

The Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation

In 1987, Dr. Thomas Frist, Sr., and Dr. Steven Stroup formed The Cancer Education and Research Council. When Sarah Cannon, also known as comedienne “Minnie Pearl,” was successfully treated for breast cancer, she became a passionate supporter in the fight against cancer and in 1992 offered her stage name in support of their mission. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization funded through corporate and private donations as well as events supported by Minnie Pearl’s friends and fans, The Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation is an active organization whose guiding principles honor Minnie Pearl’s generosity and caring spirit.

Highlights

- By using Greater Giving Join Me for their 2010 Hope On Wheels cycling event, MPCF gave their participants an easy-to-use fundraising tool and exceeded their participation and fundraising goals.
- Since implementing Greater Giving solutions, MPCF greatly reduced the time spent on collecting donations, reconciling donation amounts, and production and marketing.
- With Greater Giving Event Software and Online Payments staff can now build event websites and registration pages, saving approximately \$1500 per event previously spent on Web design and IT support.

Challenge

The Minnie Pearl Foundation operates with a development staff of two, yet hosted more than seven major fundraising events in their last fiscal year, so efficiency was a necessity.

To manage their robust donor base, the organization invested in donor management software; however,

MPCF continued using spreadsheets to manage event data. As the complexity of their fundraising events grew, Faith Holley, MPCF’s director of development, realized that the manual process was creating more work for them. Managing and tracking event data for multiple yearly events was increasingly more difficult and time-consuming.

For MPCF’s signature Hope on Wheels cycling event, participants tracked pledges on paper and MPCF staff would enter the data—one donation at a time. The process was arduous due to the volume of pledges and the fact that the team had to enter each pledge in multiple systems. Valuable time was also taken up in reconciling fundraising efforts between their controller, event management team, and their donor management system.

Holley began looking for a tool that would centralize and manage all aspects of their diverse fundraising efforts in one place. She also wanted to find a solution that would help them reach a broader audience leveraging social networks.

Solution

After looking at several different companies, MPCF chose Greater Giving and purchased the Fundraising Suite, including Greater Giving Event Software, Online Payments, Auctionpay and Online Auctions. The suite met their need for centralized, Web-based software and gave them multiple ways to raise funds online. They also purchased Join Me, an online peer-to-peer fundraising tool, to empower their supporters to raise money by leveraging their social networks, and save time managing pledges. It was everything they needed to take their fundraising efforts to the next level.

Tips from The Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation

- Leverage the power of teams and friendly rivalry when conducting a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign by encouraging competition and offering prizes donated by sponsors.
- Utilize your top Join Me fundraisers to host orientations on how easy it is to build fundraising pages and share tips on surpassing fundraising goals.
- Track the donor comments on your fundraisers' pages, and then post them on Facebook®, Twitter® and blogs to promote the event and showcase your cause.

Results

The tireless fundraising efforts for The Minnie Pearl Cancer Foundation are as inspiring as their cause—in 2010 alone they hosted ten events!

Due to their packed fundraising calendar, the 2010 Hope on Wheels event planning and execution began to fall behind schedule by several months—putting overall funding at risk, since 15% of MPCF's annual budget comes from this event. However, the MPCF team felt strongly that Join Me's ease of use would drive more supporter based fundraising despite introducing Join Me on a short timeline. The team was right—and the gamble paid off. Their supporters took Join Me and ran with it—creating over one hundred fundraising pages with little or no training. The top fundraisers exceeded their fundraising goals by thousands of dollars and participants raved about how easy it was to customize their pages with images and stories. MPCF was thrilled when they exceeded their overall participation and fundraising goals for the event.

Holley stated, "Everyone loved that Join Me was so intuitive—that's what I've liked the most about it from the beginning."

The time MPCF staff saved by using Join Me to track and reconcile online pledges was very significant as well—no more manual entry! They also saved production time and money on letters by using the email tool to send customized thank you messages to donors and sponsors.

The other Greater Giving products purchased by the Foundation have proven to be very cost-effective, too. For example, Holley estimates they would spend approximately \$1500 per event to hire a Web designer and IT support to build individual event websites for each of their events. For the six events MPCF holds annually, that's a savings of \$9,000 per year on just building event websites.

Says Holley, "Creating a page and connecting it to our website has been extremely easy—we love that our staff and volunteers can build pages and not depend on an IT person or a graphic designer." And the Foundation realizes additional savings by using the solution on an ongoing basis. Holley explained, "With Online Payments and integrated products you pay one fee and can use it as many times as you want throughout the year."

Another huge advantage of using Greater Giving products is the ease of exchanging data between their donor management system, DonorPerfect and Event Software. Now they have a way to connect their large donor base with updated event information, giving them a 360° view of their relationships.

Holley explained that by implementing Greater Giving products they can now be "much more streamlined in the structure" of managing their events. With so many events to juggle each year and an ever-growing need for their services, they've benefited in multiple ways from their wise decision—and so have their constituents.