



# Unforgettable Donor Thank Yous: Tips for Sending Authentic Gratitude

Beth Ann Locke | The Fundraiser Coach

*Thank you notes shouldn't be considered the last step of a transaction  
but the opening line of a continued conversation.  
This is your moment to create a closer relationship.*

### **Make your note unforgettable**

*When you can, open your note with the word 'you' ("You are ensuring kids in our town are able to have enough food"). Thank and connect to your charity and community. Thank donors for their generosity, rather than their generous gift. Make the note about your donor and close with gratitude.*

### **Keep a stash of cards + stamps on hand**

*Replenish your thank you cards for special donor thank yous (plus a few birthday and sympathy cards). Cards can be simple; the key message is what you write. Keep stamps at hand so you're mailbox ready.*

### **Keep it easy to read**

*Donors should never have to strain to read your note, so keep the ink high-contrast and writing easy to read; I suggest a medium nib and dark ink. Keep it legible for older donors with larger lettering.*

### **Don't stress about perfection**

*You may make a mistake or 'typo' when writing – especially if your thoughts get ahead of you or you are distracted. If you make one mistake, use a simple strike through and continue. Be authentic!*

### **Remove excuses + barriers to penning a note**

*Making time for handwritten notes is an investment in donor loyalty and more deeply connects supporters to your charity. Many older donors feel nostalgic receiving a handwritten note and younger donors are delighted by the novelty. Best of all, a note is something to re-read and treasure.*

### **Get the names right - every time**

*Nothing annoys a donor more than seeing their name misspelled. Or the wrong last name when your partner doesn't share your surname. Always double check both the addressee and salutation and err on the side of formality.*

### **Keep your signature legible**

*When you finish your note, be sure the donor knows who sent it; a signature isn't enough. Include a business card or print your title, phone number and email below your signature. Help the donor be in touch!*

### **Always, be prompt**

*Promptly writing and sending your note – whether a thank you, sympathy note or birthday card – is always best because you are "in the moment" of the impulse. Plus the donor will be delighted sooner!*



**Ready to unlock your fundraising potential? Let's talk.**  
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*Anyone can dash off a text or email, but extending heartfelt gratitude, in writing, will make your thank you unforgettable.*

Here are some phrases I use to start my thank you notes or emails.

**Tip: use the word “you” or “your” in the opening line!**

- *When I heard about your gift today, it made me remember your generous spirit...*
- *Your generosity will make an incredible difference because [impact/ why it matters].*
- *I want you to see difference you are making, so enclosed is a photo of [project]...*

**Don't forget to share gratitude with volunteers and board members**

- *As a volunteer you don't just give your time, you give your heart. [Use specific example.]*
- *What you did made everyone at [your charity] feel ...*
- *Your work as a board member is so important. I want you to know how your leadership has made a difference. [Refer to a specific example.]*

**Always send a note to celebrate and congratulate**

- *Wow! 50 years of marriage – I hope you'll share your secrets!*
- *The whole team wants to say, “Congratulations!” on the birth of your first grandchild.*
- *Your business announcement caught my eye today – congrats ...*

**At times you may need to express sympathy or sorrow**

- *I can't imagine the sadness you must be feeling...*
- *I have such wonderful memories of when your brother ... He was such a joy to work with ... [Use this if you knew the person the supporter has lost.]*
- *How have you been keeping? I wanted to be in touch and check in with how you've been feeling after the [surgery or illness]. I look forward to connecting again when you are feeling more recovered [from your illness or surgery].*

**Suggestions for checking in..**

- *I hope this find you well. I wanted to be in touch as it has been a while since we spoke. I love hearing from donors what they love most about the impact [charity] makes in the community. I've not heard your story before... what makes your heart sing most?*
- *I've missed being in touch with you [missed seeing volunteers like you]. Might we schedule a phone or video meeting in the next two weeks? I would love to share with you our progress since your last gift.*



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# I love being a Fundraiser



## Experience the Joy of Inspired Donor Relationships

*There is so much good yet to be done in the world: people fed, animals saved, education achieved, children uplifted, the earth protected. Philanthropy fuels change and fundraisers are there to guide donors.*

*Being a fundraiser isn't just about getting dollars in the door; it's about building relationships and inviting donors to create greater community impact.*

*I also consult with nonprofits: for a new strategy or plan, to strengthen the Board, or restructure their fundraising, I bring decades of experience, a major gift lens, and an attitude of gratitude.*

**That's how we create inspired donor relationships.**

## Meet Beth Ann Locke

*I know fundraisers have the power to change the world through our work with donors. I'm proud that I've been a donor champion and change-maker for more than 25 years. I started fundraising from the ground up, working in nearly every area, from gift processor to Chief Development Officer.*

*During my successful career, I've raised more than \$75 million in nonprofits small and large in both the U.S. and Canada.*

**Our work in the community and across the world is needed now more than ever. Let's rollup our sleeves and take your fundraising to the next level.**

*I'm coaching fundraisers and consulting with nonprofits as The Fundraiser Coach. I coach and train fundraisers to be their best: raising more money, building donor relationships, working more effectively, and achieving their goals. I also consult with nimble nonprofits, creating strategies and using focused fundraising to ensure charities maximize their impact.*

## Let's connect!

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