

AWARDSPRING

A FIRST LOOK AT DONOR EXPERIENCE

# Every donor gets a major gift experience.

*We're starting in just a moment.*

This session is recorded, and the Q&A panel is already open.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

DONOR EXPERIENCE

2:00 PM ET

AWARDSPRING

TODAY'S SPEAKER

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*Alex Stepien is the CEO of AwardSpring, and has been building leading edtech businesses for about 20 years. Alex joined AwardSpring in late 2024.*



SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

DONOR EXPERIENCE

A FIRST LOOK

# A first look, then your questions.

01

## The problem

Why stewardship stops below the major gift line, and why it is capacity, not caring.

02

## Where it sits

Donor Experience, and the one record underneath every AwardSpring product.

03

## The product, live

Thank-you letters, impact reports, and the donor portal, on screen.

The donor who gave \$25,000 gets a visit,  
a custom report, and a relationship.  
The donor who gave \$100 gets a receipt.

*It was never a question of caring less. There were never enough hours.*

Stewarding a thousand donors the way you steward twenty has never been possible with the staff most offices have.

WHY WE BUILT IT

# 4 in 5

first-time donors **never make a second gift**, according to the Fundraising Effectiveness Project.

*Nobody ever told them what their gift did.*

# 7x

**what a new donor costs** versus renewing one: \$1.50 to acquire against \$0.20 to retain.

*And 83% of institutions saw their donor count fall between 2019 and 2023.*

WHY WE BUILT IT

# It is capacity, not effort.

*Small teams, manual work, and nobody left who remembers how it was done.*

36%

run stewardship on **less than half of one FTE**.

14%

median advancement **vacancy rate**,  
about double the national average.

3 yrs

median **tenure** in advancement specialist  
roles.

*In the same benchmark, 53% named staff time their biggest barrier, ahead of budget and technology.*

*The work does not stop because anyone stopped caring. It stops because the person doing it left.*

# You already run a content factory.

*The material exists. The loop does not.*

**01**

**Collect.**

Chase the student for the letter, the professor for the chair they hold, the program director for what the fund paid for.

**02**

**Assemble.**

Pull the award data, the fund numbers, and someone's words into one document. In Canva, in Word, in a mail merge.

**03**

**Deliver.**

Print it, stuff it, mail it, or email it. Next year, start over with nothing reusable.

*One to two staff-months a year, which is why most offices report only to their biggest donors.*

# Three offices. One dollar. No shared view.

*Ten funds, and you can assemble it by hand. Five hundred, and you cannot.*

**01**

**Financial aid owns the award.**

Who applied, who won, what they studied, and what happened to them.

**02**

**Advancement owns the donor.**

Who gave, how much, when, and who is assigned to them.

**03**

**Finance or the foundation owns the fund.**

The balance, the spending policy, the payout, and the compliance record.

*The proof of what a gift did lives in the scholarship office, not the donor database.*

WHY WE BUILT IT

# Every donor gets the same letter.

01

**One template, lightly merged.**

The donor who gave \$100 and the donor who gave \$10,000 receive the same page with a different name on it.

02

**One channel, print and mail.**

Assumed to be what an older donor base prefers, so no digital option is ever offered, and nobody is asked.

03

**No signal comes back.**

Who opened it, who read it, who gave again. The loop ends when the envelope leaves the building.

*Nothing about the letter changes, and nothing about the result comes back.*

AWARDSPRING

INTRODUCING

# Donor Experience.

*Every donor gets a major gift experience,  
without adding headcount.*

Available September 2026, on the AwardSpring Fund Platform.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

THE PRODUCT

AWARDSPRING

FUND PLATFORM · SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

## Where it sits: the Fund Platform.

Scholarship  
Management

LIVE

Donor  
Management

LIVE

Donor  
Experience

SEPTEMBER 2026

Fund  
Management

FALL 2026

SpringIQ · the AI layer running across every product, under human review

Fund Platform · one record, every dollar connected

INTEGRATES WITH YOUR STACK

blackbaud

Ellucian

workday

MailChimp

qb INTUIT  
quickbooks

fm FundMiner

slate

...and so much more

# Two things your donors see. One record underneath.

Donor Experience is woven through Scholarship Management and Donor Management, right where the work happens today. It builds from the award and student data already in your account.

01

## Impact reports and letters

Built from real award data. Print them, mail-merge them, attach them: they're yours to send.

02

## A personal donor portal

A personalized microsite for each donor, curated by your team: their funds, their students, their impact, any day of the year.

### HOW IT FLOWS

#### Your award season

Applications, awards, students: the record you already keep.



#### Donor Experience

Builds each donor's story and waits for your approval.



#### Your donors

A report in the mail, a portal that's theirs, and proof it mattered.

*Thank-you letters come first.*

# The walkthrough.

01

## The thank-you loop

One letter, start to finish: the student's words, the polish setting, and who approves it.

02

## Impact reports

The builder first, then the finished page a donor holds.

03

## The donor portal

One donor's personal view: their funds, their students, their impact, any day of the year.

# Nothing donor-facing goes out unapproved.

**01**

## **Consent, built in.**

Students explicitly consent before their story goes anywhere, and releases are versioned: one active release at a time, full history retained.

**02**

## **Approval, your way.**

Review everything by hand, auto-publish within thresholds you set, or run the portal fully live.

**03**

## **A person signs the work.**

SpringIQ prepares the drafts. Your team signs every piece the system assembles.

*We call it AI under human review. It's how the whole platform works.*

# Meet your donors where they are, and how you *already* operate

- Reports and letters go out your way: export the PDF, share the portal link, or send them directly.
- Your email system, your print shop, and your mail merge all keep their jobs. They just get better material.
- No mailing list to move over, no new sending tool to learn on day one.

*The fastest path to better stewardship is upgrading what you send.*

# Where this goes next.

*The same three jobs, for every fund your donors give to.*

**01**

**Collect more than letters.**

Professorship letters, student video, program chair attestations, photos. From every fund type, not only scholarships.

**02**

**Assemble something richer.**

More customization, more content types, and a portal a donor can interact with rather than only read.

**03**

**Deliver it further.**

Smoother printing workflows, and distribution into the CRM and email tools your office already runs.

# Before you go.

## ALREADY ON AWARDSPRING?

### You have a head start.

If you're one of the 600+ organizations on AwardSpring, the award and student records Donor Experience draws from are already in your account. Talk to your account team, or reply to the follow-up email.

## ANYTIME · 30 MINUTES

### See it on your own funds.

A walkthrough of Donor Experience shaped to your program: your funds, your donors, your questions.  
[awardspring.com/demo](https://awardspring.com/demo)

## COMING UP

SEP 15 · 2 PM ET

**The 2026 Donor Stewardship Benchmark: The Deep Dive**

SEP 22 · 2 PM ET

**AI Under Human Review: An Executive Forum**

Registration for both is at [awardspring.com/webinars](https://awardspring.com/webinars). Today's replay is in your inbox within 24 hours.

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

DONOR EXPERIENCE

AWARDSPRING

# Questions?

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

DONOR EXPERIENCE

LIVE Q&A



AWARDSPRING

# Thank you for spending this hour on your donors.

*Every donor gets a major gift experience.*

Available September 2026 · Replay within 24 hours · [awardspring.com/demo](https://awardspring.com/demo)

SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

[awardspring.com](https://awardspring.com)

