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BBB Wise Giving Alliance

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Director, Charity Evaluation

Ezra Vazquez-D’Amico
Research Analyst
In 2015, I was proud to complete my six-year term on the BBB Wise Giving Alliance Board of Directors, the last two years serving as its Board Chair. As I look back at our accomplishments during my service on the Board, I believe many of our successes have been a function of our collaboration, communication, and credibility.

Back in 2010, we collaborated with both Independent Sector and GuideStar to create a reporting framework, Charting Impact, to help charities share information about their effectiveness and achievements. In 2012, we helped launch the Overhead Myth campaign with both GuideStar and Charity Navigator. In 2015, we worked with the International Committee on Fundraising Organizations to hold a major charity conference in Washington, DC. BBB WGA also launched a collaborative effort with Better Business Bureaus to help expand reporting on local charities.

Communication activities have always been a key part of our goal to help educate the public on wise giving practices. In 2015, we strengthened the Give.org website by launching the Wise Giving Wednesday blog and introduced a Building Trust video series that features interviews with CEOs of national charities.

Our credibility as a standards-based charity evaluator is reflected in the respect and recognition we receive from charities and government regulators as we carry out our work. This was demonstrated in our participation in the Washington, DC press conference in May 2015 with federal and state regulators to help announce the fraud action against four cancer charities.

The Board, staff and I thank all of you for the support you have given us and look forward to further assisting donors in helping to verify the trustworthiness of charities.

Sincerely,

Myrl Weinberg, CAE (ret.)
Chair, Board of Directors
BBB Wise Giving Alliance
2015 Highlights

“Wise Giving Wednesday” BBB WGA Launches Weekly Blog

In 2015, BBB Wise Giving Alliance introduced a weekly blog on its website, Give.org, to provide a forum for addressing various issues of interest to both donors and charities. A variety of topics were covered such as the value of standards, charity results reporting, charity concerts, crowdfunding, governing board oversight, veterans organizations, and a description of selected BBB Charity Standards.

The blog also featured a Building Trust video series that involved interviews with the CEOs and other charity executives from nationally soliciting BBB Accredited Charities such as the American Red Cross, Community Health Charities, GlobalGiving, Grameen Foundation, Defenders of Wildlife, Lupus Foundation of America, Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, National Trust for Historic Preservation, National Wildlife Foundation, Network for Good, Road Runners Club of America, Student Conservation Association, United Way Worldwide, and Women for Women International.

Wise Giving Wednesday also provides links to recently completed national charity reports and encourages visitors to identify other charities of interest.
Hosting International Conference on Charity Accountability

In June 2015, BBB Wise Giving Alliance hosted a charity conference in Washington, DC about advancing donor trust which was held in conjunction with the International Committee on Fundraising Organizations (ICFO.) ICFO is an international association of national charity monitoring organizations with a membership of standards-based charity reporting organizations that report on charities in their respective countries. Each year an ICFO member hosts their annual meeting in their home country and BBB WGA was proud to be the host for the 2015 gathering. Some of the conference highlights include:

- **Security & Privacy:** Allison Lefrak, Senior Attorney, Division of Privacy and Identity Theft Protection, Federal Trade Commission explained how the FTC plays a leading role in addressing online privacy and security protections and indicated the FTC’s interest in addressing nonprofit privacy issues.

- **ALS Association & Ice Bucket Challenge:** Carrie Martin Munk, Chief Communications and Marketing Officer, ALS Association discussed how her organization handled the large volume of donations resulting from the ice bucket challenge videos.

- **Gaining Trust of New Generations:** Derrick Feldmann, President and Founder of Achieve, talked about how charities have sought to engage Millennials.

- **Communicating Charity Value & Inspiring Trust:** Andrew Watt, President and CEO, Association of Fundraising Professionals, underscored the significant role of ethical standards in ensuring trustworthy charities and reminded everyone that true change takes time and continuing effort to achieve and is not quickly accomplished.
Participating with Federal and State Regulators in Major Charity Fraud Announcement

On May 19, 2015, BBB WGA joined with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and 58 law enforcement agencies from every state and the District of Columbia at a Washington, DC press conference to encourage wise giving practices in light of a major fraud action against four cancer charities: Cancer Fund of America, Cancer Support Services, Children’s Cancer Fund of America and Breast Cancer Society. They were accused of collectively bilking more than $187 million from the public over a period of several years.

Previously posted BBB WGA reports on three of these charities showed that they chose not to disclose any information to BBB WGA despite repeated written requests. The fourth organization provided information but did not meet several of the BBB Charity Standards and did not respond to additional questions about their fundraising and finances.

Nondisclosure Charities

In September 2015, BBB WGA launched a public campaign to bring attention to charities that do not disclose requested information. To complete its national charity evaluations, BBB WGA asks organizations to complete a detailed online form and also submit supporting documents about their finances and activities. Charities that do not provide any of the requested information, despite repeated written requests, are called “nondisclosure charities.” BBB WGA reports on these organizations have a literal red flag, a red exclamation mark, along with an explanation about this lack of cooperation.

Due to the broad scope of the 20 BBB Standards for Charity Accountability, BBB WGA requires much more than just an annual tax return (the IRS Form 990) in order to complete its rigorous evaluations. This also reflects BBB WGA’s long-held belief that finances alone do not provide the full picture of a charity’s accountability.
### 2015 Financial Summary

Financial Summary for the year ended December 31, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES AND SUPPORT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charity Seal license fees</td>
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<td>Grants &amp; contributions</td>
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<td>Publications</td>
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<td>Interest and other</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Management &amp; general</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>REVENUE EXCEEDING EXPENSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning net assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ending net assets</td>
<td>$1,237,454</td>
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Audited financial statements available on Give.org and on request.