Intro

This is a quick 101 document on important things to consider before you start charity streaming! Just a couple of things before you read the rest of this:

- You absolutely don't need to follow everything in here to have a successful charity stream, and you can do a great job just going through the donation logistics section and then streaming as you would normally; the other sections in this document just help to make your charity stream more robust
- This document assumes you know how to stream already and won't be going into the 101s on that
- My technical knowledge is with Twitch, Streamlabs, and Streamlabs OBS, so all of this is assuming you have access to use those (or have access to their resources on how to actually set up some of these things technically)
- My expertise is in organizing charity TTRPG streams (especially open call community ones), so YMMV if you're doing another kind of stream
- I am doing this document as quickly as possible to get it out into the world; it may be updated with things that I've noticed are glaringly missing, but overall this isn't meant to be a complete comprehensive doc, just something to help you get started on the right path by providing options and things to think about - if you're a charity streamer and you see something that you would add, please DM me on Twitter (@KiennaS)

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Donation Logistics

When raising money for charity on stream, there's a variety of ways to get the money to the charity, each with their own pros/cons.
Before you do anything however, do your research to make sure the charity is legitimate (check out their websites and social media, search on Google, see whether other people are donating to it, if they use PayPal or a legitimate credit/debit card process, etc.).

Direct-to-site

This is asking viewers to go directly to the charity's page and donating without going through the stream.
How to do this:

- Make a Twitch panel that people can click and direct them right to the charity page
- Have a chat timer with Cloudbot that shares the link to the charity's page every so often (usually every 15-30 minutes)
- Add a chat command (like !donate) to share the link and any donation incentive details and add that command to your stream title
- For donation incentives/goals, ask viewers to share screenshots of their receipts to you or mods via DMs or emails (whichever you/your mods are most comfortable with and easily accessible/checked often), proving that they have donated

Pros and cons:

- Pros
    - Makes sure there's a minimal amount of fees taken away from donations
    - Donors can claim tax on donations (if appropriate)
    - Less financial logistics to worry about on your end
- Cons
    - Hard to keep track of donations in order to hit donation goals or honour donation incentives
    - Isn't necessarily tied to your stream/team

Tiltify

This is using Tiltify as a third-party charity facilitator, which allows viewers to go to your Tiltify page, donate, and have the money go to the charity without you needing to move anything around. (Note: if you have a charity you'd like to see on Tiltify, please reach out to them and ask them to join, it's a great third-party facilitator)
How to do this:

- Signup with Tiltify or sign in with an affiliated account (I signed up using the Twitch account I stream with)
- Create a campaign for the charity you're supporting
- Link Tiltify to your Streamlabs account and select the campaign you made (https://howto.streamlabs.com/streamlabs-in-general-21/tiltify-setup-with-streamlabs-97)

- Make a Twitch panel that people can click and direct them right to the Tiltify campaign
- Have a chat timer with Cloudbot that shares the link to the Tiltify campaign every so often (usually every 15-30 minutes)
- Add a chat command (like !donate) to share the link and any donation incentive details, and add that command to your stream title
- Set up Tiltify alerts on your stream overlay (note, Tiltify alerts are separate from your other Streamlabs alerts in Cloudbot)
- Keep the Tiltify campaign dashboard open to track donations (and viewer notes on said donations)

Pros and cons:

- Pros
    - Makes sure there's a minimal amount of fees taken away from donations
    - No question about accountability for money reaching charity
    - Less financial logistics to worry about on your end
    - Easily trackable and has a built in goal in the campaign
    - Can add other people to the Tiltify campaign team and raise money as a team of streamers
- Cons
    - A limited number of charities available to support on Tiltify, which brings the choices down only to whichever charity is registered with Tiltify

Donate to stream

This is asking viewers to donate to you (via Streamlabs), and you will donate the cumulative amount at the end to the charity. Note: only really recommended if you're a 501(c)(3)

How to do this:

- Make a Twitch panel that people can click and direct them to your Streamlabs tip page
- Have a chat timer with Cloudbot that shares the link to the Streamlabs tip page every so often (usually every 15-30 minutes)
- Add a chat command (like !donate) to share the link and any donation incentive details and add that command to your stream title
- Setup a donation goal and have the goal widget on your overlay
    - Streamlabs -> all widgets -> donation goal
- Keep track of the donations via Streamlabs activities or your PayPal/credit card statements
- Donate to the charity as soon as possible after the stream, making sure to post a receipt somewhere publicly for accountability (and removing any of your personal/transaction info)

