

When Direct Response Does More Than Ask



We broke a few “best practices” to get here.



Mackenzie Darbyshire, CFRE

Strategic Growth Director,
Kittiwake



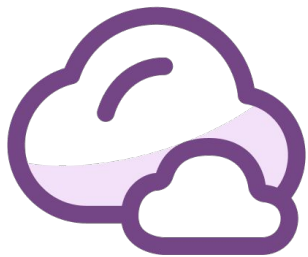
Jenna Joyce

VP Philanthropy, Dartmouth
General Hospital Foundation



Joanne Bath

CEO & Founder, Kittiwake



What comes to mind when you hear "Integrated Direct Response"?





What Is Integrated Direct Response?

A strategic approach to donor engagement that coordinates messaging, timing, and channels to build meaningful relationships and drive measurable results.

What is Donor-Centred Writing

One Donor, One Reader

Write as if speaking directly to a single person, not a mass audience

Donor As A Change Maker

Position your supporter as the change-maker, not your organization

Emotion Before Logic

Connect with the heart first, then provide rational reinforcement

Clarity Over Cleverness

Use grade 6-7 readability—clear language reaches more people

Speak Directly with "YOU"

Help the donor recognize themselves in the story, not as an observer, but as part of what's unfolding.

Create a Sensory Experience

The donor isn't just reading—they're feeling the paper, picturing the moment, and stepping into the story you're telling.

Case Study

This wasn't a campaign. It was an experience that led to action.

Mail Package

SPECIAL REPLY FORM FOR:

[ADDRESSEE]

[address line 1]

[address line 2]

[city], [province] [postal code]

[Code]



Yes, Stephen! I'll give monthly so life-
always ready — no matter when the n
happens.

Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation
address here
city, province, postal code



This winter, you can bring the warmth that saves a life.

SPECIAL REPLY FORM FOR:

[ADDRESSEE]

[address line 1]

[address line 2]

[city], [province] [postal code]

[Code]



Dartmouth General
Hospital Foundation



Yes, Stephen! I'll help make sure a new Belmont Rapid
Infuser is ready when the next emergency strikes with
a gift of:

☐ \$[AMT1]

☐ \$[AMT2]

☐ \$[AMT3]

☐ Surprise us: \$ _____

☐ CALL ME — I'D LIKE TO DO MORE TO HELP!

☐ I've enclosed my **cheque**, payable to Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation.

☐ I prefer to donate by **credit card**:

Card Number _____

Expiry _____ CVV/CSC _____

Name on Credit Card _____

Signature _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Or give Online at dghfoundation.ca/RapidInfuser
or by calling (902) 460-4149

THANK YOU!

FLIP OVER TO MAKE YOUR GIFT
MONTHLY — AND SHARE THE GIFT
OF LIFE-SAVING CARE BEYOND THE
HOLIDAYS.

(902) 460-4149 | dghfoundation.ca
325 Pleasant Street, Room 1361 Dartmouth, NS B2Y 4G8
Charitable Registration No. 123456789 888 8888



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You'll be part of the moment a life begins again.

With heartfelt thanks,



Stephen Harding
Chief Executive Officer, Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation

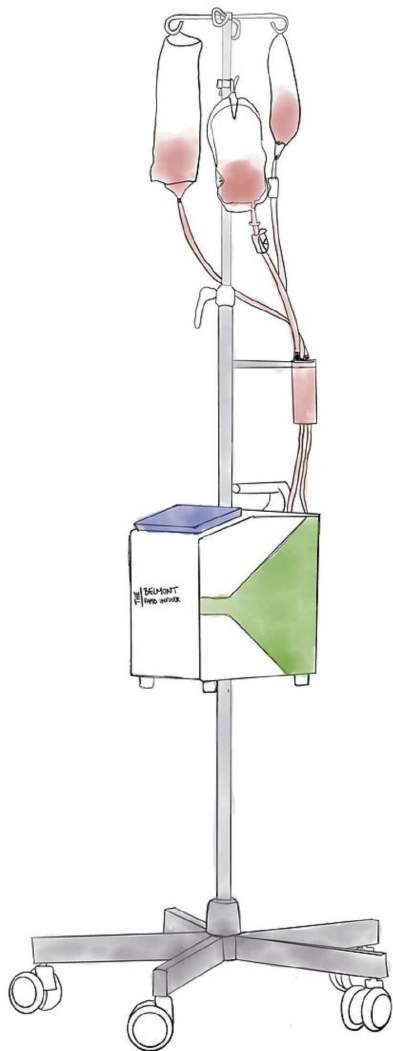
P.S. When every second counts, the right equipment can mean everything. Your gift today will
help bring two new Belmont Rapid Infusion machines to Dartmouth General — and help our teams
save lives faster, right here at home.

