Small Nonprofit Raises Its Entire Operating Budget in One Day

After raising $5,000 in 2017, Team Telomere, which supports families affected by Dyskeratosis Congenita and Telomere Biology Disorders, set a bold goal of $10,000 for GivingTuesday 2018. Katie Stevens, the organization’s Executive Director, challenged supporters - if they could reach their goal, both she and her son would take the polar bear plunge and jump into Idaho’s Lake Coeur d’Alene in January! As Team Telomere passed the $10,000 mark, Katie’s husband and her other son proposed another challenge - if they hit $20,000, they, too, would do the polar plunge! “As a community, we ended up raising nearly $26,000 and received a $1,000 matching grant from Facebook,” says Katie. “Our operating budget is about $30,000 a year. On GivingTuesday we nearly raised that in one day AND my family jumped in a cold lake to boot!”

Go Bold and Fundraise for Another Nonprofit

Rather than fundraising for their own organization, the HELP International team decided to fundraise for Team Humanity, another organization making a big difference in the refugee crisis. “Often times, in the world of nonprofits, there is this toxic notion of competition - despite united causes,” said HELP International when asked about why they decided to fundraise for another organization on GivingTuesday. “We recognize that it is together, not through division, that we will be able to reach our full potential and meet the needs of the people that need help the most. Together, our impact is stronger.”

Collaborate With Other Nonprofits For More Impact

Abundance of Hope Center, a women of color-led nonprofit in Seattle, provides equitable, culturally responsive, holistic and person-centered homelessness prevention for at-risk youth ages 12-25. On GivingTuesday, Abundance of Hope partnered with two other nonprofits, Arms Around You and New Horizons, on a winter clothing drive. The three organizations asked their supporters to donate coats, hats, and scarves at various local small businesses. On GivingTuesday, they distributed the items together to people experiencing homelessness in the Seattle area.

Get Your Clients Involved in an #Unselfie Campaign

Anthesis supports independent and inclusive lives for adults with disabilities through employment and community integration. They raised funds to cover public transportation costs, so their participants can explore their communities without limits. Anthesis ran a great #unselfie campaign featuring their clients and supporters.

Host a Supermarket Sweep

Feeding America in Southwest Virginia hosted a Supermarket Sweep-inspired competition to fill shopping carts for the food bank. In the lead up to the competition, they had bins outside of the local Kroger for people to donate food items into the bin of their favorite team competing in the “supermarket sweep.”

Write your own success story!
Fund a Project That Would Change Your Community

Because of a community’s generosity, a new space at Laura’s Home at The City Mission in Cleveland will give homeless teenagers a place where they can leave life’s difficulties at the door. With help from a $5,000 match from a local wellness company, Laura’s home raised $18,000 total in their 24-hour #TeenSuiteTuesday campaign, almost doubling their initial goal. The teen room features different spaces that will allow teenagers to work out, play video games, read, study and congregate with other kids their age.

Organize Campaign Ambassadors

Wisconsin Singers, the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s nationally renowned touring troupe, raised 5 times more from 6.5 times more donors than their previous GivingTuesday campaign by turning their supporters into team members. They started their campaign in June by enlisting board members and volunteers to take on specific roles in the campaign: as contributors to a match fund, as spot-donors at specific times during the donation day, as social media reporters, storytellers, cheerleaders, commentators, and as sharers of their campaign story. They secured a matching grant from an angel donor of $10,000 which helped them incentivize more giving. Altogether, Wisconsin Singers raised $26,000 with the help of their GivingTuesday ambassadors.

A Photo An Hour is Worth a Thousand Words...and Dollars!

To catch attention early, Black Swamp Conservancy in Perrysburg, Ohio, launched a post-Halloween online contest to name a new statue of a heron, the organization’s pseudo-mascot. At 8am on GivingTuesday, they created a big moment and drove followers to their social channels by announcing “Erie” as the winning name of the statue. Throughout the day, the organization posted photos of Erie to Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. In each image, she was posed in an area that the group had helped to protect — a meadow, a historic farm, a marsh, and the like. By day’s end, the photo-every-hour campaign had raised some $12,000 — more than twice the amount that the organization typically netted on GivingTuesday.

Teach Kids to Give Back

OASIS Network uplifts and supports students in the Tampa area by providing them with clothing, shoes, hygiene items and other basic necessities. For GivingTuesday, the group hosted #GivingKidsDay, a day for kids to give back to kids! Local Girl Scout troops collected gently used clothes from their closets to give as donations. Then they visited different nonprofits in the area to help sort donations and learn more about how they can support people in need by donating their time.

The 2nd & 7 Foundation promotes reading by providing free books and positive role models to kids in need while encouraging young athletes to pay it forward. On GivingTuesday, the Foundation partnered with local youth athletic teams for young athletes to #PayItForward. Coaches signed up their student athletes and brought books to classrooms and read for elementary school students in the Columbus, Ohio area.
Give #DonorLove on GivingTuesday

The Arts Commission in Toledo, Ohio celebrated GivingTuesday with a gathering for supporters at a popular bar. The organization collected donations at the event, “but it was really more about the opportunity to say ‘thank you’ to people and meet face to face,” says Jennifer Jarrett, deputy director of the commission.

