

The page is framed by various autumn-themed elements: scattered leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and red, and thin, bare branches. Some leaves are whole, while others are part of larger sprigs. The overall aesthetic is warm and seasonal.

# FROM GRATITUDE TO GIFTS:

## Thanksgiving Tips

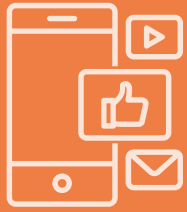
**F**or nonprofits, October through December is a key fundraising season. In fact, most nonprofits raise the majority of their funds for the year in these three months alone. **And with donors busy traveling, spending time with family and friends and involved in other holiday engagements, their attention will be pulled in a million different directions.** That's why it's important to make sure your Mission is even more on their minds throughout this giving season.

As friends and family gather to celebrate all the reasons they've got to be thankful, you'll have countless opportunities to encourage involvement and all kinds of giving back at Thanksgiving!

Here are some ideas to incorporate into your Thanksgiving fundraising plan to make their gratitude turn into gifts that bless your Mission and those you serve!

**BrewerDirect**

WHAT MATTERS MOST



## SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't let the busyness of the season keep you from sharing the amazing stories of how your Mission is giving hope and help to those less fortunate during the holidays.



**Spotlight supporters** on your various social media platforms who are helping change lives at your Mission. Share the impact of their generosity with your followers.

- Did a church group or business donate 500 pounds of food? Along with a message of thanks, share the impact of their gift by telling them how many meals their gift will provide.
- Did a young boy or girl donate birthday money? Share how many meals or days of shelter this young one's support will help give.

### HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:

*"See how Smith & Co. is serving up support! Last Friday, over 30 Smith & Co. employees made the Mission their office – ditching desks for our Donation Center. These helping hands sorted more than 100 bags of warm coats that we'll share with guests in need who come to the Mission this Thanksgiving. Will you join Smith & Co. in meeting the need? Lend YOUR helping hand today. [link to "get involved" section of website or Thanksgiving landing page copy]"*

## PRO TIP!

Get organized with an **editorial calendar** of post ideas. This can be as simple as a timeline of how frequently you want to post across each of your social platforms, or as detailed as knowing what content you will post each day – photos, captions and all.

November Editorial Calendar						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		"Countdown to #GivingTuesday" post #1 (Facebook & Instagram)	Reminder post re: volunteer training on Monday (Facebook & Twitter)	"Countdown to Thanksgiving" post #1 (Facebook & Instagram)		
Reminder post: "Don't miss it! Volunteer training starts tomorrow at 10am!" (Facebook & Twitter)	<b>Volunteer Training, 10am</b> Thank-you post for those who came to training (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	"Countdown to #GivingTuesday" post #2 (Facebook & Instagram)		"Countdown to Thanksgiving" post #2 (Facebook & Instagram)	Volunteer Spotlight post: Mary Jones (Facebook & Instagram)	
	Call for volunteers to decorate for Mission's Thanksgiving meal (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	"Countdown to #GivingTuesday" post #3 (Facebook & Instagram)		"Countdown to Thanksgiving" post #3 (Facebook & Instagram)		
		"Countdown to #GivingTuesday" post #4 (Facebook & Instagram)	Reminder post for Thanksgiving meal (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	<b>THANKSGIVING!</b>	Thank-you post for Thanksgiving meal volunteers (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	
	Reminder post for #GivingTuesday (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)	<b>#GIVINGTUESDAY</b>	Thank-you post for volunteers on #GivingTuesday (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)			
						



**Set a goal** and invite your followers to help you meet it. Whether it's a certain dollar amount or a quantity of food or clothing items, keep track through status updates on social media of what your remaining needs are to compel donors to jump in and give.

### **HERE'S A GOOD EXAMPLE:**

*"Tick, tock – time till turkey day is running out on the clock! [Mission name] needs 90 turkeys before [DATE] to feed our guests a feast that will nourish body and soul. Help us meet our goal by sharing a gift today at [MissionName.org]. Then invite your friends and family to join you in bringing the bounty from your table to ours!"*



### **Holiday preparations and celebrations are great activities to film!**

Film volunteers decorating the Mission for your Thanksgiving feast, preparing food, bringing in donations...

→ **EVEN BETTER!** Compile a short video to share on your website and social media that captures how donations are being used to provide a family feast for the guests at your Mission.

### **PRO TIP!**

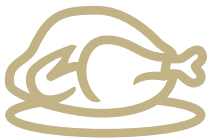
Upload your video on Facebook natively to increase chances of engagement. Videos you upload natively receive higher engagement than videos linked to external sites.

*that is, video uploaded directly to your social media vs. video posted as a link to an external site like YouTube*



## DRIVES

No one should go hungry this Thanksgiving! Collect holiday fixin's and other needed items with these ideas to spruce up the traditional donation drive.

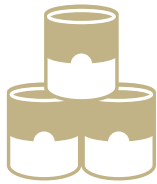


**Turkey Team-up!** Can you imagine a Thanksgiving dinner without turkey? Neither can we. Encourage local businesses, churches, schools and other organizations to create "Turkey Teams," where participants purchase frozen turkeys to donate to the Mission for your holiday meal or food boxes.

- Don't want to shop? Turkey Teams can donate \$20 for a "virtual turkey," which the Mission will use to purchase turkeys as needed.

### PRO TIP!

Have another item your Mission needs? Adapt the "team" theme as needed! Call for "Coat Crews" to buy or donate warm coats, "Shoe Squads" or "Boot Brigades" for winter weather shoes... Give the option of sharing a monetary gift for "virtual" items for these themes, too.



