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From the San Antonio Business Journal:

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GOOD WORKS SA: Big Give adds employee engagement initiative

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The Big Give, San Antonio's day of online donating to local nonprofits, is coming soon, and organizations that want to be included have just a few weeks to register.

For businesses, local philanthropist [Harvey Najim](#) said the Big Give — set for March 28 with the deadline for nonprofits to register as participating partners being Feb. 14 — is the easiest way for a company's employees to give to causes they care about.

"As a business owner, I understand that employees want to give back to the community. ... They just don't always know how," Najim said. "Participating in Big Give makes it easy and fun for them."

With a few clicks and a bit of information, the Big Give's website will enable instantaneous online giving to a donor's favorite charities.

And organizers seek to make this year's Big Give, the event's sixth occurrence, even easier for businesses to promote. They recently launched the Big Give Employee Engagement Program designed to bolster participation by companies and help them connect their employee donors to causes that are meaningful and close to their hearts.

Last year, the Big Give, which is administered by The Nonprofit Council, raised more than \$5 million as it amped up its technology offerings and social media presence to appeal to millennials. This year, the Big Give Employee Engagement Program hopes to make inroads with employers and help them encourage more of their employees to sign on.



BIG GIVE

Local philanthropist Harvey Najim, left, and San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg are strong supporters of the Big Give initiative.

"We want to give employees of companies in San Antonio and surrounding counties the opportunity to participate in this communitywide online giving day," said Scott McAninch, CEO of The Nonprofit Council. "There will be over 500 nonprofits to explore on the Big Give website. ... And if there is one thing we want to let employers know, it's that Big Give is the most uncomplicated way for their employees to give to the causes they wish to support."

McAninch said it's also a terrific way for companies to team build by demonstrating corporate citizenship via participation in the Big Give Employee Giving Program.

"We provide a tool kit to make it fun," he said. "It also shows employees how much their company cares about the community and the collective impact they can make as a team."

Najim, founder of the Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation, continues to beat the drum for increased philanthropy in San Antonio with a rapid-fire delivery of statistics about need. He said San Antonio is adding nearly 55,000 people a year, with 26 percent of them needing social services.

"That's why I'm involved with Big Give. ... That's why I believe in it," he said. "I know our community has a big heart, and if we make it easier to give, they will."

As a seasoned fundraiser and well-known philanthropist, Najim said the new engagement program offers the most effortless way for employers to promote giving that he knows of.

"There is no cost to participate in this program and no payroll deductions," he said. "All you need to do is say yes."

It's not just the givers who are passionate about the Big Give, McAninch said, it's also the corporate partners. He points to DOCUmentation, a San Antonio document management and printer system seller, which jumped on board the Big Give in its earliest days.

"We're 100 percent committed to caring for our community. ... Service that serves is what we aim for," said Jordan Abshier at DOCUmentation. "The Big Give is the perfect opportunity for our employees to not just learn about all the different organizations that serve San Antonio, but also ways to give back, whether it be with their time, talent or treasure. We usually make a day out of it at DOCUmentation in hopes of getting our employees excited to give back."

Chris Carmona, a partner at local accounting firm Schriver | Carmona, agrees.

"I have instilled the passion of giving back into the corporate culture of my firm," Carmona said. "This is why we have supported Big Give since its first year and believe the employee engagement program is an exciting addition."

Last year, 50 percent of donations made through the Big Give came from first-time givers, Najim said with intensity in his eyes.

"There's a place for everyone here. ... Not only will Big Give allow you the chance to support causes you believe in, we all get to come together on this one day to promote all the good work we're doing as a community," he said. "It's time for all of us to step up."

GETTING INVOLVED

Big Give San Antonio

What: A day of online giving administered by The Nonprofit Council

When: March 28; the deadline to register as a participating nonprofit partner is Feb. 14

For Information: Go to www.thebiggivesa.org; frequently asked questions are at www.thebiggivesa.org/info/faq

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