



The Center Helping Obesity in Children End Successfully, also known as CHOICES, is a grassroots organization whose mission is to fight against the deadly epidemic of childhood obesity. The Center aims to spread awareness and provides a parent and child resource center for the clinically diagnosed and at-risk children of obesity. By promoting weight management and lifestyle changes through nutrition education, peer socialization, physical activity and community involvement, CHOICES hopes to significantly reduce the presence of childhood obesity in their communities.

THE CHALLENGE

Like many organizations, CHOICES kept their constituent contact information for different types of supporters and program participants in 4 to 5 different spreadsheets and custom databases. With staff continuously searching for information in multiple places, and creating time-consuming custom reports from these sources, they didn't have enough time to focus on their mission.

When CHOICES began looking for a solution, they searched for 2 specific things. They wanted a system that could consolidate all of their data in one place. And they needed a software system that was user-friendly and therefore wouldn't require extensive training for their volunteers. After about 3 months of exploring their options, CHOICES decided on Convio's Common Ground®.

LIST GROWTH

With a large community-based audience around their Atlanta headquarters, CHOICES was unable to maintain their growing list in a manual system. "Our email subscribers are in the thousands. Because of the different programs we offer, there are several email lists with diverse needs," explained Sedessia Spivey, Business Consultant at CHOICES. Sourced from schools, churches, and other community groups, "one list could focus on women's health, another focus on childhood obesity specifically – and might include community supporters and participants. That list becomes thousands of individuals."

EVENTS & VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

In addition to email subscribers, CHOICES has 2 to 3 events per month, all different in size and scale with attendees from dozens to thousands. "We'll get a school requesting an expo, and have 2 to 3 floors of activity," stated Sedessia. "We are such a small organization but we have such a major impact. Over the past 10 years, the organization has impacted the health of over 11,000 people." Sustaining these numbers with a small staff of 7 people across manual databases was impossible. But with Common Ground, staff has saved 10-15% of their time across the board, the equivalent of hiring a new part-time person with an annual salary of \$30,000. In the time they've freed up, they've been able to conduct outreach in more of the counties surrounding the metro Atlanta area.

SUMMARY

CHOICES freed up 10-15% of their staff time by consolidating to one "go-to" database, the equivalent of hiring an additional part-time employee for \$30K annually.

Volunteers can now learn the system quickly, access necessary information via the web, and help the group be more productive.

Funders appreciate visibility into total volunteer hours tracked by program; and staff use this to plan future activities and capacity.

Event staff save easily 5 hours in post-event wrap-up for each of 2 to 3 events held per month, ranging from small diabetes workshops to "mega" community health fairs.

Donors have given over \$13,000 online, something that "never would have happened before."

Rising awareness of childhood obesity as a national issue has helped drive greater attendance numbers over the years. Every year, CHOICES holds a fundraising event, the Twilight Gala, between October and November that includes corporate sponsorship and even celebrity attendance. The organization can now offer online ticketing through Common Ground, helping improve both registration and event efficiency. “What took 5 hours of complex reporting after each event is now just the click of a button,” says Sedessia, “I can have data formatted exactly the way I want, and share it immediately with stakeholders.”

A single event can have between 50 and 100 volunteers, depending on its size. Common Ground allows the organization to manage recurring and multi-day job shifts, empowers online shift sign-up and track number of hours per volunteer and per program. With only 1 staff member managing volunteers, Common Ground can automatically identify appropriate volunteer positions. “We never had a problem attracting volunteers, it was managing them that was the challenge,” explained Sedessia. “It was difficult to track the number of hours per volunteer for the year, for any given workshop or event. Our funders like to see that kind of information, and we need it for strategic planning purposes.”

GRASSROOTS CAMPAIGNING

CHOICES started an annual campaign called CHOICES Champions when they first got on Common Ground. Since the beginning of the campaign, the numbers have been growing on a weekly basis. “I first took a look after the launch of the campaign and realized, ‘the numbers are growing!’” explained Sedessia. “Every week there is someone donating and that has never happened before. It doesn't matter to me if it's \$5 or \$20 – each gift is enormous! We've raised thousands of dollars now online, and that never would have happened without Common Ground.” CHOICES just completed the re-launch of their website using WordPress, and have added an interactive blog. “We're getting the word out about the challenges kids face in society today - diminished safe places for play, the bombardment of fast food marketing, and the lack of healthy meal choices in schools – and we're gaining ground with Common Ground.”

“We see a difference in our fundraising numbers on a weekly basis, in comparison to previous campaigns before Common Ground. Every week there's someone donating and that never happened before. Thanks to Common Ground, our mission is getting out.”

— Sedessia Spivey, Business Consultant

CONCLUSION

Since implementing Common Ground, CHOICES is seeing a significant impact in their daily operations, list growth, and the increase in awareness of child obesity. “Without Common Ground, we never would have raised \$13,000 online. Never. Before, you would have to knock on doors or make phone calls,” says Sedessia. “That, again, just shows the impact of saving time – it all goes back to the point of saving time that we can use in more productive ways, so we can help more families with the resources we have. By the time you take into account the additional money we've raised and the value of the time we've saved, we've made about a 1000% return on our investment in Common Ground, so I'd definitely say Common Ground is a great partner for us, and for our kids.”

ABOUT CONVIO

Convio is a leading provider of on-demand constituent engagement solutions that enable nonprofit organizations to maximize the value of every relationship. With Convio constituent engagement solutions, nonprofits can more effectively raise funds, advocate for change and cultivate relationships with donors, activists, volunteers, event participants, alumni and other constituents. Convio offers two open, cloud-based constituent

engagement solutions: Convio Common Ground CRM® for small- and mid-sized nonprofits and Convio Luminate™ for enterprise nonprofits. Headquartered in Austin, Texas with offices across the United States and United Kingdom, Convio serves more than 1,500 nonprofit organizations globally. Convio is listed on the NASDAQ Global Market under the symbol CNVO. For more information visit www.convio.com.

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