



Strategic Giving Charity Evaluation

Reasons to Be Cheerful

ROG Rating: “A” Charity, “Good” Fit for Doug Sample

Charity Core Mission: Positive journalism. “We tell stories that reveal that there are, in fact, a surprising number of reasons to feel cheerful.”

Locations Served: Online, worldwide **Year of Founding:** 501(c)(3) determination in 2020.

Official US Incorporation Name: [Arbutus Foundation](#), EIN 83-1802347

Affiliations: Arbutus Foundation, Theater of the Mind

Current Total Annual Revenue: [\\$177,000 in initial year](#) (2019 IRS 990EZ Form)

Recent Updates and Accomplishments:

- [Reasons to Be Cheerful Main Story Site](#)
- [David Byrne introduces Reasons to Be Cheerful on NPR](#)
- [David Byrne’s new ‘Reasons To Be Cheerful’ edition documents the “collective visceral moment” of coronavirus \(NME\)](#)
- [David Byrne comments on negativity with Freakonomics Radio](#)

Charity Reputation:

- Charity is Unrated by GuideStar and Charity Navigator
 - This is not uncommon, and as a newer, small organization, this charity offers limited data for ratings.
 - This charity is eligible to submit the abbreviated 990EZ form.
- Charity reported net assets of \$29,000 after liabilities in 2019
- This organization indicates low debt, with outstanding liabilities representing less than one half of their first total year’s program costs.
- This charity operates on a tight annual funding model. They have published consistent content, even with pandemic challenges.

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- Primary expenses in 2019 were related to planning for its two signature projects, and fees associated with their content. The consulting fees outlined in 2019 tax documents were reasonable.

Impact Stories:

- [Reasons to Be Cheerful mission and strategy video](#)

ROG Evaluation Notes:

- **A contribution to this organization will substantially influence the world of ideas and support an innovative suite of content.**
- **This charity is groundbreaking in its focus on positive storytelling and a mission to replicate good.**
- This charity's costs offer no reason for concern, and are within expected ranges for the activity they have demonstrated in their first two years.
- Available data indicates that fundraising costs for this charity are responsible, and they have utilized reputable giving technology providers, including *Network for Good*.
- If this charity seeks to operate in the long term, a focus on permanent endowment may be warranted.
- Focused on positive, inclusive messaging, Reasons to Be Cheerful offers many positive stories that are not otherwise being told.
- David Byrne, founder of the charity, is an innovative and trend-setting creator. Givers should be comfortable with norms-busting artistic projects [and review his history](#). He has offered public apology for [previous missteps](#) and ROG believes he is a leader in thoughtful reconciliation.

Summary ROG Evaluation: In our opinion, this is an “A” rating charity. Contributions will have significant, immediate impact and be used by the cause for direct action.

Impact to the Sample Family’s Philanthropic Mission: This charity is a good fit for Doug Sample’s charitable goals, given a focus on culture-moving journalism and artistic expression. A transformative gift would allow the organization to increase its reach.

Note: ROG’s research team works hard to present the best available information on this charity at the time of publication. However, we can’t know everything, so this report is subject to [Return on Good’s full legal disclaimer, which you can access at ReturnOnGood.org](#)

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