

HOW ALABAMA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES WON #GIVINGTUESDAY

5 KEYS TO THEIR WINNING STRATEGY

Introduction

GIVING TUESDAY: RIDING THE WAVE

Following close on the heels of two of the most recognizable and deeply discounted shopping days of the holiday season, Black Friday and Cyber Monday, #GivingTuesday is dedicated to taking a break from the focus on consumerism to shine a light on nonprofits and the causes they champion.

The annual day of generosity has grown exponentially since its inception in 2012 and all nonprofits can benefit from hitching their wagons to this continually rising star.

In 2014, Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries (ABCH) dipped its toes into the #GivingTuesday waters for the first time with a modest goal of \$2,400. After receiving more than \$16k in donations that first year, they waded all the way in, raising more than \$300k by their fourth year.

Now, they're making the most of the nation's attention on generosity to nonprofits for a day, gearing up for even more success moving forward.

Leading the nonprofit's #GivingTuesday campaign is ABCH's Director of Development Jay Boyd and Director of Communications Michelle Glassford.

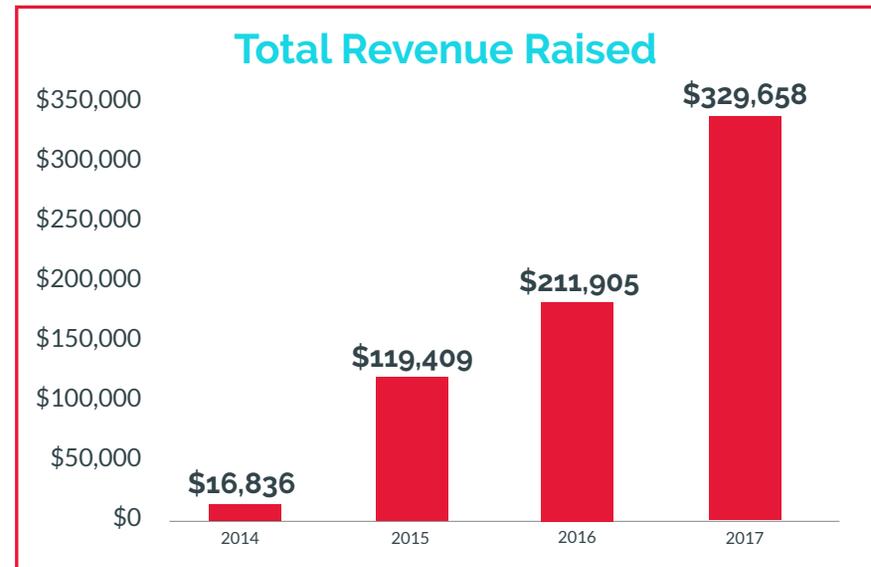
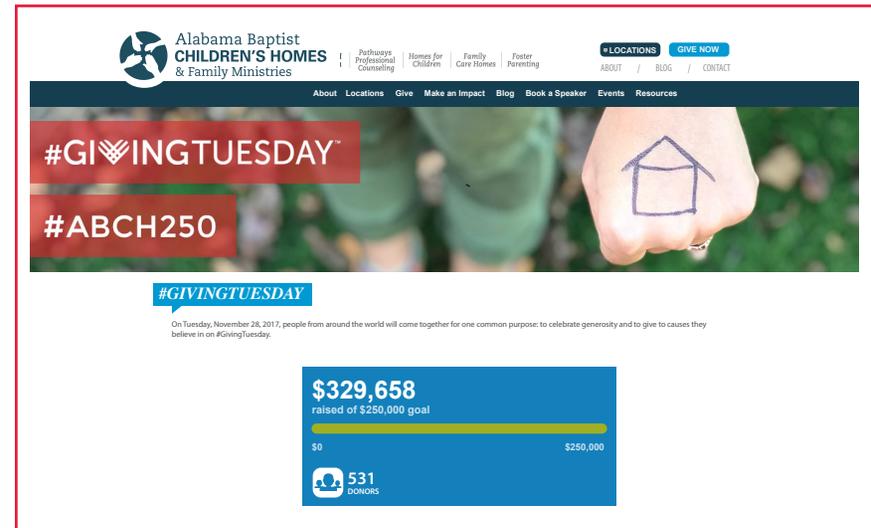
They shared five reproducible and scalable keys to the organization's success they've learned along the way:

