

April 2020

Citizen Diplomacy Philadelphia: Crisis Appeal Rewrite

NEW VERSION: Lea Ann Peterson

The Problem stated by Andrea Silva:

[#ask](#) [#directmail](#) [#covid19](#) I have finally finished writing this appeal and gotten all my letterhead and printer set up. Time keeps on slipping out of my grasp while launching weekly virtual events, canceling the gala and designing this new appeal.

In the essence of time, I'm posting the letter here for any and all feedback. Happy to provide additional background information if it helps. Thanks in advance for your help! [#crisisappeal](#) [#comms](#)

Simple Recommendations:

1. I'm a trained copywriter, and I follow "The Power of One" religiously. Tell One good story that Inspires One Simple Action.

In your case, you had the perfect story to tell. Umme's experience ties in directly with the reason you're writing. Awesome. So I highlighted that by indenting it.

2. Get specific about how much you need to raise. You cancelled the event. How much would you have made, or will lose? Fill in the \$XXX



3. I cut out some of the red herrings. They may be good points on their own, but don't add to the strength of this letter.

4. You can make the letter longer by adding some 'social proof' elements. Get quotes from your two honorees about why you rock and what your program means to them.

OR

Get quotes from other sponsors about the same thing.

Either way, put them in AFTER the story, and before the final ask.

5. Please don't mail that Impact Report with this letter. Just the words "... on page 12..." made me feel bad for your donors. Why you wanna' give them homework? Always remember... make it eaaassyyy.

[Citizen Diplomacy Philadelphia C19 Appeal Rewrite on following page →](#)



Johnson Box:

**CITIZENS SOIREE
CANCELLED**

**You can still show your support during the crisis!
Donate today!**

Dear <Salutation>,

Your help is needed urgently. The pandemic has created a financial shortfall that threatens Citizen Diplomacy's exchange programs.

Our major spring fundraiser has been cancelled due to social distancing. The Citizens Soirée: A Dinner of Diplomacy was set for June 4, 2020. Thanks to generous sponsorships from caring donors like you, the event usually brings in \$XXXX.

Will you make a special donation of \$25, \$50 or even \$100 by May 15 to make up for this cancelled event?

Without these funds I'll be forced to severely reduce exchange programs between our Sister Cities. But you'll agree, now is not the time to stop reaching out to our global neighbors.

No question, this crisis is scary... for the whole world. That's why your support of Citizen Diplomacy is so important right now.



If you're like me, you've closed yourself at home with family. You work from your home office. The news seems to be all gloom. It's tempting to shut it all out...

But I want to remind you... This crisis is not forever!

The world needs people like you who care deeply about what's happening in the world...

Right now, you have an opportunity to support the emerging leaders of tomorrow. It's up to them to guide our world with the bonds of friendship and shared knowledge.

When you give today, you support people like Umme, a medical officer in Communicable Disease Control who took part in a recent professional exchange program.

Umme is deeply worried about her crowded city of Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Umme is a leader with integrity who knows deep down it's up to her team to keep people in her city safe.

She understands pandemics and knows what resources her city has to handle COVID-19... and does not. There are not enough tests, supplies, and ICU beds. Hospitals are turning away patients.

Daunting challenges.

But Umme is now ready for the coming fight against this deadly illness... and the aftermath.

You see, you funded Umme's recent professional leadership exchange in Philadelphia. Her goal? To learn about preparing Bangladesh for a pandemic outbreak.



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Umme got a chance to learn from the EcoHealth Alliance and Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health.

She has taken what she learned and is putting it to work... stopping the spread of disease in Dhaka... developing good public health systems... supporting medical innovation... and saving lives.

And you made that possible!

Lives are being saved in Bangladesh because of Umme's exchange here in Philadelphia. Because of you, and other kind people like you.

You know what it means to be a global citizen.

Donate to Citizen Diplomacy now to help more young leaders like Umme.

You've been here for Citizen Diplomacy and our delegations year after year. Thank you! I sincerely appreciate your bottomless kindness and generosity.

Will you please send an extra special gift of \$25, \$50 or even \$100 by May 15 today? The main thing is to ACT NOW.

Without your immediate help, I will have to make tough decisions.

With no funding, Citizen Diplomacy will have to turn away international delegations... slash the Sister Cities High School Exchanges... reduce our local programs... and restructure staffing.

I am confident we'll get through this together. With your help!

