

Case Study:

## **National Kidney Foundation Middle TN Exceeds Fundraising Goal by 36% using Firstgiving**

"We knew this walk had the potential to be a \$100k walk; we feel that Firstgiving played a big part in getting us there."

*Kim Troup  
Development Director  
National Kidney Foundation Middle TN*

### **The Fundraising Bar is Raised**

Kim Troup, the Development Director for the National Kidney Foundation, Middle Tennessee, knew that the 2005 Fall Kidney Walk needed to be a success. The 2004 walk had been hurt by the fact that another organization's walk had unexpectedly been held on the same day, and the 2003 walk, while successful, had had the added benefit of a celebrity appearance by Danny Glover. Kim knew that the 2005 Walk could meet its fundraising goal of \$75,000 with some careful planning.

She was right. The 2005 Fall Kidney Walk exceeded the fundraising goal by 36%, raising a total of \$102k.

Kim heard about Firstgiving when a member of the Firstgiving sales team let her know about the opportunity to use Firstgiving's online fundraising pages set up through the National Kidney Foundation's national Firstgiving subscription. Kim admits that she was a bit wary at first, but she gave it a try for the Fall Walk in 2004. Fundraisers who used the pages raved about how easy they were and how much more money they raised using them, so the pages were used again in 2005.

### **RESULTS AT A GLANCE**

- ➔ Total Donations Raised were 36% more than Goal
- ➔ Walkers using Firstgiving pages raised 2.5x more than offline fundraisers
- ➔ 28% more donations were raised in 2005 vs. 2004

### **The Numbers Speak for Themselves**

Using online fundraising pages, just 10% of the walk participants were able to raise 21% of the total. Online fundraisers raised on average \$354, over 2.5 times more than the offline fundraiser average of \$139.

The NKF of Middle Tennessee has an annual tradition after the walk of recognizing their top fundraisers. In 2005, 4 out of 5 of the top teams had used online pages, as had 5 out of 5 of the top individual fundraisers. Each fundraising team of 10 had a fundraising goal of \$1000; teams using online pages raised an average of \$1250, 25% over target. In addition, donations came in from 3 countries, with 35% coming from out of state.

**"This is just the easiest way out there to raise money." - NKF Middle Tennessee fundraiser**

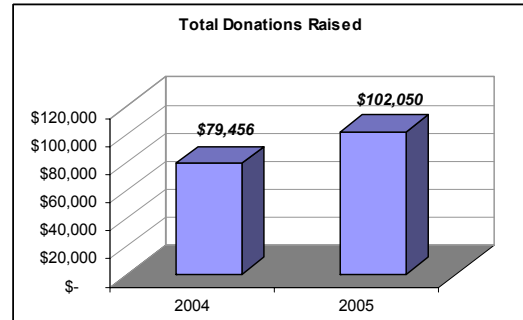
Kim's fundraisers had high praise for the online pages.

- Firstgiving pages are fun and incredibly easy to use. The page template is easy to follow and can be personalized as much or as little as each fundraiser wants.
- Online pages made it easier for Kim and her committee to recruit more walkers because they took some of the stress out of the fundraising process. "Many people don't like to ask for money; these pages let them ask through email".
- Online pages make it easier for donors to give. They can make their donation right then and there without hunting for their checkbook, finding an envelope and remembering to get the whole thing off of their desk and into the mail.
- Online pages have a greater impact on donors than a traditional letter or phone call. Donors are asked to give right as they are reading a personal message from somebody they know.

## Getting the Word Out

Kim and her Walk Committee set up an organized plan to promote the use of Firstgiving pages to their walkers, and they were persistent.

- They placed the link prominently on their website and left it up there for the whole year leading up to the 2005 walk
- Committee members created their own personal fundraising pages and emailed them to their personal contacts
- Committee members placed the link to the landing page with a line about the Firstgiving service in their email signatures
- Information about the landing page was provided to team leaders at the Kickoff meeting 6 weeks prior to the event
- Information and links to the landing page were included in all follow up emails about the event sent to team leaders and individual walk participants as the event drew closer.
- Communications to fundraisers emphasized that individual pages needed to be promoted too; it's not enough to just set up individual pages, pages need to be emailed, linked to and talked about.

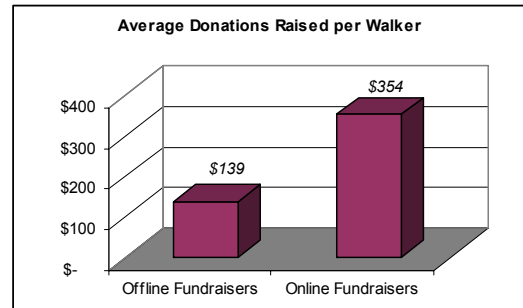


Total Donations grew 28% year over year.

As Kim points out, it's simple to let supporters know about the online pages, since promotion can piggyback on communications that are already going out, requiring no extra work.

## Time-saving features

In addition to contributing to the fundraising success of the 2005 Fall Kidney Walk, the Firstgiving online fundraising service saved the walk committee a lot of time because of the personalized thank you emails that are automatically sent to every donor at the time of donation. Fewer thank you letters to send! Time was also saved in processing donations.



Fundraisers using a Firstgiving page raised an average of 2.5x more than those who didn't.

The 2005 Fall Kidney Walk raised 28% more than the 2004 Walk, with online donations growing 89% year over year. Kim sums it up: "It really does work"