
Unlock Your Top Supporters: Student-Led Fundraising Strategies That Work



Lily Pevoto
2023 Executive Director
Penn State THON



Logan Echard
Director of Analytics and Strategy
Four Diamonds



Kay Todd
Product Marketing Manager
DonorDrive

Agenda

- 1 Results
- 2 Student Empowerment
- 3 How THON Works
- 4 Importance of Technology
- 5 What's Changed for 2022-2023?
- 6 Strategic Communications
- 7 Alumni Engagement
- 8 Q&A



THON Success

As the largest student-run philanthropy in the world, Penn State's THON — a 46-hour dance marathon — has mastered on-campus fundraising.

\$13.7M

Total Raised
2022

16,500

Fundraisers
2022

↑ 29.3%

YOY Increase
2021 to 2022

How do you inspire student-led fundraising at Penn State?

DonorDrive®

Student Empowerment

THON is completely student-led. Four Diamonds and Penn State development mentor student fundraisers and give them the resources and access they need.

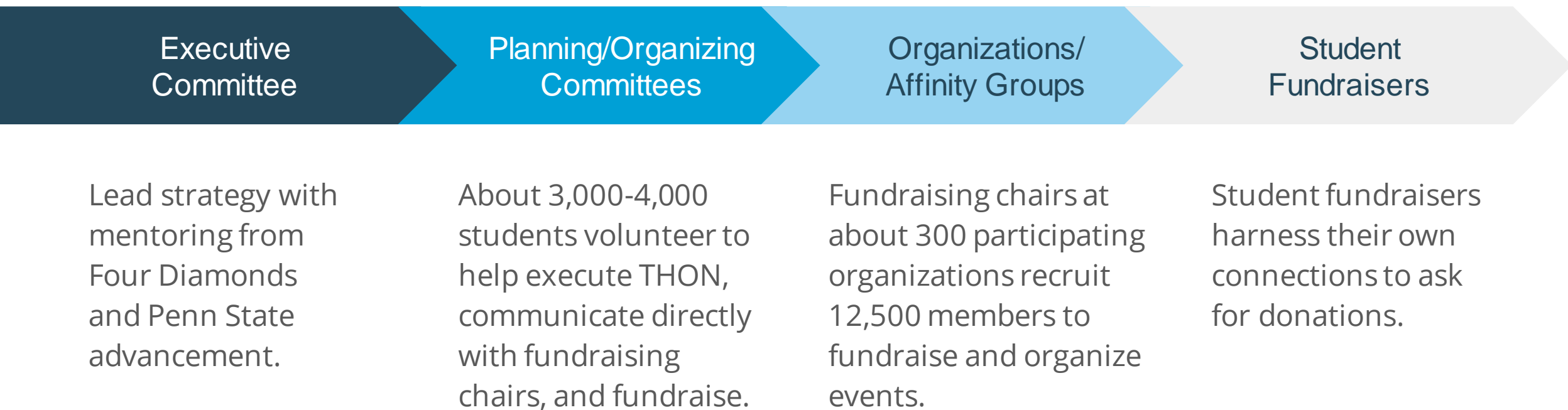
- Fundraising best practices
- Storytelling
- Technology
- Communications support



How do you motivate
students to fundraise?

DonorDrive®

How THON Works



Student Motivators

“What’s in it for me?” Like all supporters, students want to know **why** they should be involved.

But it’s not all about incentivizing participation with stuff.

Making a difference, recognition for an organization/affinity group, experiences, and chances to increase impact are all great motivators.



Mission: Messaging should focus on storytelling and sharing the impact.



Recognition: Student organizations strive to be the top fundraisers, which drives healthy competition.



Experience: Only 700 student dancers get to participate in THON weekend.



Incentives: Encourage fundraising throughout school year with specific pushes and events (ex. Giving Tuesday, 100 Days ‘Til THON).

