

# read ahead

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## 2022 Giving Tuesday Read Ahead Fundraising Tools & Templates

Read Ahead's 2022 #GivingTuesday page is [here](#)

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## Welcome and About Giving Tuesday

We're thrilled that you'll be participating in this year's [#GivingTuesday](#) campaign for Read Ahead!

GivingTuesday was created in 2012 (right here, in NYC!) as a day that encourages people to come together and collectively do good. As of today, it's its own independent nonprofit - and a global movement inspiring millions on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving to give, collaborate, and celebrate our shared humanity. As it approaches it's 10th anniversary, #GivingTuesday has transformed into an inclusive community, touching lives in each country and continent.

The funds raised through this international day of generosity help make Read Ahead possible. As students, families, and schools experience the lingering impact COVID, the need for Read Ahead has never been more urgent. Our weekly virtual sessions provide a unique opportunity for NYC public elementary school students to connect with a mentor. Through reading together, informal conversations, and fun and educational games and activities, children gain confidence in their reading abilities, develop critical literacy and social-emotional skills, and so much more.

Fundraising for #GivingTuesday happens in the days and weeks leading up to the actual day, with everyone's approach being slightly different. We hope you find this toolkit helpful, and if you have any questions or want to schedule a short strategy check-in call, reach out at any time to us at [development@readahead.org](mailto:development@readahead.org).

Thank you again for your support of Read Ahead!

## Fundraising Start-up Checklist

- Create your personalized fundraising page on the [Read Ahead Classy site](#) by referring to our "[How to Create Your Fundraising Page](#)" guide
  - If you have used Classy in the past, you may already have an account - you can always reset your password if needed
  - Reach out to us if you need any help with this process!
- Tailor your page to get it ready for fundraising!
  - Determine your goal amount - this can be whatever you want it to be, and can be changed at any time; you can keep it the default \$1,250 or update it
    - People love a goal, so letting your friends and family know that you are personally trying to raise a specific amount will help inspire them to give!
  - You can also update the text and video or photos on your individual page. You don't have to do this, but adding a few sentences about why you are personally invested in Read Ahead's mission is always great
  - [This help article](#) gives an overview of how to customize your page
  - There's also information on how to customize your page in the "How to Create Your Fundraising Page - #GivingTuesday 2022" deck

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- Create your plan of action - which friends / family members / coworkers will you reach out to?
  - Consider making a personal donation - this will help get things started! Any amount makes a difference, and your friends and family will be even more excited to contribute if they see that you already have donations on your page.
  - Someone you're especially close to might also be a good choice for your first donor
  - Many people have found that a combination of personal outreach (e.g. emails, phone calls, texts) and social media is very effective
  - Create your outreach plan by thinking through which family/friends/colleagues, etc. you plan to ask for a contribution
    - For example, you could ask a small number of people for \$20-25 each and/or a large group of people for smaller sums of \$10-\$15 each
- Tailor your emails (using the templates below / by writing your own) and begin outreach!
  - You should plan for a few rounds of follow up to have the most impact - most people appreciate the reminder
- Determine whether any donations (made by you or others) may be eligible for a corporate match. The Read Ahead team can help with this if you have any questions
  - Google form [here](#) for submitting those pledges
- Keep an eye on your donation page to track your progress, and say thank you to your donors!

## Fundraising Tips & Best Practices

**If you ask, they will give.** Your friends and family will want to support you and a cause you believe in! The most effective strategy is conducting direct outreach via email, phone, or text, with multiple rounds of follow-up. Ways to maximize your impact include:

- **Personalization:** While sending a mass email / BCCing everyone is an option, we strongly suggest tailoring the template emails / social media posts by adding your a personal touch and/or story about why you're running and why you support Read Ahead
  - These are proven to elicit a higher response rate
  - If you use Gmail, Yet Another Mail Merge (YAMM) is a low-cost and easy-to-use [Chrome add-on](#) that will let you send personalized emails to large groups
  - Include why you're supporting / connected to Read Ahead's mission! Knowing this always resonates with a donor and motivates them to give (or give more!)
- **Following up:** One touchpoint is enough for some people, but not for most. Many people will see your message, intend to give, and then get distracted
  - Try following up in different ways - e.g. if you initially emailed, send a text instead

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- **Leveraging the power of social media:** posting regularly and/or why you support Read Ahead can help inspire your followers to make a gift<sup>1</sup>
  - Make sure you're following Read Ahead's Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter accounts (@ReadAheadNY), and make posts ("Heads up! Seeking your support for @ReadAheadNY's reading-based mentoring program on #GivingTuesday, 11/29") as well as share our posts over the next two weeks
  - We strongly encourage linking to your Classy page on your Facebook or Instagram posts / stories instead of using the built-in Facebook / Instagram fundraising features
    - In addition - add the donation [link](#) (or link to your personal page) to your Instagram bio
  - If you do set up a Facebook or Instagram fundraiser, be sure to let us know so that we can help you keep track of your fundraising total!
- **Inquiring about corporate giving:** Speak with someone at your company's corporate social responsibility or human resources department - **they may have funds available to contribute / may offer to match donations you receive.** **Remind donors to check if their employer offers matching as well!**
- **Consider creating a matching challenge:** offer to match a certain number of donations (e.g. \$10 for every person who gives) or up to a certain amount of donations (e.g. the first \$250 donated)
  - Also consider asking a close friend / family member to offer a match on your behalf!
- **Promote a sense of urgency:** share your fundraising goals and deadlines, and let people know that your fundraising deadline is approaching as you get closer to #GivingTuesday
  - You may consider setting up mini-goals, e.g. saying that you want to have \$500 1-week before #GivingTuesday
- **Align fundraising with important milestones / numbers**
  - E.g. #GivingTuesday is on the 29th, can you give \$29?
  - I'm turning 30 this year, can you give \$30?

