



PPA CHARITIES TO CEASE OPERATIONS INDEFINITELY

July 25, 2018

After months of deliberations, the PPA Board of Directors has decided to indefinitely cease operations of PPA Charities, its 20-year-old charitable arm. The change is effective immediately, with the exception of the Dream Studio GiveAway which will continue through Imaging USA in January 2019. In announcing the decision on Friday, the board of directors cited concerns about the charity's high cost of fund-raising, coupled with a dramatically changing charitable-giving environment as the reasons for the decision. "We've had to make some difficult decisions in the past, but this is one of the toughest we have ever had to make during my tenure on the Board," said PPA President Stephen Thetford.

In its motion to close the charity, the board of directors explained that its dwindling success in recent years was not the fault of the charity's board of trustees, staff or volunteers. Rather, the PPA board felt that new technologies and increasing social media involvement in charitable giving simply made donating to a specific charity easier and more efficient. The ability of donors to give to their favorite charities, with a higher percentage of the donations going directly to their favorite charities, effectively marginalized the need for a "pass-through" charitable clearing house -- PPA Charity's operating model.

PPA Charities, which is not actually a charitable cause itself, was simply unable to generate a broad enough base of support. Charities of all types depend on higher volume donations, which allow them to increase efficiencies and decrease the cost of fundraising. That translates into a higher percentage of each dollar donated going to the selected charity.

By contrast, PPA Charity's cost of fundraising in recent years has been higher than generally accepted standards for charitable giving. Which means that a smaller percentage of each dollar donated actually made it to the selected charity. PPA board members simply felt that donors these days expect to make a bigger splash with their charitable dollars, and worried the high cost of fund-raising could become a smudge on the reputation of the charity and the association. "We knew that donors would not be satisfied with that," said Thetford. "It is just too easy to give directly to a cause these days."

PPA Charities was founded in 1998, as the brain-child of former PPA President Bert Behnke, who in later years became its executive director. Though they felt it was necessary to make the change, the PPA Board praised the efforts of Behnke, the PPA Charities board of trustees, and the hundreds of volunteers who worked tirelessly to support it over the years.