



**WOODS:** I know that you've been on a couple times before and you've told the story, but we have new people coming in listening to *The Tom Woods Show* all the time. So before we get into what's going on today, maybe you wouldn't mind just briefly telling your story of where DonorSee came from. I mean, it more or less developed out of events in your own life.

**GLYER:** Yeah, that's right. So I grew up as a private school kid in Northern Virginia, right outside of DC. It was a great upbringing, and I had really lovely to parents. And then after I graduated from college, I spent a year working in the corporate world. That went just fine. But then I decided, I'm young, I want to move overseas. And I moved to Malawi, Africa in 2013. And at the time, it was the poorest country on the entire planet. And that exposure to extreme poverty, living every single day with people who were surviving on somewhere between \$20 and \$40 a month, that was shocking to me, and it was a complete contrast to what I had been used to growing up. And so that eventually led me to start crowdfunding and then start doing bigger projects.

And then eventually, I started DonorSee, which is a platform where we bring partners onto our platform, vetted, trusted partners, and they post video-based projects, and then anyone who donates to those projects gets a video update. So the example I always give is, let's say there's a girl in India and she needs hearing aids. Well on DonorSee, you can go and you can donate hearing aids to this young woman, and a few days later, you'll get video of her hearing for the first time. And we do this with all sorts of other stuff: housing projects, entrepreneurial projects, education-based projects. We have 15 different categories. And so DonorSee is this platform, our tagline is, "We serve the poorest people in the world on the worst day of their lives." And then on top of that, we provide video feedback on every single donation, even if it's just \$1.

**WOODS:** That's what makes it amazing. So DonorSee implies transparency, that the donor can see exactly what the effects of the donation are, which I think helps to account for why there are so many projects being funded on DonorSee that we might call micro projects, that you're not necessarily building the Brooklyn Bridge or something, but you are helping one person accomplish one finite thing, sometimes mundane, sometimes extraordinary and life changing, like having one of the five senses restored. And you'll recall, I am sure, in the first episode where you were with me, the Tom Woods house. Could you just remind people about that? Because again, with new listeners they might not know about the Tom Woods house.

**GLYER:** Yeah, so one of the things that people have a hard time grasping if they've never really been to a place like Malawi or somewhere in Sub Saharan Africa or a rural part of Asia, is basically the purchasing power disparity between someplace like America and someplace over there. So the Tom Woods house was basically, there was a project posted on DonorSee for about \$800 to build an entire house for someone living in Malawi. I believe it was a grandma widow who was taking care of her young children. And \$800 was raised through the Tom Woods community, and that was able to provide her with what in her village was a very luxurious house. The house had cement floors, tin roof, and in her village in her context, that is a really, really nice house that she got built. And so at the end of that, there was a video with her holding up a sign saying, "Thank you, Tom Woods community," along with all of the donors' names from your community who had come together to make this happen.

**WOODS:** Yeah, they read out the names. It was an amazing, extraordinary moment. So let's bring your story up to the present. I did have you on some time later, because of, well, some trouble you got into or some difficulties, let's say.

**GLYER:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** And so maybe you can tell us about that. And then I just want you to catch us up on what's been going on with DonorSee. Obviously, we want to talk about the coronavirus situation, but what's been going on with DonorSee since you last checked in with us, too?

**GLYER:** Yeah, there's so much that has been happening. And this was several years ago that, I mean — well, not several, two years ago at this point — where one of the ways that we grow is we bring more partners onto our platform, and if there are people who are living in remote parts of the world who are doing really amazing on-the-ground work, we want to partner with them so that they can post projects. We of course vet them first, and they go through an extensive vetting process that takes months. We turn down more than 90% of the people who apply to work with us. But for the people who do make it through the vetting process, we want to work with them.

So one of the one of the entities that we approached about working together was the Peace Corps. And we approached them and we said, Hey, we would love to work with your volunteers who are stationed in 150 countries around the world. We just think it'd be a really good fit, and we'd like to start approaching them and seeing if they would like to fundraise for some projects in their local area. I mean, they're on the ground. They know the needs of the people on the ground right there better than anyone.

