



## Episode 1,155: Help the Poor, No Bureaucracy Necessary

Guest: Gret Glycer

**WOODS:** I'd like you to take just a minute to remind people or indeed to inform people who have not heard the earlier episodes with you exactly what DonorSee is about.

**GLYER:** Of course. So DonorSee is a platform that helps donors see where their money goes when they donate. So the example I like to give is, let's say there's a girl in India and she's deaf and she just needs hearing aids. Donors can go onto the DonorSee platform, the website or the app. They can find this girl and they can donate to her. And a few days later, they'll get a video of that girl hearing for the first time. And we do this with more than just hearing aids and so forth, but that's the example that kind of demonstrates really well what we do.

**WOODS:** It's all kinds of projects, and it really is amazing. You get that semi-immediate feedback. Or just to get any feedback at all and have it be instant, on your phone, a photo, a video, whatever, a text update.

**GLYER:** It's usually a video just a couple days after you give or a couple days after it's funded, and it's always — usually you give a very small amount and it impacts someone in a really big way, and then you get that experience straight to your phone right after the video's taken on the other side of the world. So, very cool.

**WOODS:** Would you mind saying a brief word about the Tom Woods house from a couple years back?

**GLYER:** Yes, well, there's a couple different things I could mention there. The Tom Woods house specifically is that you and your family, you went through and you found some people who were of similar age to your kids, and you found people who needed shoes — I believe it was in Uganda. And so the Tom Woods household donated shoes to these people, and then on Christmas, you guys got videos of the kids receiving their shoes, and so all of your kids got to see the people that they helped with video on the other side of the world. And I believe they even said, "Thank you, Tom Woods," and all of that other stuff.

But the other thing I should mention is that your community, a different type of Tom Woods household, your community has been very supportive as well, and I think the first time that I was on your show, we got just swarmed with donations, but one of the cool things that happened was your community found one specific lady who needed a house, and you built a house out in Malawi. It took a day to get the funding for that. So a couple cool different things there.

**WOODS:** Yeah, it's amazing. It was a grandmother who was a widow, and she was raising several grandchildren who were orphaned, and one of whom was epileptic. I mean, it was just the most challenging situation you could imagine. And not only did we get a nice photo of the family holding up signs with every donor's name on them, all my listeners, their names with a thank you, but we also got a video of a walk-through of the house. It is an astonishing thing.

And so I'm glad you remembered that thing about Christmastime Christmas before last, because I wanted to do that — because as you say, I chose people who were of similar age to my kids so that they could identify with them on some level and for them to understand the depth of the need in so many places, but also to make it be a modest enough contribution that my kids could use their own money and they'd be able to put it up and say: we made this little change in the world, but we did that from the other end of the globe.

And you, Gret Glycer, made that possible. That's really an astonishing thing, and we've talked on this show in the past about the problems with some of the traditional organizations and the overhead and the lack of accountability and all that and how you've been able to cut through that and keep overhead very low. And there's so much good stuff to be said about DonorSee, but I'd like to — and no doubt we'll have some time to talk further about that, but I'd like to talk about some changes that are coming and the crowdfunding campaign you have going. Bring us up to date on DonorSee.

**GLYER:** All right, so first I'll tell you some of the things that have happened on the DonorSee platform up until this point, and then I'll tell you about a cool thing that we're doing going forward and that we launched just yesterday. So one of the big changes that we made was that for a long time, DonorSee was a platform where people could post projects of all sorts of different amounts, but what we decided to do a few months back is we capped all projects at \$450. So from now on, any projects that you go to to give to on DonorSee, the biggest that project could possibly be is \$450.

And the reason we did that was we looked at what are the different things that DonorSee is best at. Like every organization has some kind of focus that really sets them apart, that makes them their organization. So there are charities out there who just focus on water projects; there are charities out there who just focus on medical surgeries. And we were kind of doing a whole bunch of different stuff and we were looking at what is the thing that we deliver best. And when we were looking at that and when we were looking at how our users responded best and when they were engaging the most with our platform, we found out that what DonorSee does better than anything else, the thing that we do ten times better than any other organization out there is we do these really small, personal projects really, really well. So we wanted to provide a platform that is the platform for small personal needs.