You are a bright light in the midst of this terrible pandemic. You've helped build international relationships that are solving this crisis.

All this is possible because of person-to-person relationships built through diplomacy. Your belief in a connected world makes Citizen Diplomacy a vital part of Philadelphia.

You know in your soul... we really are all in this together.

As you know, we rely on kind friends like you who understand the value of a connected global world. Please donate \$50, \$100, or even \$250 by May 15. Any amount you can give will help!

This is the moment for Citizen Diplomats like you to step forward and give. You make all the difference.

Your donation of \$25 – \$50 – \$100 will help us survive the loss of funds from our spring event. I cannot stress enough how important your support is right now! Thank you for being a global diplomat.

I know you are facing challenges of your own. I only ask you to do what you can -- what is right for you!

I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. We will get through this together!

With hope and gratitude,

Siobhán Lyons
President and CEO



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P.S. You have the power to strengthen global relationships during this crisis. You, and other people like you, understand the importance of being good neighbors... even across borders.

Please help us weather the financial hit from the loss of our biggest public event of the year. Your donation of \$25 – \$50 – \$100 today will help young leaders change our world for future generations.

P.P.S. Donating today is easy. Grab a pen and complete the enclosed reply card right now, before you get busy. Mail it with your donation in the return envelope.

Or, better yet, speed your gift to work right away! Send your gift online at our secure website: www.cdiphila.org/donate



LIFT NOTE #1 RECOMMENDATION: Only mail this if necessary. This is a distraction and has nothing to do with your appeal.

(This copy was in the original letter shown at the end of this document. I took it out of the letter completely because it distracts from the goal.

However, many nonprofits have more people to consider when sending an appeal than the copywriter. This story could work as a buck slip. It would work even better if the note were written by the State Representative himself.

I still vote for leaving it out. There are other more effective messages that could be used in place of this story.)

Protecting Your Vote

There has never been a time like this. In weeks to come, we will see international connections strain. People across the world **are scared**.

The security of our democracy lies with leaders who have a global mindset.

Kevin Boyle, State Representative in Northeast Philadelphia, wants to make sure your vote gets counted. As the child of an immigrant, Kevin has always tuned into international news.

Long before his peers in the State House, Kevin was watching COVID-19 explode in across the world... and considering how it would impact people in Pennsylvania.

Kevin is a strong advocate for moving the upcoming primary to June 2. He understands the power of your right to vote. He believes in making sure you have that power... even when going to the polls in person isn't possible.

Kevin introduced legislation to mail a prepaid vote-by-mail ballot to every eligible voter.

Don't forget to register for your mail-in ballot by May 26!

LIFT NOTE #2 RECOMMENDATION: I recommend leaving technical documents out of donor-centered letters and emails unless absolutely necessary.

“You mentioned an Impact Report...

Please, don't include an impact report in this package. Don't include one in any package. Donors don't care, won't read it, and will likely depress potential gifts.

Instead, if you're really proud of it, put it online and offer a link in the letter or email towards the end, or right before the final ask - "...If you'd like more information about how this crisis is affecting Citizen Diplomacy, you can read our Impact Report [here](#).”

Original – Citizen Diplomacy Covid-19 Crisis Appeal on following page →

April 15, 2020

Address Block Address Block Address Block Address Block

Dear [Salutation],

I need your help today. This unexpected pandemic has created a financial shortfall that threatens Citizen Diplomacy's vital mission and the international visitors that you welcome each year.

Because of physical distancing, our major spring fundraiser, the Citizens Soirée: A Dinner Diplomacy planned for June 4, 2020 has been cancelled. Will you make a special donation right now to make up for this cancelled event?

Your investment in Citizen Diplomacy is so important, especially as we endure this crisis. You keep all of these essential international relations programs going while travel is frozen and we carry on exchanges virtually. Preparations for the return of international visitors in the late summer and autumn must continue. This crisis is not forever. You support emerging leaders like Ami Bharat Cheda, whose story is on page 12 of the enclosed Impact Report. She is one of the 1,000 passionate leaders who will change our world for future generations.

You've been here for Citizen Diplomacy and our delegations year after year. Thank you. I deeply appreciate your bottomless kindness and generosity in the past, and I need to ask for an



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extra special gift of \$25, \$50 or even \$100 by May 15. The main thing is to ACT NOW.

