**blackbaud**

# SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young

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—Nathan Patterson, Director of Development

Forced to improvise during the COVID-19 pandemic, SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young postponed its spring gala and, with celebrity help, put on a live virtual benefit with peer-to-peer fundraising that brought old and new supporters together *Under One Moon* to raise almost $250,000.

## SAY mixes peer-to-peer fundraising with livestream event to support young people.

For SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young, answering the pandemic and the necessary postponement of the nonprofit's spring gala took resilience and creativity.

Since its founding in 2001 by actor and director Taro Alexander, SAY has provided support, advocacy, and life-changing experiences for young people who stutter through high-quality performing arts programs, speech therapy, an annual overnight summer camp, and website resources. The yearly spring gala—an in-person fundraising event in New York City—helps make those opportunities possible for kids of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

**SAY is powered by Blackbaud solutions for:**

✓ Peer-to-peer fundraising

✓ Fundraising and relationship management

✓ Analytics

✓ Marketing

✓ Merchant services

SAY's nationally recognized programs and fundraising are centered on compassion, interaction, and genuine human connection. The social distancing measures required by the pandemic presented unprecedented challenges that led to virtual adaptations for summer camp and other programs. When COVID-19 cast a sudden cloud of uncertainty over the gala, SAY looked to Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising™, powered by Just Giving®, as it quickly tried something new: a live online benefit titled *Under One Moon*, which married cloud-based fundraising technology with an old-fashioned telethon feel, complete with kid performances and celebrity cameos.

The shift was well worth it. *Under One Moon* strengthened SAY's collective voice, expanded its donor audience for long-term growth, showcased new online-learning program adaptations, and brought in just shy of $250,000—more than $100,000 of which was donated online. "The buy-in from everyone who participated was heartwarming and really amazing," said SAY Director of Development Nathan Patterson.



Due to COVID-19, SAY kids and staff joined together in virtual summer camp.

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>
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>   Director of Development

## Make it Simple for Donors and Staff

SAY adopted Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising largely because of its simplicity and integration with other Blackbaud solutions. "It's easy for people to give," Patterson explained.

*Under One Moon* brought in more than 200 donations online, 65% of those from new donors. Customized personal fundraising pages that SAY participants and other supporters linked to the event helped fuel the surge, with gift information flowing into Blackbaud's flagship fundraising and relationship management solution, Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT®, which SAY already had in place.

"(Donations) automatically entered into our Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT system, which is a huge help in terms of timesaving and data entry work," Patterson said. "Not having to manually punch in 200 gifts is a big deal." Likewise, payment processing with Blackbaud Merchant Services™ "was really helpful to have integrate behind the scenes."

## Extend Reach and Impact by Going Virtual

While SAY livestreamed the benefit through another vendor, the video link was embedded within the *Under One Moon* campaign page, which allowed visitors to simultaneously watch the benefit and see the contributions coming in. For larger donations made offline, staff had the flexibility to add them on to the running total. Anyone who missed the event or wanted to relive special moments could click on a recording on the campaign page.

Taro Alexander, SAY's founder, chats with a participant and a parent live during the *Under One Moon* benefit.

Most of the content was live for a spontaneous feel, mixing confidence-building moments for young SAY participants with visits from celebrities, such as actress Dame Helen Mirren and *Saturday Night Live's* Heidi Gardner and her cat. Performances included beloved singer and musician Everett Bradley, who has been on board since SAY's earliest days, and Broadway singer Kelli O'Hara, who surprised the audience with a "worm-off" against Broadway star James Monroe Iglehart and signed off in song with the finale.

As a virtual event, *Under One Moon* could reach a broader audience than an in-person event, not only for the sake of fundraising but also awareness and community. "It's an event for you to watch and enjoy and connect with something real. I think that's another big reason why it clicked," Patterson said. "Our mission and our message are very emotionally resonant, even if you don't know anyone who stutters and have never known anyone who stutters."

**Raise more money and reach new supporters with Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising, powered by JustGiving.**

**Learn more**

*Visit the Under One Moon campaign page and watch the livestream recording to learn more about SAY: The Stuttering Association for the Young and their nationally recognized, award-winning arts programs.*

SAY's *Under One Moon* livestream event with Blackbaud Peer-to-Peer Fundraising, powered by Just Giving, resulted in more than 200 online donations—65% from new donors.

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**About Blackbaud**
Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud connects and empowers organizations to increase their impact through cloud software, services, expertise, and data intelligence. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, companies, education institutions, healthcare organizations, and the individual change agents who support them.