

Kennesaw State University

DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University

Master of Arts in Professional Writing
Capstones

Professional Writing

Fall 12-4-2021

COVID-19's Impact on Communication Practices in the Animal Welfare Nonprofit Sector

Tiffany M. Davis
dtiffany2015@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mapw_etd



Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Other Communication Commons](#), and the [Social Media Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Davis, Tiffany M., "COVID-19's Impact on Communication Practices in the Animal Welfare Nonprofit Sector" (2021). *Master of Arts in Professional Writing Capstones*. 104.
https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/mapw_etd/104

This Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Professional Writing at DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in Professional Writing Capstones by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

COVID-19's Impact on Communication Practices in the
Animal Welfare Nonprofit Sector

By Tiffany M. Davis

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Professional Writing in the Department of English in the College of
Humanities and Social Sciences of Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

2021

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methods and Methodology	5
Literature Review	10
Chapter 1: Discussion of Nonprofits and the Importance of Funding	19
Chapter 2: COVID 19 Pandemic and its Influence on Nonprofits and Donations	31
Chapter 3: Tools for Communication During COVID-19 Pandemic	58
Chapter 4: Autoethnography	76
Conclusion	87
Works Cited	91
Resume	97

Introduction

While I have long been an avid reader and writer, my writing skills began to be honed for a professional setting during my time as an undergraduate at Kennesaw State University. The written word has been a significant part of my life, and I have grown to appreciate how words can have a meaningful impact. This capstone connects my academic career in English and Writing Studies with my professional interest in the nonprofit sector.

As an English major, I learned how to conduct meaningful research, communicate with classmates, edit, be critiqued, and use the written word to create meaningful works for my writing portfolio. My drive to learn more about writing and communication practices in a professional environment spurred me to continue my education at Kennesaw State University by joining the Master of Arts in Professional Writing (MAPW) Program. It was in this program that I built upon the relationships that I had started to create in my time at the university as an undergraduate. I came into the program knowing that I wanted to develop my skills as a writer and as a professional even further. It was through the program that I truly found a professional path that I would not have thought of if not for the help and guidance of my professors.

I found my direction after taking a directed study course with Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton called Writing in the Nonprofit Sector during the Fall Semester of 2020. Dr. Smith-Sitton's teachings inspired me to pursue a career in the nonprofit sector.

The course helped me understand how the importance of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector, and I was able to see how I could play a role within a nonprofit organization by using my writing and communication skills. Specifically, I came to understand how my background in English and writing could translate into a job as a developmental writer for a nonprofit organization. Through Dr. Smith-Sitton's encouragement and tutelage, I was able to grow as a writer and a professional. I learned so much about the nonprofit sector, and it was through this class that I began to become invested in the nonprofit sector. I even developed my capstone thesis around animal welfare nonprofit organizations' writing and communication practices.

The need for this capstone came out of my studies at Kennesaw State University. I saw an opportunity to explore and research how COVID-19 has affected the writing and communication practices within the animal welfare nonprofit sector. The idea of my capstone first formed in the Directed Study course with Dr. Smith-Sitton, as I wanted to learn about the history, importance, and role that writing and communication played within the nonprofit sector. It was during this course that I developed a greater understanding of the role of writing, and I wanted to couple the teachings from the course with my love for animals. The animal welfare nonprofit sector is a subgroup of the larger nonprofit sector.

Personally, I have been involved with animal welfare nonprofit organizations for years. I have rescued animals from shelters and nonprofit groups, and I have been a volunteer for a local organization in Atlanta. With animal welfare being a topic and area near and dear to my heart, I felt like it was important to delve deep and understand the importance of writing and communication for these organizations, but also, I wanted to

create a platform or work that would enlighten others who want to pursue a similar path as mine.

The research for this project stemmed from the need to understand and learn about the importance of writing and communication practices in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. I have experience in writing through my education from Kennesaw State University and also as a professional who has interned in an animal welfare nonprofit organization and who is currently employed by another animal welfare nonprofit. Through my own experiences in the nonprofit sector, both in course study and in professional setting, I wanted to research about crucial role that both writing and communication practices play within the nonprofit sector. I have seen firsthand how pivotal writing is for nonprofit organizations and wanted to establish in this research why it is a necessity that nonprofit organizations' works be founded on clear and effective writing. Additionally, I wanted to learn how COVID-19 has impacted this portion of the nonprofit sector, since the pandemic occurred as I started my journey within the animal welfare nonprofit sector and the future repercussions that such an event would have for the sector as a whole.

Within this capstone, I explore the history and importance of writing and communication practices within the nonprofit sector, with a more focused lens on animal welfare nonprofit organizations and how they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of this research is focused on the written and virtual communication practices that shifted for animal welfare nonprofit organizations during the pandemic, and why it is important for nonprofits to be adaptable in their writing.

The research provided by this capstone will be valuable for many different audiences. Primarily, it will be valuable for individuals who are looking to learn more about the importance of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector. It will also be valuable for people work or want to work in the nonprofit sector who want to know the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofit organizations and how the nonprofit sector will continue to be affected by the pandemic. Specifically, nonprofit staff members can learn more about how to develop and shift their writing and communication practices to maintain funding and donor relationships by reading about the history of writing within the nonprofit sector and by analyzing the answers from nonprofit leaders in the interview portion of this capstone. Lastly, this research will be beneficial to students and professors in English and professional writing programs who wish to learn or teach about the importance of writing and communication practices within the nonprofit industry.

Methods and Methodology

For this capstone project, my primary objective was to answer the following questions: First, how has COVID-19 impacted animal welfare organizations, specifically fundraising, volunteers, and donations as well as outreach and communications? Second, how has writing historically been used in this nonprofit sector and writing tools and rhetorical practices were primarily employed before the COVID-19 pandemic? Third, how has writing and rhetorical practices changed for animal welfare organizations as a result of the pandemic? Fourth, how will writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector continue to adapt in the future? Fifth, what rhetorical strategies will continue to be implemented as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and what tools will be employed in the future to ensure continual support and donations for animal welfare nonprofit organizations? In order to answer these research questions for my capstone, I used multiple methods of research which included analysis of scholarly articles about writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector, review of articles created discussing the impact of COVID-19 on the nonprofit sector and subsequently the animal welfare nonprofit sector, interviews with leaders in the animal welfare nonprofit sector regarding the importance of writing and communication as well as the impact of COVID-19 on their organizations through and IRB-approved research study, an analysis of social media posts during COVID-19 from animal welfare nonprofit organizations, and research into the digital tools for writing and communication practices

employed by nonprofit organizations during the pandemic. It was essential for this project that I included textual and digital analysis into the background of writing and communication processes in the nonprofit sector and the impact of COVID-19 in order to answer my core research questions.

The methodology behind my research allowed me to analyze and explore the importance of writing and communication practices for animal welfare nonprofit organizations as well as the impact of the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, I reflected on my own experiences as a professional writer during my time as an intern and Director of Development within the animal welfare nonprofit sector. Through the autoethnographic portion of this capstone, I was able to reflect on the importance of my own writing and the pivotal role that writing and communication practices have in the nonprofit sector.

For my secondary research, I relied upon books, articles, journal articles, and social media posts focusing on discerning the importance of writing and communication practices within the nonprofit sector. I also conducted research to identify articles discussing the impact of COVID-19 on animal welfare nonprofit organizations as a whole. To further explore the changes in writing and communication practices, I conducted textual and digital analysis of social media posts from animal welfare nonprofit organizations posted after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of these social media posts showcased the impact of the COVID-19 on animal welfare nonprofit organization's writing and communication practices for their social media audience. I would have not been able to gather this information unless there was a limited textual and digital analysis of social media communication from the included nonprofit organizations' Instagram accounts. Sources expanded to include articles about the

increase in social media communication and virtual conferencing growth for organizations during the time of COVID-19. After the sources were identified and analyzed, I created a literature review to discuss key points from the research conducted.

After completing my secondary research and writing my literature review, I considered the historical significance of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector, growth of virtual tools, and analysis of social media communication practice changes. I then conducted the primary research for this project. Regarding my primary research, I started constructing a series of questions for my interviews with animal welfare nonprofit leaders during the summer semester of 2021. The questions that I created served as the primary research for my capstone thesis. In September, I submitted developed an IRB protocol and received approval for the study on October 6, 2021. I decided to have participants use their name and affiliated organization, rather than use pseudonyms, and interviews were recorded using Zoom. After receiving approval, I reached out to interview six individuals working in administrative roles at different animal welfare nonprofit organizations for interviews. Recruitment for the study occurred through email. Once the informed consent forms were executed, the Zoom interviews were then transcribed

During the interview process, the nonprofit leaders were asked several questions, which are listed in Chapter 2, about their experiences with writing and communication, as well as the impact of COVID-19 in their individual organizations, which built upon the core research questions mentioned previously. These research questions developed upon the secondary research conducted within this study, but allowed first-hand, unique answers from nonprofit leaders in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. I further analyzed

and discussed why writing and rhetorical practices are critical to a nonprofit organization's success. These interviews served as primary research as to how animal welfare nonprofit organizations' writing and communications practices have changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the interviews further enhanced the secondary research that I continued to compile during my summer and fall semesters by providing first-hand evidence of the changes resulting from the pandemic. Through my secondary and primary research, I was able to discern how and why writing and communications practices have changed because of COVID-19. I also analyzed why writing is crucial to the success of nonprofit organizations and why it is vital to be adaptable as a fundraising writer during times of crisis.

In the final chapter of this capstone, I chose to include an autoethnographic portion that reflected on my writing experiences while interning and working in the nonprofit sector. The autoethnography allowed me to reflect on the importance of writing and communication practices that I personally experienced, which added an essential facet of research to this project. By including this reflective portion, I was able to gain a deeper understanding and explore how writing and communication is used in the animal welfare nonprofit sector through my own experiences. My personal experience and subsequent reflection affirm the value of writing and communication practices and why they are both essential aspects of working in the nonprofit sector.

As a writer, it was important to understand the impact of writing and communication practices within the animal welfare nonprofit sector. Professionally, I wanted to learn how my skills learned through years of education and training would translate into my chosen profession. Personally, it was important for me to conduct this

research in order to validate all of the hard work that I have completed to get to where I am today. Writing and communication are two skills that have had a major impact on my life, and I wanted to create a project that strove to understand their impact on the animal welfare nonprofit sector.

Literature Review

Writing and communication practices serve as the keystones for successful fundraising in the nonprofit sector. One working in the nonprofit sector must be able to adapt to the world around them in order to fundraise and run a successful nonprofit organization effectively. With the spread of the COVID-19 virus in 2019, organizations in the nonprofit sector had to adapt and change their writing and communication practices to maintain donations and funding. Amir Pasic, Mary Jovanovich, and Michael Voss discuss in the article, “The Current and Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofits,” the pandemic “has increased the demand for nonprofits’ services while damaging their finances and staff.” This increase in demand and financial strain on the nonprofit sector has forced nonprofit organizations to reconsider how they will continue to receive funding and ask for donations. Through changing writing and communication practices, nonprofit organizations have adapted in this world of uncertainty to continue disseminating their missions.

Proper writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector are crucial for any organization to be successful, because “communications are seen as an essential part of [any] program and fundraising success” (Leroux Miller 42). Communication and networking are pillars of the nonprofit sector. Nonprofit organizations must actively be “cultivating prospective donors who indicate an interest in the cause” (Barbato and Furlich 23). An organization must understand the needs of their community, how to engage them, and ultimately “convince [donors] that making a gift to [a] good cause will

satisfy their needs” (23). Knowing how to effectively write to raise funds, communicate with donors or board members is vital to maintain a nonprofit organization's structure. While the importance of writing in the nonprofit sector is not a new idea, there is not much literature specifically about the kinds or types of writing needed in the nonprofit sector. Through my capstone project, I was to aggregate this knowledge and look at the importance of writing and communications practices and how they have evolved in the nonprofit sector due to the unforeseen circumstance of COVID-19 pandemic.

The need for this project stems from the epic changes to the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has caused unforeseen changes to the world as a whole, and nonprofit organizations have been seriously impacted due to COVID-19 and forced to deal “with waves of constant change and uncertainty” (WealthEngine). By analyzing the article, “How COVID-19 Is Changing the World: A Statistical Perspective, Volume II” published by UNICEF, one can see the massive impact of the virus with “over 25 million cases and nearly 850,000 attributed to the disease as of the end of August [2020].” The significance of the virus has greatly impacted the world as a whole, and those working in the nonprofit sector. As someone who would like to work in the nonprofit sector, I was curious as to how writing and communications practices changed as a result of the pandemic. I needed to understand what the writing practices were before and what the writing practices were during the pandemic. Specifically, I will be researching how funding and development practices have been altered due to the pandemic.

Before COVID-19, it was easier to ask for supporters for funding for animal welfare nonprofit organizations; due to the pandemic's economic impact, the amount of

funding received by animal welfare organizations has diminished because people cannot afford to give as much in donations. The article “Nonprofit Fundraising in the Age of Coronavirus” written by Alan Cantor and published in *Harvard Business Review* states, “the pandemic and economic collapse constitute an existential threat.” Cantor explains that there is much financial uncertainty due to COVID-19 and that nonprofit organizations will have to adapt in order to continue funding their organizations and suggests that individuals are looking for gestures of support; still, nonprofit organizations have to show support while also seeking funding from their community.

Effective writing and targeted communication practices are the core of nonprofit organizations. As Joseph Barbato and Danielle S. Furlich discuss in *Writing for a Good Cause: The Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and Other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*, “a fund-raising writer meets the needs presented to him. More often than not, he or she responds to demands” (49). This adaptation by the fundraising writer extends to the individual needs of their organization and must include changes that occur in social and political climates. The importance of writing, specifically writing effectively to entice donations and funds during critical times, is paramount to any nonprofit organization's success. One such change that caused nonprofit organizations to adapt was the Coronavirus pandemic that started in 2019.

As a result of COVID-19, nonprofit organizations have had to adapt their rhetorical strategies to continue to receive funding and donations from their volunteers, community, and board members. Kay Sprinkel Grace, a respected voice in the fundraising and nonprofit community, mentioned in an interview with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy that “to be successful right now, organizations need to show

flexibility, innovation, and acceptance to change” (Young). Sprinkel’s perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on fundraising discusses how the fundraising landscape has moved to virtual platforms due to the pandemic. She indicates that the industry itself has not changed, but rather the tools for fundraising have adapted.

One such tool for communication is virtual fundraising. Fundraising methods for nonprofit organizations have had to shift as a result of the pandemic. In Amy Worden’s article, “Fundraising from a Safe Distance,” she discusses that nonprofit organizations have “scrambled to save or reimagine their bread-and-butter fundraising events” and that there has been a “wave of new fundraising ideas set largely in the virtual world.” As Jenna Jameson analyzes in her article, “Pivot to Virtual Events Helps Nonprofits Sustain 2020 Fundraising Goals,” there has been a need for nonprofit organizations to pivot from in-person events and had “to find new online revenue streams to supplement projected revenue” that was lost when stay-at-home orders were issued because of COVID-19.

Additionally, social media has grown increasingly important for nonprofit organizations to continue communication and fundraising. Virtual platforms have become invaluable to the nonprofit sector due to the pandemic and shelter-in-place protocols over the past year. A nonprofit must also employ marketing strategies based on social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Social media is now an essential tool for nonprofit organizations to communicate. F. Duke Haddad notes in his article, “The Importance of Social Media to Nonprofits” that “nonprofits must use social media” and that “social media platforms allow organizations to tell their story,” which allows organizations to spread their mission and message to grow their supporters. As Nicole Fullerton discusses in her article, “Instagram vs. Reality: The Pandemic’s Impact on

Social Media and Mental Health,” there has been an increase in social media usage and engagement of “61 percent during the first wave of the pandemic” with that growth only increasing. As Levinson notes in his book, *Guerrilla Marketing for Nonprofits*, “messages spread fast on social media” and the nonprofit organizations need to use the tool of social media to their advantage in order to continue disseminating their mission and message. All these different platforms have their own affordances, which can help an organization reach different potential volunteer and donor base members.

