

CASE STUDY

Haven of Hope launches first year-end and capital fundraising campaigns through Bonterra Guided Fundraising, increasing their year-over-year fundraising by nearly \$400,000.





Haven of Hope is a faith-based ministry located in Lake Odessa, Mich. committed to healing hearts and restoring relationships. They provide marriage and pre-marriage mentoring, along with marriage retreats at no charge. Established in 2003, Haven of Hope operates with a small staff made up of two counselors, one part-time bookkeeper, and one full-time administrative secretary, Melissa Barker. Melissa joined the Haven of Hope team part-time in 2012, managing fundraising operations for the organization.

Establishing a donor database and increasing communication with an easy-to-use solution

Prior to onboarding to Bonterra Donor Engagement's Guided Fundraising solution (formerly Network for Good) in 2020, Melissa was using spreadsheets to manage donor information and had no dedicated system for contacting donors. With Bonterra Guided Fundraising, Haven of Hope has noted significant improvements in how they communicate with supporters, attract new donor demographics, and increase fundraising.

“Maybe the most powerful thing we’ve done in the past few years is get a donor management system,” said Melissa. “We had a fairly good donor base [before Guided Fundraising], but this allowed us to better connect with them. Now that we’re seeing younger couples come in for our premarital counseling, which was really almost nonexistent before Guided Fundraising, we are finding that they like to give online and via text, so it has really helped us connect with our younger donor base as our premarital counseling has stepped up.”

Transitioning to digital fundraising has allowed Haven of Hope to be more effective with their communication and meet donors where they are with fundraising appeals.

“It was so easy to do emails, it was so easy to do text-to-give,” said Melissa. “We had never done either of those things before. Everything like newsletters had been in paper form, so we were able to get into the electronic side of fundraising.”

Launching fundraising campaigns through Guided Fundraising and fundraising coaching

“Before Guided Fundraising, our main advertising was four newsletters per year, we were bringing in roughly 40% of our donations in the month of December, and around \$150,000 per year,” said Melissa. “So we didn’t even really realize that GivingTuesday and year-end was something that we needed to do.”

Through Bonterra’s fundraising coaching program, Haven of Hope has gained best practices to launch their first ever year-end and capital fundraising campaigns.

“Previous to Bonterra Guided Fundraising, we probably had a two-year waiting list for folks wanting to come in for mentoring,” said Melissa. “So, with that waiting list, we had the desire to hire more mentors and we were looking at some property, but we had no idea how to do a capital campaign...[Our coach] worked right with our board and us and walked us step-by-step through how to start a capital campaign. We don’t know what we would have done if she had not helped us with that.”



Amplifying giving on the global day of generosity, GivingTuesday

They first decided to launch a GivingTuesday campaign to capitalize on this worldwide day of giving. Having never hosted this type of campaign before, they turned to the GivingTuesday engagement plan built into the Guided Fundraising solution. This provided Melissa with step-by-step instructions for engaging with existing and lapsed donors to ensure their message resonated with each audience.

“[Our board] didn’t realize the power of the asking [for GivingTuesday support] and the different ways of connecting with people, so everyone was a little skeptical,” said Melissa. “After we saw how easy it was, the next year we started working it really early in the process and using every tool that Guided Fundraising gave us for the end of the year and the donations started coming in. We were just so uneducated about how to even raise funds, so [this experience] has really trained us in our fundraising.”

Since then, they begin planning early, developing e-blasts, securing matching gifts from their board, and ensuring their supporters are aware of their goals for the campaign. According to Melissa, she starts planning Haven of Hope’s year-end fundraising campaign as soon as the Guided Fundraising resources become available!

Since 2019, before utilizing Bonterra Guided Fundraising, Haven of Hope has increased year-end fundraising by over \$50,000.

FUNDS RAISED BY HAVEN OF HOPE DURING GIVINGTUESDAY THROUGH YEAR-END:

2019

\$36,660 RAISED

- Prior to onboarding to Bonterra Guided Fundraising. The only donor engagement during this year was through four paper newsletters.

