



CaringBridge[®].org

Media Kit

CaringBridge is a nonprofit providing free websites that connect people experiencing a significant health challenge to family and friends, making each health journey easier.



Fast Facts

Our Service

- The mission of CaringBridge is to **amplify the love, hope and compassion in the world**, making each health journey easier. Our vision is to amplify caring worldwide.
- CaringBridge is a nonprofit providing **free websites** that connect people experiencing a significant health challenge to family and friends.
- The program is funded by a donor community, ensuring the services are available at no charge to families. Through this generosity, the websites are **free of advertising**.
- Each website is **easy to create, unique and focused on the patient**. Authors select their website design and add health updates and photos to share their story. Visitors read updates and leave messages of support.
- CaringBridge offers a **variety of privacy levels** for authors to manage who can access their site.
- According to the 2010 CaringBridge Impact survey, **91% of patients** agreed that using CaringBridge helped make their **health journey easier**.

Our Reach

- As a community of grateful, engaged families and friends, more than **43 million people visited CaringBridge in the past year**.
- More than **323,000 personal sites** have been created.
- **1.7 billion visits** have been made to personal CaringBridge websites.
- Each day, **half-a-million people connect** through CaringBridge.
- The CaringBridge community includes authors, visitors and/or donors in all 50 states and more than 225 countries/territories around the world.
- More than 125,000 families and individuals have made a charitable gift to CaringBridge in the past year.

Our Organization

- Headquartered in Eagan, Minn., the work of CaringBridge is fulfilled by 65 employees, a governing board of 13 members, and 216 volunteers.
- Charity Navigator, an independent charity evaluator, states that CaringBridge consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way and **outperforms most other charities in America**.



Company Overview

CaringBridge is the world's oldest and most widely-used free online service for keeping families and loved ones connected while facing a significant health challenge. Its mission is to amplify the love, hope and compassion in the world, making each health journey easier. CaringBridge is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization funded by private donations and partnerships.

History

In 1997, founder Sona Mehring's close friend developed a life-threatening pregnancy. To keep family and friends informed about the critical situation, Mehring created a website to communicate information to a wide circle of family and friends without disturbing the mother's need for rest or placing additional demands on hospital staff.

Baby Brigid was born almost three months premature. With her mother in critical condition, the one-pound preemie was quickly rushed to the Newborn Intensive Care Unit at Children's Hospital in St. Paul, Minn.

The family posted daily news about mom and Brigid on the website. An accompanying online guestbook enabled visitors to send the family messages of love and encouragement.

Sadly, Brigid's story does not have a happy ending. After a nine-day struggle against tremendous odds, she died in surgery.

The website allowed the family to convey this saddest of news without the painful burden of several emotional phone calls. The parents also had a place to post a final message to honor Brigid and their supportive online community. Brigid's death prompted an outpouring of loving messages to the family. They immediately understood that other patients dealing with the birth of a premature baby, childhood cancer or other critical illness would benefit from the same online resources.

A memorial fund, created in Brigid's memory, enabled Children's Hospital in St. Paul to dedicate a computer and Internet access for patients and families wishing to create their own online communities.

And CaringBridge was born.



How it Works

From any device with a connection to the Internet, a patient, family member or trusted friend simply goes to www.CaringBridge.org to begin creating a CaringBridge site. They will then follow a few simple steps to set up a site complete with personalization and privacy options.

Access to a CaringBridge website requires that visitors know the exact name of the site they're trying to reach. In addition, CaringBridge site authors have the ability to add password protection, create a "by invitation only list" to allow access to pre-approved visitors, or block access to specific unwanted visitors. CaringBridge authors have complete control of the privacy settings and can modify them as frequently as desired.

When a new site is created, CaringBridge sends the author a confirmation message, and provides a sample announcement e-mail that can be forwarded to family and friends. The service allows users to easily update everyone with online journal entries while focusing their energies on the person who requires healing.

Technology

CaringBridge was the first service of its kind and continues to be the leading force in this industry. It is based on Compassion Technology™ which allows patients and families to stay in touch with loved ones when facing a significant health challenge. Because of the innovative use of technology, communication is not hindered or limited by time zones or area codes. Through the use of Compassion Technology, both patients and families feel a sense of control in a healthcare situation that is otherwise largely out of their control.

Input and feedback received directly and regularly from patients and families drives changes, enhancements and new features to the technology and service.

Donations

Nearly 90 percent of all funding comes from individuals and families who use CaringBridge. Financial gifts support the mission of CaringBridge and are not provided to the families using the free service.

Partnerships

CaringBridge develops a variety of partnerships with healthcare and nonprofit organizations. These partnerships allow CaringBridge to offer more services and to connect more friends and family facing a significant health challenge.



Sona Mehring
CaringBridge, Founder & CEO



Sona Mehring, founder and CEO of nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization CaringBridge, created the first CaringBridge website in 1997.

Based upon the idea of keeping friends and family informed when someone is facing a serious medical condition, Mehring's vision was to create a free service that would not only ease the stress of communication, but also provide a means for people to express encouragement and support to ones they love. This function would

alleviate the burden of making several emotional phone calls without disturbing the patient's need for rest. In addition, each website would include pictures and journal updates, as well as an online guestbook allowing all parties to stay informed without placing extra demands on hospital staff.

Sona is frequently recognized and honored for her passion and visionary leadership. She was named one of 2011's "Most Influential Women in Technology" by Fast Company. In 2010 she received the Health Care Heroes Award from Twin Cities Business magazine. In 2009 she was named one of 25 Women Industry Leaders in the Twin Cities by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal. In 2008, she received a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for outstanding and invaluable service to the community. Mehring was recognized by MSN.com as one of the nation's leading women working for change and was a participant at *Fortune Magazine's* Most Powerful Women Summit. She has also been awarded CBS affiliate-WCCO-TV's Good Neighbor Award, the Angel Foundation Star Award and an Alumni Excellence Award from the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

Mehring is a member of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, National Health Council, Women Business Leaders of the U.S. Health Care Industry Foundation and the National Health Marketing Leadership Roundtable, a national network of leaders dedicated to applying the power of marketing, communication, and partnerships to improve the health of individuals, families, and communities in the United States and throughout the world. She has also participated as a speaker and panelist at many healthcare related events.

Recognition

In 2006 CaringBridge was accepted for membership in the National Health Council (NHC), a private, nonprofit organization that brings together health-related organizations for the purpose of bringing quality healthcare to all people. Members of the NHC must meet good operating practices to ensure that the highest standards of organizational effectiveness and public stewardship are met.



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