



## **ANNOUNCING BRING LIGHT, A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ONLINE NETWORK**

*New website aims to inspire a new generation of philanthropy*

SAN JOSE, California, May 30, 2007 -- Today, a social network was born to inspire a new generation of online philanthropy. Bring Light ([www.bringlight.com](http://www.bringlight.com)) is a website where donors and nonprofits build communities to fund specific charitable projects. For donors, it is a fun, interactive and secure place where they can see where their contributions are going, and multiply the impact by building Giving Groups around the causes they care about. For charities, it is a quick, simple and inexpensive way to fundraise and build relationships with new donors on the Web.

Co-founders Melissa Dyrdaahl and Drew McManus left senior executive positions at Adobe Systems to apply their business, marketing and technology expertise to help charities connect more effectively with donors online, and give people a stronger personal link to their giving.

### **Understanding What Online Donors Want**

Bring Light was created for people who want to feel connected to the result of their donations. The site features specific projects posted by charities that are first screened by Bring Light for legitimacy. Donors can see evidence of their impact with real-time updates and by chatting with others in the community, including the charity itself who is encouraged to report back on how the money was spent.

Visitors can make an individual contribution, or create or join a Giving Group of like-minded donors. According to a recent survey by Cone Communications, family (77 percent) and friends (64 percent) were the two groups most likely to influence an individual's decision to support a cause or charity.

"The power of social networking can have an exponential effect on a fundraising effort," said Drew McManus, President and Co-founder. "You may only have twenty dollars to give, but the impact is bigger when you invite your friends and family to donate to the cause as well."

### **Addressing the Needs of Charities**

"In my experience working with nonprofit organizations, I see, first hand, the challenges they face in getting critical funding requests in front of donors," said Dyrdaahl, CEO and Co-founder. "Bring Light provides them with an efficient and immediate way to get the support they need."

Bring Light's goal is to give exposure to small- to medium-sized nonprofit organizations (NPOs) who often have limited marketing and fundraising budgets. "These are the grassroots organizations who are working hard to help our communities," said McManus. "If they don't get funding or new donors, they won't be around to do the amazing work that they do."

Qualifying 501c3 organizations are welcome to visit the site and apply to post its projects. As of today, the following local charities have made postings that require immediate funding:

- ANGELS (Autism Network for Global Education & Lifelong Support)
- Assistance Dog Institute
- Grail Family Services
- Humane Society of Silicon Valley
- InnVision (housing and day programs for the homeless)
- LAMBDA
- Pacific Autism Center for Education
- Planned Parenthood Golden Gate
- ProjectHIRED
- Resource Area for Teaching (RAFT)
- Ronald McDonald House at Stanford
- Room to Read
- San Jose Museum of Art
- San Jose State Alumni Association
- San Jose Youth Symphony
- The Family Giving Tree
- The Girls' Middle School (Mountain View, CA)
- Wings Learning Center
- YWCA of Silicon Valley

“Mining the Internet is a huge opportunity for nonprofits, but one which requires a level of training not often found in a small, mission-driven organization like ours,” said Honey Meir-Levi, executive director, Ronald McDonald House at Stanford. “Thanks to Bring Light, donors can respond to our specific needs, and we can reach a fresh world of people eager to help us in a fast and cost effective way.”

#### **Offering exceptional benefits of a donor advised fund**

Bring Light is unique in offering the advantages of a donor advised fund through its provider, American Endowment Foundation (AEF). AEF aggregates the individual donations funneled into the donor advised fund and provides a single grant to the charity, significantly reducing the nonprofits' administrative costs.

Donors can fund a Giving Account on Bring Light, immediately receive the maximum tax-benefit, and manage their charitable giving at any time thereafter. This brings the advantages of a donor advised fund to many who would not otherwise qualify.

“Bring Light chose American Endowment Foundation because they are a trusted, respected, and independent sponsor of donor advised funds nationwide.” said Dyrdaahl. “AEF shares our vision of inspiring a new generation of philanthropy, and we are excited to bring the benefits of a donor advised fund to the users of Bring Light.”

“For over 14 years, the American Endowment Foundation has helped donors fulfill their charitable goals,” said Phil Tobin, president of AEF. “We’re thrilled that by working together with Bring Light, we can extend these benefits to more people than ever before.”

### **Launching at NetSquared Conference honoring innovative social cause organizations**

Bring Light launched today at the NetSquared conference in San Jose at Cisco Systems Headquarters, an invitation-only event spearheaded by the nonprofit technology Web resource TechSoup ([www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)). Bring Light has donated a free project posting to each of the qualifying nonprofit organizations, which are competing at the conference for the NetSquared Innovation Award honoring the best social Web projects working for social benefit. For more information about the conference or the projects, go to [www.netsquared.org/2007/conference](http://www.netsquared.org/2007/conference).

“Because nonprofits thrive on relationships, the social networking capabilities of today’s Web hold tremendous potential to transform their effectiveness and impact,” said Marnie Webb, VP of Knowledge Services of Tech Soup and Member of Bring Light’s Advisory Board. “Bring Light taps into this potential by connecting donors and causes, and we’re excited about what it will do for all of the nonprofits we serve.”

**For more information about Bring Light Inc.**, go to [www.bringlight.com](http://www.bringlight.com).

### **About American Endowment Foundation**

American Endowment Foundation (AEF) is an IRS-recognized, 501(c)(3) public charity serving a national constituency since 1993. Its total donor advised fund assets now exceed \$130 million. Their sole business is donor advised fund administration, which includes compliance monitoring, state and federal filings, charity review, and grant disbursements - all in accordance with IRS guidelines. For more information, visit <http://www.aefonline.org/>.

### **About TechSoup**

TechSoup ([www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)) offers a wealth of information on products, applications, best practices, online forums, and ideas on nonprofit tech topics from networking to open source and Web 2.0. It also gives its 400,000 unique monthly visitors access to the TechSoup Stock ([www.techsoup.org/stock](http://www.techsoup.org/stock)) service, which offers hundreds of hardware and software products donated by leading providers such as Cisco, Microsoft, Symantec, Intuit, and Adobe. Since its inception in January 2002, the service has distributed more than 2.7 million products to nonprofits in North America, Europe, Australia, and Africa, and freed up over \$600 million for other uses.

Note to media, see accompanying press releases:

- *Bring Light helps charities efficiently market, fundraise and find new donors on the Web* – May 30, 2007
- *Bring Light creates a social network to inspire a new generation of philanthropists* – May 30, 2007

#### Media Contacts:

Linda McNair, Bring Light  
[linda@bringlight.com](mailto:linda@bringlight.com); 408.702.2088

Franziska Marks, TechSoup  
[fmmarks@techsoup.org](mailto:fmmarks@techsoup.org); 415.633.9336

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