



Top U.S. Peer-to-Peer Programs Post Encouraging Results in 2019

Revenues for the 30 largest U.S. peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns posted a modest decline in 2019, according to a new annual survey.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, USA, February 28, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Revenues for the 30 largest U.S.



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David Hessekiel

peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns posted a modest decline in 2019, according to an annual survey by the Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum.

But it was actually a strong year for the majority of large American peer-to-peer fundraising programs with 18 of the 30 largest programs reporting revenue increases compared with 2018.

And after removing the results of just one program, American Cancer Society's Relay for Life (which is in the midst of a deliberate downsizing and overhaul), results for the remaining 29 campaigns were collectively up.

Collectively the 30 campaigns tracked by The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Thirty raised nearly \$1.37 billion in 2019, down 1.25 percent.

"While it's easy to look at the top-line revenue number and assume that peer-to-peer fundraising is struggling, this year's survey tells a much different story," said Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum President David Hessekiel. "The majority of large programs experienced strong gains in 2019 – even as many organizations are shifting away from managing one central campaign in favor of hosting multiple smaller programs that appeal to more diverse audiences."

Peer-to-peer fundraising is the practice of having a nonprofit's supporters take part in an activity such as a walk, bike ride or video gaming challenge and reach out to their friends, family members, colleagues and followers for donations. Results of the study including the top 30 rankings can be found at www.peertopeerforum.com.

The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Thirty survey results mirrored a number of key trends that have been shaping the industry – and are likely to continue in 2020 and beyond.

Walk campaigns had a particularly strong year in 2019 – as 10 of the 16 walk programs included in the top 30 posted increases.

The St. Jude Walk/Run to End Childhood Cancer was particularly notable, as it posted the largest percentage increase of any of campaign in this year's survey. It's nearly \$14.2 million in revenue qualified it for the top 30 list for the first time in its history.

The jump was the result of a number of tactics – including a move that increased the fundraising minimum for walkers from \$100 to \$289 and a renewed focus on sponsorships, according to Danielle Dodman, who manages the Walk/Run to End Childhood Cancer.

A second St. Jude Children's Research Hospital campaign, St. Jude Heroes, also bucked a recent trend among endurance fundraising campaigns (those in which fundraisers participate in marathons, triathlons and other extreme events) by raising more than \$23.3 million, up a robust 8.1 percent compared with 2018.□

Perhaps the leading storyline in peer-to-peer is the field's embrace of Facebook Fundraising. Facebook reports that its peer-to-peer platform has raised more than \$2 billion for nonprofits – a number that is only likely to grow as organizations become more adept at using its tools.

Facebook's impact was significant for a number of Top 30 programs, including the Pan-Mass Challenge. The Pan-Mass Challenge integrated with the Facebook Fundraiser API for the first time in 2019 and reports that this move attracted more than 30,000 new donors and \$3 million in new donations.

"That bodes well for 2020 and beyond," said Billy Starr, Pan-Mass Challenge's founder and executive director. "That kind of growth does not just happen – our team works diligently year-round to ensure we're finding new ways to innovate as we continue to raise the fundraising bar."

The increase in fundraising through Facebook helped fuel another record year for the Pan-Mass Challenge. PMC raised a record \$70 million in 2019 – up \$10.75 million from 2018.

The figure vaulted the campaign to No. 6 on top 30 list – and set a new record for the largest single-event fundraiser.

While many large organizations once built their peer-to-peer strategies around a single program, today's nonprofits have moved to playing host to multiple campaigns, each of which aim to appeal to different audiences.

American Cancer Society – which has long managed the massive Relay for Life program – is perhaps the most notable example of this shift.

In 2019, the organization reduced the number of Relay for Life events by more than 300. With a smaller – but still large – footprint of 2,200 events, Relay for Life raised \$161.4 million, down 12.7 percent from \$184.8 million in 2018.

"The American Cancer Society made a conscious effort in 2019 to further diversity the overall fundraising portfolio by intentionally reducing the number of events and planning for a decline in revenue," said Maria Clark, American Cancer Society's senior vice president of volunteer events. "While we did see a reduction in Relay for Life, we saw meaningful growth in sports, corporate and employee giving, other community-based revenue using new platforms and tools, and significant growth in non-event digital and social revenue."

This shift has helped the organization's other, smaller programs, including Top 30 campaign Making Strides for Breast Cancer, post revenue gains in 2019.

Making Strides' revenues totaled \$64.6 million, up from \$63.5 million one year ago.

About the Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Thirty

The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Thirty is based on survey responses from professionals who manage major peer-to-peer fundraising programs and publicly available data. The full report is available at peertopeerforum.com.

The 2019 survey is sponsored by Charity Dynamics. Results of the study were unveiled at the Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum's annual conference today in Austin.

About the Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum

The Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum supports professionals who manage peer-to-peer fundraising events at nonprofits around the world. It offers a growing array of conferences, webinars, research, white papers, and case studies that aim to help these professionals gain knowledge and insights that help them become more effective fundraisers. Learn more at peertopeerforum.com.

Peter Panepento
Peer-to-Peer Professional Forum
+1 202-531-3886

[email us here](#)

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