



SUCCESS STORY: HEADSTRONG FOUNDATION

How HEADstrong Foundation Planned a Virtual Event That Raised \$90K in 3 Weeks



THE CHALLENGE:

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the HEADstrong Foundation to shift their giving strategy, fast.

2,039 PARTICIPANTS

Mobilized by the #LastShift challenge

\$42

Average gift to a fundraising page

The HEADstrong Foundation provides supportive services to families fighting cancer. Every year, the organization engages thousands of college athletes nationwide in peer-to-peer fundraising to support its programs.

When the NCAA canceled the 2020 athletics season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HEADstrong was left wondering how they could continue to engage their community of student athletes, whose college careers had abruptly ended. The result was **The Last Shift**

Virtual 5K Challenge, set to take place on National Student Athlete Day.

The HEADstrong team credits Classy for giving them the ability to get a powerful fundraising campaign set up quickly. With Classy, “we were ready to roll and enable these kids to do third-party fundraising.” The HEADstrong team set up a Registration with Fundraising event, where runners paid \$20 to register and received a personalized fundraising page. The organization activated 2,039 participants and raised \$90,000 in just three weeks.



All registrants received a simple toolkit including tips on sharing their page with friends and family and graphics and photo frames for social media. They were encouraged to share their run on social media, tag the foundation, and share the #LastShift2020 event hashtag. The event grew quickly, with runners sharing the event with their friends and teammates. In 48 hours, 1,200 registrations were purchased, and HEADStrong Director of Fundraising Jeff Baxter says he was “blown away by how many people were donating on top of their registration fee in these challenging times.”

On the day of the event, hundreds of runners took to Instagram, sharing their personal reasons for supporting HEADStrong as well as

their fundraising pages, which kept the gifts flowing in. In total, 2,000 runners from across the country participated in the event, raising over \$90,000 in less than three weeks. Many of the donations were small, with an average gift around \$40.

The takeaways? Know your audience, and keep it simple. HEADStrong Chief Development Officer Pat Colleluori highlighted the importance of understanding your community and what asks resonate with them. “We know our community is very active on Instagram, so we centered our outreach on Instagram. With their seasons cancelled, they were looking to do something, and the athletic call to action made sense. We just led the charge.”



Top Teams

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	St. John's University \$6,577 raised (164%) 110 members
	RIT LACROSSE \$5,479 raised (274%) 35 members
	Culver Lacrosse \$4,407 raised (441%) 48 members
	Princeton University \$3,745 raised (374%) 47 members
	Team Riptide \$2,886 raised (58%) 38 members