HELP OTHERS DURING COVID-19



While we find ourselves in this difficult season of uncertainty, one thing we can find joy and comfort in is lending a helping hand to others. There are many ways we can join together to make a difference. Here are a few simple ways you can change the world during the COVID-19 pandemic.

and gift market hosts. These are all things that can be done virtually, so your safety and health are protected.

Interested in volunteering? Email surinder@alternativegifts.org

1. Donate To A Nonprofit Cause

There are many charitable programs that offer help to those in need during a crisis. Alternative Gifts are unique gifts that give a hand up for vulnerable communities. During this time of a worldwide health epidemic, donating to causes that provide healthcare to people in need is of utmost value. **Give a gift: <https://alternativegifts.org/giving/gifting/causes>**

3. Crowdfund For A Charity

A crowdfund is an online fundraiser for a cause you believe in. Creating a crowdfund is a simple process that takes minutes to complete. Then you invite your network of friends to donate via virtual channels (social media, email, text). Starting a crowdfund for health-related causes would impact thousands of lives around the world. **Start here: <https://alternativegifts.org/giving/crowdfunding/register>**

2. Donate Your Time

Volunteering in-person is not the only way you can help nonprofits. At Alternative Gifts International for example, we have a need for creative writers, call specialists,



(ABOVE) Market Planning Session

HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL GIFT MARKET

An Interview with Laura McFall, Wichita Alternative Gift Market Coordinator

How long have you led the Gift Market?

I have been leading the Wichita Alternative Gift Market on and off for several years. This is my third (or is it fourth?) year serving as the team leader in a strictly volunteer capacity.

How long has the Wichita Alternative Gift Market existed?

The Wichita Alternative Gift Market has been a steady presence in the Wichita community for over 25 years. Part of our success lies in that history—we build on our past success. We keep our momentum going, and add to the number of educated consumers who shop at the Market every year. Continuity is a key. While individual team members come and go, the team itself continues. The current team boasts members who

have been leading for over 20 years, and members who joined the team just last year.

What advice can you offer for someone who has never hosted a market before?

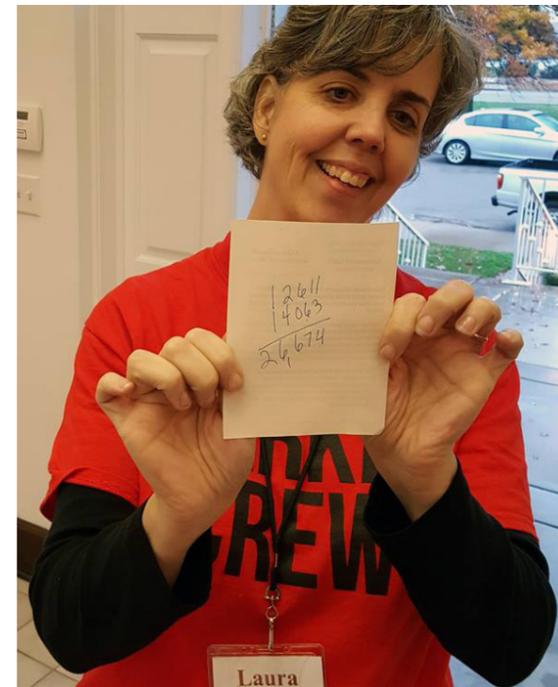
As for advice... to host your first market, you just have to plunge in. Recognize that your effort won't be wasted, whether you start something that will continue for years, or a one-time event that raises a few hundred dollars. The key is to start. When the Wichita market started, it was tiny—one church offered a handful of projects and raised a little bit of money. In year two, a couple more churches joined the effort, and the growth has been slow and steady ever since.



Shoppers at the Wichita Alternative Gift Market receive a handmade ornament in addition to a gift insert.



Local organizations are allowed to participate in the Alternative Gift Market also. This image is from the 2017 Wichita Alternative Gift Market.



Market Coordinator, Laura McFall giving an update on funds raised at a previous market.



(ABOVE) The City Of Wichita declared November 9, 2019 Alternative Gift Market Day, to encourage all citizens to remember the contributions of volunteers and charitable, nonprofit organizations.



(LEFT) Alternative Gift Markets would not be possible without volunteers. This group of women volunteered to serve in the kitchen area during the market.

What are a few things that you absolutely have to do to host a successful market?

To be successful, dream big, share your dream, and help others see what you see. Every market is a unique expression of its organizer—learn from what others are doing, but don't be afraid to be creative. Take your excitement and help others feel the same spark. (I realize this sounds like a lot of platitudes, but it's really true—just jump in. Your excitement will be contagious.)