Without your immediate help, at our June 16 board meeting, I will have to make tough decisions to turn away international delegations, slash the Sister Cities High School Exchanges, reduce our local programs and

restructure staffing. Our team is flexible, adaptable and resilient, and I am confident that we will get through this together with your help.

There are bright spots in the midst of this terrible pandemic. The international relationships that we have already established are being called on to solve this crisis. Governments are sharing information and public health strategies; business leaders are donating medical masks and personal protective equipment; and scientists are cooperating towards treatments and vaccines.

All of this is possible because of 65 years of multilateralism and person-to-person relationships through diplomacy. This is the value of our programs. The programs that you have invested in. This is why we are here!

Diplomacy is a long game that must be sustained through thick and thin.



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As you know, we rely on kind friends like you who understand the value of a global world. Please donate \$50, \$100, or even \$250 by May 15. Any amount you can give will help! This is the moment for Citizen Diplomats like you to step forward and give. You make all the difference.

Over the past three weeks, we have been reaching out to our past international visitors to check-in and ask "How are you doing?" For one of our recent visitors, the situation is tough.

Umme is deeply worried about her crowded city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. As a Medical Officer in Communicable Disease Control, she understands pandemics and knows acutely what resources her city has to handle COVID-19. There are not enough tests, supplies, and ICU beds. Hospitals are turning away patients. Physical distancing is straining the millions who rely on daily work to feed their families. Daunting challenges.

Umme is a leader with integrity who knows deep down that it is her team who will keep people in her city safe. She is working nonstop to protect healthcare workers on the frontline and to protect her community. It is exhausting and new questions arise hourly.

The only thing Umme can count on right now is you.

You connected Umme to a strong network of public health peers through an international leadership exchange. Philadelphia is a



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world leader in treating and eradicating chronic diseases like Hepatitis C. Medicine is our top regional asset. While we have much to learn from other countries who are dealing with pandemics, Philly has strong structures in place.

While in Philadelphia, Umme talked with the EcoHealth Alliance and Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health about preparing Bangladesh for a pandemic outbreak. She has been able to take that knowledge to stop the spread of disease and to save more lives through good public health systems and medical innovation in Dhaka. Lives are being saved because of her exchange.

If you want to help more leaders like Umme, you need to donate to Citizen Diplomacy now. Please, grab a pen and complete the enclosed donation form and send it with your donation to me at our new Pipeline Office in the return envelope. Or, better yet, speed your gift to work online at our secure website: www.cdiphila.org/donate.

There has never been a time like this. In weeks to come, we will see international connections strain. People across the world are scared. One of my fears shared by friends around the world is that America will come out of this crisis accepting Isolationist policies. Even before this pandemic, we were advocating to keep America open and welcoming to the world. The security of our democracy lies with leaders who have a global mindset.

The best example of this is Kevin Boyle, our State Representative in Northeast Philadelphia, who wants to make sure your vote gets counted. As the child of an immigrant, Kevin has always tuned into international news. Long before his peers in



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the State House, Kevin was watching COVID-19 explode in China, Italy and Ireland and considering how it would impact Pennsylvania. Kevin was a strong advocate for moving the upcoming primary to June 2. More importantly, he introduced legislation that will require Pennsylvania to mail a prepaid vote-by-mail ballot to every eligible voter, enabling everyone to vote in our election.

Your vote is being protected because of an international mindset in your leaders. (Don't forget to register for your mail-in ballot by May 26.)

This international outlook begins young. This is why your commitment to global high school exchanges is so very important.

Your Sister City High School Exchanges support leadership development for African American and Latinx students who are underrepresented in international careers. Your donation now ensures that these students will have an international exchange experience next school year - be it in-person or virtual.

With so many new challenges in public education today, our students and teachers need Citizen Diplomacy's guidance to navigate this whole new way of starting relationships with schools around the world.

Your donation of \$25 - \$50 - \$100 will strengthen programs in 12 schools next year on Sister City High School Exchanges - giving



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many students the opportunity to see the world for the first time. Right now, our team is actively planning to launch two new exchanges with our Sister City Frankfurt. You make this happen.

I know you are facing challenges of your own. I only ask you to do what you can -- what is right for you! If you want to donate, but can't do it right now, please let me know at siobhan.lyons@cdiphila.org. It will really help to know if you are planning to give.

I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe. We will get through this together!

With hope and gratitude,

Siobhán Lyons President and CEO

P.S. Please keep our global programs strong by making your donation by May 15.