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Centralizing for Success: How SSM Health Unified Annual Giving

Bringing together annual giving efforts across multiple hospitals, four states, nine Foundations, and different donor communities sounds like a daunting task.

SSM Health used the opportunity to build something stronger.

Barrett Hadican, Director of Annual Giving and Marketing at SSM Health, knew it would be worth the challenges. With over two decades of experience in nonprofit fundraising, Barrett has overseen many different fundraising models.

"I've seen how successful a centralized approach can be," she shares, "and it was something we wanted to implement at SSM Health, especially in the annual giving space."

One important step according to Barrett? Work with your stakeholders to ensure they are informed, educated and involved when selecting a direct response partner. For her, that meant the various regional leaders from the diverse hospitals within the SSM Health system.

"My team serves as a valuable resource to our regional Foundations in advancing their philanthropic efforts. Centralization was intentionally designed to elevate local priorities, not replace them. Our current model provides greater coordination, data-driven strategy, and donor engagement that strengthens long-term donor relationships across the organization."

Barrett knew earning trust was the start to success.

"Our leaders were part of selecting the right partner for this initiative," she explains, crediting StoryCause with a big assist on that front.

Partnering with a team that has a wealth of knowledge and was extremely responsive to the individual questions and concerns of SSM Health's local Foundations made everyone feel comfortable and excited about moving forward.

Centralizing annual giving into one coordinated program and taking on many of the “day-to-day tasks and heavy lifting involved” offers several benefits.

- Ensures consistency in branding, messaging, stewardship and operations.
- Allows local teams more time to raise money and build strong, dynamic relationships with their donors.
- Creates a pipeline of new annual giving donors and places an emphasis on the potential of converting them into mid-level and major gift donors.
- Provides more efficient opportunities to measure ROI, retention, and focus on growth.

“This model gives our local teams more time to focus on their donors,” she says. “That’s where the real impact happens.”

For Barrett, the success of the transition is all about creating stronger and more meaningful donor relationships across the entire health system and partnering with a team who helps navigate that journey.

“Even amid the many moving parts, it has been reassuring to see how readily available the StoryCause team has been with their guidance, expertise, and genuinely collaborative approach. Their shared commitment to our success is evident throughout every stage of the process.”