What has proven successful to promote the event?

Social media, traditional press, church programs and announcements, word-of-mouth—all of it contributes to a successful media campaign. As you grow your market, having one person who is gifted in that area and can dedicate him- or herself to the effort helps tremendously. We use a free Wordpress site to maintain an online presence year-round so we have an easy place to refer people to for info. We keep track of our shoppers every year and send postcards and emails (with their permission) to remind them of the date. We keep the date the same year after year (second Saturday of November) so we can plan way ahead and never have to work too hard to remember the date.

How early in advance would you advise starting

to plan your market?

A small market can be pulled together in a few weeks. We start planning immediately after our market for the following year. It's April now, and we've begun talking (via email) and reminding ourselves of things we want to do differently, people we met who we need to reach out to again, etc. In August we'll have Project Picking Night when all the groups who help us by sponsoring a project/hosting a table come to pick the project they'll host from the catalog, and then their work will begin. It sounds very complex, but it's really very simple. Start small, and build from there.

Why do you volunteer to host a market? What does that mean to you?

I attended an Alternative Gift Market in Ohio in about 1997 or 98. It changed my life. I was moved to tears by the stories I heard and projects I learned about. As I write this, I've been "social distancing" for weeks, and expect to continue for weeks more. Our country is learning what AGI supporters have known for a long time – our consumer culture isn't sustainable, and it's not where the meaning in our lives comes from. Leading the Wichita Alternative Gift Market gives me the opportunity to live out my values, and share them with my community.

The Easiest Gift Market

With everything going digital, our crowdfund tool is perfect for hosting an online gift market. A crowdfund is a virtual fundraiser you create to raise money for causes you believe in. Choose your causes, and in a few minutes you can easily start your crowdfund!

The crowdfunding platform enables you to gather support from people anywhere simply by sharing a link provided to you, for your network to click on and donate. You can personalize your page to describe the reason why you are promoting certain causes, and include an image of your organization. There is also a search feature on the Alternative Gifts website (alternativegifts.org), so your community can find your organization's fundraiser.



Wichita Alternative Gift Market Volunteers

1. Choose Your Causes

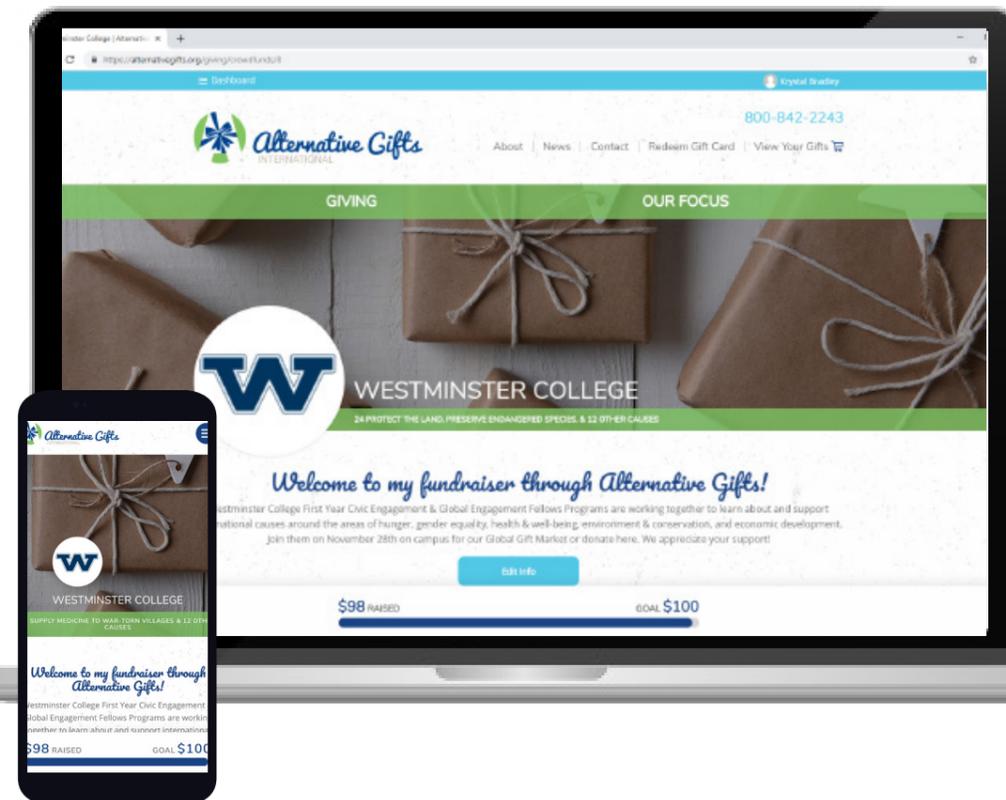
Learn about the causes at alternativegifts.org/giving/gifting/causes

2. Create Your Page

Start your personal or organizational crowdfund here alternativegifts.org/giving/crowdfunding

3. Invite People To Support Your Fundraiser

Promote your crowdfund by sharing the link provided through email, social media or text message.