So you go to DonorSee, you find these small projects, and there's no other place like it. And the reason that we capped it at 450 is so we're not getting distracted by other things. We're good at building wells. We're good at building — we had an orphanage that we built on the platform. We're good at doing those things, but there are lots of other organizations that do that really well too. But the thing that we're best at are these small, personal needs, and so we're the platform does that. And that's a change that we made a few months ago and we've been really pleased with the reaction and the results to that, so that's the —

**WOODS:** Well, you know what? That's an interesting change. When I read that you were making that change, I wasn't entirely sure what was motivating it, but I get your reasoning.

And I also think that maybe it works well, given the nature of the app, that the fact that I'm getting a video showing me specifically what my contribution did might be tricky if I'm donating \$100 to a \$10 million project. I mean, what did I do, put in those five bricks? How could you do that?

**GLYER:** Yes, that's exactly right. I mean, we've tried doing different things. For example, when we were building this orphanage, people would give in different phases. So first they would lay the foundation for the orphanage, and then everyone who gave to that phase would get a big sign. But still, there were like 100 or 150 names on the sign. Same thing with these wells that we were building. And so it got to be not nearly as personal. And like I said, there's other people doing that out there, but there's no one doing what we're doing with these small, personal needs, and so we're trying to be as focused as possible on this service and this way of giving that we really excel at.

**WOODS:** We recently I guess had the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, who was the opposite of what you're doing for many reasons, but one of them is there's no evidence he ever actually visited a factory and met anybody who met the characteristics he was describing or interacted with these people on any level. And he and his followers spoke entirely in terms of generalities and classes and the people and these aggregates, these abstractions that never had personal faces on them. But everything DonorSee does has a personal face. This isn't some category. This isn't some mechanism in the process of historical development. This is a human being, and you're making a connection with another human being. That's fantastic.

**GLYER:** Yeah, that's really, really what I wanted to do, and it really gets at the heart of why I started DonorSee in the first place, because I spent three years living in Malawi, Africa, which it's always in the bottom five of the poorest countries on the planet. When I was there, two of the three years it was the poorest country on the planet. And I spent three years living with these extremely impoverished people, just like the widow that we mentioned earlier. And I so badly wanted to help people back here in America back in the first world, for lack of a better term — I wanted to help them understand some of the ways that people on the planet live. And not just some people. We're talking about like half the planet. There's 3.5 billion people who live in similar situations to the widow that we mentioned earlier.

And so I wanted a way to do that, and I've been trying really, really hard, and with DonorSee, we were at like 90%. We were really close. And then once we capped it, we've found our sweet spot, and this is something — it's a pivot that I'm so excited about.

**WOODS:** And by the way, what you're doing, if I may use a hackneyed phrase, brings people together. And if I may just recall an incident — we won't mention any names, but let's just say I'm probably not the most popular person over at *National Review* magazine, even though years and years ago, I used to subscribe to it. But you know, I'm different. I'm cut from a different cloth, and I'm not sure I'm their favorite person, or even if some of them even know me.

But I have enough of an in with a few people that when DonorSee came out and you wanted to try to get as much publicity as possible, I wrote to somebody over there and said: look, this thing is extremely worthwhile. We can all agree on that. And doggone it if he didn't actually go ahead and write an article, and they've got — you know, like them or not, they've got a gigantic audience. So I don't think I would have been able to write to him and say: I had this

guest on; I'd like you to promote him. In general, that is a non-starter. But who doesn't like DonorSee?

So tell me about what you're doing now with crowdfunding for DonorSee, what kind of crowdfunding it is and what you're trying to accomplish with it.

**GLYER:** All right, I think it would be good if, as a preamble, we started off by explaining that DonorSee is structured as a for-profit. We're not actually a nonprofit. I started a nonprofit when I was in Malawi. It's called HOWMs and people still donate to it. It's a way for people to build homes for orphans and widows, and it's a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with tax deduction and all that stuff. And I learned a lot from starting that nonprofit, mainly that the benefits of starting a nonprofit are not — they don't warrant the cost of starting a nonprofit.

So when I started DonorSee, I said I wanted to start an organization that's going to help people in the most effective way possible, and so having DonorSee be an LLC, we decided that would be a much better, more efficient way to funnel funds directly to people. So by not having it be a 501(c)(3), we take out all of the paperwork, all of the organizational glut, and we just create a situation that it can actually be more transparent, that money can be funneled more directly. And because we're dealing in such small amounts, tax deduction is not a huge deal to our donors. And we are working on a way to get tax deduction at some point in the future. But that's an important thing to mention before I get into this new thing that we're doing.

