

Chill Changes Children's Lives With Sage Fundraising 50

"You can't call it a sport unless everybody gets to play." That's the idea behind Chill Learn-to-Ride, a nonprofit program that helps inner city youths develop patience, persistence, courage, and pride—while having fun learning how to snowboard.

Chill selects several hundred disadvantaged young people every year from inner cities and takes them to the slopes. Many of the youths have never left their neighborhood, much less been outdoors in a beautiful mountain setting.

"The impact on these kids is both immediate and profound," says Sarah Woodard, director of development. "They shed old labels like addict, delinquent, or underachiever, and replace them with snowboarder."

Lift Ticket to Success

Burton Snowboards founded Chill in 1995 in its hometown, Burlington, Vermont, as a small pilot program, tracking everything on paper and spreadsheet programs. As the program grew, their needs became more complex.

Chill's biggest problems were due to the lack of a multifunctional database. "Our records were stored on several different hard drives on various people's desks," says Woodard. "Whenever someone left, we had to figure out how they had organized their records, and then try to import their data into a usable format. Any turnover meant we were stuck without usable information."

Centralized Information

Woodard had spent almost a year evaluating software packages at her previous job. "I could see right away how Sage Fundraising 50 would improve efficiencies at Chill," she says. "I therefore moved quickly to implement it, so we'd start seeing benefits immediately."

Now Sage Fundraising 50 provides an end-to-end solution for organizing the program, including a consolidated database for all records. "Everything is in one place, such as contact data on our volunteers, donors, affiliated agencies, grants, and people connected with our special events," says Woodard.



CUSTOMER

Chill Learn-to-Ride Program

INDUSTRY

Nonprofit
Social Services

LOCATION

Burlington, Vermont

Number of Locations: 14
(U.S. and Canada)

Number of Employees:

Five year-round, 18 in season

SYSTEM

Sage Fundraising 50

Challenge

Replace spreadsheets and multiple-format record-keeping system with an end-to-end solution for tracking all fundraising and financial functions.

Solution

Sage Fundraising 50, an all-in-one fundraising system designed to streamline administrative processes and improve results.

Results

Mail merges that used to take many hours can be done in minutes; program integrates all information on clients, donors, and related agencies.

Chaperones, Hosts, and Grants

“We track other program elements in the software also, including information on our bus rentals, host resorts, safes for storing snowboarding gear, and training materials for kids before they go out on the mountain,” Woodard notes. “Because the information is centrally located and stored in a consistent format, everyone can access it quickly and easily.”

Sage Fundraising 50 also records details on the grants that Chill applies for, the results of the application, and the dollar amount of the grants. The software helps ensure that expenditures are recorded properly, for easy reporting back to donor agencies.

“Shredding” Inefficiencies

“Sage Fundraising 50 tracks all mailings and provides a historical record,” Woodard continues. “This lets us stay in constant contact with all of our constituents, making certain that people are asked consistently for donations and receive promotional items. We can now do this without digging through archives or paper files.”

Chill staff members are able to make much more efficient use of their time, thanks to the new Sage Fundraising 50 system. “We don’t have to reinvent the wheel when we start a task,” says Woodard. “This is saving a colossal amount of time. For instance, instead of copying and pasting addresses from one file to another for each mailing, we simply do a mail merge. Jobs that previously took many hours can now be done in just a few minutes.”

Easier Scheduling and Events

“We perform all of our volunteer scheduling with Sage Fundraising 50, using several different variables,” Woodard notes. “When our national coordinators travel, we export volunteer lists to their laptop. Then they have all contact information for the city they’re visiting and can work out agendas for chaperones and instructors to accommodate the volunteers’ needs.”

Chill Learn-to-Ride holds two annual golf tournaments as fundraisers. “We use Sage Fundraising 50 to track all the players and sponsors,” explains Woodard. “Then we send a story album afterward to participants, relying on the software to help us match people into correct foursomes and mail to their current addresses. I’m not sure how we ever ran these large events without the software.”

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– Sarah Woodard
Director of Development
Chill Learn-to-Ride Program

Grooming Slopes for Growth

Woodard is expanding Sage Fundraising 50 throughout the organization. “After implementing the software at headquarters, we tried it in Boston, where it was a great success. Now we’re looking at using it everywhere.

“Having the right software is essential for any nonprofit that’s ready to grow beyond the formative stages,” she continues. “Sage Fundraising 50 lets you consolidate information and build on your assets, creating a truly professional organization.”