Pros and cons:

- Pros
    - The easiest to track donations for goals and incentives
    - Is tied closely to your channel and your community as a united effort
    - Most amount of flexibility with where the money goes charity wise

- Cons
    - Processing fees from multiple venues (Streamlabs and then charity page) takes away from the donation amount unless you cover it personally
    - Places more financial responsibility on you (money received still counts as income and has the associated taxes)
    - Accountability is also heavily on you to make sure that the charity actually receives the donations

Donation Incentives

There are two main ways that you can incentivize people to donate during the stream: donation goals and per-donation rewards. These can be paired up in whatever combination you feel is appropriate.
When it comes to any incentive however, keep the following in mind:

- DON'T DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD HARM YOU/SOMEONE ELSE OR VIOLATE TERMS OF SERVICES ON YOUR STREAMING PLATFORM
    - Avoid any pain-inducing rewards/events/incentives, don't involve alcohol/drugs, have backups in case you realize you can't continue with a planned incentive
- If you have other people involved on stream with you, make sure that they are ok with all of the potential rewards/events, or have it available for them to opt out
- Place your incentives somewhere really easy to see directly on the overlay, in a panel, or under a chat command

Donation Goals

Setting out a goal and displaying it visibly has been shown to get people to work together as they collectively try to hit it.
Some considerations when doing donation goals:

- Generally speaking, start with a goal of $100, then adjust based off of your normal stream audience size and revenue whether you think that's feasible
- For an extra incentive, have a series of goals that unlock certain rewards or events at different milestones
    - E.g. pie to the face, beanboozle, singing a song from a musical, makeup/cosplay/dressup, start a giveaway etc.
- Consider having a backup goal in place for the case of hitting your goal in the first half of the stream (so you can keep the hype and momentum going)

Per-Donation Rewards

Per-donation rewards let people donate certain amounts to make things happen during the stream.
Some considerations when doing donation goals:

- Usually have 3-7 per-donation rewards, depending on how many options you want to provide (and you want to keep track of)
- Keep the per-donation reward tiers to round numbers (usually multiples of $5)
    - Example tiers: $5, $10, $15, $25, $50, $100
- If the donation reward is something that impacts people on stream and what they're doing, put the more low-impact/positive/beneficial ones on the lower/cheaper tiers and high-impact/potentially negative/hindering ones on the higher/more expensive tier
    - E.g. for a TTRPG stream, put rerolls and item boons on the lower/cheaper tiers and adding monsters and naming NPCs on a higher/more expensive tier
    - It minimizes trolling and overwhelming people with negative effects, and if people really want to cause chaos, they will pay for the higher amount
- TTRPG stream example per-donation rewards
    - Player reroll/advantage/disadvantage
    - Item/boon
    - In-game rumour made by viewer
    - Viewer names/describes NPC
    - Add complication (GM choice)
- General stream example per-donation rewards
    - Beanboozle
    - Putting stickers on face
    - Jumpscare alerts
    - Eat baby food/hot sauce/insects/other unpleasant food
    - Writing donor names somewhere visible on stream

Giveaways

Giveaways are a great way to pull viewers into the stream and also to promote engagement and extended viewership throughout the whole stream.

Some considerations when doing giveaways:

- Check the legalities for giveaways in your area; as different countries have different laws around them, and you'll have to be careful for any international giveaways
- Put out a call for giveaway items on social media or reach out to creators/companies
    - Give them the information about what the stream is and for what cause, when it'll be happening, etc.
    - Be explicit about whether you're looking for donations (creators/companies giving you items for free) or if you're looking to pay for products to then be given away
    - Organize with creators/companies whether you will handle distribution (i.e. you will send the prize to the winner) or they will (you pass on info to them to send the prize)
        - Shipping for physical products
        - Product codes/PDFs for digital products
- Setup all of your giveaways in Streamlabs before the stream so you can easily start them with minimal work when you're actually streaming

- Decide on what information you'll need from winners (e.g. emails, mailing addresses, etc.) in order to give them the prizes if they win and put how they will get that info to you explicitly in the "X person won [prize]" section of the Streamlabs giveaway setup
    - E.g. "Congrats X for winning [prize]! Please DM your email to me on Twitter."
- Have a spreadsheet of all of the prizes (individually split out if there's multiple of the same kind) and places to put all of the relevant information
    - Item name and details
    - Creator/company of item
    - Name of winner
    - Email/mail address of winner (whichever is relevant)
    - Admin notes
- During the stream, have giveaways happen either at certain donation goals or at certain times (e.g. every 30 minutes)