Additionally, video conferencing has increased as a result of COVID-19.

Surattana Adipat discusses in her article, “Why Web-Conferencing Matters: Rescuing Education in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis” that “e-conferencing has seen a huge increase in conducting business globally and technologically mediated interactions are now the order of the day” due to COVID-19. The Penketh Group also wrote an article, “Why Video Conferencing Tech Is More Important than Ever” which further discussed how “video conferencing and media conference technology has become more essential than ever.” To further underscore the notion that videoconferencing has seen a tremendous amount of growth due to the pandemic, one can look at Brian Dean’s article, “Zoom User Stats: How Many People Use Zoom in 2021?” and Roger Dooley’s article, “How Zoom Conquered Video Conferencing” analyze the exponential growth of Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic and the repercussions that the virus had for nonprofit organization’s virtual communication practices. Similarly, other video conferencing platforms usage skyrocketed as a result of COVID-19. Stephanie Condon’s article, “Google Hangouts Meet’s Daily Usage Soars during COVID-19 Outbreak” showcases the platforms growth of 60 percent “with daily usage now 25X higher than it was in

January of 2020.” Likewise, Microsoft Teams saw usage growth during the past two years because of COVID-19. Tom Warren’s article, “Microsoft Teams usage jumps to 145 million daily active users,” discusses the twenty-six percent increase for the platform to 145 million users from “115 million daily active users in October 2020.” By looking at how animal welfare nonprofit organizations have changed their writing and communication practices on various social media platforms, I analyzed what changes occurred and why due to the changing social climate by looking at social media posts from various animal welfare nonprofit organizations.

Video conferencing has also aided nonprofit board members to comply with their bylaws. In the article, “Virtual Nonprofit Board and Member Meetings in the Time of COVID,” Jeremy T. Coffey states that “board and member meeting serve important functions”, which include fiduciary duties, discussion of nonprofit management and activities. Video conferencing has allowed nonprofit boards to “find a way to carry out their normal board activities” during abnormal times.

Social media and video conferencing have become key tools for any nonprofit organization to be successful. In addition, a nonprofit’s website must also act as a key piece of writing for any organization. As Leroux Miller discusses in his book, *Content Marketing for Nonprofits: A Communications Map for Engaging Your Community, Becoming a Favorite Cause, and Raising More Money*, websites are an essential communication channel for an organization and serve as the first impression of any given nonprofit (307). Writing plays a key part in creating an effective website for potential donors, along with good graphic design and layout. There needs to be a good design,

theme, and message on an organization's landing page to help entice people to not only donate, but volunteer and share the organization's mission statement with others.

As pointed out in the article "Do Mission Statements Matter for Nonprofit Performance," "passion for a cause is crucial; however, passion alone cannot build and sustain organizations" (Pandey et al. 389). Nonprofit organizations run on the goodwill of their volunteers and donor base. This volunteer and donation base is continually changing and fluctuating throughout any given year. It is a constant struggle to maintain donors and keep consistent volunteers. To constantly receive donations and funds, a nonprofit organization needs "to understand and apply good marketing to accomplish [their] goals" (Levinson 6). Understanding the needs of a community and effectively communicating how an organization will meet those needs is pivotal for a nonprofit organization to gather funds and support successfully. As Robert Lupton writes in *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)*, "trust is the foundation of all human relationships. Without trust marriages dissolve, business partnerships collapse, loyalty evaporates. Trust is the bedrock upon which civil society is built" (61). Building and continuously cultivating a nonprofit's donation base is achieved through proper communication and understanding a community's needs.

Effective writing and communication during such tumultuous times are vital for the nonprofit sector. COVID-19 has caused some shift in donor behavior as seen in Fidelity Charitable's article, "COVID-19 and Philanthropy: How Donor Behaviors Are Shifting Amid Pandemic." The article notes that "most donors plan to maintain- or even increase- the amount they donate to charity" but that donors are still concerned with COVID-19's impact on the nonprofit sector as a whole. In order for organizations to

continue running their operations, they must be willing to adapt to the reality of uncertain times by strengthening ties with their communities while simultaneously asking for funding in a gracious and understanding manner. Trust and relationship building are necessary components for any nonprofit organization. Herrington J. Bryce mentions in his article, “The Public’s Trust in Nonprofit Organizations: The Role of Relationship Marketing and Management,” that nonprofit organizations “need the public’s trust for legitimacy, for effectiveness, and for non-financial as well as financial support.” During a crisis like COVID-19 it was imperative for nonprofits to continue communicating with their supporters to ensure that there was still a sense of trust. Communication is crucial for nonprofit organizations. As Susan Ueber Raymond further explores the importance of communication between nonprofits and individuals indicated from Fidelity Charitable’s and Bryce’s articles in her book, *The Future of Philanthropy: Economics, Ethics, and Management*, “communication and networking are key to help move funds between individuals offering aid and those that are in need of aid.” Writing and communication serve as the backbone for the majority of a nonprofit organization’s activities and functions.

It is necessary to research and analyze why writing communications practices have changed and how organizations have been able to maintain and continue effective fundraising. During the course of this project, there were more articles discussing the impact of COVID-19 and writing within the nonprofit sector. The analysis of these documents provided evidence regarding the value of writing and communication within the nonprofit sector. The additional primary sources in this thesis help to fill in the gaps regarding the immediate impact of COVID-19 on animal welfare nonprofit organizations

and provided information that underscored the critical nature of writing during the pandemic. The research in this study will be valuable for other nonprofit organizations struggling to adapt during such uncertain times and will provide keen insight into the historical significance of writing and communication practices as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the animal welfare nonprofit sector.

Chapter 1: Discussion of Nonprofits and the Importance of Funding

There are more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States, with animal welfare being a subsection of the larger nonprofit sector (Candid Learning). There are approximately 43,000 animal-focused nonprofit organizations operating in the United States each year (Cause IQ). Many people support local nonprofits in their area but do not know how a nonprofit organization operates and generates funding to disseminate its mission. For the purpose of this research, it is essential to understand key aspects of a nonprofit organization that stems from effective communication, fundraising, and writing in order to understand the work that goes into running a successful animal welfare nonprofit organization, especially during times of struggle like the one presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

First, it is critical to understand what the nonprofit sector is. According to Walter Powell and Patricia Bromley, “nonprofit organizations operate without distributing profits to their stakeholders . . . the nondistribution constraint is centrally tied to the tax exemption given to the nonprofits, which comes from an obligation to respond to society’s needs at a particular time” (Powell 3-4). What this means is that nonprofits function with the aid of donors and prospective donors. The money to run a nonprofit organization is funded and raised through communications with donors. This communication can only be achieved through constant and focused communication practices.

Communication and writing play vital roles in the nonprofit sector. This communication to donors, board members, and volunteers is often designated to a specific part of a nonprofit organization's staff, the development office. Developmental staff at nonprofit organizations play a crucial role in keeping an organization running. To aid in the writing and communications needs of a nonprofit, "[a] development writer may be called on to write anything: an advertisement; a multimedia presentation; a video script" (Barbato and Furlich 46). There are multiple facets and outlets for writing in the nonprofit sector that need to be addressed by the organization's staff. One key aspect of that writing revolves around fundraising. A fundraising writer "provides the written tools for fundraising . . . [and] takes information and assembles it to do a job, whether in a proposal, a case statement, a brochure, a newsletter, or other piece of writing. The job is to sell the organization" (47). Thus, writing is critical for raising donations and keeping up communication between all parties involved in an organization.

Raising donations and enticing gifts from donors is not a one-time deal. To be a successful nonprofit, an organization must be focused and organized through its hierarchy. Meetings, interactions with donors, and any gifts need to be meticulously documented and filed to maintain an organized and viable communication system between staff, volunteers, and donors. It is critical for a nonprofit organization, no matter its mission, to build relationships with its audience and create a sense of trust, because all nonprofit organizations rely on outside fundraising in order to continue functioning. According to Herrington J. Bryce, nonprofit leaders "recognize the nonprofits need for the public's trust for legitimacy, for effectiveness, and for non-financial as well as financial support." This recognition of the need to build relationships and trust between a

nonprofit and its supporters is critical because without trust from the public to a nonprofit organization, the organization would not continue being successful (Bryce). Writing and communication are the building blocks of a nonprofit organization's relationship with the community it serves, and that communication is paramount to the success of gathering funding to continue fulfilling its mission.

How Do Nonprofits Entice Donations and Gifts?

Fundraising is not an end-all, be-all situation. Getting people to donate time, gifts, and money is an art and is also a constant battle. There is always a need for donations and gifts within a nonprofit organization with "individuals [being] the largest source of charitable donations for nonprofit charitable organization" (Fritz). Nonprofit organizations rely heavily on the goodwill of others to help them fulfill their mission statement and goals. However, there is much to understand about the depth and importance of fundraising.

Nonprofit organizations run on the goodwill of their volunteers and donor base. Unfortunately, this base is continually changing and fluctuating throughout any given year. Therefore, it is a constant struggle to maintain donors and keep consistent volunteers. According to David Patterson, "a nonprofit organization's mission statement should be its principal case for support - the main reason why anybody should consider donating to the organization." A clear, effective mission statement helps an organization maintain the needed level of gifts, donations, and time from its supporters.

Any organization's mission statement acts as the keystone or lynchpin that holds the structure and hierarchy of an organization together. It needs to be well-crafted, elicit emotion, and have a clear cause. The mission statement of a nonprofit organization is the

centerpiece of writing any organization revolves around. In *Engine of Impact: Essentials of Strategic Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector*, the authors discuss how an effective organization “needs a clear mission statement and focus on pursuing that mission” (William and Jonker 27). A mission statement is important to an organization because it is the core piece of writing that instructs all other decisions that a nonprofit will make.

To be successful, an organization must keep its mission statement close to its heart and make changes and decisions based on its mission statement. If the mission’s text is vague and unfocused, it will be harder for a nonprofit to encourage people to donate or volunteer. What a nonprofit needs to be successful is a mission statement that is “clear, concise, and active” in order to have an increased likelihood of attracting others who believe in their message” (Patterson).

For example, Furkids, is the largest no-kill shelter in Georgia—“no-kill” means that an organization is “saving the lives of 90% or more of the animals who enter an animal welfare organization’s doors” (Atlanta Humane Society). Furkids has a mission statement that reads, “The Furkids’s mission is to rescue homeless animals, provide them with the best medical care and nurturing environment while working to find them a forever home. Furkids heals the whole animal, physically and emotionally, restoring its health and its spirit” (Furkids). By examining this mission statement, one can see that Furkids is an organization centered around animal welfare. Their mission statement is concrete and tells their audience exactly what their organization stands for. Furkids backs up its mission statement by focusing on helping rescued and abandoned animals, and they have helped “more than 35,000 animals since its founding in 2002” (Furkids). With a clear mission-driven organization, it is possible to gain a massive number of volunteers

and donors for an organization. Still, it is important to keep in mind a mission statement must be carefully crafted through writing and then must be followed and disseminated through the communication channels to prospective donors and potential volunteers. Nothing is accidental in the writing practices of top nonprofit organizations.

In comparison to Furkids, the ASPCA or The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals's mission statement, "as stated by founder Henry Bergh in 1866, is 'to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States'" (ASPCA). Their mission statement has been the driving force for their nonprofit work since the mid-nineteenth century and has continued to be the keystone of the organization. Through the concentrated effort to maintain and uphold their mission, the ASPCA has assisted over 100,000 animals and has assisted many more with relocation, spay and neutering, and animals who have been poisoned (ASPCA).

While the two organizations have diverse mission statements, the core of both Furkids and the ASPCA is to help animals in need. These well-crafted mission statements have helped both organizations to stay focused and organized as they try to help their communities and the animals they serve. Mission statements serve as the foundational piece of writing for any nonprofit organization. This core piece of writing "describes [a] organization's fundamental, unique purpose. It communicates the value the nonprofit delivers and what group it serves, and how" (Raj). Both ASPCA and Furkids's mission statements contain these elements of a clear and effective nonprofit mission statement. It is clear to their audiences that they both are trying to help and improve the lives of animals in their communities.

When comparing the two mission statements, the core element of helping animals is seen in both, but for Furkids they use language that is more heartfelt and with ASPCA their use of language is franker about their goals. Each mission statement reflects the organizations themselves. Furkids is an organization that is based in Atlanta and uses words like “nurturing,” “health,” and “spirit” to evoke an emotional response from their audience. In comparison, ASPCA is an organization that has locations all across the United States, and their mission statement is clearer cut and as they write “effective” in order to portray the image that their organization is effective in the work they are doing to improve the lives of animals.

Along with the mission statement, strategic marketing is needed to ensure that donations constantly come into an organization. Strategic marketing refers to marketing techniques “that an organization can leverage to provide value and a better service to its customers, thereby differentiating itself from its competition and its strengths. The primary goal of strategic marketing planning is to get creative with the marketing mix by laying a framework for fundamental change related to how a company works and engages with other industrial sectors” (London School of Business & Finance). Organizations “need to understand and apply good marketing to accomplish [their] goals” (Levinson 6). Without focusing on product, price, place, and promotion, an organization cannot truly engage with the community they are trying to help.

Levinson underscores the point that a nonprofit must “engage the community in an educational campaign program with clear purpose” (9). The reason for clear and concise marketing is pretty simple. Suppose a message or any part of the marketing campaign does not gel with the whole of the mission statement. In that case, there will be

a disconnect between the organization's mission and the people they are trying to get money, time, or other donations from, and like with the rest of the nonprofit organization, being organized is a critical aspect of running a successful nonprofit. There needs to be lists and guidelines for how a nonprofit should proceed in its marketing strategy.

As noted by Leroux Miller, marketing strategy and marketing organization are important. He further states the need for marketing banks, which provide materials for development staff to "follow through and to complete work in ways that are more compatible with your marketing strategy" (Leroux Miller 128). There is also the need for an editorial style sheet which "is a chart you fill out showing how you will use, format, and spell certain words" (130-31). Graphic design style guides must also be created so that development staff can have a clear indication of "how things should look both in print and online" (131). Having checklists and style guides are essential to having a successful marketing strategy as it "ensure[s] that everyone is in agreement about the goals for a specific communications project" (134). The writing that goes into these guidelines helps to not only organize the developmental staff writers but also ensures that an organization is sticking to their mission statement as they create media, posts, and other methods of writing to encourage others to donate.

Levinson also notes that, "marketing is not a campaign you do one a year to generate donors or clients; it is an ever-present part of your organization's daily routine," and people involved in the organization's actions are a constant representation of the nonprofit as a whole (23). This statement suggests everything an organization does is part of its marketing. A nonprofit organization needs to foster a relationship not just with its donors but also with its staff and volunteers. This relationship needs to encourage the

staff and volunteers to essentially eat, live, and breathe an organization's mission. Once a person has become involved with a nonprofit, it is vital to create a relationship with them that drives them to be constant representatives of their mission. According to Jennifer Devon, Senior Director at CCS Fundraising, "relationships play an essential role in the success of any organization" and that "trust is an integral element to any successful relationship." By forming these important relationships, a nonprofit grows in its ability to have more people know about their organization, mission, and goals by having supporters who believe in their nonprofit spread the word about them. Nonprofit organizations have many different tools at their disposal to build these invaluable relationships with their volunteers, board members, and donors.

What are the Different Writing and Communication Tools Employed by Nonprofit Organizations?