And most importantly, don't forget to **thank** your donors for their support and contributions - we'll have templates to get you started, but **personalizing these** is also immensely impactful!

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<sup>1</sup> Good to know: 21% of peer-to-peer fundraising dollars raised are the result of a direct click-through on social media. An additional 14% of donations are assisted by social media or sharing. Be sure to share the link to your fundraising page and include the "why" behind your dedication to Read Ahead on social media!

Source: State of Peer-to-Peer Fundraising 2017

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## Sample Plan to Raise \$1,000 in one week

Below is a quick breakdown of a week-long fundraising strategy that you can use to raise \$1,000. This plan is an example of how fundraising becomes more manageable because you're not asking just one person to donate a lot, you're asking many people to donate a little. It all adds up!

**Day 1:** Donate \$50 to your own campaign.

*Running Total: \$50*

**Day 2:** Tell 5 close friends that you just donated \$50 to your own campaign - and ask them to match it.

*Running Total: \$300*

**Day 3:** Ask 5 family members or friends for \$30 each.

*Running Total: \$450*

**Day 4:** Hit up 5 co-workers for \$30 each.

*Running Total: \$600*

**Day 5:** Ask both sets of neighbors for \$25 each.

*Running Total: \$650*

**Day 6:** Ask your boss for \$100.

*Running Total: \$750*

**Day 7:** Ask 5 of your favorite mentors for \$50 each. Think past teachers, coaches, or community figures.

*Running Total: \$1000*

Didn't quite hit your \$1000 goal? Totally OK. Think of 3 people who promised to donate and follow up with them. You're on your way!

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## Read Ahead: General Background Information

### About Read Ahead

Read Ahead is dedicated to helping New York City youth strengthen the literacy and social-emotional skills they need to thrive in school and beyond.

Since 1991, Read Ahead has connected public elementary school students with caring mentors from leading corporate and community partners. During weekly sessions, mentors and mentees read together, discuss books and their lives, and engage in fun and educational games and activities. Read Ahead sessions are designed to help children grow their confidence, love of reading, literacy skills, and other skills essential for success.

Read Ahead developed a virtual program in 2020 to provide essential support during a challenging year of remote and hybrid learning. Combining our 30 years of experience with new technology platforms and an educator-designed curriculum, Read Ahead has continued to match hundreds of children annually with supportive mentors for fun, live program sessions that build connection, confidence, literacy skills, and more. Since launching our virtual programming, 100% of parents/caregivers and teachers who completed our spring survey stated that children benefited from Read Ahead.

More background information on our history, mission, vision, values, and where we serve can be found at [readahead.org](http://readahead.org)

### Read Ahead's Impact in 2021-22

Read Ahead's mission is now more critical than ever. The challenges that our students, families, and schools have faced during COVID -- unpredictable schedules, academic learning loss, social isolation, and trauma -- are profound and will have a lasting impact.

Even during this challenging time, Read Ahead helps our students succeed by providing one-on-one support and individualized learning. In the 2021-22 school year, Read Ahead:

- **Connected 650+ students with 1,000+ volunteers**, continuing the strong, meaningful connections between mentors and mentees, while also providing **additional, individualized literacy instruction**
- **Facilitated over 13,000 program sessions**
- Enabled mentor and mentee pairs to **read 6,600+ books together** during Read Ahead virtual sessions
- **100% of educators** surveyed felt that students benefited from Read Ahead
- **81% of educators** surveyed felt that Read Ahead increased students' enjoyment of reading
- **73% of parents and caregivers** surveyed felt that Read Ahead increased students' reading ability and enjoyment of reading

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## Email Templates

### Email Template #1 - Initial Outreach

Subject: Support Read Ahead for #GivingTuesday 2022!

Hi [NAME],

Read Ahead is a nonprofit that touches the lives of hundreds of emerging readers at New York City's public elementary schools each year. **I'm excited to serve as a champion for Read Ahead and share more about their mission-fueled work—and I hope you'll consider supporting me by making a donation to my #GivingTuesday campaign this year [include your personal page link].**

Read Ahead's unique reading-based mentoring program pairs caring adults with elementary school students, where a majority of students are from historically excluded communities that continue to be disproportionately affected by COVID. Nationally, the average reading score for fourth graders is at the lowest point since 2005, and young children are continuing to experience the stress and trauma of the pandemic. Students need the individualized support that Read Ahead provides now more than ever. By contributing to my #GivingTuesday campaign, you are directly supporting Read Ahead's virtual program designed to build connection, confidence, literacy skills, and more.