**Company Can Wars.** Advertise your need for canned goods to local businesses, and invite them to stage a “Can War” at their company. Office departments face off in a battle for the biggest gift, and the team with the most weight in canned goods wins!

### **PRO TIP!**

Don’t divide the office too long... encourage a “Turkey Truce” to reunify! Provide businesses with a list of Thanksgiving ingredients you especially need for your Mission’s holiday feast – turkeys, stuffing mix, potatoes, etc. – inspiring them to share an additional, company-wide gift after the war has been won.



**Student supporters.** Can Wars is a drive that works well with schools, too – class against class contending for the title of Can War champion! Healthy competition between grade levels is a great way to get the variety of Thanksgiving ingredients you need.

- Schools assign each grade level a food group (for example, first graders collect canned starches, second graders collect canned veggies, etc.).
- Or each class can make up a food box to support a family in need.
- As always, provide the option of sharing a monetary gift to help purchase the items on your Thanksgiving shopping list!

### **PRO TIP!**

Encourage donors to involve their families, neighborhoods or churches by holding drives during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (the week before Thanksgiving) to create additional buzz for your Mission and highlight how they are helping you meet the need in your community. And schools hosting drives will appreciate this added teachable moment!



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, held annually the week before Thanksgiving, encourages people to consider those less fortunate and give back before they give thanks.

And it's **the perfect opportunity to host activities or events to bring attention to the burdens of those who are in need** in your community.



**Thanksgiving tour.** Set up an online tour calendar allowing donors to reserve a spot for a special holiday tour of your ministry during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Set specific dates for tours, and include the option for visitors to give time at the end of their tour to help decorate the Mission for the following week's big meal. Reach out to churches, businesses, schools and other groups who might be interested in learning more about how you serve the community.



**Thanksgiving run/walk.** Turkey Stampede, Drumstick Dash, Gobbler Gallop... Bring together your community with an event you can host the week before or the day of Thanksgiving. Decide on a distance – 1 mile, 5k or multiple courses. Runner registration costs help pay for food boxes, Thanksgiving meals or other needs.

- Go the extra mile – encourage participants to fundraise for their registration costs. Those who raise above a certain dollar amount you choose will have their registration fee waived!

### **PRO TIP!**

You'll need volunteers for an event like this. Encourage those who might not want to run to help with registration, setting up a "hydration station" for thirsty participants and setting up and tearing down for the event.



**Bag of Bounty & Scan Away Hunger.** Partner with a local grocery store to give Thanksgiving shoppers who are buying ingredients for their own feast the opportunity to buy a bag of groceries for another family or individual at your Mission. Or, when shoppers check out, they have the option to "Scan Away Hunger." The checker scans a special plate, adding the cost of one meal at your Mission to the donor's receipt.



**Power of the press.** Share how you are making Thanksgiving possible for hurting individuals in your community! Send out a press release to local media. Community awareness leads to community involvement!



**Download the editable sample Thanksgiving press release found on Brewer Toolbox.**





# VOLUNTEERS

Although it's easy to find volunteers to serve meals at Thanksgiving, what are other ways your Mission can get eager-to-help hands involved this holiday season?



**Pre-Thanksgiving service week/day.** Invite volunteers to serve in various ways around the Mission during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the week prior to Thanksgiving. Have a special theme for each day – Meal Prep Monday, Tidy-up Tuesday, etc. – that teams and individuals can sign up for. Or host an all-day pre-Thanksgiving preparation day to make sure all cleaning and maintenance will be done in advance of the busy holiday season.



**Dine-in & Drive DIY.** Host a lunch-and-learn event at the Mission for leaders in your community to discover more about your services to the community and how they and their businesses and organizations can get involved. Provide a meal and use a short handout or PowerPoint presentation to share the simple steps they can take to host a drive to collect the food and other items you need at Thanksgiving. With so many available volunteers to serve meals, it's helpful to focus attention on other ways people can help – by giving through a drive or hosting one!

## PRO TIP!

Host your lunch-and-learn event several months in advance of a food drive to provide your partners with ample time to prepare. Follow up in the days after your meeting with resources like a list of drive ideas and a shopping list of food items needed for your Thanksgiving meal.



**Calling all kids – and kids at heart!** Volunteers of all ages will enjoy decorating your facility for Thanksgiving. Ask school groups, churches and other organizations in your community to create handmade centerpieces, table cards and placemats for your dinner tables. This is a fun activity for families too. Invite them to bring their creations to decorate for your feast! Or provide materials at the Mission they can use.

### **PRO TIP!**

**Double the impact of your Decoration Day** by having someone from your Mission share a brief presentation about ways to get involved at the Mission all year round. Give details on other ways your decorators can give (donating to your food drive or through a financial gift).



**And remember...** Even with vast numbers of eager volunteers at Thanksgiving, make sure your volunteer page on your Mission website is updated to reflect your holiday opportunities. Include the date on which your Thanksgiving volunteer sign-ups begin. Keep the list current by marking opportunities that are already filled. Use this page to gently educate donors on the need for volunteers throughout the season, not just on the day of your Thanksgiving meal.

### **PRO TIP!**

Posting pertinent dates to social media – volunteer sign-up day, days of events needing volunteers, etc. – will help you gain more support! People who already follow your social media pages are likely to be the ones who will volunteer. And by posting your opportunities on social media, you make it easy for followers to tag and invite their friends to join them in serving at your Mission!