With the dawn of the digital age, nonprofits are able to reach a broader audience of prospective donors and volunteers than ever before. One of the most common ways of communicating with staff, donors, and volunteers is through email. Email is an important communication tool for nonprofits (Leroux Miller 59). It is a means of communicating with board members, donors, or potential donors. The writing in an email must be persuasive, truthful, and inspiring. Emails are used to thank donors and board members. They are also used to grow organizations through effective language. Technology has allowed nonprofit organizations to scale and keep interested parties invested.

While email is an effective and cost-efficient way of communicating to donors and staff members of any nonprofit organization, other social networks need to be utilized. A nonprofit must craft a website that serves as a face for its organization. As

Leroux Miller discusses in his book, *Content Marketing for Nonprofits: A Communications Map for Engaging Your Community, Becoming a Favorite Cause, and Raising More Money*, websites are the most important communication channel for an organization and serve as “the first impression someone gets from your organizations. With online donations increasing every year, that first impression needs to be a good one, or you could be losing potential support” (307). Writing plays a crucial part in creating an effective website for potential donors, along with good graphic design and layout. There needs to be a good design, theme, and message on an organization’s landing page to help entice people to not only donate but also volunteer and share the organization’s mission statement with others.

Imagine going to a cluttered website. The website has too many blocks of text or is not cohesive with the nonprofit organization’s mission. It would be unlikely that one would donate one’s time or money to such an organization. Having a cohesive image and mission statement is vital to reaching any level of success in the nonprofit sector. People do not want to waste their time, money, or energy on an organization that does not go through the effort of creating a welcoming, informative, and pleasing website. As Leroux Miller further notes “your website needs to contain information about your organization, what it does, and where it does it. Your website and its content also need to be designed for its visitor” and these components need to be carefully thought out and well-crafted in order for people to want to donate (307).

The importance of writing extends from the landing page of a nonprofit’s website. To use social platforms to their fullest, a nonprofit should also use blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media sites. All these different platforms have

their own affordances, which can help an organization reach different members of their potential volunteer and donor base. As one learns more about the nonprofit sector and its communication practices, the importance of understanding the language and affordances of these individual platforms becomes more apparent. One should not merely copy and paste one message on a particular social media site and then put the identical version on another social network. Instead, a developmental writer or staff member for a nonprofit should remix or revise the content to fit with the different social platforms.

According to Michelle Cyca, who works for the popular social media scheduling platform, Hootsuite, “caption length, image formatting, and vocabulary differ by platform,” so it is important for a writer to be able to take their content and alter it for the purpose of each different virtual platform” (Cyca). Once the original content is created, a nonprofit should “make it do at least double or triple duty, if not more” (Leroux Miller 203). This remixing of the original content across the different platforms helps to increase the amount of content that an organization can produce. The slightly altered posts can help generate more sharing and engagement since they have been altered to fit the different platforms’ algorithms and styles. Word choice, sentence structure, and care need to be put into any social networking platform. It is important that it is not one-size fits all mentality when it comes to posting on social media.

In addition to the importance of writing, there needs to be proper engagement with the nonprofit’s audience. Social media is not the only viable method of communicating with donors, volunteers, and staff. While it is a powerful tool, it must also be coupled with newsletters and other physically printed words of writing. Print newsletters are still popular with the nonprofit audience because they are “usually easier

to read and look better . . . [and] have a higher deliverability rate” than virtual communications (323). Nonprofit organizations need to combine a ratio of print and virtual communications to successfully fundraise.

Direct mailing is another piece of writing that is important for any nonprofit. As Jeremy Beer writes, “you find donors through acquisition or prospect mail. . . you keep and cultivate them via house-file mail” (83). There is no substitute for a hardcopy mailer toward potential donors or current donors. Approximately eighty percent “of nonprofit gifts come via mailbox” (83). This large section of donations is huge for a nonprofit to continue carrying out its mission and ideals. While direct mail is a long-term investment, it is a vital way of connecting with potential donors to help the nonprofit organization’s community. The writing that goes into prospective mail appeals to a person’s need to support a cause. It must be eloquent but concentrate on the issue at hand. Beer explains, “Direct-mailing prospecting is the most cost-effective way to systematically acquire new donors over time” (85). This type of prospecting, coupled with social media networking and marketing, helps to ensure that there is a constant influx of donations for a nonprofit organization. The messages across the platforms may be slightly altered to fit the type of media they are using, and this type of remixing falls on a development staff writer to carry out.

Reflecting on Writing in the Nonprofit Sector

Writing is the foundation of any nonprofit organization. Mission statements, emails, thank-you letters, marketing, meeting minutes, white papers, and other pieces of writing have to be clear and concise. They all must work together to create a united front for an organization, and it is no simple matter to just write well. An organization must

write well and stay true to their mission and be focused on the community they serve.

There are many different pieces of writing that a nonprofit organization can create, but all of writing must be effective and stay true to an organization's mission and goals.

Writing effectively is not as easy as stringing together a few words and posting an ask for a donation on a webpage or social media site. There needs to be care in the composition of any message, whether through email, social media, on a website, or any other method of communication. Relationships between a nonprofit organization and its audience need to be built and maintained and writing and communication are the tools for success. A simple, well-crafted message can turn the tides of a campaign and even change a person's life. Understanding the power in the written word and the empathy that can be created through a message is paramount to maintaining success in the nonprofit sector.

Chapter 2: COVID-19 Pandemic and its Influences on Nonprofits and Donations

It is no small statement to say that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world as a whole “with over 25 million cases and nearly 850,000 attributed to the disease as of the end of August [2020]” (UNICEF). The fear of infection, illness, and death due to the virus has caused changes in all aspects of life. COVID-19 has also impacted the nonprofit sector as well. The importance of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector has been previously mentioned, and during the pandemic, these writing and communication practices have only become more important.

Traditionally, a person’s work takes place in a face-to-face environment. However, with shutdowns, restrictions, and safety concerns, many people have had to adjust to working from home. Even with the introduction of the different vaccines for COVID-19, it has been a slow migration back to offices, stores, businesses, and schools. In the article, “In-Person Workers Are Slow to Return to Jobs, Data Shows,” by Tim Henderson, the author discusses that even as the economy and world is reopening after pandemic shutdowns “many are reluctant to return to the workplace.” There is a sense of uncertainty about employee benefits, and as Henderson points out people are facing “hurdles such as childcare uncertainty as schools reopen and the delta variant continues to frustrate expectations” (Henderson). The threat of a mutation in the COVID-19 strain continues to instill fear and public safety regulations that were unseen in the United States of America prior to the virus.

So why does all this matter? Aside from the obvious health concerns. For the purposes of this thesis, the pandemic has caused a need for communication to shift and change within nonprofit organizations. Donor and volunteer behavior giving was impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Fidelity Charitable's article, "COVID-19 and Philanthropy: How Donor Behaviors are Shifting Amid Pandemic", they conducted a survey that indicates that there is hope for nonprofit organizations during these tumultuous times. The article indicates that "Younger generations plan to step up their donations in greater numbers, 46 percent of Millennials say they will give more in response to the pandemic, compared to 14 percent of Baby Boomers and 25 percent of Gen X. Of those who say they will decrease their donations to charity, concern over recession and the economy in general was the top trigger." While it is good to see that through this survey that was conducted there is a likelihood of increased giving, the volunteer base for nonprofits has dropped significantly with "47 percent of recent volunteers believ[ing] the amount of time they volunteer will decrease or stop entirely because of the pandemic" (Fidelity Charitable). Donors and volunteers make up a huge portion for any nonprofit organization. While it is encouraging to see statistics that funding will continue, it is also worrying to see volunteer numbers dropping so drastically.

In the height of the pandemic and nationwide shutdowns, one of the most common forms of communication: face-to-face interaction, was limited or done away with completely for a time. As mentioned above there is some fear still lingering from the pandemic shutdowns that has continued to have nonprofit's work and fundraise from home. In the place of face-to-face communication, there was a rise of technological tools

that made it possible for businesses and organizations, including nonprofit organizations, to continue functioning. For example, videoconferencing “has seen a huge increase in conducting business globally and technologically mediated interactions are now the order of the day—the new normal” (Adipat). The world has had to adapt, and with it the animal welfare nonprofit sector has had to adapt their writing and communication practices to maintain their organizations. Through the course of interviewing leaders in the animal welfare nonprofit sector, several of the participants spoke about the importance of writing and communication practices within their organizations and how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their organizations.

The article “The Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofits and the Outlook for 2021” states that “throughout forced closures, months of remote work, and inconsistent reopening plans, nonprofits have constantly adjusted by implementing strategies like virtual nonprofit fundraising to stay afloat. All nonprofit organizations rely heavily on fundraising, especially through charity events, for operation. As the pandemic began to spread, many organizations had to adjust to remote work and face the harsh reality of event cancellation” (WealthEngine). Nonprofit organizations had to adjust to the changing climate and be flexible in order to continue disseminating their missions. The article, “Fundraising from a Safe Distance,” further discussed that “like nonprofits everywhere, shelters and rescue groups scrambled to save or reimagine their bread-and-butter fundraising events: the galas, the fun runs and the meet-and-greets that help keep their programs going” (Worden). COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the animal welfare nonprofit sector, and through the interviews with nonprofit leaders, much was revealed about how COVID-19 impacted their organizations.

Methods and Methodology for Interviews

In order to gain first-hand knowledge about the impact of COVID-19 on animal welfare nonprofit organizations, I conducted an IRB-approved research study. I obtained IRB approval for a research study that included interviews with individuals who hold leadership roles in animal welfare nonprofit organizations. For the study, I conducted six interviews with individuals currently working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. These interviews served as primary research on the importance of writing and communication practices for animal welfare nonprofit organizations as well as the impact of the Coronavirus on such communication practices. The interview questions listed below built upon the main research questions for this study.

Interview Questions:

- What is your involvement with the animal welfare nonprofit sector?
- What positions have you held in your organization and other nonprofit organizations?
- Please provide a brief overview of your responsibilities.
- What is the importance of communication and writing for you and the organization that you work with/for?
- In your role, what types of writing deliverables do you create?
- On an average day, what percent of your time do you spend writing?
- What kind of training, background, or formal education in writing or communication practices do you have?
- What role does writing play within your organization?

- How does writing affect your communication with volunteers, donors, and board members?
- How important is writing in regards to fundraising for your organization?
- How has COVID-19 impacted your organization?
- How has COVID-19 impacted the writing and communication practices of your organization?
- Specifically, how has communication regarding fundraising, volunteers, and donations as well as outreach and communications changed?
- Have you had to change how you communicate when asking for fundraising and donations due to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- Did you notice a change in your audience as a result of your communication practices during the pandemic?
- What has been the most effective change you or your organization has made regarding your writing and communication practices?
- How do you think the writing and communication practices will continue to change for your organization in the future?

Table 1 below summarizes information about each interviewee. As previously mentioned, the participants in the interview gave written consent to have their name and affiliated nonprofit organization mentioned within this IRB- approved study.

Table 1- List of Participants in IRB-Approved Study

Name	Job Title	Organization
Caroline Hunter	Executive Director	Fix Georgia Pets
Tracy Dean	Board Chair	Fix Georgia Pets/ Georgia Pet Foundation
Catherine Lynch	Senior Specialist of Special Projects	Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)
Samantha Shelton	CEO/ Founder	Furkids
Patricia Montgomery	CEO	Paws Humane Society
Lily Amato	Associate Director of Community Outreach	Atlanta Humane Society

Sources: Personal Interviews with Caroline Hunter, Tracy Dean, Catherine Lynch, Samantha Shelton, Patricia Montgomery, and Lily Amato

The Importance and Role of Writing and Communication in the Nonprofit Sector

The interviews with these six nonprofit administrators provided much data regarding the importance of writing and communication practices. All six participants expressed how vital writing and communication practices were for their organizations. All interviews included statements about how effective writing and communication practices were essential to continuing the success of their organizations and continuing to grow their organizations in the future.

When asked questions such as “What is the importance of the importance of communication and writing for you and the organization that you work for?” and “What role does writing play within your organization?” all six participants explained how critical writing was for their individual organizations. All participants mentioned several methods in which writing played a significant role within their organizations, including emails, thank-you letters, board member communication, communication with

volunteers, grant writing, social media, relationship building, and communication of their mission and goals. One participant, Montgomery, stated that “words mean things. From grant writing to the way you write an email, to the way you speak to somebody . . . communication is vital to everything that we are doing.” The sentiment that effective writing and communication practices were shared between all participants, underscores the value of writing in order to continue to develop relationships between nonprofit organizations and the community they serve. Writing is the building block of any nonprofit organization, and during the interview process with the participants, it was made apparent how vital writing was for each organization.

To learn more about the role that writing plays within the animal welfare nonprofit sector, participants were asked the question, “On an average day, what percent of your time do you spend writing?” the participants gave varied responses. Two participants noted that on an average day they spend about 80% of their time actively writing or brainstorming ideas for written projects for their organization. Two other participants noted that they spend approximately 50% of their day actively writing. The last two participants did not give an exact percentage of time that they spent writing. However, Montgomery stated that there is not enough time in the day for all of the writing that she needs to accomplish. She further mentioned that she often uses the weekends to write and focus on writing (Montgomery). Another participant, Dean, similarly mentioned in her interview that she spends a significant amount of her day writing, with times of intensive writing periods depending on the time of the year and the projects that are going on for the two organizations of which she serves in the position of Board Chair. By analyzing the answers to the previously mentioned question, it is made

apparent that writing takes up a significant amount of time for individuals working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. One participant even commented that when she was not actively writing, she would spend much of her time thinking about writing projects for her organization (Lynch).

Understanding the Importance of Effective Writing

To understand how the participants in the study learned how to write effectively within their organizations, they were posed with the question: “What kind of training, background, or formal education in writing communication practices do you have?” Four out of the six participants interviewed had no formal education or background in writing and communication practices. Instead, they learned how to write and communicate within the animal welfare nonprofit sector through their experience working with their organization or another nonprofit organization. Dean mentioned in her interview that while she did not have a degree in writing, she has taken courses from Sarah Lawrence College to improve her writing skills in order to be a more effective leader in the nonprofit sector. Out of the six participants there was the only individual within this study that has a degree focused on writing or communications: Montgomery has a degree in communications from the University of Alabama. While not all participants in the study had formal communication training, all six individuals have honed their writing and communication practices through working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector and serving as leaders within their organizations.

Shelton, Founder and CEO of Furkids, discussed that while she did not have a formal background in writing, her experience before founding Furkids helped develop her writing and communication skills. Shelton worked at Turner Broadcasting for many

years, under two different presidents, where she was responsible for writing their communications to the public. She also worked for a now-retired chairman of Equifax for five years. While her experience in writing was not learned through formal education, she grew as a writer and developed her writing skills through her corporate jobs before founding Furkids. Shelton further stated that “you are either a good communicator or you are not. You can be taught a few things, but I think that it just comes naturally in the way that you communicate with others and want them to feel a part of what you are doing and wanting [others] to understand that what you are trying to communicate is important.” This notion of natural communication abilities is evident by looking at the number of participants in this study who have risen to leadership positions within their organizations without formal writing or communication education.

Being able to trust and believe in their mission and learn how to formulate their individual passions for animals has led many of the participants into their current roles. After conducting the interviews with the participants, it was clear that many of the participants learned how to write effectively for their intended audiences through experience on the job. For nonprofit organizations it was important that staff hired learn the importance of writing and effective communication for their organizations. While not all participants had a formal background in writing going into their positions, the sentiment that writing and communication was still crucial when working in the nonprofit sector.

The ability to effectively write and communicate were two key components for me personally finding a job in the nonprofit sector. My education and background in writing and English gave me a distinct advantage when applying for internships and jobs

in the nonprofit sector. I had an easier time obtaining a job in my chosen field because of my professional writing education that made me an outstanding candidate for working in the sector, as I came into my job with a solid background regarding the writing and communication practices needed to thrive in a nonprofit organization. While most of the participants in the study did not have initial writing or communication backgrounds, the sentiment of how valuable writing and communication was shared by all participants. Lynch underscores the importance of writing by saying that “it plays a major role for communication, both internally and externally. It plays a role in every facet we do as an organization. Most of our communication is written in some form or another.” Therefore, one must still learn to hone their writing and communication skills because they are important tools and skills needed to be successful in the nonprofit sector.

