CASE STUDY

Eagle Bluff streamlines event management and exceeds revenue goals with Bonterra Guided Fundraising.

Located in rural southeastern Minnesota, Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center connects people to nature through education and transformative outdoor experiences. Through direct observation, interaction, engagement, and exploration of the environment, students and visitors connect with nature on a deeper level, cultivating a relationship with and developing an understanding of the natural world. The organization's mission is to empower people to leave the learning center with experiences that inspire them to become lifelong stewards of the environment.

Each year, the Eagle Bluff team hosts a *Banquet on the Bluff* to raise money for scholarships, programs, and special projects. Typically the event is live, in-person, but the last two years have been virtual due to the pandemic. Moving forward, the team plans to host a hybrid event.

Recently, the organization set a stretch goal of $50,000 to raise funds for a new nature preschool program to fund equipment, the construction of a nature-inspired playground, and other expenses associated with the program.

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Bonterra Guided Fundraising's solution has an integrated events platform to work seamlessly alongside your donor management system.

Using Bonterra Guided Fundraising streamlines event management.

For many years, the Eagle Bluff team ran the event entirely manually. Joe Goetzke, development and marketing director, explains, "We considered how much time we spent processing payments, importing donor records, arranging auction pickups, and all of the things that went into hosting an event like this. I knew we needed to streamline all that this year."

Using the Bonterra Donor Engagement Guided Fundraising (formerly Network for Good) solution's integrated events platform alongside the donor management system allowed Eagle Bluff to accomplish this simplification. Joe says, "We used the events and auction platform—all the features in the platform, including the sponsorship features and live stream. The software was a huge part of the success of the event. We're down staff this year, and I was the main guy making all this happen, so the ease of use was a huge factor in allowing me to maintain my sanity in the process. Having all of the features in one product integrated with our donor management system just erased all the pain points."

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Silent auction raises $8,000.

A crucial component of the event was the silent auction, which the organization ran using Bonterra Guided Fundraising's online auction software. Joe and his team made sure to promote the auction alongside the main program event, communicating how and when attendees could participate. They were successful, as the silent auction alone raised $8,000. Joe also points out that they were able to reach more people by offering virtual participation.

"We're in a rural area that's not that close to any major city. By having a virtual auction, more people can participate. It really allowed us to expand our reach."

Event creates awareness, attracts new donors, and exceeds revenue goal of $50,000.

Because the banquet was intended to support a new program, one of the main goals of the event was to raise awareness. The organization wanted to reach parents of three- to five-year-old children—people who would be interested in having their kids participate in an outdoor-focused early childhood environment. The event exposed the new program not only to these parents but also to supporters who could spread the word to parents they know. Additionally, some of the parents of program participants became new donors.

Beyond exposure for the new program, the virtual event brought in significant revenue, exceeding $50,000. Joe says, "The most important metric is the money raised, and I can happily say that we surpassed our goal."

Guided Fundraising makes virtual events simple.

Strong technology tools allow even small nonprofits to host successful virtual events that hit revenue goals. Joe emphasizes that having the right software significantly impacted his event's results. "Using the Guided Fundraising solution was a no-brainer. With the direct integration to the donor management system and the customer support that Guided Fundraising provided, it was easy to put on the event. We're a relatively small nonprofit with a lean development team, so something that was easy to use was super important for me. In a lot of ways, I feel like it was made just for us."

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