

How Lakeland Nonprofits are Handling COVID-19 and Pivoting to Digital Tools

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Lakeland Volunteers in Medicine (LVIM) – Alice Koehler, President & CEO

How has your nonprofit adjusted its fundraising during this time? Because of the current COVID19 crisis, LVIM - like many other non-profits - has had to postpone our annual fundraising event. Because of this, we are projecting approximately \$100,000 in loss of revenue this year. In response, we turned our attention to communicating directly with sponsors and donors, pursuing grant opportunities focused on providing support to individuals during these unprecedented times, and have ramped up our social media presence and interaction. We have continued pushing out elements of our event in virtual ways - SuperTicket sales, text giving and Derby themed videos.

What are the biggest challenges you've encountered because of COVID-19 and social distancing policies? As a result of COVID19 and for the health and safety of our volunteer workforce, we have changed our operation in many (temporary) ways.

In normal time, LVIM relies on more than 150 volunteers each week to provide hundreds of patient services each week. Many of our volunteers are over 65 and safer home during this season, so we are functioning with approximately 10 volunteers a week. We made the difficult decision to temporarily close to new patients so we could continue ensuring the health of our current patients. We have implemented telemedicine, ordered 90-day supplies of medications for patients, and are requiring curbside medication pick up. We have altered our patient appointment schedule to limit the number of people in the building at any given time, masking everyone in the building and sanitizing multiple times per day. We've remained focused on engaging with our volunteers, creating opportunities for them to connect with us and with each other through Zoom and a Facebook Group. We are looking forward to coming back to our full operation and preparing for many more people to need our services as the economic impacts of COVID19 take root.

On March 10th, LVIM - in partnership with United Way of Central Florida and Feeding Tampa Bay, began a George Jenkins End Hunger Mobile Food Pantry which is available between 12 & 2 on the second and last Tuesday of each month. From March 10 to today, we have seen a 200% increase in community members picking up food boxes- a sure sign of the impacts this crisis is having on many in our community.

How can locals safely support your work in our community? There are many ways you can help non-profits in a safe way:

- If you find yourself in a financial situation that allows you to do so, make a monetary donation. Every dollar helps!
- Write a letter of support and gratitude for the essential work non-profits are doing. We are a working hard and it's really nice to be seen. Words of gratitude and affirmation are a boon to the spirit.
- Buy lunch from a local business to be delivered to the staff and volunteers still working.
- Like, share and comment on non-profit social media posts.
- Create a virtual fundraiser on your Facebook page.

- Call your favorite non-profit and ask what their specific needs are - some may need supplies, hygiene items, arts and craft items. Some may have volunteer opportunities that can be done from home

Bonnet Springs Park – Heide Waldron, Director of Development

How has your nonprofit adjusted its fundraising during this time? Bonnet Springs Park has adjusted our focus to practicing socially conscious fundraising in order to give our donors and community an opportunity to adjust to this new climate of charitable giving. During this time we understand that priority shifts in philanthropic giving to focus on the ability to provide immediate basic necessities for families in our community directly impacted by COVID-19. BSP has shifted our perspective to direct one-on-one communication with our existing donors and providing educational content through free online STEM-based activities that families, drone footage on park progress, and updates through our free monthly newsletter to show what the future holds at Bonnet Springs Park.

What are the biggest challenges you've encountered because of COVID-19 and social distancing policies? The biggest challenge that Bonnet Springs Park has faced since social distancing policies were put in place is the ability to provide private donor tours on our site in efforts to show donors exactly where their investment has the potential to impact our community. We are rising to the challenge of replicating a unique one of a kind experience but it's given us the opportunity to adapt and explore digital components to our in-person hands-on experiences.

How can locals safely support your work in our community? That's a great question! Currently, locals can follow us on Facebook and Instagram to participate in our #beafriendofbsp advocacy challenge. To become a Founding Friend, locals can take an active role in supporting Bonnet Springs Park at the ground level. The initial contribution will help establish the financial foundation of our Friends group and allow the support of park projects and event programming for years to come. You can find more information on our website at <https://bonnetspringspark.com/friends-of-bsp/>.

Campfire Sunshine Central Florida – Lynn Anne Castleberry, Executive Director

How has your nonprofit adjusted its fundraising during this time? Our \$100,000 signature fundraiser, our Kentucky Derby Party, traditionally falls on the first Saturday of May when the race is held at Churchill Downs. The Kentucky Horse Racing Commission has postponed the Derby until Saturday, September 5 (Labor Day weekend). We were very near a sell-out event for the May date when COVID-19 hit and the race was postponed. We have spread that word about the new date but in the meantime have two ways to celebrate in May. First we sold Kentucky Derby themed baskets, complete with traditional Mint Juleps, being delivered on the original Derby Day (Saturday, May 2) by our very own “horse jockey” – Board Member Robert Lay in costume. Second we are having our own Run for Roses peer-to-peer fundraiser. Five Board members are competing against each other. Whoever raises the most will run (or meander) down South Florida Avenue on Saturday, May 16 dressed in a horse costume, being chased by several jockeys. We may even have a team of live horses and a carriage carrying a group of “Derby goers”. Starting line will be Concord Coffee, finish line with be Swan Brewing. We hope a small group (minding social distancing) will gather at each end to cheer our horse on!

What are the biggest challenges you've encountered because of COVID-19 and social distancing policies? When the “Safer At Home” mandate took place, we closed our program center. Staff worked

remotely from their homes and program was offered on-line, via Zoom calls. All program revenue ceased. When Florida (or Polk County) enter Phase 2 of reopening, we will be able to open back up to in-person, on-site programming. We are hopeful that all summer programs will begin on June 1, as previously scheduled. We have Plan A (business as usual) and Plan B (program with limitations) for all summer day camps and teen programs.

1. **How can locals safely support your work in our community?** Three ways to support us!

- a. Support our “runners” in the Run for the Roses
<https://secure.ggiv.com/event/runfortheroses/>
 - b. Register youth K-12th grades for our programs <https://campfire-sunshine.org/summer-2020-registration-is-open/>
 - c. Become a Friend of Camp Fire <https://secure.ggiv.com/for/cfsun/event/787506/>
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