



QGIV CASE STUDY

# Merit School of Music

## + ABOUT

Established in 1979, the Merit School of Music was founded by Alice S. Pfaelzer and Emma Endres-Kountz to fill the gap caused by the Chicago Public School system's elimination of music education from the elementary school curriculum.

Today, Merit School of Music is a nationally accredited school, and for more than 40 years they've been helping a diverse community of talented young musicians achieve their musical and personal potential through the rare opportunity to learn, dream, and aspire together. Their passionate and experienced teaching artists provide access to high-quality music education, engaging over 2,500 students annually, and with 100% of their graduates going on to college.



# MERIT SCHOOL OF MUSIC

## OVERVIEW

RECEIVED  
**47% more**  
IN DONATIONS AFTER SWITCHING TO QGIV

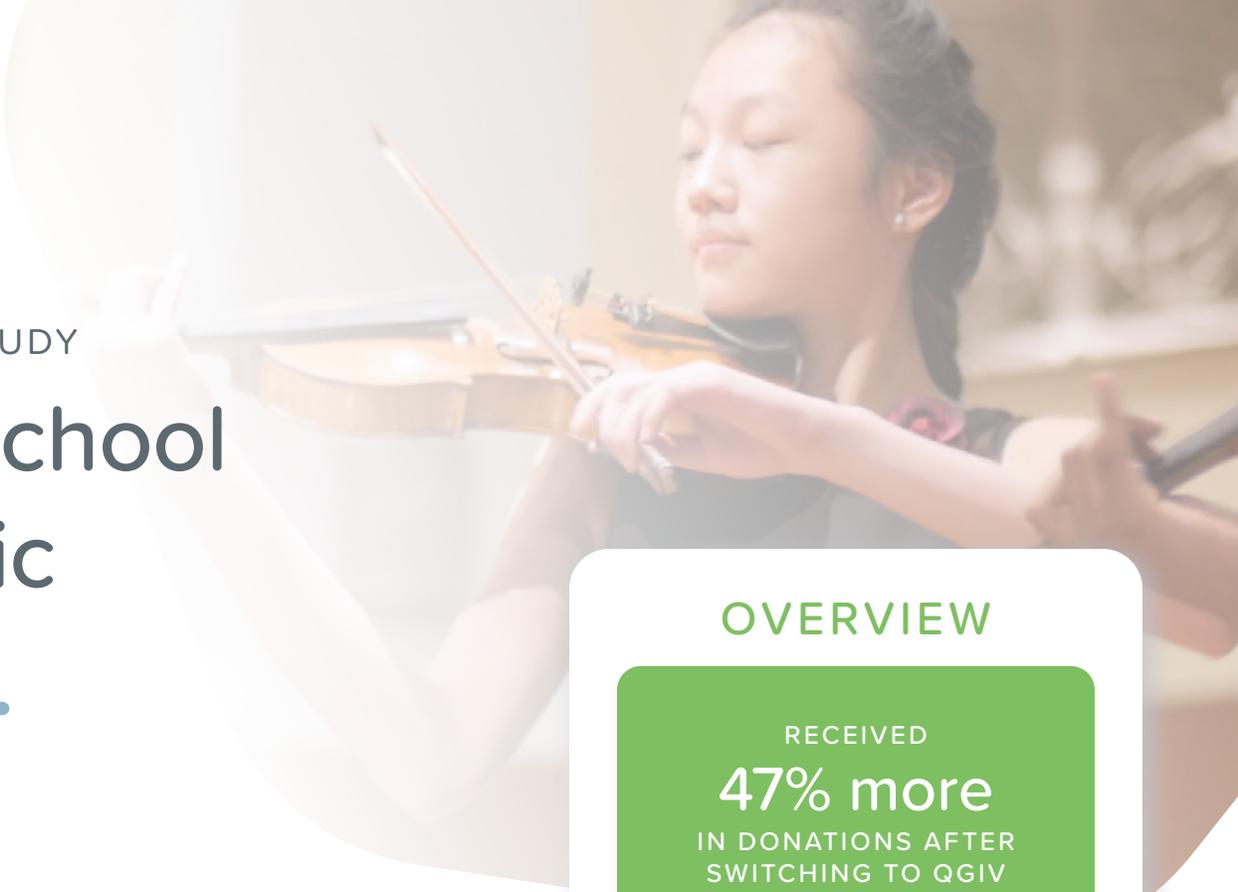
INCREASED GENERAL GIFTS BY  
**16%**

### Challenge:

- + Merit School of Music's previous fundraising merchant was ineffective at boosting their fundraising due to a poor user interface, a resultant sense of wariness among potential donors, and lacking personalization options.
- + They needed a clean, customizable, donation form that integrates seamlessly with their website, and a convenient set of digital tools to streamline their event set-up and management process.

