



Dougy Center

Community. Connection. Acknowledgment.

The mission of Dougy Center is to provide grief support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults and their families can share their experiences before and after a death. They provide support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children in grief.



Challenge

Dougy Center is a longtime client of Greater Giving, and was one of the first nonprofit organizations in Oregon to hold a virtual fundraiser in 2020—right in the midst of the pandemic. This year, they needed to do it again to continue their mission of supporting grieving children and their families.

Traditionally, Dougy Center's annual Reflection Benefit capitalized on in-person participation by displaying the artwork of children who had participated in the organization's program services to over 500 guests, with the young artists standing by to talk about their experiences. All of the artwork would go up for bid in a silent auction, and the event usually raised half of Dougy Center's entire operational budget.

The Reflection Benefit was not the type of event that could transition to virtual seamlessly, but the event organizers had a plan—and a great opportunity.

HIGHLIGHTS

Dougy Center surrounded their event with opportunities for bidders to get involved, using the [Text to Donate](#) feature in [Greater Giving Online Bidding](#) to send out daily challenges—like a drawing for today's bidders—to encourage participation in the online auction before the event.

They also kept donations open for a week after the event to provide donors even more chances to give.

Event organizers approached the 2021 Reflection Benefit like they were producing a television show: they used high quality videos to share the story of their nonprofit, and aired it on network TV to reach new casual donors who may not otherwise have known about their services.

Holding a completely virtual, online event allowed Dougy Center to reach brand new donors across the US, Canada, and even Asia.

Solution

To give their virtual event big impact and visibility, Dougy Center approached the 2021 Reflection Benefit as just one part of a longer term fundraising strategy. First, they created an event website using **Greater Giving's online platform** where guests could register for the event and buy raffle tickets for a great travel prize. They also included a donation page for anyone to immediately donate and support Dougy Center's work.

"It's so worth it to provide your supporters a way to give in the moment, and in as many ways as they can," says Rebecca Sturges, Dougy Center Special Events & Corporate Partnerships. More opportunities to give means more giving, and this philosophy was implemented throughout the Reflection Benefit. Donations were encouraged in advance of the event, during the event, and even after it was already over.

Taking Dougy Center's fundraising event completely online made it widely accessible—not just to people located outside their immediate geographic area, but nationally and internationally. People all over could participate in the auction, make a donation, and later, watch the event itself via online stream.

Dougy Center had a real opportunity to expand their reach and solicit donations from a much wider audience, and **Greater Giving** provided the variety of tools and helpful customer support they needed to pull it off.

To build up excitement and interest in the auction items before the main event, Dougy Center also opened bidding in their online auction a week before the live stream was set to start. And taking their fundraising event completely online made it widely accessible—not just to people located outside their immediate geographic area, but nationally and internationally. People all over could participate in the auction, make a donation, and later, watch the event itself via online stream.

Then a media partner agreed to broadcast the Reflection Benefit live stream on a local FOX TV channel. Event organizers were already planning to implement Greater Giving's new **Text to Donate** feature, where guests from anywhere could give with their phone, so this was a huge bonus. Now any casual viewer who tuned into the show—even for just a few minutes—could immediately donate to the cause.

Dougy Center had a real opportunity to expand their reach and solicit donations from a much wider audience, and Greater Giving provided the variety of tools and helpful customer support they needed to pull it off.

Link to Live Stream: www.avlaunch.me/reflection2021

Event Production Partners

Auctioneer Ambassador and hosts: Johnna Wells and Joe Martinez Fox

Event Planner & Support: Raise Agent

Live Stream Partner: A/V Department

Video Content Partner: Magaurn Video Media

Caterer: PDX Platters

Results

Thanks to the widespread reach of Dougy Center’s virtual, broadcasted event, the Portland-based nonprofit recorded donations from the East Coast, Canada, and even parts of Asia. More than 300 households RSVP’d to the event, which means at least 600 individuals watched the stream—not including those who happened to find it while channel surfing.

“Greater Giving is a powerful tool. It allows you to track supporters, how much they’ve given, see all their sales and donations, and manage registrations,” says Rebecca S. And with so many new supporters giving to the cause, they needed the robust tracking and reporting tools to ensure they captured all that critical contact and participation information. Now they can reach out to those new donors about their “hybrid” event next year, which organizers are already planning—it will integrate some in-person event elements alongside the virtual in order to capitalize on what Dougy Center has learned over the last two years about online reach.

300 households RSVP’d to the event

600 least 600 individuals watched the stream

That’s not to say conducting virtual events during the pandemic was a walk in the park. While sponsor sales were stable this year, a few of Dougy Center’s past sponsors weren’t able to participate in the Reflection Benefit. Luckily, they were able to make up the difference with some new surprise sponsors.

Dougy Center never let the pandemic stop their fundraising efforts, and as a result they raised the funds needed to continue their important work of serving children and families who are grieving

“Greater Giving is a powerful tool. It allows you to track supporters, how much they’ve given, see all their sales and donations, and manage registrations.”

Rebecca Sturges, Dougy Center Special Events & Corporate Partnerships



Tips from Dougy Center

- Don’t let obstacles hold you back! Use them as an opportunity to learn and try new things. Dougy Center’s flexibility and willingness to use novel and different approaches to virtual fundraising allowed them to thrive during the pandemic.
- Develop your event website as soon as possible to allow guests to register and spread the word about your event, and include a donation option so those who can’t attend can still give to the cause.
- Make your online auction available to the public early—Dougy Center opened it a week in advance of the event—so guests could get excited about the auction items and start bidding. Use all the tools at your disposal to drive engagement in the days leading up to your event for best results!
- Always work with experts. Hire a production team to create professional-quality videos and a great event program.