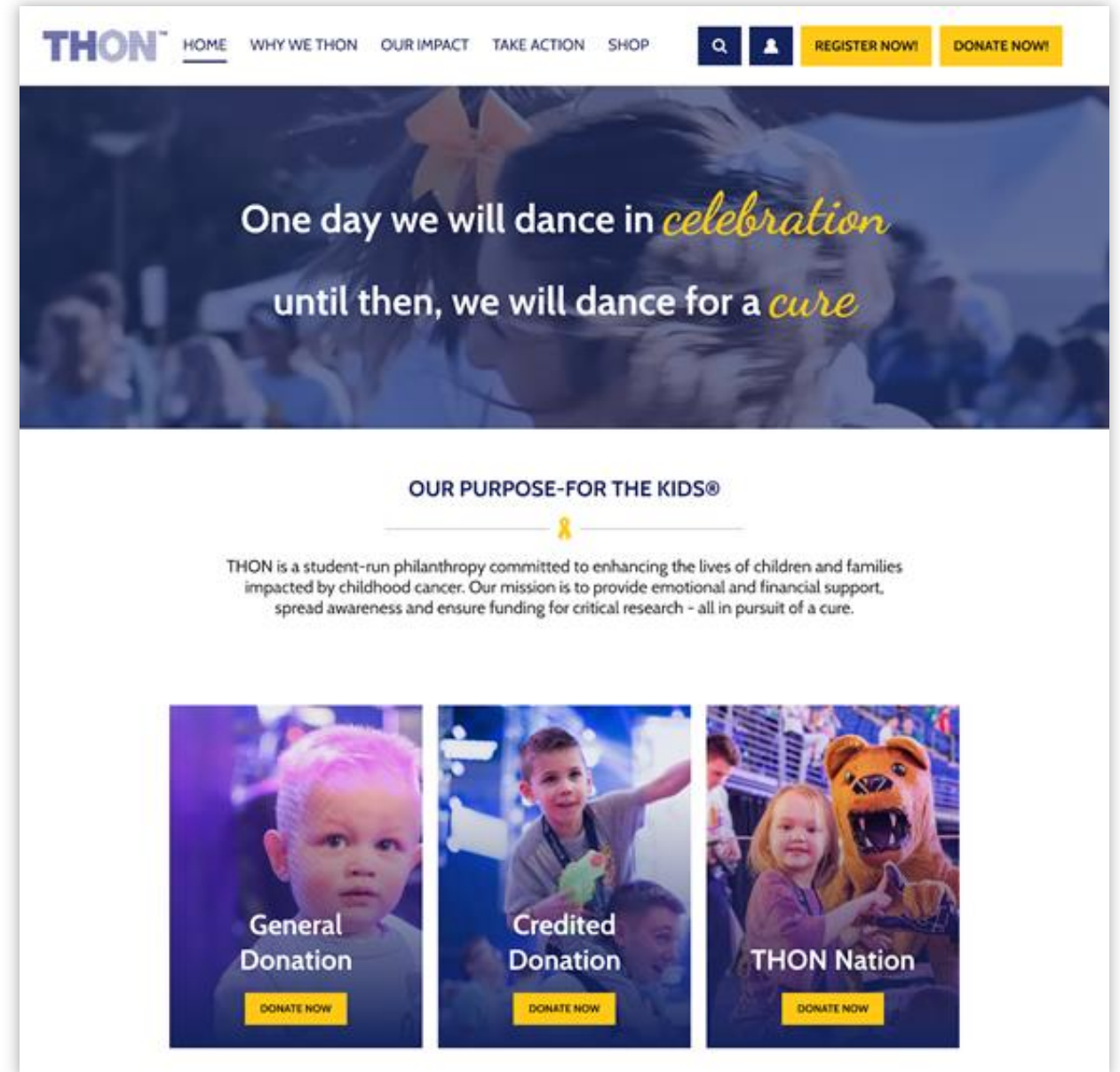
How important is technology
to the success of THON?

DonorDrive®

Technology

THON encourages all fundraisers to register online and create their own fundraising pages. The majority of donors give online.

- Amplify student voices
- Make fundraising and donating easy
- Communicate with timely messages
- Gamify fundraising with leaderboards, Achievement Badges, and Fundraising Milestones
- Virtual engagement – Activity Tracking
- Report and benchmark success





Mobile Engagement

THON took mobile engagement to the next level in 2022 with the DonorDrive Charity Fundraising App.

- Reach people where they are with Push Notifications and in-app feed
- Make fundraising easier and completely mobile
- Increase donor outreach with sharing from mobile app

↑ **155%**

Total Raised

↑ **158%**

Engagement

Linked social media, customized page, added Fundraising Milestones & Donor Incentives

↑ **28.5%**

Adoption Rate

What have you learned
and changed for 2023?

DonorDrive®

Focus on Inclusivity

THON is responding to lower volunteer numbers in 2021 by taking a close look at messaging, being more inclusive, and making sure everyone has the opportunity to participate.

- “We need everyone.”
- Revising messaging and overall communications plan
- Removing barriers to entry
 - Changing Application Structure
 - Minimizing volunteer cost
- Virtual engagement – Livestream event, Activity Tracking



How do you communicate with
students and volunteers?

DonorDrive®

Strategic Communication

Timely and meaningful communication are key for THON. Along with communicating fundraising tips, upcoming events, and motivating students, THON focuses on sharing the mission throughout their communications.

- 1:1 communication
- Timely messages after fundraisers receive a donation, reach a milestone, or meet a fundraising goal
- Personalized messages to keep supporters engaged
- Fundraising chair workshops
- Microsoft Teams for constant communication



How do you keep students
engaged after graduation?

DonorDrive®

Alumni Engagement

How do you keep alumni engaged after graduation? Traditional methods (local alumni chapters fundraising events and direct mail) are still important, but THON is breaking the mold, encouraging peer-to-peer fundraising beyond student groups.

- THON Nation
- Alumni Matching Day
- Dance Marathon Alumni Interest Groups
- Around The World Challenge





Thank You

More Questions? Let Us Know!

info@donordrive.com