### Solution:

-  *Donation Forms*
-  *Event Registration*



## CHALLENGE:

Digital giving was not a new idea for the Merit School of Music. For a few years they had worked with Network for Good, an online donation platform, to assist in the fundraising process. However, over time the School realized this giving platform was not meeting the needs of their community and donors.

*“Network for Good was not effective in boosting our overall fundraising. When donors made online donations, their credit card statements would have unrecognizable transactions, causing confusion and wariness. Additionally, the Company required a one week turnaround time to update and customize the donation page, which was unacceptable when updates needed to be made quickly surrounding our events and announcements.”*

*Jennifer Ridder, Individual Gift Manager, Merit School of Music*

Merit School of Music decided to redesign their website, and their leadership used the redesign as an opportunity to research new donation platforms that would offer streamlined service, ease of use and transparency for donors. Specifically, the School was looking for a provider that offered customization services, could support event ticket sales, and offered private, branded pages for donations.

OUR PROGRAMS ABOUT US OUR IMPACT

### MAKE A GIFT

Choose Your Gift [Sign in](#)

One Time Ongoing

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250

\$100 \$50 Other

[Multiply your impact. Make it Monthly!](#)

Please direct my support:  
Merit's area of greatest need

Dedicate this gift

I'd like to help Merit School of Music cover gift processing costs - add to my transaction

Powered By [Qgiv](#)

## SOLUTION:

Merit School of Music decided on Qgiv and its online giving solutions as the only platform able to provide every item on their wish list. They implemented both the Qgiv donation forms to offer a more simplified and trustworthy portal for fundraising through their own branded web page, as well as its event registration platform to streamline their event set-up and management process.

*“After conducting our own research and reaching out to other nonprofits to get their feedback on donation platforms, we decided that Qgiv fulfilled all of our donation and event registration needs. Qgiv offers simplicity for both our donors, allowing them to use our branded page for donations and registration, and for our internal team, who can now easily make adjustments and customize our site.”*

*Jennifer Ridder, Individual Gift Manager,  
Merit School of Music*

Since they switched to Qgiv, Merit School of Music has seen an increase in both the number of gifts and the amount of donations they received. Donors who used to mail in a check for \$20,000 donations were now logging on through their smartphone, finding the new platform easy and secure to use. With half of their current budget coming from community contributions, and almost all of its major donors embracing online giving, the simple and effective platform is key to the School's continued prosperity.

*"Our implementation of Qgiv's platform was seamless, and we began to see the results immediately. It gave our whole donation system a cleaner look, and our regular donors have told us how much they love it."*

*Jennifer Ridder, Individual Gift Manager,  
Merit School of Music*



## RESULTS:

Less than a year since implementing Qgiv, Merit School of Music has seen an increased amount of online donations as well as a significant increase in traffic to their donation page:

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**47% more**  
IN DONATIONS AFTER  
SWITCHING TO QGIV

INCREASED GENERAL  
GIFTS BY  
**16%**  
AFTER SWITCHING  
TO QGIV

NOW RECEIVES  
**35%**  
OF THEIR  
BUDGET FROM  
ONLINE GIVING

The School also held their Annual Anniversary Gala, during which they launched their alumni community with the goal of having 500 former students join the group. In order to accommodate this younger generation, Merit School of Music's staff offered mobile options for donations to meet the needs of the younger generation.

With a student body of 6,000 students across all of their numerous programs, Merit School of Music has shown no sign of slowing its momentum anytime soon, making consistent fundraising and online offerings critical to continued growth.

## Explore the full suite of digital fundraising tools



Donation  
Forms



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Fundraising



Integrations  
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Peer-to-Peer  
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Auctions



Event  
Registration



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