



Central Florida Speech and Hearing Center Dramatically Improves Fundraising Tracking by Using Qgiv's Peer-to-Peer Platform for the First Time



BACKGROUND

Central Florida Speech and Hearing Center is the region's leading provider of care for patients with communication difficulties. They provide high quality speech, language, and hearing services for patients of all ages and incomes, including patients that otherwise cannot afford them. In addition to their full range of audiology and speech-language pathology services, they are a distribution center for amplified phone systems. They also provide onsite industrial hearing testing for Central Florida businesses.

Their services are much-needed in the community, especially for children. The Center sees about 230 children a week for speech therapy services and 92% of those children require subsidized funding with over 100 on a waiting list. In addition they see more than 90 children a month for audiology services.

The Center's focus on children emphasizes their belief that it's critical to get kids who need help into speech or hearing therapy as young as possible. A child needs consistent auditory input for 5-6 years before the brain is ready to make the connection between letters of the alphabet and the sound associated with them.

THE EVENTS

The Center has two fundraising events annually, each with similar formats. The Mr. Central Florida event is held in the fall, while the Women of Central Florida Fashion Show is in the spring. The participants—community leaders representing Central Florida—vie for the titles of Mr. Central Florida and Woman of the Year in an exciting and fun-filled competition. Participants seek votes at \$1 each or by securing sponsorships and auction items.



2015 Mr. Central Florida, James Ring, 2016 Mr. Central Florida, Ronnie Hedrick II, Special Guest Sheriff Grady Judd, Commissioner Melony Bell and granddaughter and Ashely Bell Barnett



2017 Woman of the Year Jenny Robles and daughters



2017 Contestant Becky Troutman and daughter



*Chanel Bellotto, Jenny Robles, Lisa Birket
2017 Child of the Year Tristin Roberts*

CHALLENGES

For the past four years the Center has managed both fundraising events by tracking and recording votes manually in spreadsheets. The time it took was overwhelming, with contestants constantly stopping by the office to drop off cash and checks, calling and texting to see where they were in the standings, and asking whether votes had been recorded. The Center's staff devoted hours of their time keeping this information updated. However, with the votes not counting until the Center physically received the money, it was difficult to keep the results truly up-to-date.

After dedicating such a significant amount of time to manual event tracking, the Center's staff knew there had to be a change. They decided to talk to their committee to find a solution, with the biggest points of importance being efficiency and accuracy.

“When we’ve got these men and women out there trying to raise money for us, the last thing we need is to make a mistake on how many votes they received. When we started planning the fashion show we realized the need for tracking improvement. That’s when we called Qgiv to ask if they could set this up and track everything for us. Of course, their answer was yes!” -Debbie Burdett, Vice President of Community Engagement

HOW QGIV HELPED

The Center set up their 2017 Women of Central Florida Spring Fashion Show on Qgiv’s peer-to-peer platform, went through complimentary training on the system’s functionality, and then sat back and reaped the benefits of having an online system do most of the work for them!

“Once we got everything set up and live, anyone could look, at any given time, to see who was ahead in votes, and who voted for them. It was just amazing to see it all happen!”

Implementing such a quick and easy way for supporters to go online and cast their votes made a huge difference. Overall, the fashion show raised almost \$198,000, with \$147,924.61 of that being recorded through Qgiv.*

“Giving increased 300% at this year’s fashion show! If we had not changed our setup to Qgiv’s peer-to-peer platform it would have been a nightmare to keep accurate records the old way—manually on spreadsheets. We will never do another event without Qgiv!”



SUCCESS STRATEGIES

Expand Your Appeal

Get participants’ families involved! The Center decided to include daughters and granddaughters in the Spring Fashion Show since it’s right before Mother’s Day.

“We decided to build a family-focused event, and most importantly, we want to help raise charitable children. That’s just a must, because that’s our future.”

The Community Cares... Use it to Your Advantage!

One way the Center builds engagement is by asking the community to nominate event participants. That’s how community awareness about the event starts—people telling people and nominating others.

Businesses in the community also lend a hand in getting the word out about the events. The Center was invited to go on-air at local radio stations to promote the events, and they even did a post-event wrap-up so the community could hear about the money raised and what kind of impact it was having.

Build Next Year's Event

Use incentives in this year's event to build next year's event. The Center offered bonus votes to participants who could secure a contestant for the next year's event. By doing so, they finished their events with a list of potential participants for the following year!

"Right now, we've got about 36 guys on the list for this fall's Mr. Central Florida event. We wrapped up the Fashion Show with about 20 women signed up for next year. It's not uncommon for us to have returning models from year to year!"

Educate to Motivate

The Center knows how important it is for their participants to know exactly what the organization does for the community. Before becoming official contestants, participants in the events are invited for a tour of the Center.

"We don't want people to be out there asking for money when they're not really sure why it's needed or whom it helps. When the contestants tour the Center they are able to see first-hand the impact the Center has on our community. Oftentimes during the tour they don't even get down the first hallway before they are in tears."

In addition to educating participants, the tours brought in more clients. Parents, grandparents, and friends of the contestants who toured the facility came in for services!

Encourage Your Fundraisers to Host Their Own Events

Some of the contestants hosted their own microevents to raise funds, with the proceeds from each of those events turning into votes. One participant hosted a silent auction, and another put on a roller skating event.

Make People Feel Good

You know those commercials for animal shelters? As soon as you hear the sad music, do you change the channel? Focusing on the sad parts of your cause all the time can have a negative effect. The Center goes out of its way to make their events all about fun and family.

"People don't mind giving money; they just don't want to be depressed about it. It's important to help others feel good about giving. People enjoy being a part of our events because they are fun and engaging."

At our events we introduce patients and their families who have benefitted from the Center's services so they can see the incredible impact of donations. One example is our Child of the Year, Christopher. When he came to the Center, he was non-verbal and communicated through a series of complex gestures. After the Center fit him with hearing aids he was able to learn to communicate using an iPad and gained an unbelievable amount of confidence. The photo below shows the dramatic change in his attitude... he set up that pose himself!"



*2016 Child of the Year Christopher Rollins with
Campaign Chairs Wes & Ashley Barnett*

Show Your Gratitude

Recognizing your supporters and letting them know they are vital to your organization's success is necessary, so the Center thanks their donors AND their participants! After the events, the Center hosts a reception thanking contestants.

They also hosted a Donor Celebration event during a baseball game at a local field sponsored by Center State Bank. Through connections with one of the models, country singer Michael Ray made a cameo appearance at the event, posing for pictures with participants, donors, and Center patients. The Center's 2017 Child of the Year, Tristin Robarts, even got to throw out the first pitch of the ball game!



FEATURE FAVES



LEADERBOARDS

Staff and participants love looking to see who is ahead in votes.



THERMOMETERS

The Center appreciates being able to see real-time results.



PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

The ease-of-use provided by Qgiv's peer-to-peer fundraising platform improved event tracking!

*Total Event Fundraising Breakdown:

Online Donations: \$76,287.95, Offline Verified Donations: \$71,636.66