The United Way of Greater Toledo also focused its entire GivingTuesday effort on showing gratitude through what it called “Thanking Tuesday” by dispatching staff members to nearly 50 companies that support the organization. They presented each business with tokens of thanks in the form of framed watercolors of a red feather, once the symbol of the United Way’s community-chest campaign.

Get Creative in Your Artwork + Play Off Current Events

Inspired by the divisive midterm elections, Maryland SPCA and their creative partner, idFive, created a campaign to give their community a happier, more cuddly set of candidates to vote for: cats and dogs. Playing off the familiar partiality of dog people versus cat people, the “Vote Cat. Vote Dog.” fundraising campaign engaged donors with the opportunity to “vote” with donations. Maryland SPCA shared the campaign through various social media posts and emails targeting past donors, current donors, and volunteers. The campaign raised more than $41,000—$11,000 more than their goal—and celebrated both furry political parties as winners.

Create an Easy Entry Point into Your Campaign

For GivingTuesday 2018, Transverse Myelitis Association ran a robust digital campaign called WhoCares, about why we should all care about finding cures for rare neuro-immune diseases. The campaign landing page was mobile-friendly and simple with compelling copy and clear calls to action. Visitors to the page could create a fundraiser for the organization on Facebook, become a monthly donor, organize a bake sale or start an awareness campaign.

Technology Access Foundation (TAF) provides access to educational and career opportunities for children of color. TAF saw an astonishing 938% increase in donations from their previous GivingTuesday campaign. The team attributed the increase to a successful mobilization of their alumni, who ran peer-to-peer Facebook fundraising campaigns. “Our alumni loved coming together on Facebook, reconnecting with each other over their experience at TAF, and sharing that they’d gone on to work at Google, Zillow, Microsoft” TAF created a mobile-friendly campaign landing page, using Hype-link, to make all the options to participate in GivingTuesday easy and accessible.

Write your own success story!
Host An Open House To Recruit New Volunteers

Coastside Hope, a small community assistance center in San Francisco, hosted an open house on GivingTuesday. They invited supporters and the general public to come in to see their services in action. Their goals were to get acquainted with their community as well as recruit new volunteers and supporters. More than 40 visitors toured their facilities, many for the first time. One person who visited in the morning volunteered at the front desk that afternoon! Combining online and offline donations, 52 donors gave $8,825 to Coastside Hope on GivingTuesday 2018.

Host A Trivia Party or Open Mic Night

Trees Forever asked their supporters to host trivia parties as mini-fundraisers: #GivingTREEvia Parties - get it? They created a toolkit for supporters to easily host a party. Their Trivia Party, hosted at a local restaurant, included a game where participants donated based on their score. Proceeds helped fund a watering vehicle for Trees Forever’s Growing Futures, a program that gives job experience to young people as they plant and water trees.

Email Marketing + Old Fashioned Phone-A-Thon + Match = Success

YearUp developed an email marketing and social media campaign that featured videos that told the story of what’s possible when donors give the gift of opportunity. The organization also added a personal touchpoint to the campaign by holding a phone-a-thon at 18 sites across the country, led by staff, students and volunteers. YearUP set a goal of 500 gifts with the incentive of unlocking a $50K challenge gift from a family foundation. They secured more than 615 gifts for a grand total of $240,000. They made more than 1,000 calls and sent more than 2,500 personal emails to follow up on Giving Tuesday, and believe that pairing a meaningful email with a personal phone call encouraged folks to give more generously.

Reach New Donors Through Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

Camp Kesem operates free summer camps for children who have been impacted by a parent’s cancer. The non-profit raised more than any other Classy client — over $2 million from 40,000 donors, nearly $1.8 million of it on Classy. The team credits their 5,000 college-student volunteers, who promoted the campaign on social media. “Peer-to-peer really fueled fundraising,” she says. The volunteers received training months ahead of GivingTuesday on how to use Classy’s p2p fundraising tools, along with templates, graphics, campaign timelines, and other tools to enhance their campaigns. Kesem also released a video appeal in time for the volunteers to share on their Facebook, Twitter, and other social media. Volunteers juiced giving with social-media stunts. “They’d say, ‘When I raise $5,000, I’ll eat this hot pepper,’ says the team. “They got very creative.”

Mended Hearts in Indianapolis had their largest single fundraising day ever on GivingTuesday 2018. This was their third year participating and each year, their total has increased by $1,000. They built a robust peer to peer fundraising campaign, recruiting their highly engaged supporters to host Facebook fundraising pages. This strategy brought Mended Hearts Rescue “a whole different group of supporters.” In their marketing about the campaign, Mended Hearts highlighted how small donations really do make a significant impact on the individual animals they rescue. They coordinated several Facebook live videos throughout the day to talk about their work and supporters’ impact.

Write your own success story!