So DonorSee's structured as a for-profit, an LLC, and our goal is to grow and to be a product that is in the hands of people all over the world, and we want to be a household name. And so in order to do that, we're actually raising a round of funding. But we're doing it in maybe you could call it a nontraditional or a new way. So there's a website called Wefunder, and Wefunder is kind of like Kickstarter but kind of for startups. So on Kickstarter, you would post a project and you give rewards in exchange for money. On Wefunder, you actually give equity in exchange for money. So someone would come to [Wefunder.com/DonorSee](http://Wefunder.com/DonorSee). They would invest a certain amount in DonorSee. And in exchange for that, they would get equity. And in the event of a liquidity event, in case we IPO or in case DonorSee has an exit in acquisitions sometime in the next three to seven years, the people who invested in DonorSee would actually financially benefit from that.

And so that's the overarching, new direction that we're taking and something that I'm quite excited about. We just launched this yesterday, so it's fresh, but the excitement is definitely there.

**WOODS:** Are you able to give out the link here?

**GLYER:** Yes, [Wefunder.com/DonorSee](http://Wefunder.com/DonorSee) is where we can do that. And I can send that to you afterwards to put in the description.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I've got it right here from your original email. I've never heard of Wefunder.com. Is that new?

**GLYER:** Yes. So here's the thing: up until 2016, what we're doing with crowdfunding through these small amounts in exchange for equity, it was illegal. So we had to go through a whole

bunch of paperwork just to get it published on this site so that people can give small amounts. But up until 2016, the only way to invest in a private company was you had to be what's called an accredited investor. Basically, you had to be a millionaire. Either you had to make \$250,000 a year in income, or you had to have assets of a million dollars, excluding your house. Those were the rules. You could not invest in a private company unless you were an accredited investor. But the folks over at Wefunder, which is an organization I fully endorse for all sorts of reasons, they fought the government tooth and nail to create a situation where people who don't come from those types of means can invest in private companies. And so Wefunder is this brand-new thing, but there's a handful of sites who are facilitating these transactions, but Wefunder is the biggest and the best.

**WOODS:** All right, more with Gret Glyer after we thank our sponsor.

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All right, Gret, with this crowdfunding campaign, are there any minimums for donations?

**GLYER:** Yeah, there's a small minimum, but it's — so here's the funny thing that I think you'll find either amusing or tragic depending on how you're feeling. But I'm actually not allowed to talk about the specifics of the deal because it's actually illegal, so all of the specifics are available at [Wefunder.com/DonorSee](http://Wefunder.com/DonorSee). You can see all of our numbers. You can all of the specifics of the deal, the legal paperwork, all that stuff. But as far as any time I talk about it on some other kind of platform, here or on social media, I'm not allowed to mention the specifics.

**WOODS:** That's totally crazy. So we can all call this up — okay, everybody who's listening in, get on your smart phone or on your computer, go to [Wefunder.com/DonorSee](http://Wefunder.com/DonorSee), and then you can look at it with us. But we can't — so you can't say anything.

**GLYER:** [laughing] I can't talk about the specifics.

**WOODS:** Can I say anything, or is it just you [laughing]?

**GLYER:** So that's something — yeah, they told me I couldn't talk about it. Maybe you're in a position —

**WOODS:** But you know what? Let's not take any chances.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Yeah.

**WOODS:** But if I invested something in this, would I be allowed to say that?

**GLYER:** Yes, for sure.

**WOODS:** Huh. All right, because I mean, I'd like to. I don't want you thrown in jail. The beautiful thing about the Internet: you could probably run DonorSee from jail if it came to that.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Well, yes, for sure. For a while, I ran it from Malawi, so I think jail might be an even easier place to do it.

**WOODS:** But so are you living in the U.S. permanently at this point?

**GLYER:** I have to, yeah. At this point, I would love to go back and live in Malawi, but because of the time difference and because of the inferior infrastructure in all sorts of different ways, I just have to live in the U.S. to do what we're doing over at DonorSee. So I like America, but you know, Malawi is kind of this place that really has a place in my heart, you could say.

