

Online Donation Site Seeks To Provide Help, Hope

By Site Administrator

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Inspired by the economic downturn, a new web site seeks to connect "Friends in Need" with concerned people who can help, but with a new twist: Respect all around.

What does a very successful technology consultant do when her business tanks in the current economy? Well, this one created My-Friend-In-Need.Com, a web site designed to link folks with financial needs with generous people who would like to help.

So, what makes My-Friend-In-Need different from the abundance of other cyber-begging web sites already out there? "Ugh - I don't even like to call it 'cyber-begging,'" says Christine, the creator and administrator of the site, who will only be identified by her first name to defer to her strong desire to remain as anonymous as possible. "And the things that make it the most different," she continues, "are the level of respect everyone is given and the professionalism of the site itself."

She has a valid point. A Google search on the terms "cyber-begging" or "donate money online" turn up web sites that look like they came from (and perhaps should return to) the dark ages of the Internet. Pages crammed with text in all colors, sizes, and fonts, that scroll down forever and proclaim, "Get out of debt!" "No Payback!" and (dubiously), "As Seen on Oprah Winfrey!"

My-Friend-In-Need takes a much more compassionate, soft-hearted approach. First of all, both seekers and benefactors are referred to as "friends." The site's tagline states "*...because a friend in need is a friend indeed,*" and goes on to further explain that a friend that stands by you in times of trouble is a true friend. People in need of help are encouraged to provide as many details as they are comfortable sharing (all the while being reminded *not* to share any identifying information). And it's suggested that potential donors may feel they are less strangers and more friends with their beneficiaries once they look through the stories and find one that touches their hearts.

And, as would be expected from someone with a web design background, My-Friend-In-Need.Com has a clean, professional look that's attractive and easy to use. "I was really going for a departure from the cluttered, disorganized, and almost 'sleazy' sites that I found out there," states Christine. "Even though I realize it takes a step of faith to expose your financial problems, not to mention donate money, to strangers on the Internet, I'm hoping that having a site that's more polished and up-to-date will help to reassure people that they aren't getting ripped off."

Finally, a fact that the site doesn't blatantly publicize but hides near the end of the "About Us" page: even though there is a fee for listing your request on the site, My-Friend-In-Need.Com is not trying to make a profit for itself. Once the monthly costs of site hosting are covered, surplus listing fees are anonymously donated back to its "friends in need." And doesn't that make My-Friend-In-Need a friend, indeed?

On the web: <http://www.my-friend-in-need.com>

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About My-Friend-In-Need.Com: A new approach to asking for or donating money online - My-Friend-In-Need.Com is professional, compassionate, and trustworthy. The site seeks to match up people experiencing financial misfortune with those who have the means and a heart to help.

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