And so we approached them, and instead of saying, "Yeah, sure, we'd love to work with you," they actually banned all of their workers from being able to post on DonorSee. And so it was a much heavier hand than we could have imagined. It wasn't just, *I'm not sure we need a legal partnership*. Instead, it was, *No, not only are we not going to do a partnership, but you're not even allowed to talk to our people*. And so that turned into this whole thing, which also turned into a *National Review* article written by Kevin Williamson, and a lot of other kind of coverage that we got from that. And it actually helped put us on the map in a way. So it was unfortunate that they didn't want to work with us, but we're also grateful for all the extra coverage it provided.

**WOODS:** Yeah, no doubt. So one thing I want to point out, because you have a Patreon page, is that as CEO of DonorSee, you do not take a salary.

**GLYER:** Yeah, that's correct. So there's all sorts of reasons for that, and people are always kind of curious, like why choose not to take a salary? One of the main things, especially in kind of the early days, is people are always wondering who's at the head of these organizations, how much is the CEO — like if I donate \$100, how much of that is going into the CEO's pocket? And people have a very cynical view of this because of some CEOs who have kind of abused charity funds in the past. And so just to kind of separate these things completely, I said, you know what, DonorSee funds are going to be for DonorSee-based projects and for our administrative needs, but for my personal salary, I'm going to raise that separately through Patreon. So I have a Patreon where people can provide donations, and they can go to [Patreon.com/GretGlyer](https://Patreon.com/GretGlyer).

And then the other thing that it has provided us with is it's a really great way for us to actually grow faster. So we have employees, and we have video hosting costs, and we have all sorts of technical issues that we have to deal with and take care of and features we have to build, and we're working around the clock literally to make these things happen. And because I haven't taken the salary for myself from those funds, we're actually able to employ people faster and grow faster. And so that's been another really nice thing about me having kind of a separate salary.

So with that said, I am an expecting father. So my wife is due in August, and we're very excited about that, but we do have some Patreon-based goals on [Patreon.com/GretGlyer](https://www.patreon.com/GretGlyer) that we're trying to reach by the time that our little one joins us on August 14th.

**WOODS:** All right, well, that's a pretty worthy cause, supporting what you're doing and supporting that Patreon, because it is ridiculously selfless. In fact, I seem to recall you saying that when you came back to the United States to really take off with DonorSee and head up that project here, there was a part of you that really regretted that you couldn't continue living in Malawi. Am I remembering that right?

**GLYER:** Yeah, and I would say that there's a big part of that that's still true. There's a lot of things about Malawi that I continue to miss to this day. The people are just so beautiful. Like their souls are beautiful. And kind of like this materialism that kind of saturates American culture in the way that kids are brought, like all that stuff, it's like the water that we swim in, in America, so it's almost like you don't notice it because it's literally everywhere. Whereas in Malawi, it's like it's not there at all. You have kids who, unfortunately, they have one shirt, and that one shirt has a giant hole in it, and that's their one shirt, and their neighbor has the same situation. And they're just really lovely, joyful people. I love being around people like that. And just the community and the relational aspect of being in Malawi was really beautiful.

So there are things about living in Malawi that I really miss, but one of the things that I am committed to is I have limited resources and limited time with my life, and I want to be as effective as possible with that time and with those resources. And I realized that DonorSee was this really big opportunity that I had to make an impact in the lives of people, not only just in Malawi, but all over the planet. We're in over 50 countries at this point with DonorSee, and we're changing lives in a substantial way on a daily basis. And that's a really gratifying thing. I just couldn't have done that if I'd stayed in Malawi. So I'm back here. I'm in Falls Church, Virginia. I live with my wife, who's a preschool director, and this is the life calling that I have.

**WOODS:** Let's talk about challenges you've faced. It seems like there are so many good news stories that come out of what you're doing and so many worthy causes that get funded that it might be easy to forget that it must be in some ways difficult and challenging to do this.

**GLYER:** Yeah, that's a really good question and one people are often reticent to ask, because you want to just keep everything positive. But there are some very real realities when you deal with things like extreme poverty. And so one of the things that happens, one of the things on our site that we really try and do our best with is we provide babies with formula milk. And so there are these babies who are really malnourished in the first few weeks of their lives, and that can have impacts for the rest of their lives. Like if the baby doesn't just get the basic formula milk or just doesn't get basic sustenance in the first several months of their life, then that baby unfortunately will have developmental problems, which will again kind of perpetuate the poverty cycle not only for them, but possibly for generations. It's one of those things that just really keeps people down and suppressed through poverty.