COVID-19’s Impact on Animal Welfare Nonprofit Organizations

Throughout the interview process, all participants provided information about the impact of COVID-19 on the animal welfare nonprofit sector. The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the nonprofit sector as a whole, including influencing how organizations communicate with donors, volunteers, and board members. As Amato stated, writing “was the one essential thing because there was less in-person communication,” and her sentiment reflected what the other participants experienced during the pandemic. Organizations had to be flexible during such tumultuous times in order to maintain fundraising efforts and continue their missions.

During the interview process, all of the nonprofit leaders interviewed noted that COVID-19 impacted their organizations. Additionally, all participants stated that COVID-19 affected their writing and communication practices, specifically that their

communication practices had to be increased in order to maintain contact and funding from supporters. Organizations had to be even more consistent and frequent with their methods of communication with their intended audiences. As Montgomery stated in her interview, “we ramped up the communication during the time” of the pandemic and that PAWS Humane increased their “communications [from] last year for our appeals and newsletters.” The additional communication practices and writing were reflected by the other participants responses as all of the nonprofit leaders found that writing served as the essential method of communicating with donors during this time of uncertainty.

The Need to Pivot and Be Flexible

Interestingly, during the interview processes the respondents frequently used the terms “flexible” and “pivot” when discussing the changes in communication practices throughout the interviews. Table 2 below displays the frequency of which these terms were used when participants were asked about COVID-19’s impact on their organizations.

Table 2- Frequency of Common Terms Used in Interviews with Animal Welfare Nonprofit Leaders

Term Used	Number of Times Used
Flexible	7
Pivot	5

Sources: Personal interviews of Caroline Hunter, Tracy Dean, Catherine Lynch, Samantha Shelton, Patricia Montgomery, and Lily Amato

One participant, Amato, discussed how “they had to pivot suddenly” and that “within a day or so [we had to] completely change how our operations were working.” She continued to explain that once adoptions were deemed non-essential, a large portion of the operations of the Atlanta Humane Society had to stop. “We still had staff obviously

caring for the animals, and we tried to move as many of our animals into foster homes in preparation, so we didn't have a bunch of animals at the shelter," but even now, with the height of COVID-19 passed, the organization is still working in a limited capacity with many adoptions taking place through appointments instead of the previous walk-ins that were available before the pandemic (Amato). Like Amato, the other interview participants noted that they faced similar challenges with their day-to-day-operations during the nationwide shutdowns. All the nonprofit leaders participating in this study discussed how their normal operations were impacted, but they still had to find ways to carry out their mission and help the animals in their care.

Participants in the study also expressed similar challenges that COVID-19 presented to their organizations. The nonprofit leaders in the study were asked several questions about COVID-19's impact on their organization. When asked the overarching question such as, "How has COVID-19 impacted your organization?" all participants expressed that the virus greatly impacted their organizations. During the pandemic, many aspects of the animal welfare nonprofit sector were forced to close for some period of time since many of the operations within the organization were not deemed essential. Four of the six participants discussed how their organization or parts of their organization had to shut down due to the nationwide COVID-19 shutdowns and spay and neuter procedures being deemed non-essential.

One participant, Montgomery, advised that her organization remained open for most of the COVID-19 shutdowns; still, they were forced to close twice only due to COVID outbreaks within the shelter. Besides the two internal shutdowns, Paws Humane

Society remained open and active during the pandemic, while other organizations had to pivot strategies.

Another nonprofit leader, Shelton, discussed the financial impact that COVID-19 shutdowns had on Furkids. In addition to the adoption and fostering operations, Furkids also operates several thrift stores, which bring in approximately one third of Furkids's operating budget. Shelton explained, "we had to close our stores for six weeks, which cost us about \$186,000 in projected revenue. We also had to cancel our annual fundraising event, which would have brought in \$150,000 [to the organization]." Clearly, the financial impact of COVID-19 shutdowns directly impacted animal welfare organizations. Projects and events normally in operation had to be changed to virtual events, and plans had to shift. The idea of being flexible and the need to pivot to address the situation was shared by all participants.

Another example of how an animal welfare organization had to pivot due to the impact of the pandemic was seen in the interview with Lynch. Lynch, who has worked for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) for eleven years and is currently the Senior Specialist of Special Projects, discussed the impact of the pandemic in her interview. Before the pandemic that swept the world in 2019, Lynch was working on Spayathon for HSUS, a campaign in Puerto Rico to spay and neuter over 60,000 animals. Lynch said that the spay and neuter surgeries had to cease due to the pandemic since they were considered non-essential. So instead, HSUS was "issuing vouchers to several groups" in Puerto Rico so that when the surgeries were recommenced, people would have vouchers to receive the surgeries for their animals (Lynch).

While the majority of the participants expressed the impact of COVID-19 on their organizations, regarding statewide shutdowns, there were two participants whose organizations were not as directly affected by the shelter-in-place orders. Dean and Hunter explained that for their organizations the shutdowns were not as impactful as their organizations operate remotely unless they hold a fundraising event, so there was no forced shutdown for their organizations. Fix Georgia Pets and Georgia Pet Foundation are primarily organizations that fund spay and neuter programs and do not have adoption shelters or conduct animal surgeries themselves. The impact of the pandemic for those two organizations stemmed from having their traditionally in-person events move to a virtual platform.

Through the research conducted with the animal welfare nonprofit leaders, one can clearly see that COVID-19 had a considerable impact on everyday operations, fundraising, and communication practices for each participant's organization. After analyzing the participants' responses, it is clear that each organization had to make some changes to continue fulfilling their missions.

Fundraising During COVID-19

For animal welfare nonprofit organizations to continue disseminating their missions, there had to be a shift in fundraising tactics during the COVID-19 pandemic. The change in traditional fundraising was alarming for some organizations. WealthEngine's article that discusses that "as the pandemic continues to shape 2021's economy, nonprofits will see the need for flexibility remaining a key consideration in planning . . . remote work may be the new normal, and digital engagement will remain important for donor retention". Organizations had to adapt to the pandemic, and as such

their writing and communication practices had to change as well; it was a stressful situation.

However, out of the crisis of the pandemic came opportunity and creativity. Organizations had to develop new fundraising ideas that involved virtual fundraising to connect with supporters. When participants were posed with the questions, “Specifically, how has communication regarding fundraising, volunteers, and donations, as well as outreach and communications, changed?” and “Have you had to change how you communicate when fundraising and asking for donations due to the COVID-19 pandemic?” all participants in the study all expressed that they had to change their messaging and communication practices in order to continue raising funds for their organizations.

The nonprofit leaders discussed in their interviews the need to address the seriousness of COVID-19 and communicate that seriousness with their donors, board members, and volunteers. Four of the participants mentioned that they needed to create contingency plans for the future about COVID-19 and safety protocols that needed to be shared with their community and audience. As Amato stated, “you have to write out your contingency plan” because people want to know what “our plan is going to be as we move forward” and it was important that this plan was shared with staff, volunteers, and board members so that everyone was on the same page and that there was communication being put out in case of another emergency.

The sentiment of being empathetic and understanding of each organization’s audience and how their community was being affected by COVID was also mentioned by several participants. Montgomery stated, “it is important to me that I communicate

positivity and uplifting messages of motivation, understanding, and empathy.” The need to empathize through communication was also shared by Amato who mentioned that for Atlanta Humane Society they were “trying to make sure that the media that [they] were putting out there [was] something that can be related to by all sorts of people” during the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Communication with the community was critical. All six participants expressed the need to relay information about how the organization was going to address the health and safety concerns presented by the pandemic to their audience. Shelton mentioned the importance of creating a COVID-19 communication plan that also focused on the message: “First and foremost, we care about you. We hope you are safe and staying healthy. We are staying safe and healthy, and the animals are going to be healthy.” Participants discussed the importance of being in constant communication with their community during the height of the pandemic in order to assuage any fears and panic people had about the virus and the animal welfare nonprofit organizations. During the interviews, all participants expressed the need to be aware of others outside their own organization and the struggles that every person was experiencing due to COVID-19. Communication had to be constant and empathetic, but also organizations had to continue asking for help during such desperate and unpredictable times.

Regarding fundraising and communication, participants stressed the value of the written word and the impact effective writing and communication practices had on maintaining relationships and fundraising for their organizations. As one participant noted, it was important to branch out in their writing and communicating practices, especially during COVID-19, because they wanted to continue to grow as an

organization, and communication was the main method to continue that growth (Hunter). Hunter also stated, that with regard to how they were branching out with their communication practices, it was more focused on “providing information about us as an organization and what we had accomplished” even during the struggle caused by the pandemic.

As six participants previously mentioned that during COVID-19 shutdowns and panic, they all have ramped up their communication practices in order to continue disseminating their mission and goals while also keeping their audience’s fears about the pandemic in mind. Amato discussed that writing was the “one essential thing, because there was less in-person communication, so it was the way to keep everybody on the same page.” She also noted that during COVID-19, the writing and communication practices of Atlanta Humane Society towards potential donors changed the language to “making opportunities for people to support and participate or donate in ways at the level that they felt comfortable,” whether that was monetarily or through in-kind donations (Amato).

Along with the increased communications, writing during this time for these animal welfare nonprofit organizations had to be more transparent about their needs while empathizing with the changes in the world around them. Specifically, Montgomery noted that “transparency in the time of COVID is so important,” and that for her organization it was important to let their supporters “know what you need . . . and you can convey [that need] through writing.” In addition, being flexible and pivot plans were essential to continue carrying out their missions and maintaining fundraising and donations.

The pandemic caused a shift from in-person events to virtual fundraising for many nonprofit organizations. Fundraising events like year-end galas, or yearly campaigns had to be modified to fit into a virtual platform, whereas in previous years these types of events were face-to-face. In the interview with Hunter, she discussed how COVID-19 directly impacted their yearly fundraising gala. Hunter stated, “at first, it was very alarming because we knew our donor base specifically was really into the event.” Because of the COVID-19 restrictions, Fix Georgia Pets decided to have a non-gala instead. Hunter continued to explain that while it was a process to pivot from a face-to-face fundraising event to a virtual one, “it was very successful . . . and [the organization] had a good response.” When asked how the virtual event differed from the previous in-person events, Hunter mentioned that “it was interesting that some of the donors who really care and donate every year, even stepped up and gave more than they had in the past.” The other study participants also mentioned this information about donors stepping up in the pandemic. Several participants noted that there were fewer big one-time donations by fewer donors, but there were more smaller donations by a larger group of donors than in the past few years.

Other participants also noticed a shift in the donor trend during the pandemic. Lynch noted a similar trend was happening in donors for HSUS during the pandemic. Lynch stated, “donors were looking for alternative ways to support our work and animal welfare work in general during COVID. Because a lot of the programs that they had previously been funding had to stop, [donors] still wanted to make an impact, and the work of animal welfare and the needs of animal welfare did not stop just because the pandemic had stopped the world.” Lynch was not alone in this observation. During the

interview process, other participants all noticed that people were still willing to give and support their missions to help the animals and communities each organization serves. The fundraising did not stop because of COVID-19, but the messaging and the platforms did have to change as a result of the pandemic. For Furkids, they learned that “during COVID-19, that people wanted very specific messaging, they wanted to know exactly what our needs were and what we were doing [and] . . . it was really important that our writing be very succinct and clear” (Shelton).

While virtual fundraising is an excellent tool for supporting the mission of any nonprofit organization, it can have its drawbacks. One participant, Shelton, shifted from her usual in-person fundraiser to a virtual fundraiser. Furkids’s annual in-person event is similar to Fix Georgia Pets’s yearly gala as they both are events to generate funding for each organization. In comparison to Hunter, Shelton experienced a different outcome of success compared to Fix Georgia Pets. Shelton expressed in her interview that the shift to a virtual event was terrible for Furkids. Shelton stated, “I like to be in person with people. I like to see people face-to-face.” While virtual fundraising can be beneficial, the sudden shift from their usual in-person event directly impacted the number of donations gained for Furkids during their annual fundraiser. While writing and communication practices are important to any virtual or in-person event, there is a huge drawback to not having events in-person due to the COVID-19 safety protocols and shutdowns.

Participants noted the challenges of shifting their fundraising to a virtual platform with varying successes. Further questions and analysis from the interview process showcased the need to continue pivoting and shifting in communication practices, events, and programs as a result of the pandemic. The need to pivot, as previously mentioned,

was critical in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. During the COVID-19 pandemic, HSUS created called #SpayTogether. HSUS “raised around two million from funding partners . . . and distributed that money to organizations in all 50 states with the help of [their] state directors and other staff” (Lynch). #SpayTogether was an initiative by HSUS to help animal welfare organizations all across the United States to catch up with the backlog of spay and neuter surgeries that were placed on hold as a result of the pandemic. Lynch mentioned that “the program was born out of COVID-19 to address the spay and neuter backlog,” and HSUS was able to provide over 200 organizations the funding needed to continue spaying and neutering animals.

According to Lynch, writing played a huge part in helping to continue HSUS’s mission. She said, “we do so much work through writing,” and that because of COVID-19 everyone in her organization had to be moved to remote communication (Lynch). Lynch also stated, “there was a lot more email communication happening. In addition to that, HSUS does press releases, news releases, we have our blog, magazine, websites, and our email communications that go out to our members and supporters... writing is crucial to what we do . . . if we weren’t able to communicate in a clear, concise way through our writing, I don’t know how we would get our work done” (Lynch). By analyzing the responses to COVID-19’s impact on writing and communication from all participants, it was apparent that effective communication was necessary to maintain funding for each organization.

Writing is at the heart and soul of any nonprofit organization, and Lynch’s thoughts regarding the matter indicate that there would be a huge problem for her organization without effective writing and communication practices. Due to the

pandemic, Lynch noticed that the writing for HSUS changed address “an increased awareness of the impacts that COVID has had on everybody.” HSUS had to alter some of their messages to their audience by including how people everywhere are being impacted by the pandemic and addressing the virus’s serious nature while maintaining HSUS’s mission. During the height of the pandemic, Lynch stated that HSUS had to “emphasize our outreach because COVID had impacted animals and pets,” but it also “impacted people connected to animals . . . so by helping animals with funding”. A powerful sentiment that Lynch stated near the end of her interview was “we were also helping the people connected to those animals. If you are working with animals, and helping animals, you are also helping people.” There is a cyclical nature when working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. One does not just help the animals in their care but also helps the people connected to animals and the community that they serve.

During the interview process, it was clear that all participants were both emotionally and professionally tied to their organization's mission to help animals in their communities. The nonprofit leaders participating in this study all discussed how vital it was for their organization to continue helping their communities. Writing is a way to maintain the relationships they had built with their supporters. Writing is a way of creating dialogue and communicating between all members of the animal welfare nonprofit sector, but it is also how organizations create trust and build bonds with like-minded individuals in the communities they work in.

As previously discussed, fundraising is an integral part of the nonprofit sector. Organizations need to maintain and cultivate funds in order to continue operating and disseminating their mission to their communities. When asked questions such as, “How

does writing affect your communication with volunteers, donors, and board members?” and “How important is writing with regards to fundraising for your organization?” all six participants explained that writing was critical in order to continue fundraising and communicating with donors. Shelton commented that “it is really important that we are getting across our needs when communicating with donors. We need to make sure that they feel appreciated, that they know their gift is making an impact.” She further expanded on that the method by which Furkids continues to cultivate donors and volunteers is through effective communication and transparency (Shelton). For Furkids, Shelton discussed that it “is important to be very specific about what we need, our donors want to know what our needs are . . . it is important to be very specific.” All participants shared the idea of being specific, transparent, and concise when communicating. Participants expressed that there needs to be specific language and communication to draw in donors and that will resonate with their audience.