**WOODS:** All right, here's what I'm going to do for people who want to make donations. Right now — because I have great supporters who support me, who make contributions to the show and all that and they want me to do good things with it. So I think this is a worthy cause. So I'll put up \$1,000, and I'm going to put up a challenge to my folks. I know listening here, there are some of you who are folks of means who can match me on this. So what I can do — I'm trying to think of things that I could do that would be adding value, but for the next 50 people who match me, each of you donating 1,000, I'll give you — I have a \$497 product, which is lifetime membership at Liberty Classroom. I'll throw that in as a bonus and a thank you for people doing this. If that helps to get you off the fence, that you're getting like a \$500 bonus from me, then that is worth it because this is a really, really good cause. So what you would want to do is make the donation at [Wefunder.com/DonorSee](https://wefunder.com/DonorSee), and then forward the receipt to me at [Bonuses@TomWoods.com](mailto:Bonuses@TomWoods.com). And if you're one of the first 50, I'll get you that thing as a gift. And if not, I'll at least give you a coupon for it. At least you'll get something out of this thing. So there you go.

**GLYER:** I appreciate that, Tom. That means quite a bit. And the support from you and your community has been unquestionable. It's something that has impressed me even to this day, because almost every week, I get an email from one of your listeners saying: hey, I listened to you all these months ago and I'm just checking out DonorSee for the first time and you've really built something cool. Or that *National Review* article that you referenced earlier, which was something that you facilitated, that's another thing that I get emails pretty regularly about, so I can't thank you enough.

**WOODS:** Well, that's really great, especially because it's been so long since you were on. This thing has legs.

**GLYER:** Yeah, quite a bit, yeah. And I think it's helped because you've had me on a few other times after that. And your community, they have invited me on to their podcasts and they talk about me and they follow me on Instagram and Twitter and all that stuff, so I think it's a number of different things. But yeah, it really does have legs.

**WOODS:** All right, so tell me about some other interesting projects that have been funded recently on DonorSee.

**GLYER:** I'll tell you about — so the thing that I love about DonorSee is that it's personal in two ways. One of the ways it's personal is you're giving to a person who is in need, and you can see that person, you can know their story, know their name, and you can see how you help them. The other way it's personal is that the money is funneled through these aid workers who are on the ground helping these people. So there are a bunch of people you can follow on

DonorSee, people like Amy Hathaway, Georgina, Kristen Todd — there's a whole bunch of them. You go to the DonorSee.com website and you can just see the people's names who are posting these projects.

So I'll tell you one of my favorite people who's posting projects on DonorSee. Her name is Amy Hathaway. She lives in Tanzania, and she's doing some of the most incredible work. So she works with babies who are on the verge of starvation. A lot of times, sadly in these countries that are really underdeveloped, a birth mother dies in child birth. In fact, it's way more common than you would think. In third-world countries, 1 in 31 women die in childbirth, so it's really, really tragic. So there's a lot of these babies who are either abandoned at birth or their parents pass away when they're born, and so there are these babies who are on the brink of starvation. So what she does is she posts projects to provide formula milk for these babies. And so over the course of about three months, you provide \$200 worth of formula milk for the babies, and they go from being emaciated where you can see their ribs to like this full, healthy, robust baby.

But she doesn't just stop there. That's what's called a non-sustainable solution. So you can't just give formula milk to a baby and then save its life and then you have a baby. What are you going to do? That kid still has to grow up. It has to get an education. There has to be some kind of mechanism to provide for that kid as it gets older. And so first she saves the baby's life with formula milk, and then the second stage is she finds a caretaker for the baby. Usually it's like an aunt or someone related to the baby. And she sets that aunt up with a business. So you can go to Amy's projects and you can find one of these aunts who maybe needs a sewing machine or something like that, and she sets the aunt up with a business, so the aunt has a sustainable income on a monthly basis and is able to take that baby whose life was saved and raise it for the rest of its life.

And so Amy Hathaway is one of several people on our platform who are just doing the most incredible work you can possibly think of. And they're all on the other side of the world, so no one talks about them or hears about them, but they're really just like saving people's lives, and I get so excited thinking about all of the good that's happening from these people.

**WOODS:** Gret, one more thing. I happen to know that you don't take a salary for DonorSee, which is I think an interesting thing for investors to know. But then that does raise the question: how do you support yourself?

**GLYER:** Yeah, so I'm the only person at DonorSee who is not paid for my work. So everyone else, all of our developers, if we have someone who helps out with marketing or someone who just helps out with an hourly job, they're all paid. I'm the only one who's not paid. And I think a big part of that comes from I lived in Malawi for three years; I'm used to living on a little bit less than the average person my age. But I support myself mainly through Patreon, so people who support me and believe in the work that I'm doing, they can go to [Patreon.com/GretGlyer](https://Patreon.com/GretGlyer), and they can support my monthly expenses that way. And I also have a few things I do on the side, consulting and things like that, that bring in an income. But the more that I can get Patreon support, the more I'm able to focus entirely on DonorSee, which is what I want to do.

