

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada

For more than 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. As the nation’s largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers (Bigs) and children (Littles), ages 6 through 18, in communities across the country. We develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people.



Challenge

Before the onset of COVID-19, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada held a single Big Chefs, Little Gala every year. In 2018, they blended together paper bidding and online bidding—which presented some unique challenges—but have since moved to fully embrace mobile bidding for their events. For the first two years, they brought on **Greater Giving’s Professional Event Services** to help run their event, but now they know the system well enough to do it on their own. As the event has changed, so has BBBS used more and more Greater Giving features each year.

Now, in 2023, the event has grown to more than 700 people who all wanted to attend the Big Chefs, Little Gala. Event organizers knew they couldn’t put on a single gala of that size without having to decide who would be allowed to attend in-person, and who would be excluded from the live event. That’s when they had the idea to change and adapt the event to accommodate everyone.

HIGHLIGHTS

BBBS Northern Nevada loves the ease of entering items, and all of their relevant details, and packaging them with Greater Giving.

With Greater Giving, event organizers found it easy to input sponsor information and put it live on the website.

Inputting item and package data into Greater Giving automatically populated package data in the **Online Bidding** platform, saving BBBS Northern Nevada tons of time.

To manage three consecutive events in addition to holding a large auction, BBBS Northern Nevada leaned further into their suite of **Greater Giving** products.

Derek, CEO of BBBS Northern Nevada, decided to break the event into three smaller events across three days, leaving each event at a manageable size—all while keeping the auction the same. This would allow everyone who wanted to participate to attend, but created some other unique challenges. How would the team manage three whole events? They needed to know who would be attending each event, all while also running an auction that contained more than 200 packages. Previous events had experienced long wait times at check-out, and the team needed a better way of managing so many guests and such a large auction.

Solution

To manage three consecutive events in addition to holding a large auction, BBBS Northern Nevada leaned further into their suite of Greater Giving products. First, they expanded the use of their online registration pages to cover all ticket sales and sponsorship sales, for sponsorships ranging from \$2,000 to \$15,000.

Using Greater Giving online registration also allowed them to cap the number of available tickets for each event, while carefully tracking who had registered for which event. They also utilized Greater Giving's RSVP feature to collect all their attendee contact information. Sponsors used RSVP to have their guests enter their own information, so check-in and registration went as smoothly as possible. Their staff and volunteers find **Go Time** very simple to use, and they were able to move people into the event smoothly and quickly.

Since their initial adoption of mobile bidding, BBBS Northern Nevada has drawn in more and more bidders who want to bid remotely. In 2023, they decided to open the bidding a week prior to the physical event, so those who wanted to avoid large gatherings could participate and bid on items from home. Now, they email every single supporter in their database a link to the online auction, allowing them to market the event to people beyond those who are attending the event.

Since only about half of their attendees actually visit the auction display tables—while the rest browse and interact online—BBBS Northern Nevada decided to put out only some of their auction items at the event, saving staff and volunteers a lot of time and labor. They also eliminated item pickup completely, so there were no longer long lines at checkout!

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Results

Each year, the BBBS Northern Nevada event has drawn more and more people, and grown from a \$240,000 event in 2018 to earning over \$740,000 in 2023. During this last event, more than a hundred people logged in and bid remotely on the event.

And event attendees are more pleased with their experience than ever, as they no longer have to wait in line for checkout. After the event, staff and volunteers deliver every auction item to the winner after the event within 4-5 days—which grants the organization another touch

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Derek, CEO of BBBS Northern Nevada

with their donors, and saves the volunteers tons of time in breaking down a big auction. It’s also a great opportunity to collect more data on their donors, receive direct feedback on the event, and say “thank you!”

“Our event was amazing!” Derek says. “A 3-day, multi-venue event is an absolute whirlwind, but we set fundraising records, and our guest experience was great.”



Tips from Big Brothers Big Sisters Northern Nevada

- Use Greater Giving’s customer support line when you need it! They are there to help.
- Control who is entering data into Greater Giving, and train your staff and volunteers so all of the data entry is consistent.
- Open your auction a few days to a week in advance to really drive up those bids.
- Spend the time to train your staff and volunteers on check-in procedures to achieve the smoothest, fastest registration possible!