Every dollar raised is for a cause that is really close to my heart. **[Share a personal reason why you support Read Ahead's mission.]** If you'd like to learn more about Read Ahead and the work they do, you can visit their website at [readahead.org](http://readahead.org).

Thank you so much for your generosity and support — it truly means the world to me!

[SIGNED]

### Email Template #2 - Follow-up

Subject: Support hundreds of young readers this holiday season!

Dear [Name],

I hope your holiday season is going well!

I'm following up on my earlier email about my involvement with Read Ahead, a New York City non-profit with the vision that students have the opportunity to unlock their full potential through mentoring relationships based on a love of reading. I hope you'll consider supporting me with a gift of any size **[insert personal fundraising link]** as I work alongside other passionate leaders to raise critical funds in support of Read Ahead's work.

**[Add a personal anecdote or statement about why you believe in Read Ahead's mission]**

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I know what an impact Read Ahead has on so many young children—their unique program has been a bright spot for public elementary school students during the uncertainty and unpredictability of the past few years. Kids with mentors develop critical social-emotional skills and confidence that help them realize their full potential in school and life, but far too many kids -- especially those from historically marginalized, low-income backgrounds -- grow up without a mentor. Read Ahead reaches hundreds of children annually and the program works: 100% of educators report that Read Ahead benefits their children.

**This year, Read Ahead is aiming to collectively raise \$75,000 so that the children who need this one-on-one support most will be able to participate.** You can learn more about how Read Ahead has supported thousands of public elementary school students in their 30+ year history by visiting [readahead.org](http://readahead.org).

Thank you so much!

[Signed]

## Email Template #3 - Thank you

Subject: Thank you for supporting Read Ahead...and me!

Dear [NAME],

Thank you so much for your contribution to Read Ahead in honor of our 2022 #GivingTuesday campaign! Your support means the world to me.

Read Ahead's mission is near and dear to my heart because I know how important it is for children to develop a love of reading and literacy skills early on. Read Ahead's unique reading-based mentoring model provides one-on-one support for public elementary school students across New York City, especially as learning continues to be disrupted as a lasting impact of the pandemic. NYC students need this extra, individualized support and instruction now more than ever to foster confidence, skills, and joy in reading.

I'm proud to support such a great cause, and thank you for investing in the next generation of readers!

All my best  
[Your Name]



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## Social Media Resources

Read Ahead is on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) as [@readaheadny](#)

You can also use our hashtag [#ReadAheadNY](#)

GivingTuesday is on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). The official hashtag is [#GivingTuesday](#).

## Best Practices

General social media tips:

- Create posts that **follow the #GivingTuesday** hashtag
- **Use storytelling to highlight your reason for why you are supporting Read Ahead** this #GivingTuesday.
- Share quick facts about Read Ahead's mission and impact
- **Provide updates on your fundraising progress**, and why you're supporting Read Ahead
  - Share a personal story! **If you're a mentor in the program, you can talk about the progress you've seen in your mentee or what you've learned.** If you're not a mentor, **you can share a story about a mentor in your own life**, or why it's so important to spend one-on-one time reading with young children
- **Start a conversation by asking questions through your posts.** Research shows that posts that end in a "?" generate more engagement
- **Add your fundraising page to your Instagram bio** and leverage the new link feature in stories to drive engagement directly to your personal fundraising page
- Share a photo of yourself reading or with your favorite book! The **Facebook and Instagram algorithm strongly favors human faces**, so this will help your posts be seen more widely.
- Tag [@readaheadny](#) in your posts - **we'd love to retweet you / add you to our stories / reply** to help build engagement!

## Sample Posts & Digital Assets

Download digital assets [here](#).

Sample posts:

Connection and academic support have never been more important for NYC's kids, so I'm fundraising in support of [@ReadAheadNY](#) this #GivingTuesday! Help me raise \$\$ for an org that supports the next generation of readers in NYC public schools [insert fundraising link]

I'm helping support our young readers at [@ReadAheadNY](#)! Help me invest in making our young readers thrive! Every contribution is another page turned for NYC's youngest readers! [insert fundraising link] Happy #GivingTuesday!

For this #GivingTuesday I am supporting a reading-based mentoring program serving NYC students. Your contribution (big or small and everything in between!) goes towards building kids' confidence & literacy skills. Follow my progress and donate here [donation link]

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## Instagram/Facebook Stories Advice:

- Post to your stories in advance of Giving Tuesday to let your network know that you will be fundraising on November 29th.
- We have created graphics for you to [download](#) & use!
- There is space on the fourth graphic (GT General 4) for you to add the link to the fundraising page which will make it super easy for people to donate!
- Post throughout the day on Giving Tuesday! Keep your friends / family updated as you get close to your goal!
- Utilize the new 'link' feature to send people directly to our Giving Tuesday page: <https://donate.readahead.org/GivingTuesday2022>