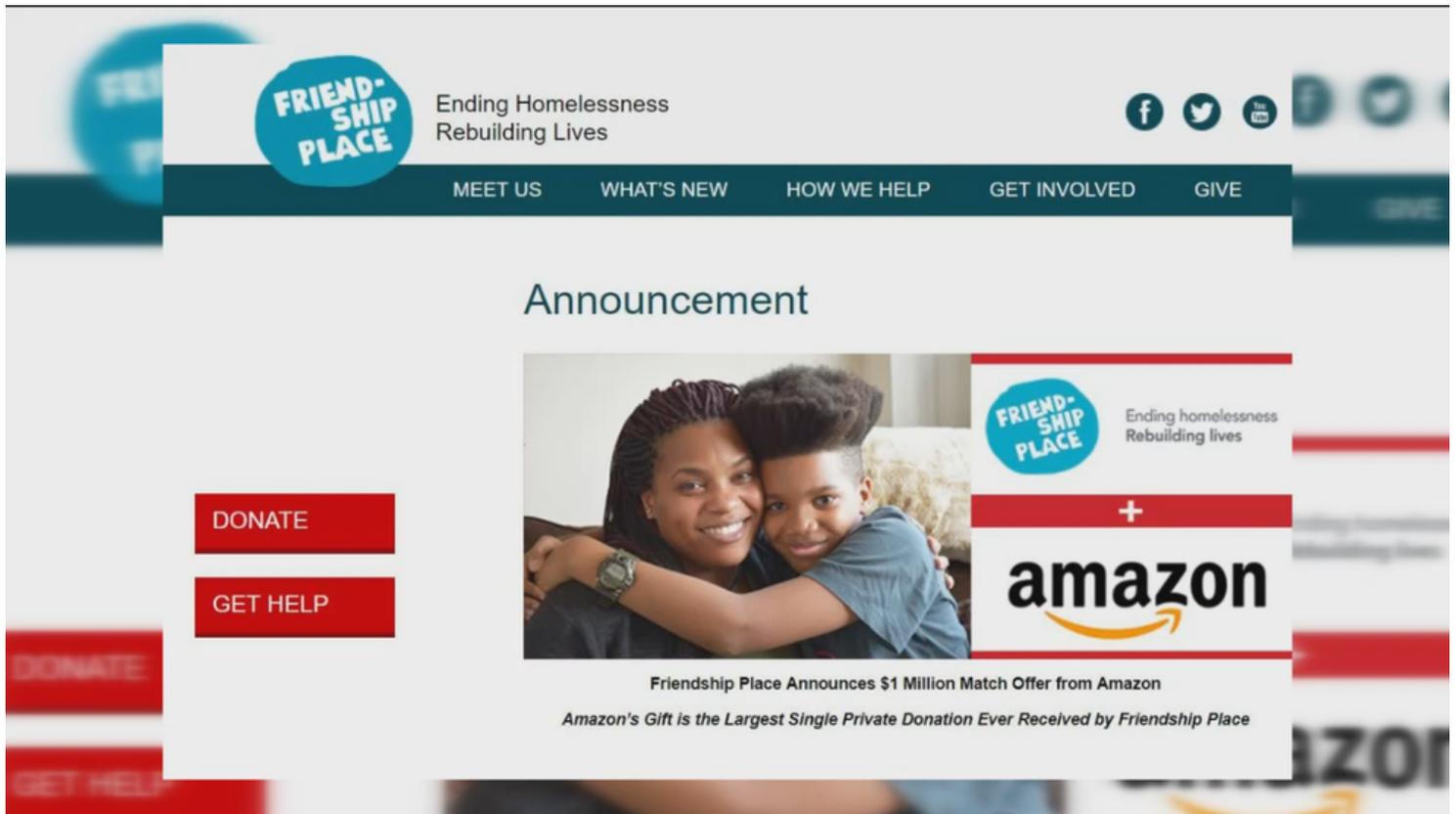




D.C. nonprofit receives \$1 million donation from Amazon

by Heather Graf/ABC7



WASHINGTON (ABC7) —

Amazon recently made good on a promise to donate \$1 million to a nonprofit based in Washington, D.C.

Friendship Place serves families throughout the region who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness.

It was back in June of last year when Amazon announced a [new partnership with Friendship Place](https://friendshipplace.org/) (<https://friendshipplace.org/>). The online retailer also said it would match all donations made to the nonprofit before December 31, 2017, up to a total of \$1 million.

Friendship Place serves families throughout the region who are homeless or on the verge of homelessness. (ABC7)



(/news/local/gallery/dc-nonprofit-receives-1-million-donation-from-amazon#photo-1)



(/news/local/gallery/dc-nonprofit-receives-1-million-donation-from-amazon#photo-2)

The staff at Friendship Place spent the next six months working to bring in as many donations as they could.

“I’m happy to say that we raised a million dollars,” Friendship Place President and CEO Jean-Michel Giraud told ABC 7.

Happy, he said, because that meant Amazon would be donating an additional \$1 million. Giraud says Amazon made good on that promise within just the last few weeks.

“We were delighted to have been chosen by Amazon as their first-time partner on the East Coast in terms of homeless services,” he said. “This will be a game changer. And we are challenging every corporation out there to do what Amazon has done.”

He said Amazon’s \$1 million dollar donation is the largest single private donation ever received by Friendship Place.

The money will allow Friendship Place to serve more families than ever before with immediate rent assistance and job placement services.

“The thing that happens when you’re privately funded is that you can act in a flexible way,” Giraud said. “And we can act now. So we’ve been able to stop evictions within 24 hours, which is amazing. Because you can imagine the anxiety a family is feeling when the eviction papers are at the door. It’s a feeling of panic for parents.”

Precious Middleton knows that feeling of panic all too well. The single mother of two nearly lost her Hyattsville apartment in October 2017.

“I was working two jobs at the time,” she said. “And slowly but surely I started falling behind. The rent had increased, but my pay had not.”

She still remembers the day she learned her family was about to be evicted.

“I got a call from the rental office, and they said if you don’t have your rent money by Monday, we’re going to evict you,” Middleton said.

That’s when she contacted Friendship Place. In a matter of days, the nonprofit had a check in her landlord’s hands.

“Not only did they pay October’s rent, they paid October thru February. And that allowed me to get up on my feet, and not to struggle as much,” Middleton said.

In addition, Middleton says Friendship Place is helping her pursue a career in human resources. She has previous experience in that field, but could not pay to get her human resources certification on her own. Friendship Place is now paying the costs associated with that training.

“I’m scheduled to take the human resources certification test in May, so that will hopefully open up some better doors for me and my children,” she said.

Upon learning of Amazon’s \$1 million donation, Middleton says she was thrilled, because she knows it will enable Friendship Place to help even more families.

“It’s amazing that Amazon and Friendship Place are helping people like me. And helping people across the District, keeping us from being homeless. I think that money serves a great, great purpose,” she said. “One that people might not understand until you almost lose your home. Because if you lose your home, you lose everything.”