

Champions for Reading!

Champions for Youth Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Toolkit

TERMS:

- **Champion:** An individual who launches, solicits, and manages a fundraising page, and asks their friends, family, and colleagues to support Words Alive.
- **Donor:** An individual who makes a gift to the fundraising page of at least \$10.
- **Page:** An online website that Champions personalize where you can direct donors to help you reach your fundraising goals.

TIMELINE:

Date you can start building your fundraising page: **November 2**

Between November 1 and December 1, you can:

- Build your fundraising page and write content, emails, messages, etc.
- Make your first donation!
- Make targeted one-on-one asks of family, friends, and colleagues who might support the campaign in our “silent” phase. This will help seed the campaign for when it officially launches.
- Not post on social media, send emails to groups of individuals, publicize in work bulletin, etc.

Official Launch Date: **December 1, 2020 (Giving Tuesday)**

Campaign Close Date: **11:59 p.m. January 31, 2020**

BONUS POOL

Farmers Insurance provides bonus or incentive dollars for meeting certain benchmarks.

- \$150,000 will be distributed among six organizations based on how much each organization raises compared to the other participating organizations (higher finish = more funding)
- \$117,000 will be distributed among six organizations based on how many donors each organization has compared to the other participating organizations (higher finish = more funding)
- \$18,000 will be divided among any of the six organizations who collect at least 75% of their funds online

*If a donor wants to submit a check to count towards the campaign, please contact us for instructions on how to accept the payment as the Century Club is strongly discouraging physical checks this year.

WHAT IS IN THIS TOOLKIT?

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WHAT IS CHAMPIONS FOR YOUTH?

Words Alive is proud to be one of just 6 charities selected by The Century Club of San Diego for participation in Champions for Youth. Champions for Youth is a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign and the charitable initiative of the 2021 Farmers Insurance Open Golf Tournament.

Words Alive will receive 100% of every donation and all donations will grow! Here's how: We'll earn **BONUS MONEY** based on how much we raise compared to the other participating charities **and** the number of donors that give. The Century Club will also cover all credit card processing fees normally paid by Words Alive.

The Champions for Youth campaign will run from December 1 - January 31.

WHAT IS PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING?

Peer-to-peer fundraising focuses on engaging other people in your immediate social circles, such as friends, co-workers, and family members. You usually have a good understanding of your peers, and they usually have a good understanding of you. There are certain shared experiences (like READING!) that bind you together—everything from local culture to major events that have shaped your community.

Like every small nonprofit, Words Alive spends a fair amount of time asking people to support us with donations. **Here's the reality: we simply don't have the ability to connect with people the way you can connect with your peers.** When you ask your friends and family to support Words Alive, their decision is influenced by an element that only you possess: the passion you wear on your sleeve.

Peer-to-peer fundraising harnesses this power and enables you to make a case for why your friends and family should support a cause that is dear to your heart. If you've been touched by Words Alive's work, volunteered in our programs, or attended our Annual Author's Luncheon & Fundraiser, you have the ability to tell a compelling story and have it resonate with people who truly admire your talent and enthusiasm. The results tell the story: **On average, every time an individual asks their peer groups to donate to a cause, that ask generates nearly \$40 in donations!**



I AM CHAMPION FOR READING: GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Why do I support Words Alive?

What, specifically, about Words Alive am I driven to raise awareness and funds to support?

Who am I going to ask to donate? Think about: friends, family, neighbors, peers, colleagues, book clubs, social or membership clubs, faith communities, professional networks, vendors, professional services, etc. (See additional sheet to help start the list.)

What does this group already know about my involvement with Words Alive?

How much do I think I can raise between now and January 31?

How do I want to be able to celebrate with my community after we reach our goal? How can I do that?

Keep in mind:

- *Whether you want to raise \$100 or \$1,000, your goal is a statement of intent that helps motivate your friends and family to contribute.*
- *Choose a goal that you feel you can hit between now and the end of January.*
- *You can be the first donor to your page!*

IMPACT LEVELS

You gift could support....

\$2,500 Provides 500 children with new, diverse, age-appropriate books. This is often a child's first book, the start of their own home library.