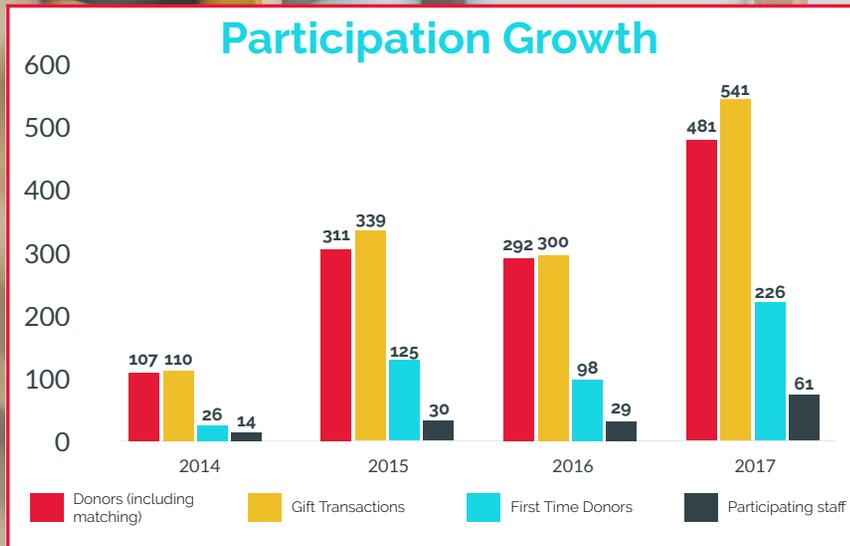
- Campaign simplicity
- Matching donations
- Peer-to-peer fundraising
- Goals, incentives and fanfare
- Marketing and social media

"We didn't create this wave," Jay says, "but we're riding it."

Michelle adds that "We're so grateful for all the ways God is moving in people's hearts to give. This has become so much bigger than we imagined it could be."

Let's dive into ABCH's stellar and unexpected results first.





Participation Growth

While revenue totals were exciting, analytics revealed important participation factors to track in any campaign:

- Increase in participation among existing donors
- Some donors giving multiple gifts
- Greater staff involvement
- New donors being added to the donor file

iDonate's unified dashboard gave ABCH immediate visibility into these metrics.

First-Time Donors

Jay is particularly interested in how their campaign attracts new donors due to the potential for long term value they represent.

First-time donors proved to be a significant growth area for ABCH's #GivingTuesday campaigns.

View more details about this important group of donors on page 6.

Now, let's find out how they did it!

Key #1 KEEP IT SIMPLE

Seeing ABCH's four-year #GivingTuesday evolution and incredible results, it may be tempting to bite off more than you can chew. Michelle stresses at the outset that this is the #1 pitfall to avoid. ABCH's steadily rising success was built upon insights gained from the previous years, making growth more organic and sustainable.

"Start small," she says. "Do what you feel inspired to do and then let it grow from there. We started with just a team of three working on #GivingTuesday and allowed ourselves time to figure out what to add the next year without becoming overwhelmed." Now with 17 development and communications staff members focused on the campaign, they are able to take on more.

Areas to Simplify

GIVING EXPERIENCES

When donors experience friction in the giving process due to long forms, glitchy mobile giving or being rerouted from your website to a third-party site to complete their gift, they are less likely to finish the process.

By ABCH's third #GivingTuesday, they had become iDonate customers, incorporating the newly launched peer-to-peer fundraising channel. The streamlined giving process and easy-to-set-up fundraising pages provided the simplicity they needed for donors and for donation management.

