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Community Assisted Fundraiser for Camp Rainbow Gold

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Abstract

My service learning project was a garage sale using items donated by my local community. I gave 100% of the funds generated to Camp Rainbow Gold, a local charity that focuses their efforts on supporting children who have been directly impacted by childhood cancer, and their families. This is important to me personally because my daughter is a cancer survivor. Camp Rainbow Gold is currently fundraising for their Hidden Paradise Project, which will be Idaho's first medical camp aimed at providing a space for children and their families affected by childhood cancer to heal. I held the event on November 12th and solicited donations from my local community through online sources such as Nextdoor and Craigslist, as well as word of mouth through friends, family and workplaces.

Keywords: Fundraising, Camp Rainbow Gold, Childhood Cancer, Families, Heal, Community

Introduction to my Capstone Project

I had a few projects in mind that were important enough for my Capstone but it was important for me to choose something that would help an organization that has impacted me personally. My family has benefitted by the work that Camp Rainbow Gold does, so for me, this idea ultimately made the most sense. My project will aid them monetarily and will also involve my community and more importantly, my children, so they can experience what it feels like to support an organization through the hard work that is required to plan and execute an event like this.

Elements Coming Together

The primary focus of my project was to lean on the community and the assistance of my family in order to achieve the event's goals. The reaction from the people in my community I discussed my project with were positive and that dynamic played out through the execution of the event. Aside from the donation items I sold, a healthy portion of the funds I generated also came from monetary donations from community members that were happy to support by contributing to my cause on the day of the event. I was also able to recruit a couple of other family members outside of our household as well as a few close friends to volunteer to help with the event and was grateful for the time and effort they contributed to our cause.

To prepare for the garage sale, I had initial conversations with Bethany, the marketing director with Camp Rainbow Gold to make her aware of the project and the goals I envisioned for it. She was encouraging, thankful and supportive of my efforts and was appreciative of what this project means for them, as well as the Idaho kids and their families that their organization helps and supports.

My research process for this project also led me to several sources that provided valuable information to aid me in this journey. One article I discovered was focused primarily on raising money for schools, but I found several parallels in its overall message that emphasized the goal of fundraising is not just to raise money, but to foster a sense of community (Gensheimer, 1993). I employed popular social media avenues to the best of my ability to maximize exposure for my event, and my goal was to embrace a simple, “grassroots” style project which I feel was the most effective approach for a casual garage sale event. Choosing this type of fundraiser, the information in Herrmann’s article was particularly useful in understanding the role that garage sales play in building community strength. Many of the items we solicited to sell came from our efforts through community outreach. We do know many of our neighbors, but we live in a large community and being able to build relationships with those we live nearby through this effort was particularly rewarding (Herrmann, 2006).

The research I performed for this project indicates awareness of self because the project I chose benefits an organization that is important to me as well as my family. We have been fortunate to have our family benefit from the work that Camp Rainbow Gold does. It is through this receiving that I was motivated to reciprocate by giving. I am aware of the efforts that Camp Rainbow Gold has put into raising funds and it is important to me to be able to contribute to such an amazing organization.

I believe that my approach considered the emotional intelligence of Camp Rainbow Gold because I put their best interest at the forefront. They are used to having to solicit donations to operate and I bypassed that by providing them with the funds from my garage sale. As far as the emotional intelligence of my community members that contributed to my garage sale in several forms, I believe that they were empathetic to the cause and gained fulfillment by supporting it. I

believe my efforts brought value to others because I shared an important cause and brought my community together in the process.

I drew on creative framework in my approach to this work initially through utilizing the three spheres of influence in IPS 492. From there, I was able to narrow all of the primary choices down to the most appropriate ideas based on feedback from both my professor and my family. Mind-mapping helped me to further understand the intricacies of each of those ideas, and ultimately my choice became clear as I felt strongly about doing something to support an organization that my family has been fortunate to benefit from. This choice made even more sense when I considered it addressed not only a social issue, but would be satisfying on a personal level as well.

I enjoyed approaching this project with the creative framework in mind. I have a small amount of event planning experience, but it has been several years and I have not planned a fundraising event before or a garage sale where the funds from items sold will go to a non-profit organization. This event required a unique approach as it was one that did not exist before. After reviewing all of the options for my Capstone project, I recognized this idea as one that would provide at least a partial solution to the fundraising needs of Camp Rainbow Gold. My family also expressed interest in helping with it as well so it seemed like an excellent way to help out an organization, and spend what limited free time I have with my family at the same time.

My project demonstrates innovation because I chose a fundraising structure that is outside of the confines of what Camp Rainbow Gold would normally do to generate funds. A garage sale that focuses on 100% of the proceeds going to charity is unique and innovative. The process is unique because it involves the generosity of my community who feel compelled to

contribute in some way to the cause for the overall betterment of society. The potential and realized outcomes of my project demonstrate innovation because I found ways to generate income through not only sales, but donations. We sold cookies and other baked goods for any donation or purchase made, which added to our unique approach.

If I were to start over again, I would have preferred to start on my project earlier, but my schedule did not permit it. My neighborhood had a community-wide garage sale about six weeks ago, and had I been able to participate at that time, I would have seen more traffic and been more successful than I was. Also, I had to push the sale to a Sunday because of weather and schedule issues, and I feel that holding the event on a Saturday would have increased traffic as well. All things considered though, my event was a success and I was happy to present Camp Rainbow Gold with what I was able to generate through the sale of donated items, baked goods, and cash donations.

Results

My project was monetarily beneficial to its primary stakeholder, Camp Rainbow Gold. Through a combination of item sales and donations, we were able to generate funds that will contribute to the work that they do for children in Idaho who have been impacted by childhood cancer. Another stakeholder that benefitted was my family. We enjoyed the time spent together preparing for the event, as well as executing the sale itself. I personally got satisfaction from seeing my children recognize that our hard work was going to benefit an organization that they were familiar with and their contributions were valued in the project's success. I also feel that several members of my community were positively impacted knowing that their item donations, and in some cases, their monetary donations were going to a good cause.

I measured the results in terms of traffic for the event as well as the amount of money generated for Camp Rainbow Gold. My project raised \$672.50 for Camp Rainbow Gold through a combination of items sold and monetary donations. There were 29 people who came to the garage sale. Bethany, my main contact at Camp Rainbow Gold, was excited to learn of the event's success and I enjoyed having the opportunity to deliver the funds to them last week.

Conclusion

Choosing the service-learning method for my project was the best fit for me because I wanted to focus on a creative way to involve my community that would benefit a non-profit organization (Camp Rainbow Gold) that has had a positive impact on my family at the same time. After completing my Capstone project, I learned that planning is key. The timeline we created in 492 was extremely beneficial to keeping me on track. I also learned that predicting issues ahead of time and having alternative plans in place in case changes need to be made is crucial to the success of planning an event. I also received a tremendous amount of gratification knowing that I created something that benefitted an organization like Camp Rainbow Gold. Their organization has had a significant impact on my life and watching both my community and family get involved and receive satisfaction from executing the project as well has been very fulfilling for me.

This assignment also helped me to strengthen my skills in event planning, organization and project execution. The planning portion of this project also helped me to avoid procrastination, which is something I have been working on recently to overcome.

I hope that the work I did and what we were able to accomplish as a community continues to inspire my family to find time to give back to organizations like Camp Rainbow Gold. Seeing them get satisfaction from our efforts was truly inspiring and being able to

incorporate my Capstone project to give back to an organization that has given us so much over the last few years was incredibly fulfilling.

Appendix

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11aH2OcAljm5IpaHC0ntu3xneLVkclMNc?usp=drive_link

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