\$1,000 Recognizes the efforts of the hundreds of volunteers who support Words Alive each year. Volunteers administer our programming throughout the year and empower the organization at every level. Support the recruitment, training, engagement and recognition of our growing corps of volunteers.

\$500 Provides home education essentials for 25 students in need of resources for classwork such as journals, glue, scissors, paper, and more.

\$250 Sends two teens on a journey through three diverse, new novels with accompanying writing and discussion prompts, activities, and art projects.

\$125 Provides a Learning Kit for a child in need. Each Learning Kit includes 6 new books and educational supplies to encourage reading while students and families are learning at home.

\$75 Supports a virtual read-aloud connecting a classroom of students with the joy of new, diverse stories while learning from home.

\$25 Helps publish a piece of student's work on Novel Ideas. Words Alive's interactive virtual gallery is designed to amplify and connect under-represented student voices.

\$10 Provides a bedtime story to a child. Readers grow on the laps of their parents and guardians first and foremost, but they need books to nurture this habit of reading every night! A \$10 donation provides a book to a child, allowing them to start on the lifelong journey to becoming a reader.

DONOR OUTREACH

When the campaign officially launches on Giving Tuesday (Dec 1), what **networks** will I engage?

Groups I will reach out to:	How I will reach out?	Approx. # of People:

In addition, what 10 individuals will I reach out to during the month of December to support my page?

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

5. _____

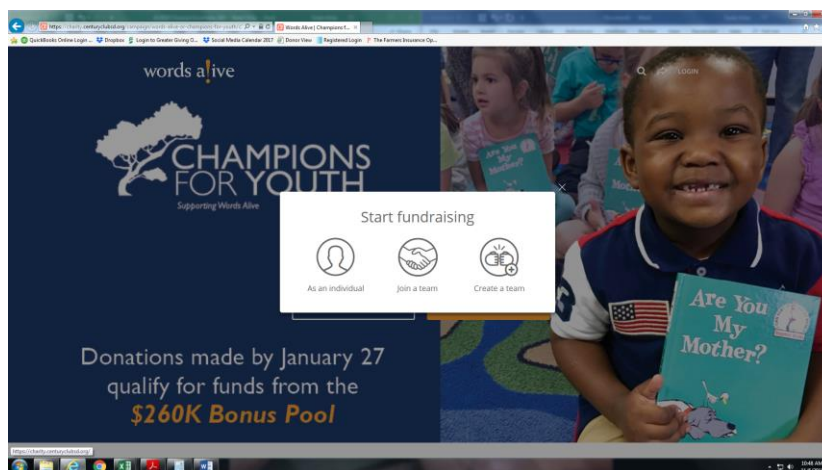
10. _____

SETTING UP YOUR PERSONAL FUNDRAISING PAGE

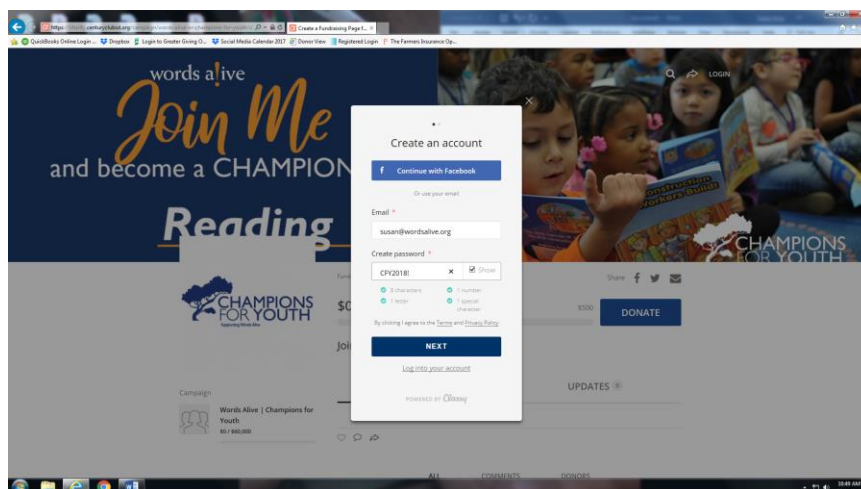
To, set up your fundraising page using the “Become A Fundraiser” button on our main campaign page. Navigate to the main campaign page using this link: bit.ly/ReadingChampion. Click the following button:



