

# Make It Fridge-Worthy

How to Write Donor Messages That Matter



a Nonprofit Storytelling Conference Publication

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## *How to Write Donor Messages That Matter*

### Why Fridge-Worthy Matters

Most donor communications are polite but hollow:

*“Thank you for your generous gift. Your support is appreciated.”*

Technically fine but emotionally flat.

A good donor message isn’t just information. It’s a **story moment**.

Every thank-you, receipt, and update is a chance to say more than “thanks.”

It’s a chance to write a few words that make the donor **feel something**—hope, pride, or belonging.

Donors don’t give to feel processed. They give because they want to feel:

- **Reassured** they made a difference
- **Hopeful** that good still exists
- **Proud** they played a part in something meaningful

Your job isn’t to issue a receipt. Your job is to **serve donors emotionally** with words that make them feel useful, connected, and hopeful.

This guide will show you how to write Fridge-Worthy donor messages.

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## The Fridge Test: Your Shortcut to Serving Donors

Here’s the simplest way to check if your message truly matters:

- Would your donor keep this?
- Would they tape it to the fridge?
- Show it to a friend?
- Reread it on a hard day?

If the answer is no, keep writing.

If the answer is yes, you’ve served them well.

## The Big Question: Are You Serving You or Serving Them?

Before you hit send, ask yourself:

**Does this message serve my organization—or does it serve my donor?**

- If it just checks a box or meets compliance, it serves *you*.
- If it makes the donor feel proud, hopeful, or deeply appreciated, it serves *them*.

That's the shift: **from acknowledgment to meaning.**

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### Say This, Not That

*(Make your donor messages Fridge-Worthy.)*

#### Say This (Fridge-Worthy)

"You did something kind today."  
"Because of you, something good is happening."  
"Here's your receipt—and a reminder of the good you made possible."  
"You gave hope today. That matters."  
"You helped someone feel less alone."  
"You showed up when it counted. Thank you."

#### Not That (Transactional)

"Thank you for your generous donation."  
"Your gift helps us do our work."  
"Please keep this for your records."  
"Your support is appreciated."  
"You're an important part of our mission."  
"Thanks for being a valued donor."

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## How to Serve Donors With Every Word

Instead of asking, *"How do I thank them for helping us?"*

Ask, *"What do they need to feel right now?"*

Donors rarely want attention.

They want:

- **Agency** (I made something happen)
- **Hope** (good is still possible)
- **Recognition** (I matter)



When you write with those needs in mind, your words stop being routine. They become a **moment of service**.

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## What Every Fridge-Worthy Message Delivers

When a donor keeps your message, it's because it gave them something valuable.

Every donor message should give at least one of these:

- A sense of **usefulness**
- A feeling of **pride**
- A moment of **peace**
- A note of **recognition**
- A dose of **hope**
- A thread of **connection**

When your messages give donors these feelings, they're worth keeping.

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## Mini-Story Swipe File

Quick ways to make messages fridge-worthy:

- “Because of you, someone exhaled in relief today.”
  - “You turned a what-if into a now-we-can.”
  - “Your gift gave someone more than help—it gave them hope.”
  - “Today, you changed a story from fear to possibility.”
  - “You didn’t just give. You showed someone they’re not alone.”
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## Plug-and-Play Templates

(Customize for Your Donors)

Use these as starting points. Personalize them. Make them sound like you. The goal is to craft messages that feel like a gift, not a transaction.

### Thank-You Email

Subject: *You made this happen*

Body:

You didn't just give today—you gave someone a reason to hope.  
Because of you, [insert impact, e.g., "a family in crisis had a safe place to sleep tonight"].  
That's no small thing. It matters.  
Thank you for showing up when it counted.

*(Notice the story arc: You acted → Something changed → It matters.)*

## Donation Receipt

Subject: *Here's your receipt—and a big thank you*

Body:

Your gift of [amount] just went to work.  
And what it's doing is bigger than dollars—it's creating moments of relief for people who need it most.  
Here's your receipt: [link or attachment]  
Thank you for being the kind of person who steps in when hope is needed.

## Lapsed Donor "Welcome Back"

Subject: *It means so much that you came back*

Body:

We noticed your kindness today—and it mattered.  
Your gift is already at work making [specific impact].  
Thank you for caring enough to return. That says so much about you.

## Post-Event Follow-Up

Subject: *What you made possible*

Body:

Because of your generosity, [insert result, e.g., "20 children have school supplies waiting for them next week"].  
That didn't happen by accident. It happened because you cared.  
Thank you for turning good intentions into real change.

## **Fridge-Worthy isn't about design or clever wording.**

It's about giving donors something they value—a reason to feel proud, hopeful, and connected.

When your words pass the Fridge Test, they do more than acknowledge a gift. They **become a gift**—a moment donors want to keep.

That's what serving donors looks like. Not just raising money but giving back meaning in return.

So before you hit send, ask:

### **Would this pass the Fridge Test?**

If yes, you've served your donor well.

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## **Want More Ideas Like This?**

At the [Nonprofit Storytelling Conference](#), we dive deep into **how to create donor moments that matter**—through words, stories, and experiences. You'll leave with strategies, templates, and real examples you can put to work immediately.

If you've ever wished your donor communications felt more human—and raised more money—this conference is for you.

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