Storytelling and Fundraising

The idea of storytelling was also raised during the interview process with the participants through during the section of questions that asked about the importance of writing and communication relating to fundraising. It was clear through the interview processes that for organizations to be successful they needed to make their communication appealing to board members, donors, and volunteers. Dean noted that for communication to be appealing it had to be “very detailed, we had to tell the stories, we had to share the data,” and that all of these components had to be shared through the writing and communication practices of the organization. Like Dean, other participants mentioned the word “story” or “storytelling” within their interviews. The idea of being

able to craft a story regarding a specific animal or a story about helping the local community is vital to help build relationships with others. For example, Amato discussed the importance of telling a story that showcases the amazing work that her organization is doing. In addition to being able to tell a well-crafted story, Montgomery noted that one also has to “know the story of the audience that you are communicating with” because it is crucial to know who you are writing to in order to create something that will resonate with a specific community. For Furkids, Shelton discussed the need for specificity when crafting a story. For Furkids, they create individual stories for the animals that they save in order for the cat or dog to appeal to a larger audience and elicit a connection between the animal and the community that Furkids serves. Dean also added in her interview that it is important to craft a story that will resonate with her organizations’ audiences and that will capture the hearts of her audience.

Effective writing coupled with emotion is a truly powerful tool for the animal welfare nonprofit organization. Being able to build trust and relationships through thoughtful stories can help aid in funding and donor retention. People like to see where their funds and donations are going and see a direct correlation of their donations to the animals they intend to aid. By analyzing the responses from the six nonprofit leaders participating in this study, it is clear that COVID-19 significantly impacted how each organization had to communicate with their donors and continue fundraising. Virtual platforms and social media were extremely important tools for these organizations to fulfill their missions and improve their communities.

Looking Toward the Future

As animal welfare nonprofit organizations look toward the future, there is a question that must be asked: “where do we go from here?” What will animal welfare nonprofit organizations continue doing with their writing and communication practices as the world continues to face the effects of COVID-19 and into the future? During the last portion of the interview, participants were posed the question: “How do you think the writing and communication practices will continue to change for your organization in the future?” This question asked participants to reflect on how they have all had to change their language and communication practices during the pandemic and what they learned worked as a result of their changes in communication. The consensus from the participants was that there would be more direct communication with donors, board members, and volunteers. The idea of being more sensitive to COVID-19 and their audience was a shared sentiment between all of the participants in the study.

Lynch stated that “flexibility is key” and that HSUS will continue to be more aware of their audience’s needs in the future. Montgomery also expressed in her response that for Paws Humane Society, there will be an increased social media and communication plan as the organization moves forward. Other participants also expressed that going into the future, it will be critical for their organizations to maintain this new level of contact and communication with their audiences and showcase the importance of their missions while also being aware of their audience’s needs will be of top priority as these organizations go forward.

For Atlanta Humane Society, Amato expressed that in the future it will be important for organization to be even “more open and inclusive to different demographics, different people,” and that they will continue “targeting all sorts of folks”

with their message and mission. Shelton stated that for Furkids they “are focused heavily right now on communication going into the future” and that they “are working hard right now on how we’re going to communicate their messaging . . . in a way that people feel connected” to her organization. For Dean, her focus for the future of Fix Georgia Pets and Georgia Pet Foundation will be on continuing “to make the organization better and stronger” through their communication practices. Similarly, Hunter mentioned that regarding their writing and communication that “they will continue to be mission-based” with the importance of “getting our message and need out to our supporters and how we will meet that need.” By analyzing the responses from the participants in this study regarding how they will continue with their writing and communication practices in the future, one can discern that all nonprofit leaders in this study see the value and importance of continued communication, with many nonprofit leaders expressing the need to adapt their communication practices for this new world caused by COVID-19. The world is facing a new normal, and with it, animal welfare nonprofit organizations will need to continue to adapt to these uncertain surroundings.

Summation of Key Findings from the Interviews

Good writing, effective writing is essential to being a successful nonprofit organization. What is particularly noteworthy is that each of the six participants in the study commented on the vital nature of writing for their organizations. By analyzing the responses from the participants, one can be clearly seen how vital writing and communication practices are for the animal welfare nonprofit sector.

As Amato stated, “writing was essential to making sure that the information was being communicated” to their supporters, volunteers, and board members. To add to

Amato's sentiment about the value of writing and communication, Shelton said "communication is everything for us. It can make or break Furkids . . . the way that we communicate with our constituents will either inspire them to give to us so that we can carry out our mission to adopt our animals or to come alongside us to volunteer . . . effective communication is key; it's everything." In addition, relationships between an organization and its audience are built through mutual trust and understanding and the ability to effectively communicate how necessary an organization's mission is to one's audience.

COVID-19 has only made the importance of writing and communication practices more apparent to the nonprofit leaders that participated in this study, which is evident by the changes all organizations had to make in order to continue spreading their mission of saving and helping animals. The pandemic forced changes like work-from-home and increased communication through virtual platforms. While parts of the world are starting to shift back to face-to-face communication, it will be important for animal welfare organizations to be prepared and ready for any continuing shifts that might impact their funding. Communication and effective writing will continue to stand the test of time, even during times of uncertainty. Through the responses in the interviews with nonprofit leaders in the animal welfare nonprofit sector, it is made clear that their continued success and triumphs through the pandemic were largely in part to their ability to write and communicate effectively with their community.

As Dean noted, "writing is very important because not only are you communicating information at that moment, but it also serves as a reference point to go back to for clarification . . . writing has so many components, so many layers, it is

incredibly important.” Communication is vital. Relationships between a nonprofit organization and the people and community they serve must be constantly tended to through the written word. To summarize how all of the six participants felt about the value of writing and communication, Montgomery stated, “that the relationships you create [are] through your writing . . . it is very important . . . words mean things and they can make or break” an organization. Writing and communication will continue to be the cornerstone for nonprofit success.

Chapter 3: Tools for Communication During COVID-19 Pandemic

Welcome to the age of video calls, telecommunication, and social media. The rise of video conferencing and social media has grown exponentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media and virtual platforms have come to serve as method for people to stay in communication with others and there has been a “sixty-one percent [increase in social media engagement seen] during the first wave of the pandemic” (Fullerton). Stay-at-home orders across the United States greatly impacted the course of communication in the animal welfare nonprofit sector, causing organizations to pivot from usual face-to-face communication between staff, board members, volunteers, and donors to a virtual platform. Organizations have had to shift their communication to digital platforms such as Zoom and increase their communication about the impact of COVID-19 to social media platforms. As experienced in my own work in the animal welfare nonprofit sector, I have seen first-hand the necessity of virtual communication, whether that is through the Zoom or Google Meet meetings I attend to communicate with donors and other staff or through the social media posts that I create for my organization.

Video-Conferencing Calls

During the height of statewide lockdowns in the United States, Zoom and other video platform usage skyrocketed due to the COVID-19 shutdowns and mandated work-from-home orders from many organizations. It is unlikely that the use of these tools will diminish in the near future. The article “Why Video Conferencing Tech is More

Important than Ever” discusses that “video conferencing and media conference technology has become more essential than ever in connecting the modern workforce . . . [and that] communication tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams have become the unsung heroes of reconnecting employed when they’ve been forced to become physically dispersed” (Penketh Group). The basis of fundraising and communication to donors, volunteers, board members, and the local community have also changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it is important to understand why these communication practices have changed with regard to communication with supporters and donors, it is also critical to understand how these virtual communications are necessary during COVID19 in order for organizations to follow their bylaws, which include meetings with board members. Bylaws are an internal document that “serve[s] as corporation’s operating manual . . . [and] contain rules and procedures for holding meeting . . . electing directors, appointing officers, admitting members . . . and taking care of other essential corporate formalities” (Mancuso 7). Additionally, as Jeremy Coffey discusses in his article, “Virtual Nonprofit Board and Meetings in the Time of COVID,” board and member meetings serve important functions . . . [and] board members cannot put their fiduciary duties on hold because in-person meetings are more difficult. Directors have to find a way to carry out normal board activities in these abnormal times. Virtual meetings are one tool.” Communication cannot come to a halt because there are stay-at-home orders or because there is the fear of contracting COVID. Organizations have to continue functioning and carrying out their duties to their board, volunteers, staff, and supporters.

Individuals are communicating through social media, email, and virtual platforms at a higher rate than previously seen due to COVID. For example, Zoom, the online video-conferencing application, has seen a 400% increase and “generated \$882 million in Q4 FY of 2021” (Dean). In the article, “Zoom User States: How Many People Use Zoom in 2021,” Brian Dean analyzes the growing trend of using Zoom for video conferences during a time of work-from-home orders and shutdowns due to COVID-19. Dean writes that there has been “an increase of 65% from the 2 trillion meeting minutes logged in the previous quarter [and that] compared with the same quarter from the previous year, annual Zoom meeting minutes have increased 3300% in Q3 FY 2021.” This data and the astounding growth rate of the digital communication platform can be directly tied with more people working from home than ever before.

Roger Dooley analyzed in his article, “How Zoom Conquered Video Conferencing,” why Zoom became one of the most popular platforms to conduct meetings from personal reasons to work meetings and conferences. He stated that, “Zoom grew more rapidly than its much larger competitors because it made things easy for its users. Easy to set up, easy to use, easy to change one’s background . . . maximum simplicity, minimum effort” (Dooley). In the article, “Stanford research provides a snapshot of the new working-from-home economy,” May Wong discusses the research of Stanford economist Nicholas Bloom. In Ms. Wong’s interview with Bloom, he states that “an incredible 42 percent of the U.S. labor force [is] now working from home full-time . . . this enlarged group of work-from-home employees now accounts for more than two-thirds of the U.S. economic activity.” People have moved from a world of face-to-face interactions to a work environment and communication system that has a large

foundation grounded in a virtual space. However, humans crave human interaction, and in a way, the video call can sort of fill in the need to see another human being's face. So, how have these rising tools of digital technology impacted the communication practices for nonprofit organizations?

Other noteworthy growth for video conferencing can be seen in the increase in users for Microsoft Teams since the start of the pandemic. In an article by Tom Warren, "Microsoft Teams usage jumps to 145 million daily active users," he discusses that since October of 2020 Microsoft has had an "increase of 26 percent" and now has "145 million people using its Microsoft Teams communications app" in comparison to the "115 million daily active users" it had only a year previously. Google Meet has also seen exponential growth as shown in the article, "Google Hangouts Meet's daily usage soars during COVID-19 outbreak." In the article, Stephanie Condon discusses that in March of 2020 "Google Meet's day-over-day growth has exceeded 60 percent . . . with daily usage now 25X higher than it was in January [2020]." The drastic growth rate for Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet virtual platforms is evident through the research and statistics. The forced shutdowns and shelter-in-place orders caused by the COVID-19 pandemic had a massive effect on these three major virtual communication platforms. As we move into the future, it will be important for nonprofit organizations to make use of these tools as there is no definitive end in sight for COVID-19.

In my experience in the animal welfare nonprofit sector I have seen firsthand how the use of video chatting platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams have become integral tools for communication. As a nonprofit organization, it is beneficial to have so many communication platforms that do not have a cost to the organizations.

Through my time as an intern at Georgia Pet Foundation and then role as Director of Development for Fix Georgia Pets, I have learned that free or low-cost communication platforms are beneficial for nonprofit organizations. The reason for this is being that saving money by using a free tool means that there is more money that can be spend toward the organization's mission. In my case, the money saved by using free video communication platforms means that there is more money to be given to fund spay and neuter efforts in Georgia.

In addition, having meetings on these virtual platforms helps make communication more human and personable. One of the key elements of running a successful nonprofit organization is being personable and building trust through communication. When communicating to potential donors and the community one serves, “you have to know whether they care about your cause, you have to establish contact with them, [and] you have to cultivate [relationships] overtime” in order to convince your audience that the mission and organization being represented is worthy of their interest and potential donations (Barbato and Furlich 23). The ability to develop and garner trust between an organization and its audience is difficult under normal circumstances. However, there was an added challenge to building trust between nonprofit organizations and potential supporters due to COVID-19.

As learned from the interviews in Chapter Two, nonprofit organizations had to continue relationship-building and enticing donations without having some type of “face-to-face” interaction. The need to continue fundraising was impacted by the pandemic and organizations had to shift from their usual methods of fundraising. Jenna Jameson discusses the impact of COVID-19 on nonprofit fundraising events in her article, “Pivot

to Virtual Events Helps Nonprofits Sustain 2020 Fundraising Goals.” She notes that in a survey conducted with nonprofit organizations that “98% typically hold one or more fundraising events annually,” but because of the need to social distance that “48% [of nonprofit organizations] had to cancel and 40% postponed at least one event”.

By analyzing Jameson’s article and research it is clear how greatly COVID-19 impacted the fundraising events for nonprofit organizations, but there was also some hope to a seemingly bleak situation. Nonprofits chose to adapt to the situation posed by the pandemic and “62% of nonprofits converted to a virtual fundraising event and 16% converted to a hybrid event”, with around “70% [of nonprofits surveyed] describe[ing] the event as successful” (Jameson). Fundraising was still possible, all-be-it from new virtual platforms that many nonprofits had not previously had to as heavily rely on. There was success, and nonprofit organizations were still able to meet goals.

An example of how face-to-face fundraising has changed to digital fundraising is how Fix Georgia Pets had to alter their plans for their annual fundraising gala to a virtual non-gala auction. The organization was trying to raise money to fund spay and neuter efforts with the mission that supporting these efforts would help end pet overpopulation in Georgia. Traditionally FGP would host a private auction/gala in December of each year.; however, the COVID-19 restrictions and lockdown protocol in Georgia during 2020 prevented a face-to-face event. As a result, Caroline Hunter, the Executive Director of Fix Georgia Pets, pivoted to having the auction in a virtual space. This auction was set to be public with no invitations necessary, whereas in previous years it was an invitation-only event. As mentioned previously in the interview with Hunter, the virtual non-gala was a great success. Fix Georgia Pets received a great amount of engagement and netted

more funding than in previous years as there were no overhead expenses needed to cover the cost of an in-person party.

Hunter's experience with online communication through Zoom was similarly shared by other members of the animal welfare nonprofit community. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the other participants in the study had to use online platforms and virtual methods of communication to continue funding their missions. Animal welfare organizations across America had to communicate with their audiences through virtual means in order to continue raising funding for their missions.

Social Media Communication During COVID-19

Writing and communication practices are at the heart of any nonprofit organization. With new technology being introduced, like video-conferencing and social media, nonprofits have had to adapt their communication practices to reach audiences through these virtual platforms. Social media is also an incredibly powerful tool that provides a way for organizations to make contact with donors, volunteers, and the communities they serve. Organizations have to be able to use social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to gain traffic, attract followers, incite donations, and rally volunteers to their cause. In an article for *NonprofitPRO*, F. Duke Haddad, discusses that “nonprofits must use social media. It allows organizations with limited budgets to reach a larger audience in a fast and cost-effective way. Social media platforms allow organizations to tell their story.” In addition to making a point of the effectiveness and necessity of using social media, Haddad continues to note that through studies Facebook is the primary social media platform used, with Twitter being the second most widely used platform by nonprofit organizations to communicate with their audiences. Being

able to effectively use social media and communicate with supporters and potential donors is critical to continuing to grow my organization's audience.

During times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, social media was a way for organizations to remain in constant contact with their follower base and inform their community of their mission and needs. The world of communication and fundraising did not stop as a result of the pandemic. Instead, animal welfare nonprofit organizations had to learn how to utilize and maximize their social media platforms and presence to maintain their funding to help the animals in their care.

