



Personalized Giving Experience: Key to St. Ann Catholic School's Success

BACKGROUND

Background

For more than a century, [St. Ann Catholic School](#) has been a pillar of the Pilsen community in Chicago providing high-quality Catholic education for grades Pre-K-8. As a Catholic school in the inner-city, St. Ann relies heavily on the generosity and support of its donors to help students reach their full academic, physical, social, and spiritual potential.

CHALLENGE

Challenge

Like many schools whose parent bases are being touched by many charitable causes, St. Ann School was struggling to spark donor engagement. The school was unable to meet their donation goal at their annual [live donation appeal event](#) for the last several years. Like many nonprofits, they were in need of new ideas, strategies, and energy to fight off donor fatigue.

“ There wasn't much buy-in from our donors. We were asking them to make a donation to a general fund without explaining the impact that money would have. So, we weren't reaching our goals,” said Katie Scully, Principle of St. Ann Catholic School.

As research shows, donors want to make an impact, AND they want to see the results of their gifts. Therefore, the St. Ann team decided that they wanted donors at the event to see how their donation would create a lasting change at the school in order to drive higher engagement and donations.

“ A donation to a general fund just isn't as enticing for donors” said Scully.

In today's world of technology, personalized shopping experiences are not only becoming common, but expected – and donors are beginning to have a similar [giving experience expectations](#). This includes wanting more personalized experiences with the nonprofits they support.

St. Ann School needed a solution that would allow guests to donate to different campaigns based on their unique giving interests, rather than simply contributing to a general fund, to help them successfully reach their donation goal. This would allow donors to choose the programs they wanted to support!

SOLUTION

Solution

OneCause partnered with St. Ann School to provide a [Text2Give solution](#) that would allow them to run three different campaigns simultaneously by using multiple keywords during their event.

“ What we ended up with was 10X's better than we expected,” said Scully. “It wasn't just a general ask to our donors, there were specific campaigns that people were able to donate toward. This gave them the chance to fund programs they were truly interested in.”

For each campaign, guests texted different keywords to contribute toward a fixed donation goal to support a different school initiative. “It was fun for our guests because they could see, in real time, which campaign needed their help the most. This [created a lot more buy-in](#) from our donors” said Scully.

RESULTS

Results

It was only a matter of time before St. Ann School's live donation appeal turned into a friendly fundraising competition. The progress of each campaign was projected on a visual scoreboard in real time, along with the names of donors – sparking friendly competition and positive peer pressure. Everyone remained engaged and full of enthusiasm throughout the live donation appeal, cheering until each campaign reached its donation goal.

By the end of the night, St. Ann School successfully [reached all three of its campaign goals](#), something they were unable to accomplish using the general donation appeal they had in the past. The three campaigns allowed the school to obtain a new copy machine, a classroom smartboard for the pre-school, AND faster internet for the school.

- Copier: 114% of goal
- Preschool: 104% of goal
- Internet: 106% of goal
- Total: 107% of goal

“ The difference was that this time there was a concrete dollar amount of what we needed to earn, and our donors knew where it was going” said Scully. “Our donors were eager to help us reach each goal and fund the items they were personally interested in.”

Based on her experience, Scully shared that she believes the key to success at St. Ann School's live donation appeal event was a personalized campaign strategy and the technology to make it happen. Moving forward, her advice to other nonprofits is to [make fundraising as personal to the donor as possible](#).

“ Give them something to connect with – a tangible impact to your mission,” said Scully. “It's so important to make your donors feel like they're doing something really good by donating to your cause.”