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Contacts: Greta Canfield
gcanfield@dreamangelsinc.org
(866) 431-5660 x 10

Tanya Conovaloff
tanya@cs-creative.com
(214)905-8008 x233

Professionals Willing to Donate Their Services Can Empower Nonprofits to Boost Cash Donations

DALLAS — June 7, 2011 — Even in the best of economic times, fundraising can be a formidable challenge for nonprofits. But as one North Texas mentoring organization recently discovered, having a wealth of marketing and design expertise at your command can be an invaluable gift that encourages patrons to keep on giving.

Dream Angels, Inc. is a grassroots organization that mentors a select cohort of at-risk girls, starting in grade three and continuing through high school. Founded in 2001, Dream Angels has gained momentum over the years, and has a number of success stories to its credit. Yet, like many growing organizations, its visual identity and marketing tools had failed to keep pace with its changing needs and opportunities.

“We had a fundraiser in 2009 that brought us net proceeds of \$1,250 — and while we appreciated every dollar, we also realized that we could do much more. All we needed was some expert guidance,” explained Dream Angels founder Marie Booker. “That fall, we applied for and were awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Dallas Women’s Foundation, which enabled us to hire a nonprofit consultant to develop an 18-month strategic plan with fundraising as a key focus.”

As you might expect, a big part of that plan included the development of compelling collateral materials and a professionally designed website that would enable patrons to make secure online donations. Unfortunately, Dream Angels had nowhere near the \$65,000-plus budget these projects would normally require. What they did have, however, was the in-kind support of several key women-owned businesses with the expertise and desire to make a difference. Through member affiliations with the Women’s Business Council Southwest, Dream Angels was able to connect with the renowned designers, photographers, writers, programmers and printers they needed to bring their new strategy to life.

“Dream Angels needed a brand that exemplified our mission and captured the spirit of relationship-building that occurs in mentoring,” Ms. Booker said. “The women-owned businesses involved in this project understood that and were able to produce an impressive brand.”

The new Dream Angels logo and collateral, along with the look and feel of the newly launched Dream Angels website at dreamangelsinc.org, was orchestrated in large part by Dallas design firm CS Creative.

“Creating the Dream Angels’ brand was rewarding in so many ways,” explained Cindy Slayton, president of CS Creative. “We love what they stand for, and that made it even more exciting to develop their branding and visual identity. The enthusiasm around this cause was so infectious it inspired several other organizations to contribute their time, talent and resources to help take Dream Angels to the next level. We were overwhelmed with the outpouring of generosity and support from everyone involved!”

With photography by Greg Booth & Associates, Web programming by Carl Reeves, copywriting by 1400 Words, and printing of collateral materials by ADP-LLC, Dream Angels was able to harness the talents of an entire network of professionals who regularly work with some of the biggest and best-known brands in the world.

“This isn’t just a project. It’s a relationship,” said Margie Bowles, president of 1400 Words. “Our experience with everyone in the Women’s Business Council has been amazing in terms of the generosity and sincerity that everyone seems to share. What makes this pro bono relationship work so well is that the client truly respects what this extended team has to offer. They appreciate the expertise that we all add, and they trust us to do our job in a way that will benefit their organization. It’s a great way for us to help empower the girls in our community by making an in-kind contribution whose long-term value far exceeds any short-term revenue that a business of our size might have earned.”

Empowering young girls to grow into confident, independent young women was a cause that ADP-LLC could get behind, as well. “Our future is only as bright as the young people we can prepare for that future,” said Terri Quinton, CEO of ADP-LLC. “My business partner, Patricia Rodriguez-Christian, and I know that in order to achieve big things, one must dream big. Dream Angels is doing remarkable work to encourage young ladies to dream big, and we just wanted to help in our own small way.”

Today, Dream Angels is well-equipped with new collateral materials and an engaging, informative website — and Dream Angels board members and volunteers say they now have the tools they need to take donations to the next level. In fact, toward the close of 2010, board members and volunteers held “Dining for the Dream” dinner parties — gourmet-cooked meals, followed by a Dream Angels presentation and a request for donations. Those donations, along with matching gifts from generous benefactors, totaled almost \$12,000. Proceeds went directly to the organization’s educational fund, which provides financial assistance to graduating Dream Angels to use for college, vocational school, or other postsecondary education.

“Now that we are branded in our marketing materials and website, we foresee our brand taking the organization to the next level in terms of awareness,” Ms. Booker said. “This will translate into increased revenue, too.”

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