The following tables are organized by type of social media post and subject matter. All social media posts below are from prominent animal welfare groups in Georgia, which include LifeLine Animal Project, Atlanta Humane Society, PAWSAtlanta, Furkids, and Paws Humane Society. The posts depicted in the following tables were selected from the Instagram accounts of these organizations because they showcased how writing and communication styles that evolved due to COVID-19. The posts were chosen for their specific date postings, which placed each social media interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology behind the analysis for these social media posts allowed me to take a close look into how the writing styles of each animal welfare organization altered during the pandemic. Each table is labeled and organized by a different subject type: safety concerns and procedures, light-hearted posts regarding the pandemic, communication or gratitude, and impacts on clinics, medical procedures, adoptions, and fundraising. The purpose of analyzing these posts by their subject matter and the time of when they were posted helps to reveal how the virus

impacted the writing and communication practices for animal welfare nonprofit organizations' social media platforms.

Table 3 below contains posts from Atlanta Humane Society, PAWSAtlanta, and Furkids' Instagram accounts regarding each organization's COVID-19 safety concerns and procedures.

Table 3- Social Media Posts from Animal Welfare Organizations Mentioning COVID-19 Safety Concerns and Procedures

Organization	Date of Posting	Text from Instagram Posts without the Image
<i>Atlanta Humane Society</i>	March 14, 2020	It is our top priority right now to maintain a safe workplace and implement practices to protect the health of our community. Our staff and volunteers will continue to provide our animals with daily care and enrichment. For more information, please visit us at atlantahumane.org/COVID-19-update
<i>PAWSAtlanta</i>	March 15, 2020	We know some of you have questions about this pandemic virus and your pets. Here is some information from the CDC's website. Should we be concerned about animals and COVID-19? (We omitted the first line on the response because it was dated and referenced community transmission only in China. It explained that, while the virus began in animals in China, it is now spreading from person-to-person.) "There is no reason to think that any animals including pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals." Should I take precautions with my pets if I get sick with COVID-19? "You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports

		of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals While you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask." This is PAWS Atlanta alum Haboob @adognamedhaboob.
<i>PAWSAtlanta</i>	April 18, 2020	Alumnae Gidget (FKA Chipper) wants to just send you a friendly reminder to wash your paws for at least 20 seconds, masks help everyone stay safe, and that we love you and hope you're staying safe and healthy. Swipe to see the unmasked pre-quarantine Gidget when she was still Chipper.
<i>Furkids</i>	March 4, 2021	How many Furkids does it take to equal 6 feet? Here's a handy dandy chart to put social distancing into a rescue-loving perspective! Remember, always stay either 2 Great Danes or 12 kittens apart! 😊 #Furkids #LifeSavingMission #PetAdoption #CatAdoption#DogAdoption #AdoptToSaveLives #SocialDistancing#PetFriendly

Sources: *Atlanta Humane Society*, *PAWSAtlanta*, and *Furkids* Instagram Accounts

By analyzing the above quotes in Table 3, one can see that there is some concern from all three organizations about the safety and health guidelines within each organization. On March 14, 2020, the Atlanta Humane Society wrote a post on Instagram expressing that safety in the workplace and the health of their community was their top priority. This expression of empathy towards their supporters was shared with other organizations. PAWSAtlanta also addressed some health and safety concerns that their audience had posed to them about COVID-19 in their post from March 15, 2020

(PAWSAtlanta). Health and safety were subjects of great importance during the pandemic.

Organizations had to be transparent and honest about what they needed from their audience while also sharing safety tips and concerns with their followers and supporters. For example, in another post by PAWSAtlanta, they shared some tips for washing one's hands but made it more light-hearted by using the phrase "wash your paws" (PAWSAtlanta). It was a cute and clever way of talking to their animal-loving supporters, while also sharing important health tips like washing one's hands for twenty seconds and wearing a mask. Similarly, Furkids was also sharing the importance of social distancing in a similarly cute but informative manner. Their post from March 4, 2020, reads: "remember, always stay either 2 Great Danes or 12 kittens apart" (Furkids). Whether the message regarding health and safety was light-hearted or more serious, it was vital for animal welfare nonprofit organizations to reach out and communicate with their donors and volunteers the effects of the virus and what their organization was going to do to address the seriousness of the situation.

The seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic was not lost on the animal welfare nonprofit organization, but constantly writing with negativity is never a good move for an organization. Below is Table 4, which showcases posts from Atlanta Humane Society and Furkids that took a more light-hearted approach to the pandemic. While it was important for animal welfare organizations to inform their supporters about COVID-19 and its impact on their portion of the nonprofit sector, it was equally as important to insert some levity when deemed appropriate.

In Table 4 below, there are two posts, one from Atlanta Humane Society and the other from Furkids. In the Atlanta Humane Society’s post, they asked the audience, “What would your ideal quarantine house look like?” The post was intended to be cute and topical about where an animal would like to live during quarantine. Within the content from the post, there was an underlying message to adopt or foster animals and to provide them with the ideal quarantine home. In Furkids’ post, they touched on how masks cannot hide the smile and joy of adopting an animal. Just because we are in times of hardship, there is still a joy to be found in the love of an animal. Both organizations used some clever wording and were using the topic of COVID-19 to showcase to their supporters that even when it is difficult, their missions to help animals can help people too.

Table 4- Social Media Posts from Animal Welfare Organizations with a Light-Hearted Approach to Messaging about COVID-19

Organization	Date of Posting	Text from Instagram Posts without the Image
<i>Atlanta Humane Society</i>	May 12, 2020	What would your ideal quarantine house look like?
<i>Furkids</i>	October 29, 2020	No mask can hide the complete joy and excitement these two have about adopting Wednesday and Raven. Adopting expands our capacity to love and be loved. #furkids #adoptdontshop #blackcatsrule #furkidsatlanta#furkidsatl #atlanta #catlanta #catloversclub #kittypalooza

Sources: *Atlanta Humane Society* and *Furkids* Instagram Accounts

A well-crafted social media post can have a huge impact on an organization. As previously analyzed above, organizations need to be transparent about their needs during times of crisis; however, it is also important to bring some levity to a terrible situation.

Another way of communicating effectively toward supporters, donors, and volunteers during the COVID-19 pandemic was to express some words of thanks and gratitude. Nonprofit organizations rely on the help of their community to continue their missions. Therefore, it was vital for animal welfare nonprofit organizations to empathize with the people that support their missions and let them know that the organization saw and recognized what their supporters were going through. Table 5 below contains posts from Furkids and Paws Humane Society that contain words of gratitude for the support from volunteers and donors.

Table 5 – Social Media Posts from Animal Welfare Organizations that Depicted Words of Gratitude

Organization	Date of Posting	Text from Instagram Posts without the Image
<i>Furkids</i>	December 31, 2020	<p>Bright spots might have been few & far between in 2020 but Furkids bids farewell in a big way with more than 3,751 successful adoptions this year. Cheers 🥂 to Stoke and Laney, our two final adoptions of 2020 who will be ringing in the new year safe, warm and curled up with their forever families.</p> <p>For rescues still waiting for a chance at a brand new life this new year, it's not too late to show your commitment to saving lives. Make a lifesaving donation to Furkids by midnight tonight, through our link in bio to turn the tide for sick, injured and abandoned homeless cats and dogs.</p> <p>We thank you for all of your continued support. May 2021 bring you much health, happiness and tons of furry friends too. 🐶 🐱</p> <p>#Furkids #newyearsavelives #adoptdontshop</p> <p>#donatetoday#livesavingdonations #givingseason</p>
<i>Paws Humane Society</i>	March 5, 2021	<p>Happy #EmployeeAppreciationDay! Each and every day, we thank all of the passionate people at Paws Humane Society for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance!</p> <p>❤️ 🐶 🐱</p>

Sources: *Furkids* and *Paws Humane Society* Instagram Accounts

Furkids posted on Instagram about their successes throughout the year while also touching on the fact that 2020 was a rough year for the animal welfare nonprofit sector. Being honest and transparent about the impact of COVID-19 was critical for animal welfare organizations during these tumultuous times. In the post by Furkids, they also reached out and thanked all of their supporters and wished them happiness and health into the new year. The acknowledgment of the hardship on Furkids's community showcased their ability to sympathize with the rough year that everyone in the world had. In terms of showing gratitude, Paws Humane Society also reached out to thank their employees, who were working through the pandemic, to showcase the dedication it takes to continue working during a global pandemic.

The pandemic affected everyone, from inside the organization to outside the animal welfare nonprofit sector. Everyone had hardships, but we as a world worked through them and still tried to thrive. Earlier in this research paper, I discussed the importance of thank-you notes and gratitude. People like to be recognized, but more than that, people like to be understood. It was important for animal welfare organizations to understand that everyone was having a tough time. Posting social media posts like the ones in Table 5 helped show their community that they knew what everyone was going through.

The virus impacted people. Organizations had to pivot and change plans. The world was anything but normal. Organizations had to pivot typical plans for the animal welfare nonprofit sector and communicate those changes with their supporters. Table 6 below contains animal welfare organizations' posts that depict how COVID-19 has impacted medical procedures, vaccine clinics, adoptions, and fundraising.

Table 6- Social Media Posts from Animal Welfare Organizations that Depicted COVID-19's Impact on Regular Procedures and Fundraising

Organization	Date of Posting	Text from Instagram Posts without the Image
<i>LifeLine Animal Project</i>	September 29, 2021	<p>Shelter dogs need your help. All three LifeLine shelters are incredibly full right now and there are hundreds of dogs in our care. If you can't adopt, fosters for medium to large dogs are urgently needed today at all LifeLine shelters @fultonanimalservices has the most animals in the shelter today than any other time since the pandemic began. Plus, there are 50 animals who aren't able to leave the shelter right now, many of which are old hold for court cases, which means there is even less space available for new animals who are arriving each day. 90 dogs arrived at @dekalbanimals just last week. Large single kennels are now being split into two kennels to make space for the new dogs arriving daily. Every dog kennel at our Community Animal Center is full, and no shelter dogs have been adopted this week so far. Help more of our dogs find homes, so that we can bring more animals over from our crowded county Shelters. There's #NoPlaceLikeAHome, and right now, the medium and large dogs in our care are in desperate need of finding homes. If you can foster, please sign up at LifeLineAnimal.org/foster-dogs. (link in bio)</p>
<i>PAWSAtlanta</i>	April 2, 2020	<p>VIRTUALLY ADOPT BRANDY! Did you know it costs \$150 per month to provide for each animal under our care? Our shelter may be closed to the public due to COVID-19, but thanks to YOU, providing for our animals never stops. Will you help cover the cost of critical care while we do our part to slow the spread of the virus? Each animal in our shelter costs approximately \$150 per month while they patiently wait for loving families of their own. If you multiply \$150 by 200 animals per month, you can understand why we need your support now more than ever! By virtually adopting one of our beloved animals you stand with us, and each month your donation enables us to provide nutritious</p>

		<p>food, medical care, vaccines, and monthly heartworm, flea, and tick preventatives to keep each shelter pet in tip-top health. All of our animals also receive a microchip (so they'll never be homeless again) and a spay or neuter surgery (so we don't contribute to the animal overpopulation crisis). With each virtual adoption, you'll receive an electronic thank-you package loaded with photos, videos, social media content and graphics you can use to help your adopted dog or cat find a loving home. These are uncertain times. But, without a doubt and thanks to YOU, the PAWS Atlanta community is stronger than ever. You can virtually adopt Brandy through the link in our profile. Thank you for your kind support!</p>
<i>Paws Humane Society</i>	October 1, 2021	<p>Paws Humane Society, Dr. Brendan Bergquist, and the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine Outreach Club are hosting a Drive-Thru Vaccine Clinic on October 9th from 9:00am to 12:00pm at Paws Humane Society.</p> <p>ALL pet owners must register online through the link provided below and is LIMITED to the FIRST 100 PEOPLE. Hurry before our spots are FULL!</p> <p>*Pets who have not been registered through the link will not be vaccinated*</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeTvPMjZx17nYPB7qswBnI_A_sRsv_PPKQvh380trANDL5Oag/viewform?usp=sf_link</p>

Sources: *Lifeline Animal Project*, *PAWSAtlanta*, and *Paws Humane Society* Instagram accounts

Analyzing the social media posts in Table 6 above shows some changes in typical animal welfare nonprofit events like fostering, adoption, and vaccine clinics due to the COVID19 pandemic. For example, LifeLine Animal Project discussed in their Instagram post from September 29, 2021, the importance of adopting and fostering dogs out of their shelter, as they have seen a large increase of dogs in Fulton County since the pandemic

began (Lifeline Animal Project). Likewise, PAWSAtlanta communicated with their social media audience on various posts that they had virtual adoptions going on since people were not allowed to really come into the shelters to look for animals to potentially adopt. The adoption process was transferred from an in-person event to one held through a virtual platform. Lastly, Paws Humane Society posted on October 1, 2021, that they would be holding a drive-through vaccine clinic, which was a service that arose out of the health and safety precautions relating to COVID-19. When looking at the three social media posts in Table 6, one can clearly see that there was an impact on the normal practices of these animal welfare nonprofit organizations. Health and safety measures dictated by the CDC forced organizations to think outside the box and hold virtual adoptions or drive-through clinics for vaccinations.

Findings and Analysis

Communication through social media was essential for animal welfare nonprofit organizations to remain in contact with their supporters. Social media was an essential tool for the continued dissemination of each organization's mission to help animals in their community. Times were hard for all of these organizations, but through transparency and clear communication, the animal welfare organizations were able to continue their success and fundraising.

In Fidelity Charitable's article, "COVID-19 and Philanthropy: How Donor Behaviors are Shifting Amid Pandemic," they discussed that while "donors are most concerned about the way that COVID-19 could impact the ability of health and human services-related nonprofits . . . concern is [still] high for organizations in all charitable sectors." While this is encouraging news to nonprofit organizations that are not health

and human-service mission-based, there are still changes in donation trends as a result of the pandemic.

While donations continue to come into animal welfare nonprofit organizations and adoption and foster rates increased during the pandemic, there are still many problems that animal welfare nonprofit organizations face due to COVID-19. Meredith Ayan discusses that “in the face of COVID-19, shelters are continually facing critical challenges, including food shortages, spikes in pet abandonment with a plummeting and near-zero rate of adoptions, overcrowding, and fears of culling.” These challenges continue to develop as the world continues to deal with the virus, which is currently evolving and developing new strains. Animal welfare nonprofit organizations have to continue to adapt to maintain donations, whether it is monetary or items like food, medicine, bedding, and cleaning supplies.

Tools for communication may continue to shift as we go forward in a world that has been affected by the COVID-19 virus. The use of digital tools like social media and video conferencing is sure to continue as the world adjusts to a new normal; however, at the end of the day, whether communication comes in person or virtually, the written word and a clear message are vital to continuing success for any animal welfare nonprofit organization. Writing and communication serve as the building blocks of relationship-building—and building relationships with one’s community is vital in the nonprofit sector.

Chapter 4: Autoethnographic Narrative—An Internship in the Animal Welfare Sector

Autoethnography functions as a way to observe oneself and provides analysis for “personal experiences and perspectives to better understand a cultural, social, psychological, or political phenomenon” (Muscente et al.). It is through reflecting on my past as a writer that I came to understand how I am in the position that I am now, the Director of Development for Fix Georgia Pets, where my job relies upon my writing skills to communicate the importance of my organization’s mission: to end pet overpopulation by supporting spay and neuter efforts of animals in Georgia. By looking back into the past and my experiences, I was able to capture key moments of my journey as a writer and now as a writing professional.