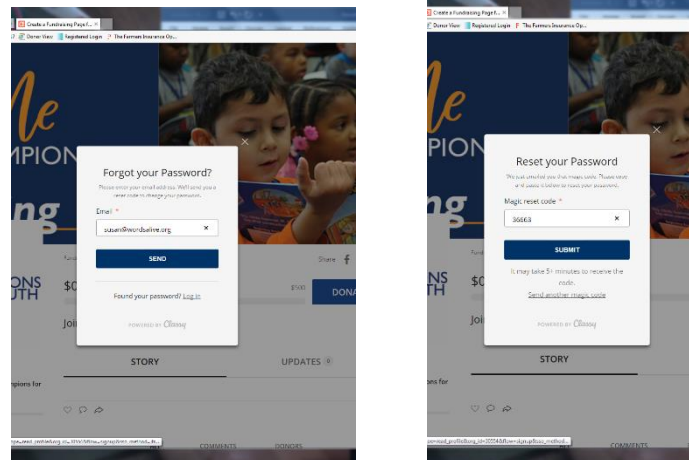
You then have the choice to fundraise “As an individual.”



Create your account. Some people may already have a Classy account. If you do and can’t remember, click on Forgot Password. Be sure to check your junk email for the reset email from Classy.



Forgot password?

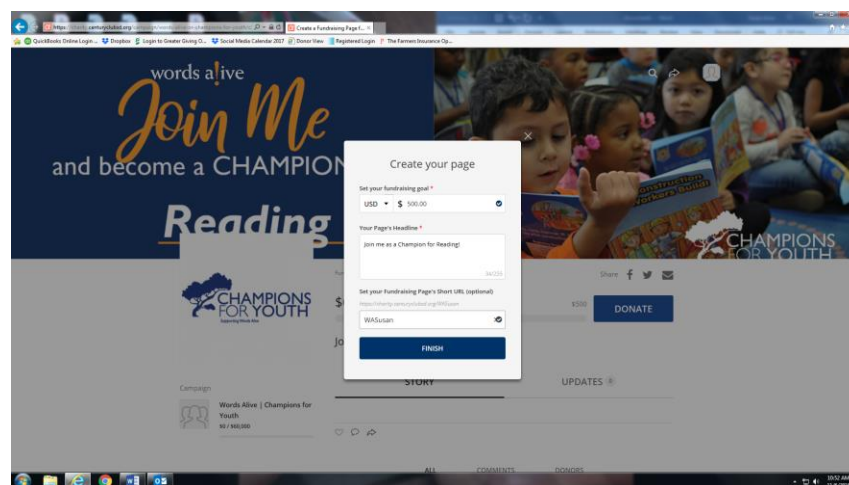


On the next screen:

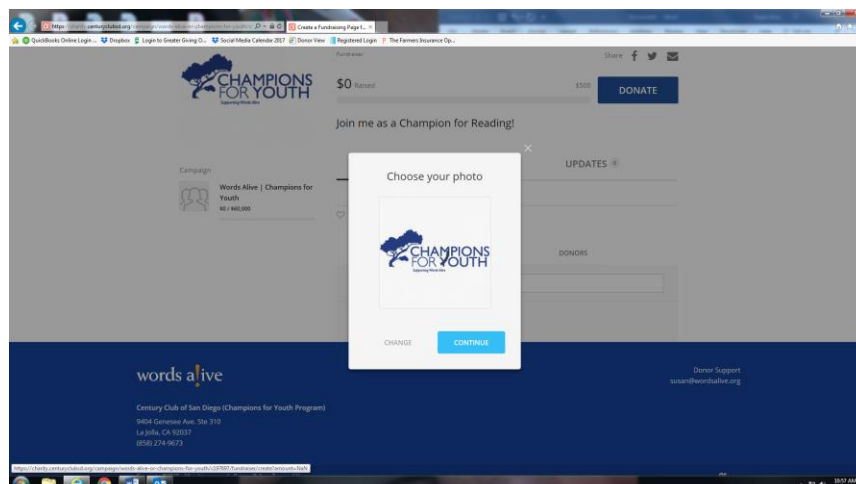
Set a meaningful goal. Whether you want to raise \$100 or \$1,000, your goal is a statement of intent that helps motivate your friends and family to contribute. Choose a goal that you feel you can hit between now and the end of January.

