

Case Study:

Operation Freefall Increases Donor Base by 3x Using Justgiving

"As a result of personal fundraising pages, our donor base has tripled. For many of these donors, this is their first time learning about organizations that address sexual assault. These individuals can now be part of the solution."

Kellie Greene
Executive Director
SOAR

Fundraising Takes to the Sky

Five years ago, Kellie Greene, Executive Director of SOAR (Speaking Out About Rape), set out to create a national event to create awareness and generate funds for sexual assault programs. In partnership with RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network), she launched Operation Freefall, a day when individuals can skydive to take a two-mile-high stand against sexual assault.

"There are no national events for sexual assault," said Kellie, "Being a survivor myself, I performed an annual skydive to reclaim the anniversary of the day when I was attacked. After a few years of jumping, I learned that others wanted to join in too. That's when I started Operation Freefall, which now occurs annually in twenty-five locations and benefits rape crises centers nationwide."



Operation Freefall 2005 grossed the most funds in its history. \$47,500 donations were collected online via Justgiving.

Personal Fundraising Pages Ease Registration Fee Burden

Skydiving fundraisers come with a hefty price tag. For the 2005 event, each participant, or "jumper," was responsible for a \$500 registration fee, of which about \$300 was overhead. Kellie sensed that this fee was a barrier for some people to participate, and she knew she needed to find a way to help people raise the money required to participate in this event.



In 2005, 50% of Operation Freefall "jumpers" raised funds online.

*Photo credit: Brian Erlen,
www.aerialartists.com*

"We always had the idea for people to collect pledges to participate. In past years, some people sent out letters to collect pledges, but it generally proved to be too time-consuming and ineffective," Kellie said, "In the end, participants didn't raise enough for the fee or they ended up paying the fee themselves, which was often a hardship."

Kellie found Justgiving and a light bulb went on for her. She knew that by helping her jumpers create personal fundraising web pages to raise funds to help cover their registration fees, more jumpers would be able to participate.

Personal Fundraising Pages = More Funds, More Donors, & More Timesaving

Kellie created a Justgiving landing page for Operation Freefall and then emailed all of the participants about the ability to fundraise for the event with their own personal web page.

As a result, 138 jumpers -- about half of the event's total participants -- created personal fundraising pages. This group of participants generated over 1,000 donations totaling over \$47,500.

"Being able to get pledges online greatly impacted how much participants were able to raise," Kellie said, "the result was more funds raised overall."

Kellie attributes the adoption of personal fundraising pages to two factors: ease to use and the personal aspect of each fundraiser's page. "Our participants felt more involved in the event by being able to collect money through their own web pages. Being able to check progress and read personal comments online kept our fundraisers motivated," Kellie said.

She added, "As a result of personal fundraising pages, our donor base has tripled. For many of these donors, this is their first time learning about organizations that address sexual assault. These individuals can now be part of the solution."

Besides realizing new donors and greater funds, Operation Freefall was able to reduce its administrative costs. In past years, it would take about 45 minutes per participant to process the registration fee checks and pledges. With 138 participants raising funds online, this saved over 100 hours in processing time. With this windfall of time, Kellie and her staff were able to spend more time interacting with the participants, reaching out to the local media, and preparing for the event.

"Justgiving made it easier for our participants and easier for our staff," Kellie said, "This year's event was a huge success because of Justgiving. I never imagined we'd raise so much money."

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

- Number of fundraisers with Justgiving pages: 138
- Number of online donations: 1,109
- Average online donation: \$43; average offline donation: \$26.
- Total funds raised online: \$47,548

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