My journey as a writer began at a very young age. Ever since my father showed me the wonderful world of stories, I have been a writer. I remember my father reading me to sleep every night, and before he would leave my room, he would put an audiobook on tape into my stereo so that I could fall asleep while listening to stories. As I got older, my father and I would have our own separate books and read until I finally drifted off to sleep. I continued this tradition even after my father passed away when I was eleven years old. I continued reading myself to sleep and just before I would shut my eyes, I would play an audiobook so that I could hear stories of fantastical places even as I slipped off into my dreams. These core memories of my father and I reading stuck with me, and I continued to grow in my love of reading and writing. It was hard growing up

for much of my life without my father, but I also knew that I could count on the power of writing to get me through some of the most difficult times. I have always been a writer, creating stories and worlds that were uniquely my own.

As I matured, I grew to appreciate power of writing, not just in the creation of fictional worlds, but also, I saw writing as a tool to impact the world. I would also like to think that I have always been a giving person. In addition to being a writer, I also consider myself to be an animal lover and an animal-rights advocate. Looking back, I had always wanted pets, but was not able to have any when I was younger because my dad was allergic. Even after he passed, I was not allowed to have pets in my mother's house because she had never experienced life with animals before. I made it my mission that when I was old enough and had my own place that I would do my part to help save animals. I adopted my first animal, Maou, a week after moving into my first apartment. Now I have three rescue pets and honestly wish I could adopt all the animals I see, but that is just not possible at the moment. The experience of rescuing and having animals in my life has shown me just how valuable animals are for people. My pets are a part of my chosen family and seeing that value of their love and affection drove me to help other animals and people who felt like me.

The two core memories from my childhood, that of reading and writing and the desire for a pet set me on the path of working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. I believed my future career would be one where I felt like I would be making a difference in the field of work relating to animals. Through my coursework at Kennesaw State University, my path towards working in the nonprofit sector became realized. Finally, I

saw a place in the professional world where I could combine my skill and love of writing with helping the animals that I hold so dear in my heart.

I had always been interested in working in the nonprofit sector, but I had no first-hand experience of what that work would entail, and my knowledge of the nonprofit sector was lacking. Deciding to learn more about the nonprofit sector, I participated in a directed study with Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton entitled, *Writing in the Nonprofit Sector*. I took this course in Fall 2020. Through the course, I learned about the types of writing practices and communication tools that keep the cogs turning in any given nonprofit through the readings given to me in the course. In addition to the readings for the course, I also had to create a reading journal for myself about each book or article read. Initially, I thought that the reading journals were just extra work to the required course readings, but I was proven wrong. My weekly journal entries allowed me to reflect and dive deeper into my readings and create a better understanding about the different components of the nonprofit sector. I was able to articulate the importance of writing in the nonprofit better in discussions with my professor because of the reflective exercise. Like with this autoethnography, the reading journals provided a place for me to reflect and understand the knowledge given to me in a more profound and thoughtful manner. Understanding the impact of writing is vital to understanding what makes the nonprofit sector unique. One must be able to identify and utilize the different types of communication tools, what methods of writing they employ, and the goals of these writing practices.

By December of 2020, I had learned much about the writing and communication styles of the nonprofit sector; however, the most significant part of taking that directed study was that it opened my eyes and passion for working in the nonprofit sector. I had

already been a frequent volunteer for a local animal shelter, Furkids. It filled the need in my heart to play a part in bettering the animals in the community. Still, I knew that with my background in writing, I could make a larger impact. I knew that I wanted to focus my capstone on the animal welfare nonprofit sector and COVID-19's impact on these organizations' writing and communication practices. I now had a clear path and passion.

Months went by, and I applied for an internship with the Georgia Pet Foundation. The Georgia Pet Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was created after Governor Deal passed legislation in 2016 for the sale of a specialty license plate. This license plate would raise money for the Georgia Pet Foundation so that they could disseminate grants to help provide spay and neuter services statewide. I applied for the summer internship position and got the job. During the interview, I knew that my passion for working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector came across to Tracy Dean, the board chair of Georgia Pet Foundation and Georgia Fix Pets. My English and Professional Writing background also served as key foundational elements that made me a perfect fit for their organization.

At the beginning of my internship, I found myself in an unfamiliar setting. I was sitting in the living room of a mansion, which was very different setting from my daily life. If you have ever heard of Coca-Cola, which if you are living in the South is essentially the same as water, then you might be familiar with the mansion I am in. The Woodruff Mansion was owned by Robert W. Woodruff, a former president of The Coca-Cola Company, from 1923 to 1954. While no longer inhabited by the Woodruff family, the grandness of the estate has not diminished. I am sitting in the living room of this mansion, and I am talking about animals.

It is an almost surreal setting that I found myself in, where I was speaking with the board members of Georgia Pet Foundation and Fix Georgia Pets about the importance of spaying and neutering shelter animals in the State of Georgia. Surrounding me are accomplished women who are volunteering their time to help animals in need. At the end of the day, it does not matter that these women are all successful in their own way or that we are sitting in a multi-million-dollar mansion. When it comes down to it, we are all here on a Tuesday afternoon to discuss how the nonprofit organizations that we work for can help our local animals in need.

So now I need to tell you why I am sitting in the Woodruff Mansion talking about cats and dogs. When I began my 2021 summer internship with Georgia Pet Foundation, I knew that I would be working from home. There would be no days in the office. Instead, I would be working from my apartment while my two cats and dogs vied for my attention. Honestly, I loved it. I could work in my pajamas or roll out of bed and be in “the office” within a minute. I love the ability and flexibility of working from home, which has been the norm since the COVID-19 pandemic reached the United States, and we went into a lockdown in March of 2020. I thought I would be glued to my home office chair for the entirety of my internship. However, that was not the case.

The opportunity to meet my fellow interns and the board members of Georgia Pet Foundation and Georgia Fix Pets came about. I was invited into the home of Ms. Ginny Millner, who is the current owner of the house. I was greeted by five rescue dogs of varying ages and hugged by all the board members. It was a very warm greeting and went a long way toward soothing my anxiety of meeting all of these important people. Also, we were all vaccinated just so that anyone reading this does not cringe at the word “hug.”

If you are new to the nonprofit sector, there is something that you must know: Communication and building relationships are critical to being successful. I learned this through my directed study and even more through my Grant and Proposal Writing course. When I became an intern at Georgia Pet Foundation, I continued to learn how communication and writing were essential to my role in the nonprofit sector. I communicated through constant emails, phone calls, video conferencing, and even text messages with my fellow interns, staff, board members, and supporters. First impressions are key. As Jerney Beer discusses in *The Forgotten Foundations of Fundraising: Practical Advice and Contrarian Wisdom for Nonprofit Leaders*, "relationship-building is crucial" when working in the nonprofit sector (137). Taking these words to heart, I knew as I drove to my first in-person meeting with board members from Fix Georgia Pets and Georgia Pet Foundation, that my first impressions and interactions would be the foundation for my relationships with members in the animal welfare nonprofit community.

I could not help but fight off some anxiety about meeting fifteen new people. I am not a shy person by nature, but I was letting the nerves get the best of me. This buildup of how the first interaction with all of these board members was getting to me, and to be greeted with warm smiles, hugs, and dog kisses snapped me back to my normal self. Being in a real professional setting was a daunting task, but I did believe that my education from Kennesaw State University had set me up to be successful.

I realized that I was in a place, mansion or not, where I was surrounded by people just like me. It was an amazing feeling. I was looking at these accomplished women and wondering how I could get to where they are in life. I even made a comment about

wanting to be like them in the future. One of them, Sandra Edwards, turned her head to me, smiled and said, “You are already on that path.”

She was right. I am now writing this reflection on not only as an animal lover and person who has had real experience in the nonprofit sector, but as a person who is currently fulfilling her dreams. My connections with my chairwoman, Tracy Dean, and with Caroline Hunter, the Executive Director of Georgia Pet Foundation’s sister organization, Fix Georgia Pets, has allowed me the opportunity to continue working in the nonprofit animal welfare sector. I became Volunteer Director of Development for Georgia Pet Foundation and was hired to be the Director of Development for Fix Georgia Pets. Now I have a bigger role to play for the animals in Georgia.

Before this internship at Georgia Pet Foundation and the subsequent job at Fix Georgia Pets, I was unaware of the impact that spaying and neutering had on decreasing pet overpopulation and its direct impact on helping to eliminate senseless euthanasia on healthy cats and dogs. It was only when I started to get deeper into my internship and then started working part-time as the Director of Development for Fix Georgia Pets that I truly understood the importance of supporting spay and neuter efforts. In Georgia, there are 159 counties, with many rural counties lacking animal welfare resources. The project that helped me start understanding how my personal involvement within the animal welfare nonprofit sector could help address these serious problems, is the creation of the GPF Ambassador Program.

During my time as an intern for Georgia Pet foundation, I found myself sitting in on an internship meeting with my fellow interns at the time for the Georgia Pet Foundation. Tracy Dean, our board chair and internship supervisor, started to discuss a

new program that GPF would be launching, The Ambassador Program. The program was simple: we were going to start digitally canvassing people in the animal welfare community who could represent each of the 159 counties in Georgia. The program's goal was to make sure that each county had a person representing them and to give them a direct line of communication between each county and GPF.

Along with the county ambassadors, we would also have eight regional ambassadors to oversee their respective regions. In addition to providing a method of communication between GPF and all of the counties of Georgia, the Ambassador Program would also allow county and regional ambassadors to communicate with one another in a positive platform and subsequently keep GPF updated with changes in resources or alert us to needs or problems that could occur in more rural areas of the state. Ambassadors would also be tasked with communicating with their local tag offices to ensure that the GPF specialty license plate tag, of which proceeds go toward funding spay/neuter efforts in Georgia, was actually being made available for people wishing to support our cause.

We started reaching out to people that were on our newsletter list to start garnering attention toward the program. I remember sitting in on the first two Zoom meetings held by my board chair, Tracy Dean, as she explained to interested parties the value of our Ambassador Program. I have never been a part of a gathering of so many people who want to do good for the animals in their community. It was riveting to watch as people asked questions to Ms. Dean about the program, and it was amazing to see how many people were already ready to become county ambassadors. During the meeting, I

was taking minutes and notes of who wanted to sign up to be an ambassador. That is how my involvement with the Ambassador Program started.

As I moved from being an intern for Georgia Pet Foundation to being their Volunteer Director of Development, I continued to grow the Ambassador program from the people who were initially interested in our first two meetings. Something I was not prepared for before starting this project was the sheer amount of time needed to reach out to each person, explain the value of the program, and ask if they would be willing to be an ambassador or recommend an ambassador. I spent hours on the phone, emailing, and writing with board members, staff, and supporters of Georgia Pet Foundation. There were days where I sat at my desk and updated our excel spreadsheet and Salesforce account with the contact information of confirmed and potential ambassadors.

One of the amazing things that I realized while working on this project is that word of mouth is everything. People know people. I made connections to potential ambassadors through previously established connections. It was like a tree growing with unending branches. It seemed like everyone had at least one recommendation for another county ambassador. One of the things that I learned from my Board Chair is the importance of leveraging connections and multiplying one's work. During my time working on the Ambassador Program, I have taken those words to heart. My time working, writing, and communicating with people who are genuinely interested in helping animals and improving their community has only led me to make new connections and establish relationships with other people.

Passion. That is a word I want to focus on for a moment. When it comes to working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector, I have felt a sense of passion from every

person I have come in contact with. There is a kindred spirit of those who love animals and go out of their way to help animals. While the nonprofit sector is not known for having exceptional pay for employees, it brings people in through shared passion and drive.

Impact is another term that I want to discuss in more detail. What creating impact is and how to achieve one's intended impact. Nonprofit organizations have their own specific missions. For example, you can look at Paws Humane Society. Their "mission is to enrich the lives of both animals and people as a solution-based community resource for animal welfare by providing high-volume and high-quality spay/neuter, rescue, and adoption services, volunteer opportunities, outreach, and education" (Paws Humane).

Compared to Paws Humane Society's mission, my mission for Georgia Pet Foundation and Fix Georgia Pets is to end pet overpopulation by supporting low-cost, high-volume spay and neuter efforts in my state. I have learned how I can make a difference for these two organizations through my writing. I can reach out to a large audience of similar-minded people to make an impact.

Being a professional in the nonprofit industry also means that I serve as a guide for others who want to learn more about working in the nonprofit sector. Writing and communication served as my tools to help guide others to help support spay and neuter efforts in Georgia. I was blessed with guidance not only from my professors and time at Kennesaw State University but also from my colleagues at the two nonprofit organizations that I work for. Nobody starts off knowing what they are supposed to do in their life, let alone their profession. Being guided and continuing to learn are essential

parts of working, especially in the nonprofit sector. I am constantly talking to new people every single day, through email, calls, or face-to-face.

Working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector has also taught me that while many of us have similar goals and missions, personal conflicts also come into play. Being able to navigate complex and sometimes hostile relations is an art, and it is one that I am still trying to master. There have been times in my short career as a nonprofit professional that I have had to deal with negativity between competing organizations and individuals. Having grace and responding cordially is critical when trying to communicate. There is a balancing act that I must undertake to ensure that I am not offending one group or another. This problem is not something that I had thought much about before working in the nonprofit sector, but it is not surprising. Being able to properly handle relationships between my organization and other members of the animal welfare community is vital toward making all of our missions a reality.

My writing for both organizations also serve as a method of communication between my organizations, myself, and our intended audience. I am not only being guided, but I also am the guide to others. This type of cyclical, integrated relationship is something that is only possible through communication and first-hand experience. Through the reflection of my own experiences as a writer and a professional working for two animal welfare nonprofit organizations, I hope that others come to understand the value of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector.

Conclusion

Writing and communication practices are crucial for a nonprofit organization to be successful. There are no donations, no volunteers, no coordinated staff if the writing is suffering. As discussed in the article “Do Mission Statements Matter for Nonprofit Performance,” “passion for a cause is crucial; however, passion alone cannot build and sustain organizations” (Pandey et al. 389). What builds the foundation of an organization is the well-crafted writing and a strong mission statement associated with the nonprofit. Keywords and phrases must be coupled with sincerity and focus are crucial for any nonprofit to succeed. There needs to be proper documentation, polite and emotional communication in order to create an organization that will entice a community to work together for the nonprofit’s cause. I now know that thank-you letters, or any words of thanks are needed to help maintain and grow an organization over time. Like Lupton writes, “trust is the foundation of all human relationships. Without trust, marriages dissolve, business partnerships collapse, loyalty evaporates. Trust is the bedrock upon which civil society is built” (61). Building trust is not a fast or easy process. Still, it is important that one remember that relationship-building is vital to creating a nonprofit organization that can be effective for the community they are serving. One must truly understand the community they are serving and the needs that the community needs to be met. This process takes time, and it is through consistent and real communication and writing that real change can be achieved.

The world of fundraising in the nonprofit sector is an ever-changing climate. Writing and communication practices are always evolving to meet the needs of a nonprofit organization. There is always room to grow, observe analytics, and strive for better communication between a nonprofit organization and its board members, volunteers, and donors. The danger of becoming stagnant with one's writing, campaigns, and communication is very real. There needs to be constant adaptation when working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector.

There were four main research tools that I employed for this project to understand the value of writing and communication practices within the nonprofit sector. First, I had conducted secondary research regarding the history of writing and communication practices in the nonprofit sector. This secondary research allowed me to understand and appreciate the value of effective writing and what role it plays within an animal welfare nonprofit organization. Additionally, the secondary research provided a fundamental base of knowledge for me and for others wanting to learn more about how writing is a pivotal aspect of working in a nonprofit organization.

Second, I conducted primary research for this project through interviews with six individuals who hold leadership positions within the animal welfare nonprofit sector, which showcased the importance of adaptation during crises and how digital fundraising and communication methods can be more effective than originally thought possible. The interviews with these nonprofit leaders allowed me to gain first-hand experience through their responses on how vital writing and communication practices are for their organizations. The primary research also provided important information about the

effects of COVID-19 on the animal welfare sector, which are not widely written or talked about.