We suggest changing your tagline to **“Join me in becoming a champion for reading!”**

We suggest changing the short URL to **https://charity.centuryclubsd.org/WA_____**, where the blank is your first or last name. This will be an easier URL to remember and will make it easier to promote.

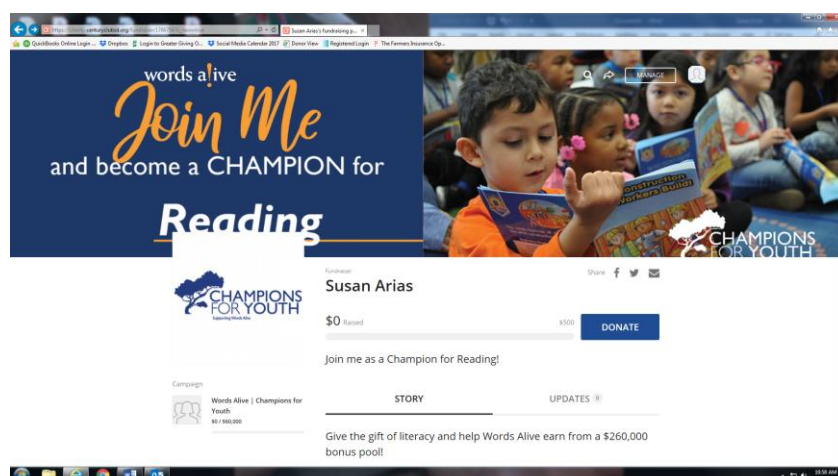


We highly encourage you to update the picture from the Champions for Youth logo to a picture of **yourself**. This will help your friends, family, and supporters recognize this as *your* page.



Though your page will be automatically populated with default campaign content, you can personalize your fundraiser page by **adding a heartfelt note**. Remember: your friends and family will be motivated as much by their support of you as their support of the cause. **Telling your own story will make a huge impact!** In the next section we have provided comments, testimonials, and stories from our program participants that might help.

Changes can also be made after you set up your page by clicking on the Manage button on the top right corner of the page.



QUOTES & DATA TO HELP SHARE YOUR MESSAGE

In the **Family Literacy Program**, we ask parents to share open-ended responses at the end of the program. When asked about the most valuable things they learned, parents shared:

- “How important it is to be involved in their (child’s) lives emotionally and educationally.”
- “I learned how to make reading fun for my kids and to let them make up their own stories.”
- “We have improved a lot – me as a father and he as a child. Reading allows us to both learn.”

In the **Read Aloud Program**, we ask our teachers to share what they would miss most if they could no longer participate in Words Alive programming. Teachers shared:

- “The quality of books is great. We do not have the money to buy material for class that compare with the books that the volunteer is reading.”
- “The Read Aloud Program is awesome! I love that you provide books for my students... many of whom have no books at home. They cherish the books they are given to keep and read at home.”
- “Students love listening to stories. I read to them every day, but they need to hear from different people. Most of our students do not read/get read to at home so the more they get at school the better.”

In the **Adolescent Book Group Program** end-of-year evaluations, we asked students to share how Words Alive changed the story of their life.

- “I’ve learned the importance of discussing as a community. This allows us to understand each other better.” - Student
- “Before the program, I didn’t care about reading. With Words Alive, I found the first book I ever really liked, which was *Anger is a Gift*. I re-read it all the time.” - Student

In the **Words Alive Westreich Scholarship Program**, we ask our college-level scholars to participate in end-of-year evaluations. When asked how Words Alive changed the story of their life, one scholar shared:

- “Words Alive has been the support system that has guided me from high school to community college to my dream university. I can confidently say that I would not be where I am without Words Alive. I know that I can always turn to my mentor and program manager to get help with anything I may need. My confidence has gone way up, and I always want to be involved with this program as a mentor or volunteer after I graduate. I can't say thank you enough and am so excited to be a part of the program for another year. Thank you for all you do to ease our transitions into college!”