And so if there's a baby who is malnourished and is not getting enough sustenance, we want to provide them with formula milk, and you can usually do that for like 200 or 250 bucks, and that will provide them with formula milk for the first six months of their lives. And the donor gets to see the baby turn happy and healthy and so forth. But the reality is that there is so much need. You can't fathom the amount of need that there is, that often — it's really sad to say, but more often than I want to admit, we raise the money for formula milk, and the baby was kind of brought to us too late. And we raised the money as fast as we possibly could. We got the formula to the baby as fast as we possibly could, and the baby just doesn't make it. And I wish that that were a rare story. I wish that that was something that was like this one-time thing that has only happened once in the history of DonorSee, but unfortunately, I hear about these stories twice a month, maybe, something like that. So yeah, there are some very

real and harsh realities about some of the work that we do because we're dealing with extreme poverty.

**WOODS:** I think one thing people are worried about, and I know you have ways of dealing with it, would be, how do we know that the people who put the various requests on DonorSee are on the up and up and aren't just scammers?

**GLYER:** Right. So that's something that we have spent probably about two years perfecting. So at the very beginning of DonorSee, the idea behind it was we basically allowed pretty much anyone to post, and then we were going to try and create like an eBay-type feedback system, where we could kind of vet people retroactively. And if someone was not on the up and up, as you say, then they would kind of be down voted on the platform.

Eventually, we realized that that really wasn't sufficient to build trust. We realized that people don't want to do the work of going through the feedback system, and they want to just come to the site and know that everything on the site is valid and trustworthy, and that's what they want. And so we spent about two years trying to figure out that system, and it was not an easy thing to solve. I mean, we're working in remote corners of the globe, where there are people who, I mean, there's not even a bank nearby. There's not a hospital nearby. They're living so remotely, that it's tough to really know exactly what's going on.

So basically, what we did was we put them through a six-point vetting system. And I won't go through all of it because it'll be extremely boring, but it's all obviously on our website. But there's the front-end vetting, where they apply to partner with us, and we check a lot of their things. Like we're able to check their financial history, we're able to check, they provide us with references. And I would say almost exclusively, we only work with direct referrals, so people who are already within our trusted network are able to refer us. And if we get multiple referrals from different people who are not connected, that signals a level of trust to us that, again, gets them to the next round. And so they go through several rounds of vetting, and they go through interviews and reference checks.

And then once they're on our platform, after they've gone – and again, this takes months. Once they go through this entire application process, then in addition to that, they have a feedback system. So on Amazon, when you want to go buy a blender, you go and you check to see how many stars there are. *Okay, this has 4.2 stars. I know that this is going to be a great blender for me and my family. It's going to blend everything just right, and there's 4000 people who have told me so.* And you feel really good about buying that blender.

Well, we have the same thing on DonorSee, actually. We have not only our donors, but also fellow partners rate each and every partner so that you can read what other people have to say about them. And we have partners who have probably 50 to 100 of these reviews written about just one single partner, and you can read through them and you can see people who make know them on a personal basis. And we have metrics that go along with it, things like the number of times that a donor has donated. So you can see, okay, this is a serious donor. They've donated to over 100 projects, and they're saying that this is a legit partner. So we have a lot of these metrics that are built in, and we have a really robust trust system put in place.

Now, obviously, we work in messy parts of the globe, and anytime that you give money to anyone, there is a trust level that is needed. So if you're someone who wants the same assurance that you get from walking into McDonald's when you buy a Big Mac, and you expect the same Big Mac every single time, unfortunately, that's not how charity works. Charity is extremely relational, and at the end of the day, you're always going to have to have trust when you give. And so that's just a necessary component to this type of work.

**WOODS:** All right now, let's talk about what's going on today. Obviously, nobody can know exactly how this is going to unfold, and this coronavirus situation has been very bizarre in the way it's unfolded in some places rather than in others.

GLYER: Yes.

WOODS: Like in Vietnam, as of the time we're recording, they've had no deaths at all.

GLYER: It's baffling.

WOODS: Yeah. And then people try to say, *Oh, they've done this. They've done that.* But the things they've come up with are really lame to account for that kind of a disparity. So I think there's a lot more to this that we just don't understand. So who knows how it's going to hit any particular place? But it could well be the case that there are parts of the world that are extremely unprepared for what could be about to hit them. What's the role of DonorSee here?