Third, I conducted textual and digital analysis of social media posts which showed how nonprofits have had to change their communications during COVID-19. The analysis of these social media posts and communication practice changes provided an insight on how COVID-19 has affected the writing practices for animal welfare nonprofit organizations. Communication through social media became a way for nonprofit organizations to continue raising awareness of their missions, while also acknowledging the fear of the virus.

Lastly, the autoethnographic portion of this project helped me reflect on my experiences learning and working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. I have always been a writer, and it was through my autoethnography that I was able to look back on my journey as a writer and subsequently as a professional working in the animal welfare nonprofit sector. Reflection is key to growing, and my experiences as an intern for Georgia Pet Foundation and subsequent role as Director of Development for Fix Georgia Pets can allow others to understand how I used writing and my education in English to get to where I am today. The reflective nature of the writing emphasized the value of writing and communication that I have had the privilege of learning at Kennesaw State University and through my own experiences working in the nonprofit sector.

Through the research methods that I employed for this study, I came to the clear conclusion that effective writing and communication practices are vital to a nonprofit's success. The primary and secondary research gathered for this thesis provide information and first-hand experience that attest to the value of writing. There is so much to learn

about the nonprofit sector, but the keystone of any successful nonprofit is communicating and building relationships and trust. A crisis will not break down those relationships but can instead provide an opportunity to showcase the lengths an organization will go in order to continue working towards its mission. Effective writing and communication are key to working in the nonprofit sector and creating these relationships. Through my research and personal experiences, I have showcased the value of writing and communication practices. Nonprofit organizations need effective writing; they need effective writers to continue building relationships between their organizations and their audiences.

Works Cited

- Adipat, Surattana. "Why Web-Conferencing Matters: Rescuing Education in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis." *Frontiersin*, Frontiers in Education, 22 Sept. 2021, <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/educ.2021.752522/full>.
- Amato, Lily. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 11 October 2021.
- ASPCA. "About Us." *ASPCA*, <https://www.aspc.org/about-us>.
- "Atlanta Animal Shelter: Furkids: Furkids - Georgia's Animal Rescue & No-Kill Shelter." *Furkids*, furkids.org/about-us/mission-and-history/.
- Atlanta Humane Society [@atlantahumane]. Photo of COVID-19 Update. *Instagram*, photographed by Atlanta Humane Society, 14 Mar. 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9t-IIHlgpF/>.
- Atlanta Humane Society [@atlantahumane]. Photo of Choose Your Quarantine House. *Instagram*, photographed by Atlanta Humane Society, 12 Mar. 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CAGBRCYAqfs/>.
- Atlanta Humane Society. "What Is No Kill?" *Atlanta Humane Society*, 3 Sept. 2021, <https://atlantahumane.org/who-we-are/what-is-no-kill/>.
- Barbato, Joseph, and Danielle S. Furlich. *Writing for a Good Cause: the Complete Guide to Crafting Proposals and Other Persuasive Pieces for Nonprofits*. Simon & Schuster, 2000.
- Beer, Jeremy, Author. *The Forgotten Foundations of Fundraising : Practical Advice and Contrarian Wisdom for Nonprofit Leaders* /. Hoboken, New Jersey :: Wiley. Web.
- Bryce, Herrington J. "The Public's Trust in Nonprofit Organizations: The Role of Relationship Marketing and Management." *Non Profit News | Nonprofit Quarterly*, Nonprofit Quarterly, 2 Feb. 2016, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/the-publics-trust-in-nonprofit-organizations-the-role-of-relationship-marketing-and-management/>.
- Candid Learning. "How Many Nonprofit Organizations Are There in the U.S.?" *Candid Learning*, <https://learning.candid.org/resources/knowledge-base/number-of-nonprofits-in-the-u-s/>.

- Cantor, Alan. "Nonprofit Fundraising in the Age of Coronavirus." *Harvard Business Review*, 15 Apr. 2020, hbr.org/2020/04/nonprofit-fundraising-in-the-age-of-coronavirus.
- Cause IQ. "Animal-Focused Nonprofit Organizations." *Animal Organizations | Cause IQ*, Cause IQ, <https://www.causeiq.com/directory/animal-organizations-list/>.
- Coffey, Jeremy T. "Virtual Nonprofit Board and Member Meetings in the Time of COVID." *Perlman and Perlman*, 14 Sept. 2020, <https://www.perlmanandperlman.com/virtual-nonprofit-board-meetings-time-covid/>.
- Condon, Stephanie. "Google Hangouts Meet's Daily Usage Soars During COVID-19 Outbreak." *Zdnet*, 31 Mar. 2020, <https://www.zdnet.com/article/google-hangouts-meets-daily-usage-soars-during-covid-19-outbreak/>.
- Dean, Brian. "Zoom User Stats: How Many People Use Zoom in 2021?" *Backlinko*, 10 Mar. 2021, <https://backlinko.com/zoom-users>.
- Dean, Tracy. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 12 October 2021.
- Devon, Jennifer. "Identifying and Developing Strong Relationships for Nonprofit Success." *CCS Fundraising*, CCS Fundraising, 7 Jan. 2021, <https://ccsfundraising.com/identifying-and-developing-strong-relationships-for-nonprofit-success/>.
- Dooley, Roger. "How Zoom Conquered Video Conferencing." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 30 Sept. 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rogerdooley/2020/09/30/how-zoom-conquered-video-conferencing/?sh=7ea577205a97>.
- Fidelity Charitable. "Covid-19 and Philanthropy: How Donor Behaviors Are Shifting amid Pandemic." *Fidelity Charitable*, <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/insights/how-covid-19-is-shifting-donor-giving.html/>.
- Fritz, Joanne. "How Nonprofits Generate Revenue Streams." *The Balance Small Business*, The Balance Small Business, 29 Sept. 2019, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/where-do-nonprofits-get-their-revenue-2502011>.
- Fullerton, Nicole. "Instagram vs. Reality: The Pandemic's Impact on Social Media and Mental Health." *Pennmedicine*, Penn Medicine News, 29 Apr. 2021, <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-blog/2021/april/instagram-vs-reality-the-pandemics-impact-on-social-media-and-mental-health>.
- Furkids [@furkidsatlanta]. Photo of two people with masks on holding cats, *Instagram*,

photographed by Furkids, 29 Oct. 2020,
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CG8uGTnnDDz/>.

Furkids [@furkidsatlanta]. Photo of four people with masks on and an adopted dog,
Instagram, photographed by Furkids, 31 Dec. 2020,
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CJe0ENWHFKL/>.

Furkids [@furkidsatlanta]. Photo dogs and a social distancing guide, *Instagram*,
 photographed by Furkids, 4 Mar. 2021,
<https://www.instagram.com/p/CMASJ5Kznvh/>.

Haddad, F. Duke. "The Importance of Social Media to Nonprofits." *NonProfit PRO*,
 Nonprofit PRO, 9 Oct. 2020, <https://www.nonprofitpro.com/post/the-importance-of-social-media-to-nonprofits/>.

Henderson, Tim. "In-Person Workers Are Slow to Return to Jobs, Data Shows." *The Pew Charitable Trusts*, 9 Sept. 2021, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/09/09/in-person-workers-are-slow-to-return-to-jobs-data-shows>.

Hunter, Caroline. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 10 October 2021.

Jameson, Jenna. "Pivot to Virtual Events Helps Nonprofits Sustain 2020 Fundraising Goals." *Giving USA / A Public Service Initiative of the Giving Institute*, 22 Dec. 2020, <https://givingusa.org/pivot-to-virtual-events-helps-nonprofits-sustain-2020-fundraising-goals/>.

Muscente, Kailee, et al. "Autoethnography: When Should I Submit My Self-Study to the IRB." *Teachers College - Columbia University*, Teachers College, Columbia University, 20 July 2021, <https://www.tc.columbia.edu/institutional-review-board/irb-blog/autoethnography-when-should-i-submit-my-self-study-to-the-irb/>.

Leroux Miller, Kivi. *Content Marketing for Nonprofits. [Electronic Resource] : A Communications Map for Engaging Your Community, Becoming a Favorite Cause, and Raising More Money*. 1st ed., Jossey-Bass, 2013. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06545a&AN=ken.997659875502954&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Levinson, Jay Conrad, et al. *Guerrilla Marketing for Nonprofits. [Electronic Resource] : 250 Tactics to Promote, Recruit, Motivate, and Raise More Money*. Entrepreneur Press, 2010. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06545a&AN=ken.9913749107302931&site=eds-live&scope=site.

- LifeLine Animal Project [@lifelineanimal]. Photo of Kilo the dog. *Instagram*, photographed by Lifeline Animal Project, 29 Sept. 2021, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CUatvyitQF7/>
- London School of Business and Finance. "What Is Strategic Marketing and Why Is It So Important?" *London School of Business & Finance*, 8 Oct. 2021, <https://www.lsbf.org.uk/blog/online-learning/what-is-strategic-marketing-and-why-is-it-so-important>.
- Lupton, Robert D. *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (and How to Reverse It)*. Kindle ed., HarperOne, 2012.
- Lynch, Catherine. Personal Interview. 14 October 2021.
- Lynch, Catherine. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 14 October 2021.
- Mancuso, Anthony. *Nonprofit Meetings, Minutes & Records : How to Properly Document Your Nonprofit's Actions*. Vol. 3rd edition, NOLO, 2018. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&A=1615460&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- Montgomery, Patricia. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 22 October 2021.
- Pandey, Sheela, et al. "Do Mission Statements Matter for Nonprofit Performance?" *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, vol. 27, no. 3, Spring 2017, p. 389. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1002/nml.21257.
- Pasic, Amir, et al. "The Current and Potential Impact of COVID-19 on Nonprofits ." *Stanford Social Innovation Review: Informing and Inspiring Leaders of Social Change*, 15 July 2020, https://ssir.org/podcasts/entry/the_current_and_potential_impact_of_covid_19_on_nonprofits.
- Patterson, David. "Make Your Mission Statement a Fundraising Tool." *Raise- Funds*, 3 Oct. 2016, <https://www.raise-funds.com/make-your-mission-statement-a-fundraising-tool/>.
- PAWSAtlanta [@pawsatlanta]. Photo of a dog. *Instagram*, photographed by PAWSAtlanta, 15 Mar. 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9xQnPIJhMv/>.
- PAWSAtlanta [@pawsatlanta]. Photo of a Brandy the dog, *Instagram*, photographed by PAWSAtlanta, 2 Apr. 2020, <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-feEN7JUIs/>.
- PAWSAtlanta [@pawsatlanta]. Photo of a dog with a facemask, *Instagram*, photographed by PAWSAtlanta, 18 Apr. 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/B_Ijea8peNL/.

- Paws Humane Society “Paws Humane.” *Paws Humane Society*, 7 Oct. 2021, <https://pawshumane.org/>.
- Paws Humane Society [@pawshumane]. Photo collage of people with masks holding animals, *Instagram*, photographed by Paws Humane Society, 5 Mar. 2021, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMC1E-5Lzf0/>.
- Paws Humane Society [@pawshumane]. Photo of a dog in a car with drive-through vaccine clinic information, *Instagram*, photographed by Paws Humane Society, 1 Oct. 2021, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CUfe9o4pgKf/>.
- Penketh Group. “Why Video Conferencing Tech Is More Important than Ever.” *Penketh Group*, 6 Oct. 2020, <https://penkethgroup.com/knowledge-centre/why-video-conferencing-tech-is-more-important-than-ever/>.
- Powell, Walter W., and Patricia (Assistant professor of education) Bromley. *The Nonprofit Sector : A Research Handbook*. Third edition., Stanford University Press, 2020. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06545a&AN=ken.997747600102954&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- Raj. “How to Write an Awesome Nonprofit Mission Statement: Actionable Tips.” *Donorbox*, Donorbox, 10 Aug. 2021, <https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/nonprofit-mission-statement/>.
- Raymond, Susan Ueber. *The Future of Philanthropy: Economics, Ethics, and Management*. John Wiley & Sons, 2004.
- Shelton, Samantha. Interview. By Tiffany Davis. 24 October 2021.
- UNICEF. “How COVID-19 Is Changing the World: A Statistical Perspective, Volume II.” *UNICEF DATA*, UNICEF, 22 Sept. 2021, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/how-covid-19-is-changing-the-world-a-statistical-perspective-volume-2/>.
- Warren, Tom. “Microsoft Teams Usage Jumps to 145 Million Daily Active Users.” *The Verge*, The Verge, 27 Apr. 2021, <https://www.theverge.com/2021/4/27/22406472/microsoft-teams-145-million-daily-active-users-stats>.
- WealthEngine. “The Impact of Covid-19 on Nonprofits and the Outlook for 2021.” *WealthEngine*, 29 Mar. 2021, <https://www.wealthengine.com/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-nonprofits-for-2021/>.

- William F. Meehan III, and Kim Starkey Jonker. *Engine of Impact : Essentials of Strategic Leadership in the Nonprofit Sector*. Stanford Business Books, 2018. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=e000xna&AN=1583460&site=eds-live&scope=site.
- Wong, May. "Stanford Research Provides a Snapshot of a New Working-from-Home Economy." *Stanford News*, 29 June 2020, <https://news.stanford.edu/press-releases/2020/06/29/snapshot-new-working-home-economy/>.
- Worden, Amy. "Fundraising from a Safe Distance." *HumanePro*, 2021, <https://humanepro.org/magazine/articles/fundraising-safe-distance>.
- Young, Kelly R. "The Fundraising Landscape in the Midst of COVID-19." *Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*, 17 Aug. 2020, blog.philanthropy.iupui.edu/2020/08/17/the-fundraising-landscape-in-the-midst-of-covid-19/.

TIFFANY M. DAVIS

(678) 200-4921/ dtiffany2015@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE

Building upon graduate coursework focused on writing in the nonprofit sector, seeking an internship in the animal welfare sector to gain critical experience and knowledge for communications grant writing or development work.

EDUCATION

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, GA

Master of Arts in Professional Writing, GPA: 4.0 January 2020-Anticipated Graduation Fall 2021

Thesis Title: COVID-19's Impact on Communication Practices in the Animal Welfare Nonprofit Sector

Relevant Courses: Writing in the Nonprofit Sector; Grant & Proposal Writing; Document Design; Feature Writing

Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, GA

Bachelor of Arts, English; Minor Professional Writing, GPA: 3.94

Graduated December 2018

Awards: Graduated *Summa Cum Laude*, Dean's List 2015-2018

MAJOR PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY WORK

Atlanta Student Movement Project

Atlanta, GA

May 2018-July 2018

- Served as a leader for content design team
- Created two multimodal articles about leaders of the Atlanta Student Movement in the 1960's

Atlanta Rescue Dog Games

Atlanta, GA

August 2018-December 2018

- Served as leader for content design team
- Prepare materials to promote no-kill animal shelters for a local fundraising event.

Furkids

Atlanta, GA

October 2019-Present

- Communicated with community members to promote local fundraising event
- Volunteered to aid cats at local animal shelters for over a year

WORK EXPERIENCE

Georgia Pet Foundation/ Fix Georgia Pets

Atlanta, GA

Volunteer Director of Development/Director of Development

May 2021-Current

- Created a social media plan and designed content for various social media platforms
- Writer and editor for Georgia Pet Foundation newsletter, posters, and flyers for fundraising purposes
- Coordinated with other team members for spay and neuter veterinarian recruitment at southern veterinarian universities

The Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research

Atlanta, GA

Editor

May 2020- July 2020

- Copyedited nine manuscripts from student-authors
- Coordinated all aspects of all social media for the academic journal
- Communicated effectively with student-authors and faculty reviewers
- Learned how to take an initial submission of a manuscript through the process of publication

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Technology Skills: WordPress, Website Creation, Adobe InDesign, Microsoft Word Suite, Canva

Additional Skills: Grant Writing, Social Media Knowledge, Time Management, Communication