WHO ARE SOUTH LONDON CARES?

South London Cares is a community network of young professionals and older neighbours in Southwark and Lambeth, hanging out and helping one another in our rapidly changing city. Our three programmes bring older and younger Londoners together to share conversation, company, laughter, skills and ultimately, friendship.

Our Social Clubs offer a chance for older and younger neighbours to share time, laughter and new experiences in a group setting. This runs alongside our Love Your Neighbour friendship programme, where neighbours spend time together one-to-one. Both of these are supported by our Outreach, which proactively identifies and welcomes older neighbours to South London Cares. This work is heightened with our Winter Wellbeing project, where we provide clothing, connections and company to older neighbours during the challenging months.

We do all of this to:
• Reduce isolation and loneliness amongst older people and young people alike;
• Improve participants’ confidence, wellbeing, skills, connection and power;
• Bridge social, generational, digital, cultural and attitudinal divides.
WHY THE BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE?

In 2016, South London Cares ran a campaign with the Big Give Christmas Challenge for the first time. The campaign exceeded our expectations, allowing us to reach out to our large volunteer network and raise £6,321 to fund our Winter Wellbeing project, helping older neighbours in Southwark and Lambeth stay warm, active, healthy and connected.

In 2017, our challenge was bigger. Thanks to pledge donors and the Postcode Support Trust, we doubled our match funding from £2,000 in 2016 to £4,000.

In order to reach our goal, we increased our lead-in time, working from early October in order to carefully plan and execute a campaign that would garner new supporters and re-engage existing volunteers and donors. We were delighted to successfully exceed our match funding target for a second time, allowing our project to continue until March 2018.

BEFORE THE BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Our first task was to reach out to volunteers across our network and ask them to pledge their support to the campaign. Our volunteers are aged between 20 – 35. They live across south London, and engage with us mainly though social media, through which we share daily stories from our charity. As well as this, we write regular blog posts on our website about what is happening in our community.

We started the campaign in October by updating web banners on our social media to highlight the Big Give Christmas Campaign, and by writing a blog post to share across our platforms. These comms asked our supporters to pledge a donation to the Big Give Christmas Challenge, and linked to a pledge form.

Community is at the heart of everything we do. To this end we personally emailed 168 people across our network. We divided these into separate groups, with a different ask for each: Social Club volunteers, Love Your Neighbour volunteers, corporate volunteers and volunteers who had taken on challenges for us, as well as those who had donated and pledged in 2016. An example of a personal email to a Love Your Neighbour volunteer email can be found here.
ENGAGING THE WIDER NETWORK

To complement our personal emails, we also planned five email blasts to the 1,800 people signed up to our newsletter. We sent three blasts before the Big Give Christmas Campaign with a link to our pledge form (e.g. [here]) and two during the campaign itself.

CAMPAIGN VIDEO

We found that the best engagement across social media, blogs and email was content that included a video that we filmed especially for the campaign. It was a short film about neighbours Josh and Bill, who were matched through our Love Your Neighbour programme. They talked about how South London Cares had impacted both of their lives. **This was a hugely successful tool to highlight the importance of our Winter Wellbeing Project** (we first met Bill this way) and connect the ask to a personal story.

OTHER LEADUP ENGAGEMENT

Finally, we talked about the Big Give Christmas Challenge at our volunteer inductions throughout autumn. We hold volunteer inductions every month, where we induct up to 50 people to our network. **This proved an engaging way to talk about the campaign to a captive audience.**

Thanks to these efforts we were able to secure 19 pledges from our volunteers which amounted to £1,000. This gave us the confidence to know that when match funding opened, we would have at least **25% our £4,000 overall campaign target.**
BIG GIVE CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

When the Big Give Christmas Challenge launched at 12pm on Tuesday 28th November, **we immediately called or emailed everyone who had pledged a donation and informed them that match funding was open.** We also sent out another email blast, and made sure our comms across social media announced that the campaign had begun. Because of this coordination, on that first day we received 40 donations – half of the whole campaign, which amounted to 45% of our £8,000 target.

SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE CAMPAIGN

As well as regular posting, we put spend behind three posts on Facebook during the campaign. **By far the most successful post was one that used our campaign video.** This post had 10 shares, 1,810 organic reach and 1,345 paid reach, with 181 post clicks. The copy read ‘One donation, twice the impact. Donate now to South London Cares, your donation will be matched through The Big Give #christmaschallenge17. Make double the difference to neighbours like Bill and Josh this winter: [http://bit.ly/Donate2SLC](http://bit.ly/Donate2SLC)’

This worked well because as well as it’s engaging content, it used the Big Give Christmas Challenge tagline, had a direct, clear call to action, and explained how the donation would be doubled.

We also regularly updated our Twitter and Instagram throughout the week and found that similarly, **comms which contained images (such as the one above) and videos, explaining how donations would be doubled, with a direct call to action, received the most engagement.**
KEEPING OUR ASK TANGIBLE
Alongside our video, across our communications we endeavoured to make the ask tangible. **We came up with suggested donation amounts that were linked to specific items that that money could help to buy.** We wanted to keep our content engaging and fresh using images and infographics, as well as keeping our ‘Double Your Donation’ slogan consistent.

Finally, on the success of the same strategy in 2016, **we deliberately held events around the same time as the Big Give Christmas Campaign to maximize our reach.** We held our Winter Pub Quiz on Wednesday 29th November, which meant we could tell an active, engaged audience of 100 potential donors about our campaign.

PRESS
As well as our existing network, we wanted to take this chance to engage the local community. To this end, we wrote a [press release](#), which was targeted specifically to local small news outlets.

We were taken up by a number of local blogs and news websites, and considering that **22% of donations came from new supporters,** this proved an effective way of garnering new support.
THANKING AND LEARNING

THANKING
One of the ways in which we ensured everyone who donated to South London Cares Big Give Christmas Challenge remained engaged with the campaign was by ringing up and thanking them as soon as their donation came in. Then we would follow up with another thank you email and ask them to share suggested tweets/posts on their personal social media. It was this personal touch that people commented on. Donors were touched by our speedy follow up, and were therefore motivated to help us share our message.

We plan on continuing these personal comms. In January 2018, we will be writing a personal thank you card to each donor, which will also contain a letter written by an older neighbour. Then in March, we will report on the difference that each donation has made. We see this communication as vital in building up a relationship with more potential regular donors.

LEARNING
Our tracked links showed that both with pledges and donations, the most number of clicks came from email. This underscores the importance of the personal touch in communications for the Big Give Christmas Campaign. By analysing the donations that came in, we were able to establish that the average donation amount for 2017 was £68. This is a significant increase on 2016, where the average donation was £43. As with 2016, over half of the donations came from our volunteer network, which was expected as most comms were focused on those people. This, coupled with the larger donation amount, showed that our focused marketing and the draw of match funding encouraged supporters to give more.

It is interesting to note that 34% of donations came from people who weren’t volunteers and 22% were new supporters. This means that combined efforts of press outreach and asking volunteers to engage friends and family worked in expanding our reach.

Overall, we were extremely pleased with our final result. In total, we raised £11,263.25. This was £3,263.25 over our target, a great achievement which gives us the confidence to expand our future regular giving programme.