GLYER: Well, I'll start off by saying that I am as big of a skeptic as you can possibly be. And I was in Malawi in 2013 to 2016. I think the Ebola crisis was in 2014 or '15. I was in Africa when the Ebola crisis broke out, and people were afraid to ride the subways in New York City, and I was not personally afraid of Ebola. I was on the same continent, and I was not scared of it. And so when I started hearing about the coronavirus again, I'm thinking, oh, great, here's another panic that's going to be induced by the media. And I'm just asking skeptical as you can possibly be.

And I get asked about these things all the time. I'm doing international work, and people are like, *Well, what do you think of the of COVID-19?* And I hear them, and I look at things, and I think there's no way that this is going to be real. And I read article after article where it just looks like they're really burying the lede and they're just spreading disinformation. And so I was so skeptical throughout this whole thing. And I told myself I think that we'll probably get a few cases in the US, we might even get between one and five deaths. But really, it would blow my mind if we went beyond that.

And then it did, as you know. I mean, I think by the time it hit about ten deaths in the US, I started reevaluating, and I started saying, okay, this thing is spreading a little bit faster than I thought it would, and it's a little bit deadlier than I thought it would be. And you still have these comparisons to things like the flu and so forth, but there was something going on there that was more substantial than I had originally given credit to.

So as I started to follow it, I started realizing that, again, it's weird. We don't exactly know what's going to go on. But there are some things that are pretty likely to happen. So when you look at what's going on in Italy and in Lombardy, they have about 1,250 ICU beds in Lombardy. And most of those at this at this present moment are being filled by patients who are tested positive for coronavirus. Unfortunately, a lot of them are not going to make it, and they have many more people who don't fit into the beds.

Well, when I lived in Malawi in the capital city of the Lilongwe, I knew the hospital system really well. I had a couple of friends who unfortunately had ended up in the hospital, and we took several of our aid recipients to the hospital for various things. I got to know the hospital system really well. In the capital city of Lilongwe, they have four ICU beds. They have four total for like the entire city. And so we don't exactly know the extent to which coronavirus will spread in a warmer climate like Sub Saharan Africa, but it's not going to take much for it to begin to overrun their system. And I guess I would say their system is overrun by default. So the coronavirus is just going to be something that exacerbates them.

And the analogy I've been using to kind of explain how this is going to feel — I think in the US, it seems like we have things not perfectly under control, obviously. I mean, the economy just tanked. But in the US, it's going to feel like a heavy rain. It's not going to feel nice as the coronavirus kind of works its way through our ecosystem. Take the same amount of force and apply it to an extremely fragile economy like Malawi or like Tanzania, and it's going to be like a tsunami. It's going to knock them out. And that's what we're really worried about, and that's what we're trying to prepare against right now.

So the coronavirus is just now making its way through Sub Saharan Africa. And there's about 54 countries in Africa. Almost every single one of those is having their borders locked down and is having a state of emergency declared, including Malawi, where I lived, and including Tanzania, where we do a lot of work with DonorSee.

And so what we're doing at the moment is we're in the preparatory phase. We're trying to fund projects that are entirely based to help people brace themselves as the coronavirus starts to hit. So that's things like providing them with extra sanitation supplies, helping make sure hospitals are stocked with mattresses. A lot of these hospitals, they literally just don't have beds. You can't just like walk to the store and get a bed for a hospital like you could in the States, where we have excellent supply chains.

So a lot of our stuff is extremely preparatory right now, but what we've done is we've set up a live feed at [DonorSee.com/coronavirus](https://donorsee.com/coronavirus), and that feed is going to constantly be updating for the needs of people in the poorest half of the world. So if you live in the poorest half of the world and you're one of our trusted and vetted partners, then you'll be able to post projects onto this feed where anyone who wants to help with that relief effort will be able to do so. And it'll be constantly updating projects. So it'll be completely fresh projects that are updated on a daily basis, so when the need changes, new projects will be posted. And it will be just kind of a virtuous cycle, where we're able to take care of needs as they happen.

**WOODS:** Wow, that's tremendous. So have you already started to see requests related to this come in, or are you kind of bracing for it?