And the reason I choose not to take a salary from DonorSee is because I understand the dynamic of how it kind of looks of having a for-profit charity. So not everyone is going to listen to a half-hour-long podcast and understand how much I truly care about this cause.

Some people, they might just see: CEO of for-profit charity is trying to raise investment round or something like that, and they'll just look at the headline and they'll make a decision based on the headline. And so I wanted to take that possibility off the table and be above reproach, so to speak.

**WOODS:** Well, fair enough. This is a great thing. I'm glad to hear of the continuing growth and development of DonorSee, and after I showed it to my eight-year-old today, she actually remembered from I guess a year and a half ago, because it was two Christmases ago.

**GLYER:** Yeah, something like that, yeah.

**WOODS:** Yeah, when we made that — in fact, that was a night where I was just going nuts. We were just donating left and right, and I finally said: all right, why don't you kids pitch in something? But she remembered it, and so she said, "Can we give something?" And I said, "Let me go up and talk to Gret, and then when we finish later in the day, we'll sit down together and see what we find interesting and compelling and we'll make another donation." So it's fun. It can be addicting, DonorSee, but there are a lot worse things to be addicted to than helping people.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Yeah, that's the funny thing that I hear about it, is it's the one app where people feel like they open and they can't help but spend money on it. But it's a good way to spend money. If you're going to be impulsive in one way, DonorSee is a good excuse to do that.

**WOODS:** That's right. And of course, you can always just look through and you can always say to a friend: look, I know you're interested in such and such thing. Well, this person has this exact need and you can meet that need in three seconds.

**GLYER:** Yes.

**WOODS:** Anyway, sometimes we get discouraged, especially with this show. And I was looking at my email newsletter list the other day and the subject lines, and oh my gosh, I mean, it's just — But the problem is, if I send out like a happy email subject line, people don't open it for some reason. I don't know what's wrong — what is the matter with you people [laughing]?

**GLYER:** Yeah, I operate the same way. There's something that's like deep down within us that just wants to see the controversy. I don't quite know what that is.

**WOODS:** Yeah, but all the same, I do want to point out that this app that you've designed, which people can access on a desktop or laptop computer as well as via a smart phone, is a light in the darkness, really, and it shows us that there is some good that can come out of all this. In fact, it's the sort of thing — you're too young to know who Roger Waters is, but he was a bass player for Pink Floyd, and he was the most — the last Pink Floyd album he did was *The Final Cut*, and the last song is about a nuclear holocaust. I mean, that was pretty much where he saw the world going. But four years later, he watched Live Aid on TV, which was like, you know, there were all these performers and they were going to donate the money and all that. And so he wrote a song called "The Tide Is Turning," thinking that, you know what? Maybe technology can be turned to some good. And in a way, 30 years after he wrote that song, that is exactly what's going on with DonorSee, and it's tremendous.



So I want to urge people to check it out. You can get it directly onto your devices. You can go to DonorSee.com and get cracking from there, but really, really, I want you to consider my challenge. I don't really go on the air and say, "Give money." What I do say is: I contribute to such and such cause and I recommend it to you. In this case, I'm saying: give money, especially those of you who are of means and have been waiting for something worthwhile to give it to. I would say Wefunder.com/DonorSee is an excellent, excellent option.

**GLYER:** Right, and I'll also include that not only are they supporting DonorSee and the cause behind it, but actually their \$1,000 that they'll be matching you with is an actual equity stake in the DonorSee company. You can read about the valuation and so forth at Wefunder.com/DonorSee. But they're actually going to be owning a piece of DonorSee by investing in that, so —

**WOODS:** Right, so it's not a strict donation in the strict sense. That's right. But I think with most of us, I'm not making the donation for that reason. I'm not sending in the money for that reason, but that is good to know for clarification purposes. Anyway, Gret, best of luck. And those of you listening also who have podcasts, please consider Gret as a guest. He would love to come on and talk about DonorSee. I don't want to necessarily give your email address out, but you can contact Gret via Twitter, right, send a tweet over your way?

**GLYER:** Right, and people can contact Admin@DonorSee.com, and that's a great way to book me on your podcast.

**WOODS:** Okay, maybe that's the way to do it.

**GLYER:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** All right, great. Thanks again, Gret. Best of luck.

**GLYER:** Absolutely. Thank you, Tom.