Other numbers and figures:

- Through our **Family Literacy Program**, 66% more families reported having a routine for looking at books together at home.
- 100% of **Read Aloud Program** teachers reported that the program positively impacted the students’ foundational literacy skills, reading comprehension skills and the students’ interest in reading.
- 96% of students reported that participation in **Adolescent Book Group** helped them develop a positive attitude toward books, and 87% reported developing enhanced critical thinking skills.
- 100% of **Words Alive Westreich Scholars** reported feeling more hopeful about their education and future, knowing what it takes to have a healthy relationship with another adult, and using budgeting skills and other tools to manage their finances.

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT: EMAIL

Email can be an effective tool for spreading the word. Use this as an opportunity to share with friends and family why you support Words Alive – how has Words Alive changed the story of your life, and how do we change the story for the students and families we serve? The more personal your story and your email to each person, the more likely they will feel compelled to give. People give from an emotional place and will feel your deep commitment from the story you share. We recommend personally addressing your contacts rather than a mass message.

A good subject line is an important element of your email. The subject line helps your email stands out from the rest and should call attention to your ask. Here are a few examples:

Join me in becoming a champion for reading!

Join me in changing the story for thousands of students and families!

In the body of your email, share your story and give a call to action. Share with your friends and family a special moment, experience or measure of impact from your support of Words Alive. If you need ideas, we've shared some special quotes and figures from evaluation in this packet. Remember, the more personal the better! You can also give examples of investment levels so that donors have an understanding of what their support means (these are provided on page 4 under Levels of Support). Ask your recipients to take action! You've shared how meaningful it is to be involved with Words Alive, now is the time to invite them to get involved. Consider **bolding** important points or asks and including links to your donation page so that the email is easy to navigate.

Thank your friends and family members! We want everyone to feel included, appreciated and to understand that their gift makes a difference. You might reiterate what your involvement means to you. You might offer to meet with folks over coffee to share more if they're interested, or invite them to join us for a volunteer orientation or classroom visit.

PS. Use postscripts to your advantage. Many people have a tendency to scan emails without reading every word. Just as bold font can guide readers to your most important posts, a postscript stands out at the bottom of a large block of text. Put one final call to action in a PS!

We've drafted some email and social media templates that can help you get started! Feel free to use these across all social media platforms and in your direct emails. **And REMEMBER TO INCLUDE A LINK TO YOUR PAGE!**

SAMPLE MESSAGE:

Hi friend,

As you may know, I have the honor of explain your involvement briefly here with an organization called Words Alive. We change the story for thousands of students and families each year through the power of reading! I have witnessed this change. Insert meaningful story, experience here.

I am emailing you today because Words Alive has been selected to participate in an incredible fundraising opportunity – a peer-to-peer campaign called Champions for Youth. We are only one of six San Diego organizations and we are eligible for \$285,000 in funding from a bonus pool that awards



organizations money based on donation metrics. This is exciting because support for the life-changing programming and services provided to the community from Words Alive will go further between now and January 31st.

I'd like to invite you to join me in becoming a Champion for Reading. My fundraising goal is \$_____, and the minimum gift is \$10. A gift from you would mean the world to me and could:

(choose the levels that might be best for the donor you're reaching out to – we recommend including 2 or 3 – see the impact levels on page 4 for more examples)

- **\$125 Provides a Learning Kit for a child in need.** Each Learning Kit includes 6 new books and educational supplies to encourage reading while students and families are learning at home.
- **\$75 Supports a virtual read-aloud** connecting a classroom of students with the joy of new, diverse stories while learning from home.
- **\$25 Helps publish a piece of student's work on Novel Ideas.** Words Alive's interactive virtual gallery is designed to amplify and connect under-represented student voices.
- **\$10 Provides a bedtime story to a child.** Readers grow on the laps of their parents and guardians first and foremost, but they need books to nurture this habit of reading every night! A \$10 provides a book to a child, allowing them to start on the lifelong journey to becoming a reader.

A teacher from one of our programs said, "Students love listening to stories. I read to them every day, but they need to hear from different people. Most of our students do not read/get read to at home so the more they get at school the better." Our work is important. I know that my involvement is truly helping to change the story of the lives of children and families every day.

