

# Give Locally Grows Through Gaming, Social Media

Stacy A. Anderson, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Andrew "Bo" Young III, son of former U.N. Ambassador Andrew Young, is carving out his own path for social change courtesy of a mobile app designed to help real families through the purchase of virtual goods.

Young and California lawyer Brad Newman have launched "Giv Galaxy," an iPhone game in which players buy virtual products to help feed villagers and provide them with medicine. A portion of the proceeds from those virtual purchases goes to help families in need.

The player assumes the role of Nuxx, a creature from Planet Zarru who's trying to gain his badge in Planetary Helping. For every \$1 spent on goods in the game— it boasts "Play for Fun, Give for Good!" — 25 cents goes to a pre-screened person in need of food, shelter or health care.

The free app, which launched May 17 on iTunes, has been downloaded in more than 50 countries, Newman said.

The mobile game release coincides with the third anniversary of Give Locally, a social media website run by Newman and Young that pairs donors with recipients who need help in making ends meet. Donors can register an account, search short bios and pictures to select beneficiaries, and give any dollar amount to their desired cause. They also can track their donations.

Give Locally, which has nearly 30,000 registered users and more than 34,000 Facebook fans, will launch a version of "Giv Galaxy" for Android devices this summer. So far, purchases of in-game items on Giv Galaxy have generated several hundred dollars in revenue, Newman said.

"The whole time you're playing the game, you're continually reinforcing the notion that to 'win,' or get points, you need to help the environment around you," Newman said.

Young, the charity's CEO, said Give Locally also has assisted with unforeseen hardships, such as a high school student needing help with graduation fees.

"There are millions of Americans who are hard-working, who do get up every morning like we do and work 40 or 50 hours a week, sometimes more, and are, frankly, frugal in spending," Young said. "But based on their wage and the cost of

living in most major cities, they often fall short."

Give Locally launched in May 2010. The charity directly pays bills including rent, medical fees and school tuition, as well as providing in-kind gifts such as gift cards for groceries and gas.

While other websites have also tapped the Internet for donations, Give Locally purposely operates as a business instead of a 501(c)(3) public charity. As a technology company, Newman said, it can meet an unlimited amount of needs, while tax-exempt organizations only have one or two options on how to spend the money, and givers can't designate the recipient.

A staff of about 10 paid volunteers and contractors, which grows during peak season, operates the California-based charity. Give Locally uses 18 cents of each dollar to cover administrative costs, including office rent, salaries and credit-card processing fees.

Newman said that since Give Locally was launched, the needs have become more serious and immediate, crossing geographic, racial and gender lines. For example, he said, a popular category on the website is for single fathers.

"It was bad in 2010," he said. "It's worse now."

Newman chaired and founded Give Locally after he and his son encountered a homeless man on the street, and he wondered what could be a long-term and credible way to give back. The website now receives about 300 requests for help a week. That figure doubles during the holiday season that runs from October into the new year.

The online charity said for every 10,000 applicants that ask for help, about 300 get through the screening process. Since its launch, Give Locally has raised several hundred thousand dollars from about 2,500 donors.

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