



CHARITY VIEWS

vol. 28

THE NEXT GENERATION:

Let's take a look at the origin stories of some of the most exciting new organizations in the world of philanthropy.

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NEXT UP

In the last installment of Charity Views, we examined the beginnings of some of the oldest, most-successful and well-established organizations in philanthropy. From foundation to current day, there was much to learn from their stories and even more to be inspired by.

In Volume 28, we turn our attention to the sector's next generation through the guise of two of the most innovative, effective and rapidly growing non-profits: Girls Who Code and The Lonely Whale. Similarly, we break down their paths from humble beginnings to major impacts and search for the common threads that have led to growth in a sector that gets more crowded every day.

From utilizing technology in new ways to forging lasting emotional connections with donors, we've got lots to unpack from these amazing stories.

As always, thank you for your readership and support.

Enjoy!

THE IAA TEAM

the 'BIRTH' of a MOVEMENT

Reshma Saujani has persistence in her DNA. In fact, it was during a failed political campaign that the idea for Girls Who Code was born. While she may not have won a seat in Congress, the daughter of two Ugandan refugees noticed an upsetting disparity while out on the campaign trail. As she traveled from school to school, it became glaringly clear that every computer science classroom had a conspicuous lack of girls.

So instead of falling back on her legal career after the election didn't go her way, Saujani decided she still wanted to make a difference. Girls Who Code was launched in 2012 with a classroom of 20 girls and a mission to close the gender gap in technology and change the image of what a programmer looks like.



A FOUNDATIONAL FINDING



During the initial stages of establishing the organization, Saujani spoke with teachers, psychologists and students around the country. She came across a breakthrough study that showed something interesting. Fifth grade girls were routinely testing better than boys in science and math, but when presented with problems that were beyond their capabilities, the boys were testing better.

It's what Saujani refers to as a *bravery deficit*. Girls are socialized to be perfect, and thus approach difficult problems hesitantly. Boys, on the other hand, are socialized to be brave. This explains their higher success rate and fearlessness of failure on difficult problems. Thus, a pillar of Girls Who Code was born. Instilling bravery within girls would be at the core of every one of the organization's classes, programs and efforts.



GIRL POWER

While numbers were the impetus for Saujani's big idea, success came from digging deeper. Recognizing that only 24% of coders and only 1 of every 5 computer science graduates are women was eye-opening. But understanding why enabled her to make an impact.

Since their founding, Girls Who Code has built a network of clubs, immersion programs on school and company campuses, and support groups. *Today*, their organization has reached over 185,000 girls in all 50 states! With over 200% growth in the last two years, plans to expand internationally, and the backing of tech giants like Facebook and Amazon, the impact of the Girls Who Code movement has massive potential.



ANSWERING The CALL



It all started with a documentary about a whale. 52: The Search for the Loneliest Whale, was released in 2015. In the film, we learn about the discovery of a 52-megahertz whale call, a considerably higher register than any measured to that point. The find was so intriguing because it revealed a whale that was crying out in a decibel that couldn't be answered or understood by other whales.

Of the millions of people captivated by the plight of the lonely whale were actor Adrian Grenier and producer Lucy Sumner. So much so, in fact, that they created a Kickstarter campaign to help fund the group of scientists searching for the whale. The campaign's success helped Grenier and Sumner come to a very important realization – they could do more.





an Ocean in NEED



What the story of and reaction to the documentary elucidated for Grenier and Sumner was the powerful and emotional connection people have to the ocean. It was this connection that drove the pair to create The Lonely Whale Foundation. With increasing pollution, rising temperatures and over-fishing, the fate of our oceans has perhaps never been more in jeopardy. The timing for an organization dedicated to saving it was perfect.

The Lonely Whale was built around three core pillars: Vital Education, Impact Campaigns and Scalable Solutions. In just over four years, the impact has been monumental.

Through their youth summits they have educated thousands of children across the country about ways to keep plastic out of our oceans. They have partnered with companies such as Dell and Ikea – innovating their supply chains to reduce plastic production. Most notably, their #StopSucking and #StrawlessInSeattle campaigns led to the ban of single-use plastic straws in Seattle.

that's RADICAL

From the very beginning, the Lonely Whale has been committed to one guiding principal, and it has made all the difference. They call it [“Radical Collaboration.”](#) Under this ideology, every one of their campaigns and initiatives must have at least one partner. Why? Because they believe this drives efficiency, pushes ideas further and creates more opportunities to learn.

It’s boldly humble, refreshing and most importantly, it’s working.



THE takeaway

Let's zero in on what we can learn from the origin stories of these rapidly growing, innovative organizations!

Cut to the Core

What has made Girls Who Code so successful is not just that they recognized a key issue, it's that they understood why it was a key issue before initiating a solution. This is a great lesson to consider for both the everyday and big picture objectives of your organization.

Strength in #s

It's not always easy to say, "we need help." But it's a guiding principle for The Lonely Whale and it's incredibly powerful. Their organization is committed to partnering with others. It diversifies thinking, increases resources and makes ideas exponentially more impactful.

Passion is Power

Girls Who Code and The Lonely Whale were both founded by people with extreme passion for their respective causes. This is everything. Sure, no one is passionate about every aspect of their day-to-day routine, but anytime you can zero in on what makes you passionate, utilize that energy. It's contagious.



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