

## Case Study:

### **AIDS Project RI Empowers Its Walkers to Fundraise Online**

"In just a few weeks, [our] walkers raised an average of \$277 each, which was 63% more than last year's average funds raised. By creating personal appeals through their own web pages, our walkers were able to reach more donors, in less time."

*Chris Butler  
Executive Director  
AIDS Project Rhode Island*

#### **A Fundraising Challenge**

AIDS Walk Rhode Island faced a fundraising challenge during the planning season for its June 2005 walk. Corporate sponsorships and walk teams from companies that were previously responsible for 25% of walk funds were no longer available. For a walk netting approximately \$100,000 annually, this was a significant loss.

For the first time since the walk's inception, AIDS Project Rhode Island faced a fundraising challenge: **how to get a smaller number of walk participants to raise more.** In previous years, walkers raised \$130 on average. To make up for the 2005 walk's fundraising divide, this average would have to at least double.

#### **RESULTS AT A GLANCE**

- Average donation raised per walker increased by 63% using Justgiving.
- Returning walkers raised 20% more than the previous year.
- 15% more funds total were raised in 2005 vs. 2004.

#### **Taking Event Fundraising Online**

Executive Director Chris Butler turned to the Internet to identify new methods to bridge this gap. "After visiting other AIDS Walk web sites, I found out that a number of organizations used Justgiving to support their annual walks," Chris said, "This service would allow our event participants create personalized web pages to raise money online for our walk."

"We hoped that Justgiving would allow us to get 25 to 30 walkers creating personal fundraising web pages. We had heard from other AIDS organizations that walkers with personal web pages raised significantly more than walkers fundraising in traditional methods, like pledge forms, since they were so easy for walkers to use."

After signing up with Justgiving, AIDS Project Rhode Island then started to heavily promote the ability for its walkers to create personal fundraising web pages. Chris included information about online personal fundraising in all of the walk's promotional materials: brochures, team leader kits, and print advertising.

"We knew that this technology would only work if our walkers knew about its availability. Since we expected a learning curve for our

walkers to adopt this method for fundraising, we wanted to encourage its use as much as possible," Chris said.

### Build It and They Will Come

According to Chris, what happened next was unprecedented. "Over 80 of our 700 walkers went online to create online personal fundraising pages. In just a few weeks, these walkers raised an average of \$277 each, which was 63% more than last year's average funds raised," Chris recalled, "By creating personal appeals through their own web pages, our walkers were able to reach more donors, in less time."

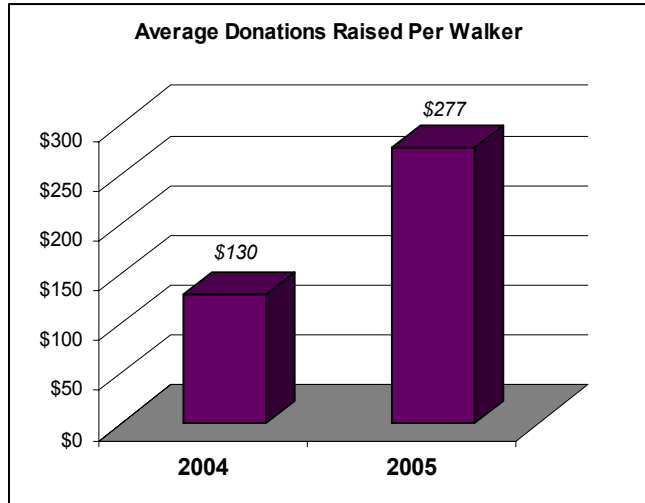
Chris reported that 75% of the walkers that created online personal fundraising pages were returning walkers. In 2004, these walkers raised \$14,500 total. In 2005, funds raised by this same group grew by 20%. Chris attributes this growth to online personal fundraising pages.

For example, Bobby Ducharme, a veteran fundraiser for AIDS Project Rhode Island, had raised around \$1,000 for previous walks. By being able to email a link to his fundraising page to this contact all over the country in just the click of a button, he raised over \$2,000 for the 2005 walk.

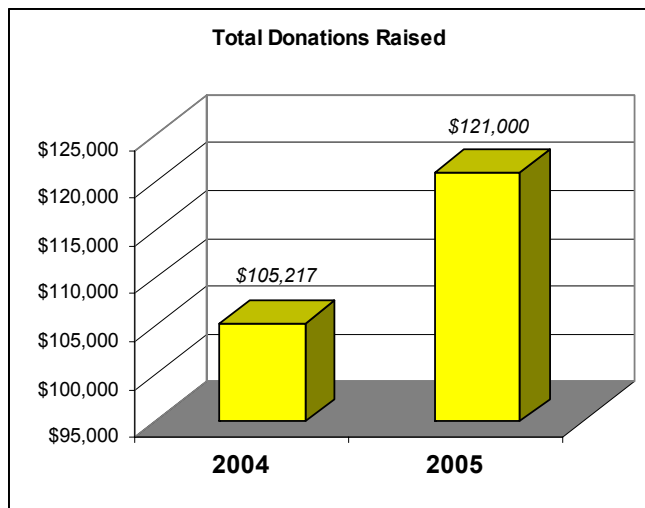
The other 25% of walkers with online personal fundraising pages were first-time walkers. Chris believes that the option for walkers to create online personal fundraising pages helped to attract new participants.

By the day of the walk, AIDS Project Rhode Island raised \$121,000, which is 15% higher than last year's total. Of these funds raised, over \$23,000 sourced from Justgiving online personal fundraising pages.

"The walk is now over and we're still seeing dollars coming in through our Justgiving pages," Chris said, "This fundraising technology is only going to continue to help us grow. This technology allows us to depend less on corporate support, and easily empower our event participants to raise more to support AIDS advocacy, research, and treatment."



In 2004, the average amount of donations raised by walkers was \$130. In 2005, this increased by 63% to \$277.



Total donations generated by walkers increased by 15% between 2004 and 2005. Chris attributes this growth to the ability for walkers to raise funds online.

To learn how Justgiving can help your organization raise more funds with greater ease, contact us at 781-863-6166 or [inquiries@justgiving.com](mailto:inquiries@justgiving.com).