



## Ridgefield Academy – CT – Giving Tuesday

The mission of Ridgefield Academy is to educate and encourage students to become knowledgeable, independent thinkers who are passionate about learning and embracing new challenges with confidence and enthusiasm. They maintain high academic standards and emphasize the importance of responsibility, respect, and service to others in all areas of school life. Ridgefield Academy strives to be an inclusive, diverse and close-knit community where students are valued, supported and inspired to excel.

### Highlights

- Ease of use extends to Ridgefield Academy's donors, making it simpler than ever to contribute.
- The Greater Giving support team was available to answer the event team's questions whenever they come up, keeping them from ever feeling unprepared.
- Ease to use payment software left a favorable impression of Ridgefield Academy on their donors.
- Instant documented results provided oversight and allowed event organizers to report how much was raised the same day!

### Challenge

Ridgefield Academy, a growing educational institution, came to Greater Giving after they found themselves dissatisfied with several other fundraising support tools they had tried in the past. Working with the Greater Giving team assured event organizer Kara Morgan that Greater Giving's solutions and customer service was the backup they required for a fun, successful and fast-paced event.

Morgan found the Greater Giving's sales team easy to work with; the demo was thorough and questions were answered in a timely manner, yet the Greater Giving process did not take the high-pressure approach that might be found elsewhere. When a question needed to be researched, the sales team found the answers and reported back as soon as possible. This helpful, honest response foretold the outstanding customer service the Ridgefield Academy's event organizers also experienced after the sale. Ridgefield Academy now uses several of Greater Giving's tools for many of their fundraising activities, including Online Bidding, which was added on later.

## Solution

When the Ridgefield Academy event organizers moved their Giving Tuesday fundraising campaign to the Greater Giving platform, they had a donation goal of one hundred gifts. Along with this monetary goal, the school wanted to encourage participation from all demographics represented in their institution's population. To achieve this, Morgan and her team first built their website out of Greater Giving's Online Payments. The Academy's development team then reviewed several videos produced by their staff to showcase the personality of the school and encourage giving.

Two weeks prior to the Giving Tuesday event, a mass email was sent out to all the academy's constituents and flyers were sent home with students from the lower grades. Regular posting on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter was planned, and a banner was placed in front of the school to promote it to families who may not follow the school online.

On the day of the Giving Tuesday event, the most concentrated stage of their promotional campaign began with a video release to the academy's email subscribers at five o'clock in the morning. Organizers handed out packets of Skittles to parents as they dropped their kids off at school, providing them with a great opportunity for one-on-one connections.

Tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts were continually sent out throughout the day with updates on the event's success and lighthearted videos that encouraged support. All this additional promotion took the fundraising to a point where they found themselves only three gifts shy of their goal at four o'clock in afternoon! With one more push for donations over social media, Ridgefield Academy reached their goal and declared their event a success.

## Results

During Ridgefield Academy's Giving Tuesday event Kara Morgan and her team surpassed their goal of 100 participants, with 134 total gifts received and over \$30,000 raised in a single day! "We had so much fun and were able to share our success with the students at a school assembly the very next day!" Morgan reports. "After the event, its success was reported in a recap to the families, which also gave us the opportunity to thank them for supporting our school."

The response from the academy's families has been wonderful, too. One even took the time to write back to Morgan, saying that this type of active fundraising was exactly why they love the school and confirmed their decision to educate their kids at Ridgefield Academy. It's a statement of recognition that what was achieved with their fundraiser was in line with Morgan's philosophy; "We are a school, we work with children, we SHOULD have fun!"

## Tips from Ridgefield Academy

- Utilize the training resources and customer service when you need help.
- Don't get stuck on speedbumps. Greater Giving's client services team helped organizers with questions along the way.
- Get creative and have fun!