

# Help your nonprofit become more financially independent with **strategic** individual giving

Discover how Link Elevating Philanthropy is helping Glasswing International increase their financial independence, stability, and organizational impact through strategic individual giving

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"By building a formal individual giving program, we're starting to increase our unrestricted funding, which gives us more freedom to use our funds as we see fit, whether that's to innovate, support our core programs, or anything else we feel we need to do. This freedom equals a deeper and more sustained impact on the communities we serve."

## **Celina de Sola**

CO-FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT,  
GLASSWING INTERNATIONAL

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## The Challenge

Since their inception in 2007, Glasswing International had been funded almost exclusively through grants and their annual fundraising gala. They wanted to expand beyond relying on restricted forms of funding and create a strategic individual giving program, but they didn't know where to start.

## The Solution

Glasswing partnered with philanthropic advisor Lori Kranczer and Link Elevating Philanthropy for strategic guidance on building an effective and always-on individual giving program that brings in unrestricted funding.

## The Result

Glasswing is now structured and intentional in how they communicate with donors, which has led to deeper donor relationships, more confidence in asking for donations, a team culture that supports fundraising efforts, and systemized giving program that promotes more financial independence.

To learn how Link Elevating Philanthropy can help your nonprofit, visit [linkphilanthropic.com](https://linkphilanthropic.com).



# Challenges



## Building unrestricted and on-going funding streams

**W**hen Glasswing International's Co-founder and President Celina de Sola reached out to philanthropic advisor and legacy giving expert Lori Kranczer at Link Elevating Philanthropy, she was eager to develop funding streams that didn't come with restrictions.

At that time, Glasswing International — a nonprofit that designs and implements innovative, community-based initiatives that address poverty, violence, and migration — was funded almost exclusively through grants and their annual fundraising gala.

And while those sources of funding had consistently powered the organization since their inception in 2007, they both came with limitations, including grant-specific terms and an event that only happened once per year.

Celina knew Glasswing was missing out on additional fundraising opportunities from their individual donors, **but wasn't sure how to create the structure to build on-going relationships with them and effectively close those gaps.**

"We've been very effective in getting funding in other ways, but we'd never

had a strategy for individual giving, and it felt like we were leaving money on the table," Celina said. "We'd pull people into our gala, for example, but then didn't have a strategy to engage with them afterwards or long term.

***"The smallest portion of our funding has always come from individual giving, yet individual giving and family philanthropy is one way we can bring in unrestricted funding and have so much more flexibility, independence, and stability. We knew it was time to become more organized and strategic with individual giving and develop a structured program, but we needed a partner who could help us do that."***





# Solution

## A philanthropic expert that offers start-to-finish advisory support

Celina had been introduced to Lori and Link Elevating Philanthropy through an interview she'd done on Lori's podcast, *Positive Impact Philanthropy*.

She loved Lori's focus on individual and legacy giving, and set up a time to meet with her to discuss Glasswing's needs.

That first conversation impressed both Celina and Glasswing's U.S. Country Director, Mark Loyka.

***“We’ve worked with fundraisers in the past but meeting with Lori was our first time speaking with a fundraising consultant,” Celina said. “It was clear right away that she had a lot of experience. She asked a lot of questions, and really tried to understand us and our organization before offering any advice.”***

“All of Lori's suggestions and comments were rooted in her own experience or data,” added Mark. “I also liked that she's based in New York and has worked with many organizations there. Most of our U.S. donor base is in New York, so having Lori understand the landscape is really great.”



Recognizing they'd found a great partner in Lori, Glasswing hired her to **assess their existing donor relations processes and materials and provide insight and recommendations on how to develop a formal individual giving program.**

Lori jumped in and began looking at everything from their marketing to their donor communications to Celina's active role as their primary frontline fundraiser.

It wasn't long before she began making suggestions about how they could make key shifts to develop an effective program that better connects with donors.

“After Lori reviewed all of our communications and marketing materials, she **helped us see we had a big lack of donor-centric messaging,**” Mark said.

“That's a reflection of us always focusing on institutional funders. It really hit home that we needed to make a shift.”

“The need for donor-centric messaging struck a chord with all of us,” added Celina. “Much of our marketing and





it more broadly," Celina said. "We've done a good job of engaging people through their kids and to volunteer, but not as much through philanthropy.

***"Lori got me thinking of the inter-generational aspects of legacy giving and how to have both a short game and a long game."***

Mark said an additional benefit of Lori's assessment was the **tangible direction they received on how to set up a formal individual giving program**, along with a project management tool to help them implement it.

"Lori developed a system for us to segment our donors into groups," Mark said. "That was really helpful because it could have been really overwhelming to think about creating new touchpoints with our entire database all at once.

"Then she provided a project management tool that outlined how we would break the work up among our team and what team member was going to do each task."

When Lori's assessment was complete, Glasswing decided to continue partnering with her, and now have her on-going advisory as they implement her recommendations.

communications had been about celebrating things we'd achieved, but Lori helped us see that our donors needed to feel part of that success, not just being informed of it from far away. They also needed to know how they could support us to keep going."

Another recommendation Lori made was for Glasswing to **start considering the funding opportunities that could come from legacy giving** — an area that Celina said she hadn't thought about before.

"Lori's expertise in legacy giving has really inspired me to start thinking about



# Results

## Creating the culture + structure for financial independence and greater impact

Celina and Mark said they've seen several changes since their work with Lori began, with the biggest ones being **how they think about donor relationships** and what they do to intentionally build those relationships.

"We've changed the way we tangibly connect with our donors," Celina said. "When I spoke at our last gala, I tried to integrate our donors into our talking points as much as I could. Also, when I meet with banks and various other stakeholders now and they ask, 'How can I help?' I bring up things like planned giving. I wouldn't ever have brought that up before, but now if the conversation allows for it, I do."

Mark echoed the impact of these changes, saying it's had a positive effect on their entire team.

"Putting processes in place and creating more structure around individual giving **allows us to be less reactionary about funding**. Because we're intentionally setting ourselves up for success, it takes away some of our team's stress and increases our optimism about getting and retaining donors because less opportunities are falling through the cracks."

Lori's individual giving structure and project management tool has also helped Glasswing **systemize and diversify fundraising activities among a greater number of people**, which not only gets more team members involved in the effort, but takes a significant amount of burden off Celina.

**"When you learn how to professionalize and structure your fundraising, it becomes less dependent on the founder and something more people can be involved in," Celina said. "It really becomes a part of the culture. It's still very personal in nature, but it's not all me all the time."**





Yet perhaps the most important change is the slow but steady progress Glasswing is making to shift to more unrestricted funding, which ultimately results in more freedom and impact as an organization.

**“This work that we’re doing now is leading us to have more predictability financially, as well as more independence,”** Celina said. “Instead of working with grants that have finite periods and often stipulate how the money is to be spent, unrestricted funding allows us the freedom to use our funding in the way we feel we need to, which ultimately equals a deeper and more sustained impact on the communities we work with.”

Both Celina and Mark are excited to continue working with Lori as their

implementation efforts unfold — and said that **having her advisory on hand provides more assurance they’ll achieve success.**

“Lori stays on top of us, and regularly checks in to make sure we’re staying on task and keeping active,” Celina said. “If you’re not working with someone like Lori, initiatives like this usually don’t get done because you get sucked into other priorities.

“Getting strategic with individual giving — and eventually with legacy giving — is so important for the long-term health of our organization, and we feel fortunate to have Lori there, working by our side.” 💡



To learn how Lori and Link Elevating Philanthropy can help your nonprofit create more financial independence, visit [linkphilanthropic.com](https://linkphilanthropic.com).