KITTIWAKE



Choose the Lie





Overall Results

	Holiday 2024	Holiday 2025
Total Raised	\$108,326	\$427,180
Total Gifts	412	583
New Monthly Donors	0	7
Average Gift	\$262.93	\$732.73
House Response Rate	-	17.6%
Acquisition Response Rate	-	3.4%



Donor 1: Major Gift Donor in Cultivation

- Identified in 2023 as a prospect by a leadership volunteer
- Attended a tour in 2023
- Gave small tribute gifts (\$20 in 2002, \$50 in 2020, \$100 in early 2025)



Made a major gift and is now engaged!



Donor 2: Lobster Dinner Purchaser

- \$200 ticket purchase in July for the Lobster Dinner to be delivered to her home
- No other history of gifts or events



Now a Monthly Donor!



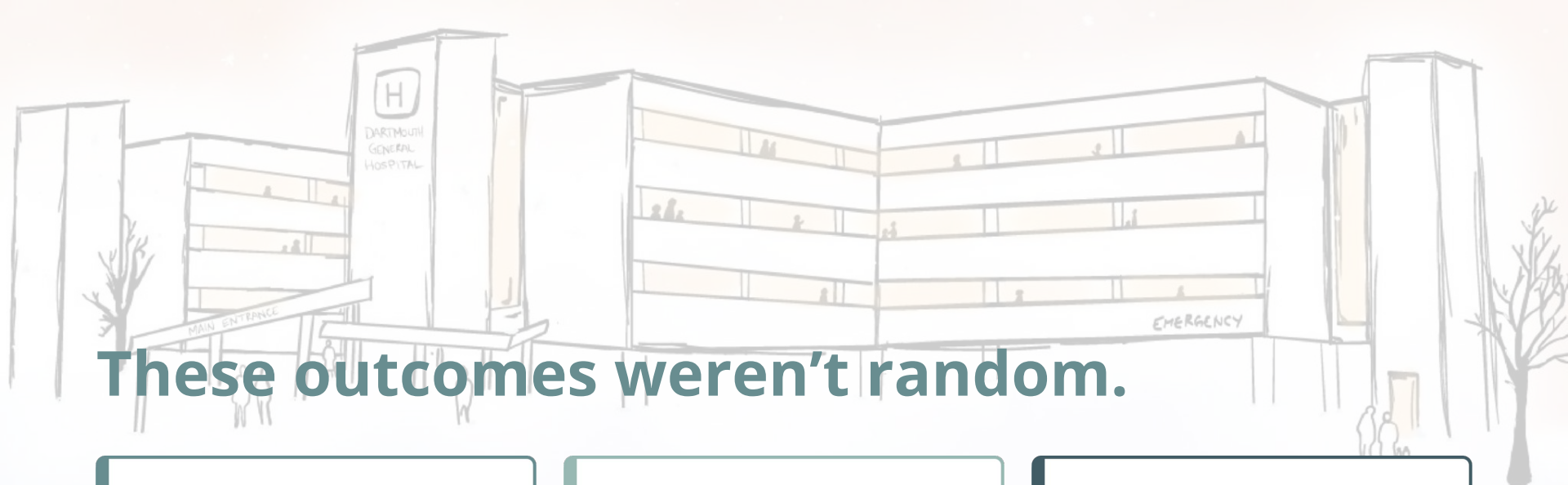
Donor 3: Husband & Wife

- Segment: Loyal Donors
- Largest Gift in 2021 of \$143,570 to a Capital Campaign
- Giving since 2021 is frequent but between \$100-\$5,000



**Steve wrote us a letter asking
us to help.**





These outcomes weren't random.

Inclusion: Major Gift & Event Donors

Acquisition from our database: Long Lapsed

Restricted Ask: EQUIPMENT!

Stuck to Timelines

Social Media to Elevate the Story

Art & Science in the Package

Font: Garamond

A typewriter look alike. to match the concept of a note sent from a person, not a corporate office.

Design: Minimal

Photos, hand drawn graphics, coffee stains. White space.

Writing:

Small paragraphs, starting with "And or But"

Formatting: bold, underline, italics



BECAUSE WHEN THAT MACHINE STARTS TO
HUM — YOU ARE PART OF THAT MOMENT.

November 17, 2025

[Addressee]
[Address line 1]
[Address line 2]
[City], [Province] [Postal Code]

Dear [Salutation],

If you could stand beside our Emergency team for just one moment, you'd understand why I'm writing to you today.

The doors swing open. Paramedics rush in a patient — pale, cold, barely conscious. It could be anyone: a father, a friend, a neighbour. In those moments, there's no time to think. Only time to act.

And here at Dartmouth General Hospital, every second matters.

That's why I'm reaching out to you, [Salutation]. Because you can help our caregivers save lives faster by helping us purchase two new Belmont Rapid Infusion machines — one for the Emergency Department and one for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

This extraordinary machine saves time when every second counts.

It rapidly delivers warmed blood and fluids to patients suffering from trauma, massive blood loss, sepsis, or dangerous drops in body temperature. The Belmont Infuser is faster, safer, and gives our care teams back precious seconds — the kind of seconds that mean the difference between life and death.

Right now, our Emergency Department and ICU share one older model. It works — but it's slower and takes more hands when time is running out.

Having a second machine means both teams can act instantly when every heartbeat matters.

