

Anne Mejia, Best Friends Animal Society

BestFriends is a 26-year old organization, but they are just now building a formal development structure. The fact that they have many consistent, long-term donors has allowed them to work organically with donors as the organization has grown. “We keep it very personal with people,” says Anne Mejia, who is major gifts manager and a founder of the organization. “That matches our mission. We work to keep our relationships with animals personal, too.”

BestFriends is able to provide donors with what they want most: as sense of being a part of the action. They achieve this in a number of different ways, including bringing major donors to retreats at the Sanctuary, where up to 2000 animals are housed at any one time. The Sanctuary is located in a region with several national parks nearby; the combination of the natural environment and immersion in the mission of the organization is a moving experience.

Likewise, the CEO, founders and program directors travel to visit major donors in their homes and donors are included in invitation-only webinars with experts in specific areas of interest to them. These webinars provide insider access to “stars” in the field, such as the individuals featured on National Geographic Channel’s “Dogtown” series. Webinars are organized around area of expertise, including dogs, horses, cats and other animals or issues.

Anne summarized, “Our goal is keep the experiences warm and inclusive. People need to understand that this is a team effort.”