

CASE STUDY

American Leprosy Missions

Funding a
Life-Changing Trial

2018 MAXI BIG IDEA & Gold Award Winner

BACKGROUND

Every two minutes, someone in the world is diagnosed with leprosy. Many Americans believe that this is an ancient disease left in the past. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Today, in hundreds of countries across the world, leprosy exists. Those affected by leprosy suffer from nerve damage and muscle weakness, which can lead to deformities, crippling, blindness, and isolation.

As the oldest and largest Christian organization in the United States dedicated to curing and caring for those affected by leprosy, American Leprosy Missions (ALM) works tirelessly with partners around the world to bring healing, dignity, and hope to some of the world's most marginalized people.



Amassing over 100 years of knowledge and experience from medical professionals, world-renowned experts, and its own on-the-ground work, ALM strives to bring an end to leprosy via a vaccine.



CHALLENGES

Through a partnership with the Infectious Disease Research Institute (IDRI), ALM had invested over \$5 million into vaccine research and development. After 15 years, the vaccine was finally ready for Phase 1 of human testing—but ALM needed to secure an additional \$1.3 million to fund this essential testing phase.

As ALM's direct response partner, we needed to develop a creative package that would secure funding and bring this groundbreaking medical discovery over the finish line.

OBJECTIVE

To inspire ALM’s most optimal supporters to donate, The Lukens Company (TLC) set out to create a must-open direct mail package that would showcase how the Phase 1 Vaccine Clinical Trials would halt transmission, end stigma, and restore the lives of those affected by leprosy.

TLC SOLUTIONS

Our team got to work developing an enticing direct mail package that would motivate donors to act—and act quickly.

Direct mail engages multiple senses, making it one of the most effective methods for fundraising and mission-focused campaigns. You feel the package with your hands, you see the design and read the copy, you smell the paper and glue, you hear the package ripping open and papers shuffling together. It was this last sense—hearing—that became the focus for the multi-award-winning Vaccine Vial Direct Mail Appeal.

Before the donor even got to the enclosed letter, reply form, and return envelope, they heard the sound and felt the shifting weight of something heavy bouncing around inside the shipping box. Paired with the message “Do Not Discard – Hope Enclosed” adhered next to the delivery address, this package created a sense of intrigue and urgency.



As for the enclosed mystery item? We included a medical-grade glass vial that was an exact replica of the vial that would contain the actual vaccine once ALM's goal was met. Including the vial served two important purposes:

1. Since the 1-inch vial wasn't adhered to anything or wrapped in any protective materials, it freely bounced and rattled around inside the 6x9x2 box and made opening the package irresistible.
2. The vial was a distinct object that immediately conveyed the gravity of the mission: creating a medical cure.

Another essential component of the package was a chart that measured ALM's fundraising progress to support the Phase 1 Vaccine Clinical Trials. This was featured on both the enclosed letter and reply form. The chart indicated that ALM was well over halfway to its goal and provided a strong case that a donation would truly make a difference since the target goal was within reach.

When it came to creating copy, we first made sure to hone in on the right audience. Given ALM's revenue goals and the high cost of the package, we targeted donors who had a highest previous contribution of their lifetime on the file of \$250 or more. We also included donors who had given one or more gifts via direct mail packages.



Our team then thoughtfully crafted messaging with the donor, organization, and mission in mind. We knew that ALM donors resonate with messages of *hope* and *healing*, as this language refers to their ability to help others through the power of Christ. We therefore used the word “hope” throughout the Vaccine Vial Direct Mail Appeal, from the sticker affixed to the outside of the package to the letter and reply form inside the box.

In addition to careful word choice, we shared that ALM was a recipient of a “Matching Challenge Grant.” Knowing their dollars would stretch even farther, donors were inspired to give more, increasing the average gift amount.

RESULTS

The Vaccine Vial Direct Mail Appeal performed beyond all expectations and enabled ALM to reach its goal of funding the Phase 1 Vaccine Clinical Trials.



The combination of employing a high impact technique, utilizing compelling language, and providing the opportunity to end leprosy in our lifetime resulted in ALM's average gift increasing by 69%. Moreover, ALM garnered a staggering 13% response rate and received nearly \$125,000 from almost 200 donations due to this single direct mail package.



▲ 69%

Average Gift



13%

Response Rate



**\$124,684
Revenue**



184

Donations

ALM was so incredibly moved by its donors' contributions and wanted to show its appreciation. In response, TLC developed and produced a high end thank you gift for the newly minted major donors: a paperweight featuring the vaccine vial suspended in a clear acrylic. This gift represented the very real outcome of the donor's contribution, providing another touchpoint to cultivate a deeper relationship and inspire donors to continue supporting ALM's fight against leprosy.



Are you ready to grow your donor base, raise more funds, and increase your impact?

Whether you're refreshing your direct response program, ramping up your fundraising, or expanding your donor file, we can provide you with dynamic strategies that champion your cause.

Get in touch with our team of experts to begin crafting data-driven, creative, and cost-effective communications that are finely tuned to your audience.

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