

# Thank-you Letter

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Available on Internet at: <http://www.fundraiser.com/jan08/how-to-write-a-donation-thank-you-letter.html>

Thank-you letters are one of the most important letters that your non-profit mails to donors. They remind donors that they made the right decision in supporting your organization. They show that you are grateful for the donors gift. As a bonus, thank-you letters increase donor loyalty, strengthen relationships with your donors and increase your chances of receiving more gifts in the future. So here are some pointers for writing effective thank-you letters.

- Be personal.  
Address your thank-you letter to your donor by name. Don't say "Dear Friend."
- Say thank you, thank you, thank you.  
Show your gratitude by repeating, in a few different ways, that you are thankful for your donor's gift.
- Be specific if possible.  
Mention the size of the gift, or the date that you received the gift, or at least say "Thank you for your recent gift." Donors are busy people who need to be reminded that they responded to your appeal.
- Show how the donor's gift is being successful.  
Reinforce in your donor's mind that sending a gift was a wise investment in the work of your organization. Describe a recent success that was made possible by the donor's generosity. Or show in other specific, tangible ways, how or where the donor's gift is making a difference in the lives of the people that your non-profit serves.
- Thank the supporter, not the donor.  
Somewhere in your letter, acknowledge that you value your reader as someone who supports your organization and believes in your mission. No one likes being treated like an automated banking machine.
- Encourage dialogue.  
Show a genuine interest in your donor by inviting them to write you, or phone you, or visit your website, or drop by your mission, or in some other way strengthen your relationship. Offer to reciprocate in kind. Chances are that they might have a favorite cause that could use a boost. It doesn't matter if you don't have money to spare because your offer can be couched in terms of being a willing volunteer whenever the need arises

- Be soft in asking for more funds.  
Your thank-you letter should say thanks. If you follow your thanks with an immediate and aggressive appeal for more funds, you may cheapen your thanks and offend your supporter. So be gentle, and soft-sell the request for another gift.
- Strive for originality.  
Be fresh. Make your letter unique. Avoid language that sounds like it was churned out by a bureaucracy.

An example of a successful thank-you letter.

Below is a thank-you letter that Doctors Without Borders (MSF) mailed to donors who responded to their appeal letter for their work in Afghanistan.

**–sample thank-you letter starts–**

Dear Alan,

In response to your recent gift to MSF, I join with the people of Afghanistan in saying shúker, thank you, for your generosity.

As I write, the security situation in Afghanistan is changing by the day, improving in some areas of the country while deteriorating in others. At MSF, we are particularly alarmed at the number of civilians who are being killed or injured in the bombing campaigns.

On one day alone, we transported 72 dead and 15 wounded to the hospital. Many of them were women and children. Among the casualties was a family whose father was killed, mother critically injured, and four children wounded. A six-year-old boy lost one eye and had to undergo partial amputation of one arm and a full amputation of his other arm and one of his legs.

We are seeing increasing evidence of an unacceptably high toll on civilians due to the military operations in Afghanistan. We are calling upon the parties involved to minimize the consequences of the ongoing conflict on the civilian population.

The good news is that, thanks to your generosity, our 60 international staff and over 400 Afghan staff are back to work in the country again, offering medical help without discrimination and regardless of race, religion, creed or political affiliation.

I join with all of them and the staff here at MSF Canada in wishing you a prosperous and safe Náwey Kaal, or New Year.

Yours sincerely,

[signature]

Leslie Shanks, MD, CCFP President – Médecins Sans Frontières Canada / Doctors Without

Borders-Canada

**-sample thank-you letter ends-**

This letter is taken from Eight Sample Donation Thank-You Letters, the 21st Handbook in the popular Hands-On Fundraising Series published by Andrew Spencer Publishing

Your fundraising thank you letter should go out within a week of receiving their donation, preferably sooner. Keep a form letter version of it on your computer and whip up a personalized note of thanks as soon as possible.

Remember, a well-written thank you note is not only good manners, it's good fundraising!