



Holy Trinity Catholic School of McKees Rocks, PA (Robinson Township, PA)

Holy Trinity Catholic School accepts that each child is a unique creation of God with spiritual, intellectual and social needs. As members of the faith community, school staff and leadership instill in students the teachings of the Gospel. They promote a partnership among parents, faculty, staff and the community that is rooted in the Catholic Faith. The school's mission is to imbue students with active and creative minds, a sense of understanding and compassion for others, and the courage to act on their beliefs.

Highlights

- Greater Giving provided the school's auction team an easy system for creating attractive auction packages.
- Adopting the event software permanently fixed the group's perpetual check-out nightmare.
- Adding a mobile bidding component greatly increased silent auction revenue.
- While maintaining the same number of volunteers and guests, the group raised an additional \$13,000 at their event.

Challenge

Holy Trinity Catholic School's annual auction is their biggest single fundraising event of the year, making up approximately one quarter of the total fundraising budget. As the school's costs increase, there is an expectation

and a need for each fundraiser to increase its annual profit. But how could they raise more money with the same guest list?

The event features a silent auction, raffles, a live auction containing 10-15 packages, and a special appeal. The whole event takes 25 volunteers to run successfully. But the last few years haven't gone so well.

When Leslie Williams joined Holy Trinity Catholic School's auction team, they were managing the auction with a spreadsheet inherited from a past volunteer. Her second year running the auction, while using the spreadsheet and an antiquated credit card terminal, Williams says the event devolved into chaos. The terminal kept losing its connection; the spreadsheet crashed over and over, making it impossible to close everyone out. Checkout was "a disaster," Williams says. It took over an hour and a half to get everyone out, and some guests even bypassed it just to avoid the line at the end of the night.

After this incredibly difficult event, Williams thought, "There has to be a better way!"

Solution

Looking around at what other nearby organizations were using, Williams and co-chair Dea Marcello found a high school in their area was using a competitor of Greater Giving. Even though the software package looked great, it was too expensive for the school. But it gave them an idea of what they wanted: a simpler event night solution to do what their spreadsheet had failed to do properly. There had to be something else out there, they figured; so Williams sent out four RFPs to potential vendors.

Only Greater Giving returned her call for help.

Not only was Greater Giving a far more affordable solution than its competitor, but it cost about half as much. After presenting the solution to the school's principal, the pastor, and the business manager, Holy Trinity Catholic School decided to take the plunge.

They implemented Greater Giving immediately to help prepare for the auction, as well as solve their credit card and check-out problems. The year after, they also decided to add Online Bidding to increase their silent auction revenue and meet their new fundraising goal.

And that year's event was a wild success.

Results

Greater Giving was simple for Williams, Marcello and their team to learn, and proved far more effective than their previous spreadsheet. They could quickly enter donated items into the software, then later decide how to bundle them into attractive auction packages. Even better, Greater Giving solved the problem of continuity between one auction group and the next—the team can hand off the whole project to the next committee without anything being dropped in the process, and the new team will be set to go.

And best of all, managing their event with software worked like a charm. The auction was a far more enjoyable experience for both guests and for volunteers. Nobody left early to avoid the checkout line at the end of the night, making it easier to collect all the money owed. And with the addition of Online Bidding, the school was able to open bidding before the event even started, driving bids even higher and increasing their overall revenue.

The Holy Trinity Catholic School's auction team raised \$13,000 more than the previous year by adding mobile bidding, and with the exact same amount of volunteers. It more than paid for itself!

Tips from Holy Trinity Catholic School of McKees Rocks, PA

- Know your donors. Who do you want at your event? How much can they spend? Design your auction to match your demographic.
- What kind of items perform well with your audience? Get more items like that!
- Leverage relationships your school's parents might have with local businesses, sports teams, or restaurants to bring in lucrative, desirable auction items.
- Prepare for adding a mobile bidding component. Communicate the change to your audience far in advance—the Holy Trinity Catholic School team started two months before the event.
- Additionally, the group brought on high school seniors to act as bidding "buddies," or assistants to help guests with mobile bidding and ease adoption of the new technology.