**GLYER:** Yeah, we are already having requests come in. And it's this strange thing, because some of our partners are being evacuated. Some of them are already being evacuated because of the government where they come from. So one of our partner coordinators, actually, someone who works for DonorSee, she's from Ireland and her husband's from Ireland. So the Irish government is actually for going to force them to evacuate at some point, so she won't be able to stay in Tanzania even though she wants to. So we have people who are being forced to evacuate.

And then we have people who are heroes, and they are staying behind. There's this one woman in particular. Her name is Dr. Trish, and her entire hospital has left. Her entire hospital has been evacuated out. And Dr. Trish has decided that she's going to stay behind and work with patients through this impending season. And you have to know that, one, she's a doctor, so she understands the implications of what the coronavirus is going to be really, really well. And then two, she understands how much of a sacrifice it's going to be. So as things come in, Dr. Trish, including several other partners, are going to be posting coronavirus-related projects.

So yeah, we're really on top of it, and I think we have about 15 projects on the site right now, but that's going to grow. In terms of the coronavirus-related projects, that's going to grow and expand as things continue to develop.

**WOODS:** All right, well great. Well, I can't say enough how much I support what you're doing. And I have the DonorSee app, and I guess I haven't used it in a while. I'll have to go back, and I'll have to fix that. But I've used it with my children. As I've said on the program before, we've gone through and looked, we did it on a Christmas one time. We found children somewhere else in the world, each of whom was roughly the age of one of my children at that time so that they could each have somebody to identify with. And we sent them gifts, because that was one of the things being asked for, that on Christmas, they would get gifts. And the gifts were sometimes so mundane, they just wanted shoes or something like that. And I just wanted them all to see that they work, they do some jobs around the house, they earn some money, and they make somebody else's life much better with a simple gesture. And then we got some feedback from them on the other side of the world, and it was an amazing thing.

So I hope other people will follow me on that, because it's not just good for you, but it really, really is a nice thing for your children, for them to see you doing it. And then it's great for both them and you to see the actual footage, whether it's video or still shots or a note or something that comes from the people you've helped. You don't get that very much in very many of these types of philanthropic enterprises, so it's quite unique and extraordinary.

So what would be, as we wrap up for today, final parting words? It could be any kind of wisdom, anything that we wanted to cover that we didn't. I want you to be able to say at the end of this that you said what you wanted to say. Because I don't care if this episode sounds like an infomercial. If you don't like DonorSee, there's something the matter with you.

**GLYER:** [laughing] Right. Well, again, thank you for having me on. I think I want to close by saying that I know that things are rough in America for a lot of people right now, and I know that the economy has led to a lot of job loss for people, and there are a lot of people in America who are just feeling the pressure of that. And so I'm a big believer in putting your own oxygen mask on first, so if you're in a place where you're struggling and you're not in a place to give, that's totally fine. We want you to take care of yourself first, because by taking care of yourself, you'll actually be able to take care of others later on in the long term.

So if you are someone who is able to support us, I would really appreciate if we included two links, [Patreon.com/GretGlyer](https://Patreon.com/GretGlyer). I really need support to continue what I'm doing, especially with a child on the way. And then the second one is [DonorSee.com/coronavirus](https://DonorSee.com/coronavirus), and that is going to be a constantly updating feed of ways that your listeners and their friends who they share with through Facebook can fight the coronavirus epidemic as it makes its way through some of the poorest parts of the world that are extremely fragile.

**WOODS:** So let's see, at [TomWoods.com/1619](https://TomWoods.com/1619), I will have both of those links available, the Patreon and to DonorSee itself. So all you have to remember is the number 1619, [TomWoods.com/1619](https://TomWoods.com/1619). If you're driving around, when you get home, go do this. You know you should do it. You're going to be doing some good for fellow human beings. And what Gret is doing is really important, and he deserves to be supported at a decent level while he's basically foregoing a salary. And he's about to become a father and everything. He's a young guy who's thrown his life into this. This is one of these times when libertarians have got to step up and prove: would they really do good if they weren't coerced into doing it? We always say people would do that, but now it's time to prove it. So you can do that by heading over to [TomWoods.com/1619](https://TomWoods.com/1619). Well, continued good luck to you, Gret, and thanks for your time.

**GLYER:** Thanks for having me.