

Client Stories

Inman Park Cooperative Preschool, Inc.



Inman Park Cooperative Preschool, Inc. (IPCP) was established in 1981 to serve the needs of parents and children in Inman Park and the surrounding in-town neighborhoods. From their humble beginnings in the basement of a church, to the current campus that includes two buildings and an award-winning outdoor classroom, IPCP continues to stay true to the cooperative concept where parents play an active role in their children’s education.

Highlights

- Volunteers were less stressed and information more accurate, because Greater Giving Mobile Bidding took care of the manual data entry.
- Guests reported having FUN with Mobile Bidding.
- Guest contact information was automatically collected by Greater Giving Mobile Bidding, saving hours of work tracking down auction winners.
- The auction raised 35% more than the previous year—breaking all of IPCP’s prior records.

Challenge

Inman Park Cooperative Preschool has been holding fundraising auctions for 29 years. As a co-op organization, the annual auction presents a tremendous need for community and parent volunteers. During a survey of the community, IPCP found that parents and businesses in the community felt they were asked to contribute a lot to the event in time and in dollars.

This year, volunteer auction chair and parent Kristina Murphy wanted to reduce those hours. After running reports on past auction results, the committee noticed that most packages were only bringing in 40% of retail value. Murphy felt there had to be a way to make more money without working so hard.

And there was another problem that had plagued Inman’s past auctions: while manually entering winning bids into the event software, typos tended to sneak in. Packages were sold to the wrong bidders, and missing contact information for winning bidders often led to items being left behind after the event—sometimes forever. As a small business efficiency consultant, Murphy wanted to streamline the auction process. “Just because we are a volunteer group, doesn’t mean we can’t be professional,” she said.

After talking to another school in the area about mobile bidding, the auction committee decided to explore different solutions—keeping in mind that they were a small co-op organization and wanted to manage the event and the bidding themselves.

Solution

Based on their requirements, IPCP's auction committee selected Greater Giving as their mobile bidding provider. Then, armed with a list of what packages had sold well at last year's event, the procurement team went out to solicit 200+ businesses in the area. The team asked businesses for experiences or items people couldn't get anywhere else. Also, each family was asked to donate two items—preferably unique packaged items or experiences.

To prepare the school community for Mobile Bidding, the auction committee began advertising the new technology in their email communications and on their website. Five days prior to the event, they opened one of the silent auction sections for test bidding so guests could experiment on the platform; get accustomed to using it; and generate some excitement for the event night auction.

Tips from Inman Park Cooperative Preschool

- Prior to the event, promote Greater Giving Mobile Bidding on your event website and all other guest communications.
- Spend time before the event training your bidding helpers.
- Set up a "Tech Bar" where guests can go to get help with bidding if they need it.

The auction committee also trained parent volunteers to act as bidding assistants at a Tech Bar, so guests who needed help bidding had an on-site resource. Other volunteers roamed the event, looking for anyone who seemed to need help. Guests reported afterwards that it was easy to get started and fun to use—and bidding became like a game.

The effects of Mobile Bidding were felt most when volunteers skipped manual sales entry completely, because the mobile bidding platform took care of it all. Packages were no longer sold incorrectly. And guests that had to leave early, had their contact information already collected when they signed up as bidders, so the school was able to easily track them down later and deliver their winnings.

Results

The auction's first year as a mobile bidding event was a success. Without manual data entry, volunteers were less stressed. All purchased packages reached their correct owners. Guests loved the interactive bidding on their phones, and knowing right away what they'd won. "The atmosphere was much livelier and more fun this year. It encouraged a lot more competitive bidding. People loved it!" said Murphy.

And best of all, the auction raised 35% more than the previous year—breaking all of IPCP's prior records.

Murphy received many words of praise after the event, but two emails in particular stood out: one was from someone who had attended the event for the last five years, "I used to hate everything about the auction—but this was the best auction ever!" And the other was from a former auction chair who said, "The auction was amazing. Greater Giving Mobile Bidding was incredible. Fund-a-need perfect, and the packages were the best I have ever seen. Best. Auction. Ever!"