Join me today in becoming a Champion for Reading **link to your fundraising page** and support Words Alive! Your support will change lives. I'd be happy to meet over coffee to chat further, and I can coordinate a classroom visit for you. I think you'll find this is a more than worthy organization.

Thanks for your friendship and support.

Happy reading,

GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT: SOCIAL MEDIA

- Use the Facebook and Twitter share buttons on your fundraising page to share with your network.



- **Tell your story!** Classy will automatically provide some copy for your tweets and posts. **We encourage you to replace this with your own donation pitch.** Especially with longer-format posts on Facebook, you'll have plenty of room to tell your story and let people know why reading and Words Alive is so important to you. Don't be afraid to make a strong and personal case for why your friends and family should support this campaign! Tag @WordsAliveSD in your posts so we can share!

SAMPLE MESSAGES:

- I first got involved with Words Alive in ____ because _____. Help me reach my fundraising goal of \$1,000 so we can provide 100 bedtime stories to kids developing a connection to reading.
update this based on your personal fundraising goal
- I love reading because ____! This is why I support @WordsAliveSD, I truly believe that Words Alive is empowering students and families through reading! Help me raise money for this wonderful organization.
- Words Alive is trying to raise \$30,000 and is competing with 6 other organizations in San Diego to earn bonus funds from a \$285,000 pool! By donating, you are helping Words Alive continue to deliver high-quality reading and scholarship programs.
- I've volunteered in Words Alive's Read Aloud Program and have seen first-hand how the children fall in love with reading throughout the school year. Help me raise \$500 to provide home education essentials for 25 students in need of resources for classwork such as journals, glue, scissors, paper, and more.

****Don't forget to include your personal fundraising link and tag Words Alive in each social media post!**

ASKING FOR MONEY IN PERSON

Asking someone to make a donation surely falls into that tricky category of difficult conversations. It can be hard to work up the courage to assert your need, especially when everyone around you is dealing with their own priorities. Good news: we believe that if you follow these helpful tips, you can have success recruiting donors to your fundraising page!

- **Head off the awkwardness by putting your cards on the table immediately.** Don't start with the background story. Start with a spoiler: Let them know upfront that you're about to ask them for money. Maybe even give them an amount from the get-go. "I am going to ask you for a \$50 donation to a cause that's near to my heart. Here's why you should say yes." Being upfront about your ask will disarm their defenses, and it'll make things easier on you to get the worst part out of the way.
- **Channel your passion into the ask.** Your friends and loved ones are more likely to give if they feel like YOU are benefiting from the donation. It's not just about the cause, it's about why this cause matters to you specifically, and what you get out of your involvement with our organization. Tell your Words Alive story. Give them a sense of why you feel invested enough in the cause to fundraise for it.
- **Be respectfully persistent.** Don't harass people, and don't badger them if they're not interested. But if they're on the fence about contributing, that means they're open to being sold on it. If you come away from your first conversation with a maybe, try to return to the subject soon and keep them thinking about it.
- **Be realistic with your asks.** Before making your ask, spend some time thinking about the person you're asking, and try to assess what they might be capable of giving.
- **Express gratitude!** Thank your friend or family member for their time at the conclusion of your conversation. If you successfully recruit their donation, be sure to thank them within 24-48 hours. Try to let them know how much impact their gift will have. The Century Club of San Diego will issue tax receipts and Words Alive will send thank you letters for all donations, but it'll be great for your friends and family to hear directly from you as well!

REJECTION HAPPENS

Don't be discouraged! The good thing about all those people who don't donate immediately is that they haven't donated yet, so the potential is still there! **Keep expressing your passion for the cause and eventually you'll see more people come through.**

Oftentimes, people wait until the last possible moment to donate. You may also find that people express interest and enthusiasm for the cause, but don't follow through with a donation. **Don't be afraid to follow up!** Just like you, they've got a million things going on in their lives, and ultimately, it's your job to make the case for why they should make time for this. Keep at it, be creative and passionate, and you are bound to hit your fundraising goal.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

We really appreciate your excitement and willingness to be a Champion for Reading this year!
Please feel free to reach out and let us know how we can help.

Throughout the campaign, we will share more resources, advice, support, and tools.

You can reach us at the Words Alive office: 858-274-9673 or via email.

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