

Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County builds its volunteer tracking with Sage Fundraising 50

Home is where the Habitat is

Families around the world struggle to attain some of our basic human rights. And, international organization Habitat for Humanity is on a mission to help those families escape lives of poverty through its homeownership program. The Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County (HFHAC) is a self-funded affiliate of the international organization, serving its local area of Tennessee with the help of individuals, organizations, and faith-based communities like itself.

Habitats around the world have needs unique to those of other religiously affiliated or social services organizations. With this in mind, Executive Director Susan Burgess-Parrish ventured to find the right fundraising system for Anderson County.

"Habitats are strange animals," explains Burgess-Parrish. "We have to keep track of volunteers and hours; donations of cash and gifts of time; and relationships and general information. We needed a really flexible fundraising and development system to help us keep track of everything."

Nail down the right solution

HFHAC began its search for a fundraising solution by narrowing the choices down according to the features it needed.

While attending the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) International Conference, Burgess-Parrish and her staff visited the booths of each of their top choices to speak with representatives and view demos of the various systems. By the end of the conference, she had decided that Sage Fundraising 50 was the perfect fit for HFHAC. "The software does everything we need it to do, and it's fairly easy to use, which meant that my staff would need minimal training," adds Burgess-Parrish. "The various online training options enabled my staff to stay in the office while they learned."



CUSTOMER

Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County

INDUSTRY

Faith-Based, Housing Development Nonprofit

LOCATION

Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Number of Locations: One

Number of Employees: 10

SYSTEM

Sage Fundraising 50

Challenge

Habitat for Humanity relies on its volunteers to further its mission of eliminating poverty through homeownership. The organization needs a comprehensive fundraising system for development, as well as volunteer management.

Solution

Sage Fundraising 50 supports the core fundraising techniques and provides the organization with an easy-to-use system for complex volunteer tracking.

Results

Using Sage Fundraising 50, the Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County quickly and easily matches volunteers to projects according to skills and recognizes them for their time contributions.

Customization for unique program needs

A member of HFHAC's development staff took the training courses to learn the basics, and decide how to customize the system for the organization's specific campaigns and needs. By using her training experiences, she could easily configure the system to address the organization's more sophisticated volunteer tracking needs.

"HFHAC needs the ability to track the hours devoted to projects in conjunction with the skill level provided by each volunteer, and the powerful capabilities of Sage Fundraising 50 make this complex volunteer tracking simple," explains Burgess-Parrish.

Sage Fundraising 50 has made tracking and reporting volunteer hours a breeze for grants and other related progress reports. HFHAC can assign dollar values to each skill provided by volunteers (carpentry, plumbing, or sewing, for example), as well as assign values to each volunteer's skill level. This simplifies the task of recognizing each donor's contributions by assigning values even to such intangible gifts as time. These capabilities enable the staff to quickly identify and contact volunteers with particular skill sets based on upcoming projects.

"If a master carpenter volunteers, it could be \$20 an hour, but if a beginner volunteers for carpentry, it's about \$9 an hour," says Burgess-Parrish. "We track all of it using Sage Fundraising 50. Then, at the end of the year, I can write Sally Jo Smith a letter thanking her for all of her contributions during the year and detail the note by saying, 'You donated \$50, and you contributed \$250 hours worth of work.'"

Breaking new ground

Sage Fundraising 50 has given HFHAC total control over its volunteer tracking methods. And, the customization it implemented to do so was fairly simple to initiate and could be duplicated by similar organizations. Burgess-Parrish hopes that Anderson County's success might pave the way for other HFHs and service organizations to streamline the processes of coordinating and recognizing their constituents.

"This is something that many other Habitats are trying to do, or want to be able to do," Burgess-Parrish explains. "We're able to do this complex volunteer tracking because we customized Sage Fundraising 50 for our specific needs, rather than using a template."

By first establishing its needs, HFHAC successfully implemented a fundraising system to help it carry out its mission more efficiently. With its reliance on Sage Fundraising 50, HFHAC has streamlined its volunteer tracking to give its participants the opportunity to reach their full potentials.

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—Susan Burgess-Parrish
Executive Director
Habitat for Humanity
of Anderson County