Download
The 2018-19 Impact Report

[CLICK HERE](#)

HEALTHY BABY, HEALTHY MAMA

A Success Story (Cause 17)

Sheilla Elliassaint (pictured) lives on a landfill in an area called Molea in Port au Prince Haiti. When she wasn't feeling well, she decided to visit a clinic as part of the Partners in Development's Safe Birthing Kits Program. Sheilla's pregnancy test came back positive, but instead of being happy, she was extremely upset and worried. She had already lost two previous pregnancies due to miscarriages and Sheilla and her husband were discouraged that they would not be able to have children in the future. She didn't have enough money to deliver the baby in the hospital and couldn't bear the idea of losing yet another baby. Through prenatal testing and screening, it was discovered that Sheilla was severely anemic and had slightly high blood pressure. One of the trained and certified Midwives, Solange, that delivers many babies in the Molea area worked closely with the clinic's Nurse Midwife and Sheilla. Solange would attend Sheilla's prenatal visits with her and in between these visits follow up at her home. She would go to Sheilla's

[DONATE](#)



house and take her blood pressure and Hemoglobin. She made sure Sheilla was taking prenatal vitamins, iron and any additional medication the Doctor had prescribed. As the pregnancy came full term, Solange was called to Sheilla's house. She delivered the baby using a sterile birthing kit that is provided to all Community Midwives in this program. Three days after giving birth to a healthy beautiful baby boy, Sheilla with Solange right beside her proudly walked through the clinic gates to show off her beloved son. Sheilla is now receiving postnatal care, they are continuing to monitor her blood pressure and Hemoglobin levels and this proud Mama, is a happy Mama!

THESE CAUSES NEED YOUR HELP



Cause 25: Change The Story For Refugee Women & Girls

Every year we do our best to advocate for the needs of those who are less fortunate. We promote giving gifts that honor someone, and uplift someone else. These gifts are a helping hand to obtain sustainability. However, some causes fail to get the support and attention they deserve.

When a Cause is at-risk of being underfunded, that means one less child will have food. One less child will have access to healthcare. And one less woman will be able to provide for her family. If you feel compelled to donate to one of the following Causes, click the photo to learn more about the Cause and give a gift.



Cause 4: Seed Banks Of Hope



Cause 6: Swimming Lessons Save Lives



Cause 26: Dental Care For The Underserved



Cause 29: Recycle For Schools & Clinics



Cause 7: A Safe Haven for Orphans



Cause 12: Empower Her With A New Skill



Cause 15: Healthy Students, Healthy Schools



Cause 17: Safe Birthing Kits



Cause 21: Livestock & Poultry for Dignity



DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

Ask your employer to match your gift or crowdfund

Many companies will match charitable contributions and team fundraisers. Your gift or crowdfund can have double the impact when your company agrees to match the donations! Request a matching gift form from your Human Resources department, and we will do the rest!

Mail To: Alternative Gifts International PO BOX 3810 Wichita, KS 67201



Boost A Cause
Donate to Cause 30



Support AGI's Mission

Your gift to Cause 31 will enable us to help more people in need.

Unique Gifting Opportunities

**May 5
Cinco De Mayo**

**June 1
Day Of Parents**

**May 5
National Teacher Day**

**June 3
World Bike Day**

**May 6
National Nurses Day**

**June 5
Environment Day**

**May 10
Mother's Day**

**June 8
Best Friends Day**

**May 13
Fair Trade Day**

**June 19
Juneteenth**

**May 15
Int'l Day Of Families**

**June 20
World Refugee Day**

**May 16
Int'l Day of Living Together in Peace**

**June 21
Father's Day**

**May 19
National Endangered Species Day**

**June 27
Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day**



Alternative Gifts
alternativegifts.org

LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Tell Your Friends About AGI

Start A Crowdfund

Host A Gift Market

Become An Ambassador

Partner With Us

Leave A Legacy Gift

Volunteer With Us

Donate

800.842.2243 | P.O. Box 3810 Wichita, KS 67201-3810