The page break.

That's why I'm reaching out to you, [salutation]. Because you can help our caregivers save lives faster by helping us purchase two new Belmont Rapid Infusion machines — one for the Emergency Department and one for the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

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Right now, our Emergency Department and ICU share one older model. It works — but it's slower and takes more hands when time is running out.

Having a second machine means both teams can act instantly when every heartbeat matters. It's about readiness — being prepared for the moment we hope never comes, but always does.

Like so many families in our community, mine has experienced the care and kindness of our Emergency team firsthand.

My mother is 93, and after a recent fall, she needed stitches and scans and careful monitoring. I watched with enormous gratitude as our Emergency team cared for her in the middle of the night with skill, patience, and warmth.

That's what Dartmouth General is known for. It's not just the quality of care — it's the heart

PLEASE TURN
OVER...

LETTER

Personalization in the letter
Name & variable text based on segment

Ask formula:

Name, will you consider XYZ. Use enclosed form to return gift that matches the reply ask array.

Signature: real, blue ink

PS: handwritten font, CTA

The first thing
someone reads.

Your generosity helps us go from good to great, turning excellent care into extraordinary moments of healing. You help make sure our caregivers have what they need when every heartbeat, every breath, and every second matters.

And you'll be there — in that moment when the machine hums to life, the blood begins to warm, and a life is pulled back from the edge.

That's the power of your generosity.

When you give, you're not just supporting new equipment — you're standing beside every doctor, nurse, and paramedic who refuses to give up when a life is on the line.

You're helping them care for people like my mother — and like yours.

[Salutation], will you consider making a [special one-time gift] today to help us bring these two new Belmont Rapid Infusion machines to Dartmouth General? You can use the enclosed form to send a gift of [SAMT1], [SAMT2], or [SAMT3] today.

Your gift will help bring warmth, speed, and life-saving care to our community when every second counts.

You'll be the reason our team can act faster.

You'll be part of the moment a life begins again.



With heartfelt thanks,

Steve Harding

Stephen Harding
Chief Executive Officer, Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation

P.S. WHEN EVERY SECOND COUNTS, THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT CAN MEAN EVERYTHING. YOUR GIFT TODAY WILL HELP BRING TWO NEW BELMONT RAPID INFUSION MACHINES TO DARTMOUTH GENERAL — AND HELP OUR TEAMS SAVE LIVES FASTER, RIGHT HERE AT HOME.

REPLY DEVICE

Donor's information (including your mail code)

White space - remember your audience

Decision Science

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ will you do this? | ☐ but this really matters. |
| ☐ or this? | ☐ do you care about this? |
| ☐ but this too? | ☐ can we talk more? |
| ☐ dont forget about this. | ☐ oh this too!!! |
| ☐ maybe this too? | ☒ NONE |

the reporting
MUST

SPECIAL REPLY FORM FOR:

[ADDRESSEE]

[address line 1]

[address line 2]

[city], [province] [postal code]

(Code)



Yes, Stephen! I'll help make sure a new Belmont Rapid Infuser is ready when the next emergency strikes with a gift of:

☐ \$[AMT1]

☐ \$[AMT2]

☐ \$[AMT3]

☒ Surprise us: \$ 100,000

☐ CALL ME - I'D LIKE TO DO MORE TO HELP!

☐ I've enclosed my cheque, payable to Dartmouth General Hospital Foundation.

☒ I prefer to donate by credit card:

Card Number 1234 5678 1234 5678

Expiry 11/28 CVV/CSC 123

Name on Credit Card Mackenzie Darbyshire

Signature M. Darbyshire

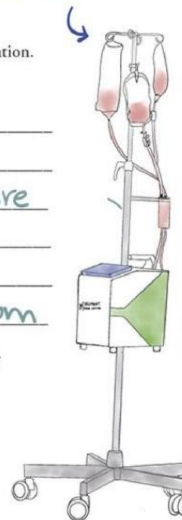
Telephone 902 293 6496

Email mackenzie@kittiwakeco.com

Or give Online at dghfoundation.ca/RapidInfuser
or by calling (902) 460-4149

THANK YOU!

FLIP OVER TO MAKE YOUR GIFT MONTHLY — AND SHARE THE GIFT OF LIFE-SAVING CARE BEYOND THE HOLIDAYS.



(902) 460-4149 | dghfoundation.ca
325 Pleasant Street, Room 1361 Dartmouth, NS B2Y 4K6
Charitable Registration No. 122455611 RR0001
KITTIWAKE

Stewardship

The donor experience doesn't end when the appeal drops or the timeline closes—it continues through timely, coordinated follow-up that reinforces trust, deepens connection, and sets the stage for the next response.

STEWARDSHIP

Strong stewardship turns one-time donors into lifelong partners

Timely Thank-You Letters

Acknowledge gifts within 48 hours with personalized, heartfelt gratitude

Campaign-Specific Acknowledgements

Reference the specific appeal donors responded to in your thank-you communications

Report Back on Impact

Show donors the concrete results their contributions achieved



Thank You

Questions? Comments?