



Therapeutic Riding Institute

The Therapeutic Riding Institute provides accredited, therapeutic equine experiences to enhance the quality of life for children and adults experiencing a variety of challenges in a safe, fun and compassionate environment.



Challenge

The Therapeutic Riding Institute was founded in 1973, making it one of the first organizations in the world established to offer equine-assisted therapeutic services. Thanks to the passion and drive of driven community service volunteers, the TRI has experienced enormous growth over the years. It has tripled in size and now offers classes six days a week to a body of nearly 200 students.

For the last ten years, the TRI has held an annual gala to support their ongoing work in the community. Each horse in the program costs the TRI \$5,000 per year, so the event seeks to raise at least \$40,000 to cover all eight horses.

Every year, volunteers move 250 to 300 guests through check-in and checkout—all by hand. In the past, the TRI has drawn on their large pool of dedicated volunteers to help out, who are all organized and proficient at their work.

HIGHLIGHTS

The online check-in feature, [GoTime](#), was easy for new volunteers to learn and use.

Long wait times at check-in and checkout vanished after TRI adopted Greater Giving's registration tools.

Using Greater Giving's on demand training, volunteers were able to help prepare for the event and enter data.

The only problem? Because everything was done by hand, long lines at check-in kept guests from getting into the event in a timely fashion. During checkout, attendees grew overtired as they waited to pick up their items. Something needed to change to speed things up.

Initially, the TRI purchased an event management software package that included an online bidding component. But in 2017, they discovered online bidding simply wasn't a good fit for their group and they wanted to stick with the traditional pen-and-paper silent auction. They needed an event software company that would let them run their event in their own way.

With the help of Greater Giving's simple, straight-forward database of training videos, their staff actually found the software easy to set up in such a short amount of time. It proved very intuitive to use, and they managed to complete all of their preparation without much additional help from Greater Giving's dedicated support staff.

Solution

In 2019, the TRI discovered Greater Giving's flexible suite of products. Greater Giving was one of the few companies who sold affordable services a la carte, so TRI could pick and choose exactly which features they needed.

Since the TRI purchased their software just one month before their event, they had concerns about the amount of time staff would have to spend learning a brand new software package and interface—and how difficult it might be for their dedicated group of event volunteers. With the help of Greater Giving's simple, straight-forward database of training videos, their staff actually found the software easy to set up in such a short amount of time. It proved very intuitive to use, and they managed to complete all of their preparation without much additional help from Greater Giving's dedicated support staff. A volunteer entered all the auction items into the software, which can be an overwhelming job on a short timeline—but the volunteer had no trouble at all, and it saved a ton of staff time and stress.

To keep things simple and ease the transition, the TRI did not utilize all of the built-in registration features their first year using it for their event—but the software allowed them to upload Excel spreadsheets with all their final sale data. Staff were able to upload everything after the event and submit credit card charges without any difficulty.

Results

The TRI was able to do everything they wanted at their event—with only a fraction of the wait times. Thanks to the changes made in 2019, the organization was able to hit their \$40k goal for the Fund-A-Need. In fact, they raised more than \$10,000 above their goal!

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The TRI found it was easy to train volunteers on check-in procedures with the provided video training. Now that volunteers had far less they had to do for each guest, lines moved much faster. Most guests paid with credit cards, so checkout also went quicker than any previous year. Guests were able to pick up their items and leave before becoming exhausted.

Volunteers also found it easy to input participation data for auction games such as Heads and Tails and Wine Pull into the system, and recording Fund-A-Need results was a cinch! Two volunteers were able to enter all the data themselves with little guidance.

Over the weekend, the TRI double-checked their paper trail to ensure all the sales were correct, and then processed credit cards on the Monday after the event. They were nervous at first to submit their charges, but everything went as expected! Afterwards, the group utilized bulk email receipts and sent them out to all guests. And finally, it was simple and painless to export the sales data they needed for their donor management system, Little Green Light.



Tips from Therapeutic Riding Institute

- Before your event, train all staff and volunteers on check-in and checkout procedures. Greater Giving's "Night of Event" video provides a great primer.
- Prior to opening the doors on event night, do a quick practice session so everyone is prepared.
- Greater Giving offers a wide array of free on-demand training. Take advantage of it! You can do it on your own time, at your own pace.
- Volunteers can be a big help with data entry. With the event software's easy-to-use interface, they'll have no trouble picking it up.