THEMES

When it comes to themes, Jay says "What our organization does for children and families is an awesome enough theme on its own. We decided that if we tried to apply a specific theme, we would end up narrowing the focus of our message."

If you choose a theme for #GivingTuesday, make sure it's easy to remember and obviously relevant to your cause.

CALLS TO ACTION

Playing off the message they share, that "Every child deserves a place to call home," ABCH settled on the symbol of a house in 2015 (which proved to be a winner). They kept their participation requests clear and simple:

- Make a donation
- Draw a house on your hand
- Share a picture of your "house" on social media
- Encourage others to give

Campaigns like the well-known ALS Ice Bucket challenge can catch on like wildfire over time, but not every donor will participate in something of that magnitude. The beauty of ABCH's house drawing is that it is quick, easy, free, and provides a low barrier to participation, even for those who might be reticent to post images of themselves.

Start small. Do what you feel inspired to do and then let it grow from there.



Key #2

MATCHING DONATIONS

Just weeks before #GivingTuesday 2014, a member of the Communications team approached Jay with the idea of trying to raise \$2,400 in 24 hours and the possibility of finding a matching donor for that amount.

Jay contacted a newer donor he had recently met, one he knew had the capacity to give more. It was the perfect opportunity to increase her giving from the smaller gifts she'd given over the year. She immediately agreed to a matching \$2,400. "That's what's so awesome about #GivingTuesday," Jay says. "It gives our Development Officers a chance to get in front of donors and ask for bigger gifts."

Considering the extraordinary success of that first campaign(\$16k+), their matching donor suggested raising the goal considerably the following year.

So, in 2015, their stretch goal was 10 times more: \$24k. Matched donations once again proved to be a strong motivator for donors wanting to increase their impact; ABCH raised \$119,409, including the matching gift of \$24k, which means donors gave nearly four times the matched amount.

Recognizing the power of matching donations, the Development team got more involved in Year 2, spending several months securing matching donations for their ambitious and meaningful goal of \$125k in honor of the organization's 125th anniversary. Ultimately, they raised \$100k in matching and a total of \$185,157.

For 2017, building upon the previous year's success, a team of donors pledged \$125,000 in matching gifts, making the overall goal \$250,000.

Studies show that match-funding is the most likely factor in raising donors' gift amounts, scoring even higher than emergency appeals. And 30% of donors indicate they have given a larger gift when a match was offered.¹

As ABCH learned, matching donations play heavily in their #GivingTuesday success. Jay says that not all matching donors are strict about giving only the amount matched; many will pledge and donate the full amount. It's always a good idea to clarify the details ahead of time.

#GivingTuesday gives us a chance to get in front of our donors and ask for bigger gifts. We've found they really love it because they know their money is getting others involved. It's a win-win for everyone!

¹The Big-Give Research Initiative

\$2-3 billion

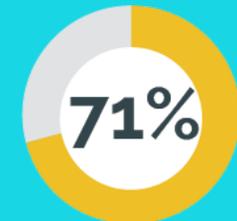
is donated through matching gift programs annually

SOURCE: DOUBLE THE DONATION

\$6-\$10 billion

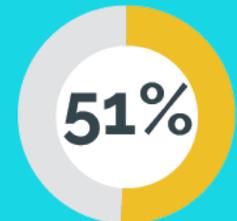
in matching gift funds goes unclaimed per year

SOURCE: DOUBLE THE DONATION



increase in the response rate to matching offers

SOURCE: TECH SOUP



increase in donation amounts when matching is mentioned (prior to receiving matched gift funds)

SOURCE: TECH SOUP



of donors are more likely to donate if a match was offered.

SOURCE: THE BIG-GIVE RESEARCH INITIATIVE

Key #3 PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

Peer-to-peer fundraising has an almost unlimited potential because it leverages the networks of your donors' friends and families—and their friends' and families' networks (and so on and so on...).

