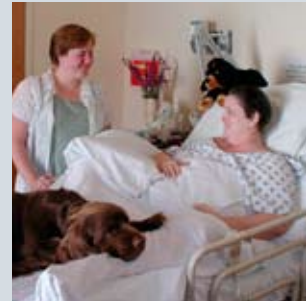


Hospice Austin Relies on The Raiser's Edge® to Enable Strategic Fundraising

Improves relationship cultivation and segmentation to drive foundation growth

With a substantial base of loyal supporters and the need to manage the often complex relationships associated with a gift in honor or memory of a patient, Hospice Austin needed to replace its custom-built fundraising database with a technology solution that would support its growth. By implementing Blackbaud's **The Raiser's Edge**, the organization was able to reduce the time it took to enter and receipt gifts from two weeks to two days, better target its direct marketing appeals, manage fundraising events, and quickly report progress to key staff. With the Blackbaud solution in place, Hospice Austin was able to raise more money to support programs and is now expanding its fundraising to include planned gifts.



courtesy of Hospice Austin

the challenge: grow the organization by tracking and using the data needed to build strong relationships

Established as a grassroots, community-based program in 1979, Hospice Austin began providing services to terminally ill people and their families and caregivers during the summer of 1980. With visionary leadership and collaborative support from area hospitals, organizations, individuals, and the community, Hospice Austin flourished and now provides family-centered, quality end-of-life care that emphasizes compassion, dignity, independence, and respect to 1,500 patients annually. More than 8,000 friends and family members also rely on the hospice each year to provide important emotional and spiritual support as they cope with caring for a loved one with an advanced illness, as well as the grief they experience after their loved one dies.

For years, Hospice Austin's development office relied on a custom-built database to manage fundraising. The system tracked only the most basic details about donors, and, once in, the data was often too difficult to extract to be useful. In 2003, Hospice Austin's year-end appeal was too successful for the homegrown system to handle. Gifts were posted more than two weeks after their receipt, resulting in severely overdue acknowledgements.

At the same time, while the longevity of Hospice Austin was helping to build a strong base of loyal individual donors, the management felt it was beginning to lose the attention of grant-making agencies. The hospice recognized the need to cultivate high-end donors to contribute to an endowment to ensure its future. It was time to invest in a system that could help the organization build on its close ties to the community and continue to grow.

the solution: streamline daily processes, improve reporting, and upgrade loyal donors

In March 2004, Hospice Austin implemented **The Raiser's Edge**® to manage its fundraising and relationship cultivation efforts. Director of Development Amy Matta remembers, "Conversion of our 100,000 constituents went well, and we were very quickly collecting much more detailed information."

Having the ability to store personal details on constituents is essential to the hospice's fundraising efforts. "Many gifts come from bereaved families who deserve to be treated with great sensitivity," said Matta. "**The Raiser's Edge** has helped us maintain a personal, caring relationship with the families of those we serve, which often results in the family choosing to establish memorial gifts through the hospice.

Using **The Raiser's Edge** to manage memorial gifts, in particular, has made it easy for us to acknowledge families promptly and personally." Speed of gift processing and acknowledgement was also greatly improved on the year-end appeal. Although the 2004 appeal resulted in even higher gift volume, Hospice Austin was able to acknowledge year-end gifts within two business days. This, combined with better collection of relationship details, has helped donors feel more connected.

The Raiser's Edge has also enabled more sophisticated direct marketing efforts. This spring, the hospice will conduct two separate campaigns for the first time. Matta plans to segment the database based on donation history and constituency codes. One group will receive a standard solicitation asking for support of the operating fund. The second group of letters will go to donors who have previously contributed \$500 or more and will ask them to give \$1000+ gifts to the newly reinvigorated foundation. Interest generated from the gifts given to the foundation is used to fund \$1 million in charity care provided by Hospice Austin.

The hospice raises 15% of its funds via special events, managing them with the event module for **The Raiser's Edge**. Matta says, "The most helpful feature of **RE:Event™** is the ability to track our event income versus expenses. We no longer have to bug our finance department every time we need a report on an event's status. I can monitor event profitability at a glance and can easily print graphs and reports for my board."

In fact, reporting ranks among Matta's favorite features of **The Raiser's Edge**. "The reports in **The Raiser's Edge** are great. I can easily keep up with my staff's progress on grants, events, and even individual donations. Rather than sifting through piles of checks to find those whom the director of development should follow up with personally, Matta has a dashboard report set up to alert her each time a gift of more than \$500 arrives. "This way, I can use my time to hand write thank-you letters to these special donors, rather than spending it sifting through paperwork."

results: investment pays off with increased donations and the ability to diversify fundraising methods

Hospice Austin didn't rush into its decision to purchase **The Raiser's Edge®**. "It was a big investment for our organization, but it has really paid off," said Matta. "Because of our ability to segment mailing lists and spend our time on the right donors, we've raised more than \$150,000 for our foundation that we wouldn't have raised before. In fact, our original goal for this year was \$100,000, but within 60 days, we raised it to \$500,000 based on our tremendous success. Of course, my staff gets tremendous credit for these accomplishments as well," Matta notes.

This year, the hospice plans to make the most of 25 years of donor loyalty by launching a planned giving program. According to Matta, the future looks brighter than ever. "Having the right people has made us successful for the past 25 years, but having **The Raiser's Edge** will ensure that we continue to be successful in the years to come."

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