Marketing/Promotion

Social media (especially Twitter) is going to be your best friend for promoting your stream.
Some considerations for marketing your stream:

- Post promotions for your charity stream one week before, 3 days before, one day before, one hour before, and when you go live
- Each of your posts should have a link to your stream, the date/time it's live, the name of the charity (@ as well if you have it), and ideally the charity link as well (whether direct-to-site or Tiltify)
- Each of your posts should have an accompanying graphic with the information above (get more views and lingering engagement that way)
- If there's any info on the graphic that isn't in the post, add alt text to the image if the platform allows
- If you can, post during the stream with quick updates, or reshare other people's posts about your stream
    - Ideally at milestones like halfway to the goal or through the stream, a goal is reached, when giveaways are happening, etc.
- If you have giveaways, promote the giveaway items, making sure to @ the creators/companies behind the prizes alongside the relevant info (as above)

Casting/Recruitment

Sometimes you might want other people on the stream with you so you don't have to go alone.
Considerations when recruiting other people to join the charity stream:

- Make sure to vet/screen anyone you're inviting on
    - Check on their social media accounts, ask other people, generally make sure you're not going to be platforming someone you wouldn't want to

- Tell them exactly what the charity is, what the expected commitment of the stream is (time and effort), what the donation incentives will be, and who else will potentially be on stream with them in the pitch so that they have all the info before accepting
- If you want to recruit people you don't know with an open call (e.g. for a community TTRPG one shot), create a Google form and get people to fill out the relevant info
    - Name and pronouns
    - Whether they have the right tech to stream (whatever that is)
    - Any social media handles
    - When they'd be available (works best if you provide timeslots)
    - What they'd be interested in doing (works best if you provide options)

Multi-Person/Channel Streaming

Written up by Farronox of For Cairne Sake, a non-profit fundraising organization with years of experience with charity streaming (https://twitter.com/ForCairneSake), covering other ways to have multiple participants doing a charity stream.

"Couch" Marathon

A Couch Marathon assumes a gathering of friends in a local venue where they will be sitting on assorted seating, gaming, and relaxing.

How to do this:

- Secure a venue, more people require a larger budget for larger spaces, more supplies, and more lodgings.
- Create a donation destination (Tiltify or otherwise, see above).
- Establish shifts, who will be playing what, when, can the game/content be shared by multiple players and shifts? Do so.
- Ensure everyone is getting the appropriate amount of rest.

Pros and cons:

- Pros
    - Allows you and your friends to work together over a longer period of time to meet goals.
    - The weight of entertainment and solicitation is spread over the team, reducing stress.
- Cons
    - It can be easy to lose focus, or set goals that might be more fun, but less safe.
    - A certain level of equipment management, venue size, etc can increase the cost of hosting/managing the event.

Multi-User/Channel Marathon

This type of event connects multiple users across the world using one channel's stream key(s) or several channels embedded sequentially on a webpage.

How to do this:

- Using your channel: Invite others through your channel settings (requires email addresses) to stream on your channel.
- Embedding on Tiltify: use the tiltify campaign's dashboard to add each channel, set channels to default according to schedule
- Using embedding on a website: Copy each channel's Embed code for Video Player and Chat into a document, exchange each channel at its scheduled time.

Pros and cons:

- Pros
    - Many streamers may take part, allowing for longer scheduled events or regularly scheduled/repeated shifts between offline times.
- Cons
    - Requires a certain amount of work behind the scenes sometimes requiring that a team be formed to handle and manage embedding and time slot scheduling.
    - Allowing people to stream to a single channel can require a level of vetting, or potentially allow "bad actors" to affect the reputation of the channel.

Other Things to Remember/Note

- Charity streams often get more troll and bot accounts showing up for harassment, keep an eye on chat to deal with them and any harmful comments and/or have a mod team prepared to deal with that
- Have a blurb on the charity you're raising money for on hand so you can easily talk about them on stream, and also have it in the chat on a timer using the chatbot and as a command in chat
- You might not hit your goal (whether explicitly stated or not), and that's ok: every dollar counts towards a good cause