As early adopters of iDonate's peer-to-peer platform, Jay reports that where this giving channel really showed its value was in reaching first time donors. Figure 3 to the right shows the ratio of first time donors to total donors ABCH experienced, both before and after implementing peer-to-peer. While both total and first-time donor rates remained relatively flat in 2016, their *first time donor* to *total donor* ratio peaked at just under 47% in 2017.

Several other factors supported the success of ABCH's peer-to-peer push:

- The Development team was now heavily involved in the campaign.
- The Communications team upped their marketing game (see page 8).
- A new group of supporters (160+ foster families) was recruited to fundraise along with staff and trustees. Peer-to-peer pages made it easy for this group to participate and engage with their networks. As the #GivingTuesday buzz increased, ABCH was able, with only two more fundraising pages created by supporters than the previous year, to almost double peer-to-peer revenue, from \$22k to \$41k.

To overcome any concerns about peer-to-peer fundraising, ABCH emailed out a fun, branded step-by-step guide to setting up fundraising pages.

Peer-to-peer fundraising is the quintessential #GivingTuesday method for getting the word out far and wide in just 24 hours...and a powerful tool for new donor acquisition.

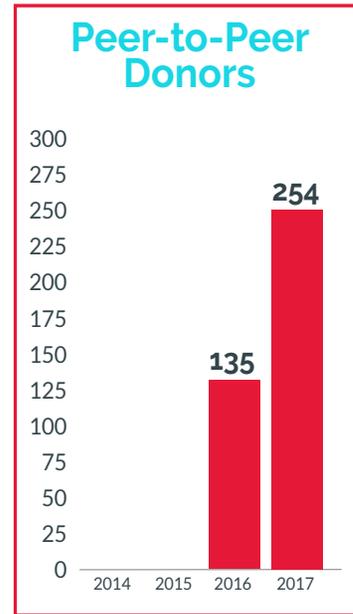


Fig.1

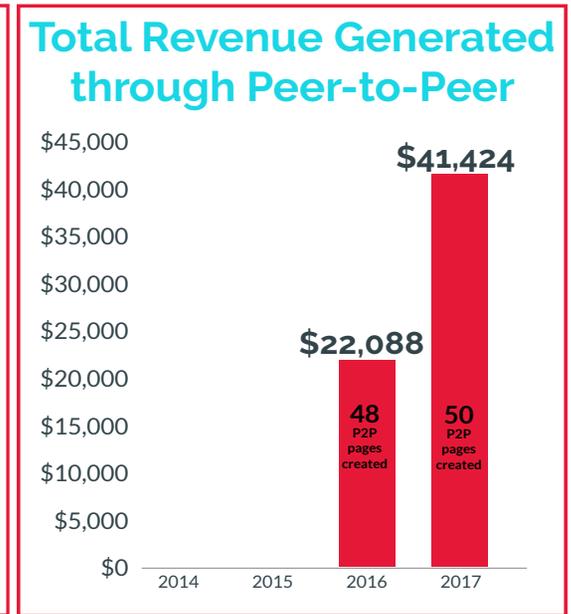


Fig.2

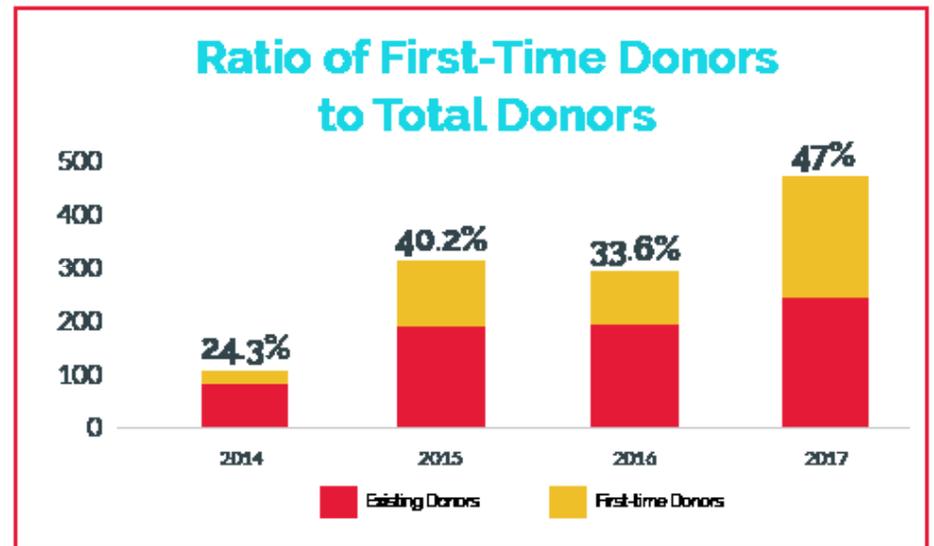


Fig.3

Key #4
GOALS & INCENTIVES

Setting & Monitoring Goals

Setting #GivingTuesday goals has been something of a journey for ABCH, one that has grown along with their success.

Deciphering the relationship between goals and results doesn't always yield a clear pattern. For example, a tiny goal didn't stop ABCH donors from exceeding it by 578% in Year 1. On the other hand, large goals might inspire supporters but if not achieved, can backfire on morale.

