

Growing their legacy:

How a **National Feature** helps The Hunger Project expand their reach and connect with new donors primed for giving



THE OPPORTUNITY

Since its founding in 1977, The Hunger Project has worked to end hunger and poverty through sustainable, grassroots, women-centered strategies that transform how affected populations relate to their futures and to themselves. They call their donors “investors,” because of their incredible loyalty and investment in The Hunger Project’s work. High-level investors engage in regular conversations with major gifts staff, who talk to them about opportunities for larger gifts, special gifts, and legacy giving.

But with limited staff capacity and a focus on current giving, little emphasis had been placed on building a formal planned giving program. Planned giving efforts were passive, with a simple web presence and little promotion beyond the current investor pool. This led to few returns, despite an aging donor base primed for legacy giving.



I actually don't have to do anything if I don't want to. I could never open up the Portal, but people would still be including The Hunger Project in their will. So, I guess what I would say to somebody is that it's a fairly modest investment for a potentially very large payoff. You can manage your own resources to take it as far or as deep as you want.

Jim Goodman
Senior Director, Major Gifts and
Planned Giving

THE SOLUTION

In fall 2019, The Hunger Project partnered with FreeWill to launch a more robust planned giving program, named the Legacy Circle. While initial efforts brought in a handful of new investors, the organization saw a significant increase in legacy gifts when they signed up for a National Feature in December 2021.

Thanks to the National Feature, what used to be something run in the major gifts staff's spare time has now grown into an active program generating over \$5 million in planned gift commitments.

The National Feature has also helped welcome a younger demographic to the Legacy Circle. While long-time legacy investors are largely in their 60s and 70s, the new investors brought in by FreeWill are mostly in their 20s, 30s, and 40s. And reaching these diverse new groups has opened up new stewardship opportunities for The Hunger Project. Learn more about understanding millennial donors in our recent webinar.

One of the most exciting benefits of the National Feature has been the potential to engage these new donors in opportunities to give today. According to Jim Goodman, Senior Director, Major Gifts and Planned Giving, each of these new investors "is someone who is a potential candidate for giving now. And I think that's one of the greatest benefits: We're expanding the pool of current prospects for investing in The Hunger Project."



Because current major giving is always going to be the thing that's pressuring me more than legacy giving, it's really good to have an outside force that's pushing me to do what I ought to be doing, what I want to be doing, and leading me in the direction that I really want to go. But I need that push. And that's what each representative of FreeWill has provided.

Jim Goodman
Senior Director, Major Gifts and
Planned Giving

RESULTS

\$5.7M

raised in gift commitments

\$80.3M

in contingent residual gifts