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Charities Remain Resilient in the Face of COVID-19 As Strategies Emerge To Manage Through The Pandemic

New CAF America report focuses on challenges and innovation

Washington, D.C. – Sept. 21, 2020 – In a new [CAF America](#) survey, 424 global and local charitable organizations provide insight on the challenges and innovation needed to survive and in some cases thrive during the ongoing pandemic. The latest report details the findings and highlights 10 compelling stories of nonprofits worldwide navigating strikingly similar challenges with diverse, contextually-appropriate strategic solutions. These creative efforts have helped ensure most of the responding organizations (97.16%) continue to operate. The findings and in-depth stories appear in the fifth of a series of [reports](#) conducted by CAF America to highlight the needs and resilience of the philanthropic sector during the global pandemic.

“This report unveils some of the most powerful narratives of survival during uncertain times,” said [Ted Hart, CAF America President and CEO](#). “The resilience of these organizations and their commitment to serving their communities is impressive. While many continue to be deeply affected by the pandemic, and some have had to shut their doors, others are finding creative ways to continue their fundraising to provide much-needed services.”

Though COVID-19 continues to negatively impact 91% of the respondents, almost all managed to maintain full or some level of operations by adjusting their strategies, by increasing their social media presence, holding virtual fundraisers, and hosting webinars and other digital events to draw new donors. While nearly half believe they can continue operating under the current conditions as long as necessary, 28% are not sure, 11% predict they wouldn’t make it another year, and 10% expect they won’t last another six months.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, & Union Counties saw the suspension of their in-person youth programming coincide with the rising challenge of emerging youth mental health issues. They responded by moving to virtual programming, implementing austerity measures, and targeted donor outreach.

“When the chaos swept over, we saw the power of our mentoring relationships emerge,” said Carlos Lejnieks, President of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson, & Union Counties.

Most organizations have enhanced their fundraising strategy in the past three months, creating new digital donation opportunities for donors (49.4%), offering new products or services (36.04%), and focusing on new donor segments (34.6%). More than a third (35.32%) have applied for public support through relief programs, subsidies, and other government assistance.

Habitat for Humanity Brazil faced an urgent need for sanitation and food relief. An initial fundraising decline was counterbalanced by a successful crowdfunding campaign that enabled them to provide emergency food and hygiene kits, handwashing stations, and allowed them to reimagine their long-term building strategy.

“We are now working through our partners,” said Carla Nobrega, Resource Development Officer for Habitat for Humanity Brazil.

Hart and [Senior Vice President of External Affairs Jessie Krafft](#) shared data and research findings, including 10 stories of survival by the charities on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response, during CAF America’s September 22 webinar, *The Face of Charities During COVID-19 Worldwide*; the report is available at cafamerica.org.

Additional highlights from the September survey include:

- 1. More than two-thirds (64.51%) said they are exploring partnering opportunities with other organizations to address the challenges faced during the pandemic. Their reasoning included:**
 - a. 60.66% say partnering with other organizations can help unlock new funding opportunities
 - b. 58.46% said other organizations are interested in partnering with them to develop new services that better serve their communities
 - c. 48.53% believe partnering with other organizations can help the organization sustain itself through the pandemic
 - d. 29.78% said their funders have indicated their interest in funding collaborative projects developed in partnership with other organizations

- 2. When asked to rate skills that were most useful to the organization during the months impacted by the pandemic from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important), organizations rated the following as most important:**
 - a. 50.50% communications (telling their story and connecting with stakeholders)
 - b. 41.61% finance (effective fiscal management, strategy, contingency, planning)
 - c. 41.65% fundraising/donor relationship management
 - d. 30.04% technology (creating virtual networks, developing apps)
 - e. 26.37% executive management/board of directors

- 3. Six in 10 organizations (59.67%) are providing direct services to those affected by the coronavirus pandemic, including:**

- a. 54.1% are providing essential services such as foodbanks, shelter, nursing homes, and animal shelters
- b. 45.06% are providing other services, such as technology for online work and education, psychological support, and financial assistance
- c. 37.94% are providing frontline relief services, such as healthcare, personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.

About CAF America

A leader in international philanthropy, since 1992 CAF America (Charities Aid Foundation of America) has been assisting corporations, foundations, and individuals in making strategic, effective, and tax-advantaged gifts internationally and domestically. Whether supporting organizations working in low-income countries, providing swift responses to major disasters, or helping build connections between global communities, CAF America turns donors' visions into impact. CAF America's worldwide reach translates into more than \$1 billion in donor funds and over 1.8 million eligible organizations in 110 countries. For more information about CAF America visit cafamerica.org.

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