Tracking your ratio of goals to revenue enables more intentional goal setting. There are no set rules of thumb, but aiming toward how much you need, plan an amount higher than the previous year's revenue totals.

Seeing their revenue consistently exceed their goals has encouraged ABCH to keep thinking bigger each year. Their generous matching donors both drive and support this decision.

Jay states that the iDonate Goal Meter is a popular element on #GivingTuesday, displaying real-time giving results against goals.

"The Goal Meter is a big part of visually keeping campaign awareness going. We can see real-time updates or go in and manually update the total for offline donations. People like refreshing the page and watching the total rise," he says.

You can also set non-financial goals that encourage participation and provide long term opportunities, including a certain number of first-time donors, a percentage increase in peer-to-peer fundraising pages created, or a donor from every state.

Competing for Prizes

To create energy and help build a culture of stewardship among staff, ABCH incentivized participation with the strategic use of friendly competition for prizes. For the first two years, staff members competed for one of three gift cards, starting at \$250 for first place.

As foster parents were included and competition grew, bragging rights took on more weight than the thrill of winning one of the prizes.

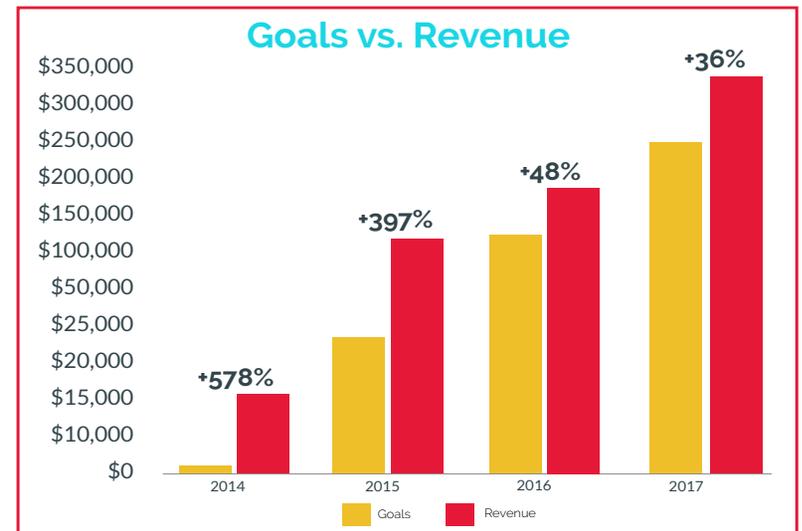
"As part of the Development team, I'm not even eligible to win a gift card, but one of the house dads was determined to beat my fundraising amounts," Jay shares. "We were neck and neck all day on our individual Goal Meters."