2020

\$60,987 RAISED

- Hosted their first ever GivingTuesday drive through Guided Fundraising did not utilize matching gifts.

2021

\$96,056 RAISED

- Hosted both a year-end campaign and capital campaign simultaneously.
- Utilized the Guided Fundraising year-end engagement plan and secured a matching gift.
- An additional \$53,065 was raised during this time that was specified for the capital campaign.

2022

\$88,014 RAISED

- Hosted both a year-end campaign and capital campaign simultaneously.
- Utilized the Guided Fundraising year-end engagement plan and secured a matching gift.
- An additional \$43,054 was raised during this time that was specified for the capital campaign.



Honing in on their mission through built-in best practices and templates

Some of the key ways Bonterra Guided Fundraising has helped Haven of Hope is by allowing them to hone in on their mission, get to know their donors better, and communicate with them in unique ways.

“Filling out the form letters and [other templates in Guided Fundraising] there are a lot of places to input your mission,” said Melissa. “Through this exercise, we really realized that our mission is ‘compassionate restoration,’ so we highlight that in our communications that we send through the platform. So, people are really looking at us as a ministry that is caring and compassionate, which helps us stand out. We have learned from Guided Fundraising to try to include faces in our photos, which helps us stand out when people open our messages. [Guided Fundraising] has really helped us get our name out there so people know, ‘oh this is Haven of Hope.’”

Engaging with lapsed and major donors through donor segmentation features

Melissa also loves that you can easily filter out exactly what information you need through the solution. Recently, they wanted to contact just lapsed donors to help them reconnect with the organization. She was able to apply a filter to her donor database to just show lapsed donors, then easily craft a message just for them through the video features of the all-in-one platform. Additionally, they were able to make quick updates to their donor information through this exercise, ensuring they had the correct details for each person.



“We put those names on popsicle sticks in a container in the office and each week everyone took a stick with someone’s name, found them in the Guided Fundraising solution, and made them a video,” said Melissa. “We’ve had many donations come in from lapsed donors just because they had a personal touch.”

Haven of Hope has also been able to identify existing major donors through the streamlined Guided Fundraising database.

“Before I had no way of knowing, other than looking up in Quickbooks, how much people gave,” said Melissa. “Just the other day we wanted to know anyone in our donor base who had given over \$10,000. We filtered that in Guided Fundraising and we found that we had some donors who could have bought a second house with what they had given to Haven of Hope. That’s an amazing donor, we have a relationship with them, and they love what we do. We didn’t know that before, we had no way of tracking that. That has been huge that we know who our donors are, we know how much they’re giving, and we have easy access to them that we never had before.”

Enhancing donor relationships to raise more year-over-year

The organization has been able to foster more personal relationships with each of their donors, whether they’re requesting donations or not, thanks to Bonterra Guided Fundraising.

“We always had the clients, the need was always there, but we didn’t always have the ability to meet that need,” said Melissa. “I think Bonterra’s Guided Fundraising solution has taken that pressure off of us...when a client comes and they’re hurting and we’re spending 15 hours a week with them in counseling, that’s a lot of time. To have to take that much time to connect with donors would be such a drain on our ministry. Having [the platform] has really streamlined that and made it fast for us, so that has taken pressure off of the organization.”

Since joining Bonterra's Guided Fundraising solution in 2020, Haven of Hope has increased their year-over-year fundraising by nearly \$400,000—more than double what they raised in 2019.

"[As a nonprofit] I don't think people realize that they're partnering with you," said Melissa. "Through Guided Fundraising and all of the touch points, I think people now think they're our partners. They're not just sending a check through the mail, but they're really here with us in the trenches, caring for people, and making a difference. That's been really powerful to have that tool to help people see they're as valuable to what we do as we are, and we couldn't do this without them."

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