Fanfare, Donuts & Swag

For ABCH staff, #GivingTuesday wasn't just another day on the job. "We brought in donuts to our office and encouraged campus leaders to make the day fun for their teams, too," Jay says.

They're currently working on a new idea inspired by the "sideline swag" that University of Georgia's football coach Mark Richt and others use to reward exceptional plays (and which players love). "We're in the process of coming up with a 'cheesy' award, which the campus that raises the most money will get to keep for the whole year."

They hope it will become a coveted incentive to challenge even greater enthusiasm and fundraising effort for staff in coming years.



Incentivized competition boosts campaign results ...and puts the FUN in fundraising!

Key #5 MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA

Virtually all of ABCH's #GivingTuesday communications have taken place online. In 2016, they pushed out a small amount of email and print ads and placed some direct calls, but the majority of the action took place via their website and strong social media presence.

Planning Your Campaign

In their first year, ABCH learned about and participated in #GivingTuesday with only one month's notice. Early is better than later, but they are living proof that nonprofits should participate even if they're getting a late start and don't know what they're doing.

Now, ABCH starts planning and seeking matching donations earlier in the year. They begin talking up the release date of their campaign marketing plans internally by mid-July and present them to staff in October. This allows them to reinforce the importance of the campaign within the organization, build anticipation, and give themselves time to develop materials and great ideas.

Say it with Imagery

ABCH is on the right track with their strategy to generate buzz with compelling, image-heavy stories. In 2017, they created a general video with a short animated intro about #GivingTuesday and a message about how gifts support their ministry. Then, for each week in November leading up to the big day, they released short video testimonials from different people in their care, like a foster child about to graduate from college, or a family restored.

Donor-generated images of that marker-drawn house have become synonymous with ABCH. This year, the house symbol will be echoed on a sticker to be mailed with October receipts, further reinforcing the mission to provide food, clothes, shelter, family environments, and love to at-risk children.

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#Hashtags

Hashtags are an integral part of any social media campaign. Some organizations use easy-to-remember phrases for their hashtag. ABCH uses and encourages the use of #GivingTuesday along with an ABCH-specific tag like their first one (#2400in24) or last year's #ABCH250, to highlight their goal of \$250k that year.

Get Others to Say it

During 2017 #GivingTuesday's 24-hour period, ABCH's Facebook posts were shared 224 times, up 42% from the previous year.

On a day when so many organizations are participating in #GivingTuesday, getting your loyal donor base to promote your nonprofit to their friends can help sway those who haven't heard about #GivingTuesday yet or undecided donors looking for a nonprofit to support.

So, be sure to let your donors know in advance about:

- Matching or challenge donations
- Peer-to-peer fundraising
- Links to giving pages
- Ways to share the message with their networks

Multichannel Giving

Make donating possible across multiple giving platforms. In addition to their online giving form and peer-to-peer fundraising pages, ABCH brought in \$625 in 2016 and \$520 in 2017 through their iDonate text-to-give feature. "It's just one more way to help make giving easy and quick for people," Jay says.



On #GivingTuesday, post often, providing updates on gifts and goals, stories about your organization's benefactors, and compelling stats and quotes about the industry you serve.

Don't forget to engage with those who are posting and sharing on your behalf.

Are you ready for #GivingTuesday?

It's well worth it to invest in ABCH's keys for a successful #GivingTuesday campaign, not just for one year but for the long game. As ABCH learned, the insights that come from trial and error and building on your success year over year are key to growing loyalty and participation among existing donors and reaching more and more new donors with every #GivingTuesday.

iDonate is committed to helping nonprofits succeed all year long by innovating generosity through better donor giving experiences, empowering fundraisers to leverage their networks for the causes they care about.

Learn how iDonate
supports #GivingTuesday
(and every day) fundraising

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