

PODi CASE STUDY

REACH OUT AND READ COLORADO INCREASES DONATIONS WITH PERSONALIZED MAIL



www.reachoutandreadco.org

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REACH OUT AND READ COLORADO INCREASES DONATIONS WITH PERSONALIZED MAIL

VERTICAL MARKET: Non-Profit

BUSINESS APPLICATION: Direct Marketing/Direct Order

BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Reach Out and Read Colorado prepares the state's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. Children served by Reach Out and Read Colorado enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a three- to six-month developmental edge. In 2015, 90,000 Colorado children will receive more than 165,000 books as a result of the organization's efforts.

To continue to support its mission, Reach Out and Read Colorado needed a direct marketing campaign that would help them accomplish the following:

- Increase participation from their current donor base
- Increase gift amounts from past donors
- Improve efficiencies in their fundraising process

RESULTS

Introducing relevant, personalized content for the 2014 year end appeal had a profound effect. Specifically the following results were achieved:

- Donors increased giving by 44.3% over the prior year
- Total December giving was increased by 40% over the prior year
- The campaign achieved a direct monetary ROI of 200%

CAMPAIGN ARCHITECTURE

Reach Out and Read Colorado's service provider, Solution Link, developed a strategy to increase the level of relevant personalization to create a more meaningful, one-to-one dialogue with donors.

An 8.5" x 14" year-end appeal letter was crafted with a personalized donation ask. While the content for the body of the letter was static, it was developed and presented by a physician who endorses the Reach Out and



Donor
Any Street
Any Town, USA

Dear Donor,

Building young brains, helping families bond, and creating a community where every child has an opportunity to learn and succeed – regardless of income. Your past support of Reach Out and Read Colorado has made these ideals possible for more than 90,000 children across our state.

I am one of more than 1,250 providers who has the privilege to deliver Reach Out and Read to low-income families in Colorado. The best part of my day is seeing a well-child physical on my schedule. It is dedicated time to focus on development and the family. **And, because of your support of this program, I get to lead that discussion with a book.**



The first thing I talk about with families – whether it's their 6-month-old infant's very first well-child visit or a 5-year-old coming in preparation for kindergarten – is about how reading books together as a family is important. It is important because it **builds young brains**, beginning immediately when a baby comes home from the hospital. It is important because it **helps families bond**, providing a nurturing and interactive environment. **It is as important as eating fruits and vegetables for child development.**

And, I know that every time I give a book - EVERY TIME - that child's vocabulary is going to increase.

Helping young children through Reach Out and Read provides a foundation for lifelong learning and opportunity. It is critical we support their development **right from the beginning.**

As a family doctor, I am aware of long-term consequences of health and life choices. I see what happens to the smoker. I watch the effect of abuse on kids and women 20 years down the road. I know what will happen to the kids without good prenatal care. I see how mental health issues can tear someone apart. I can easily predict what will happen to the patients who do not have their diabetes under control.

Unfortunately, I also see the consequences that occur in adults who did not develop a solid early literacy foundation. Analysis of the brain reveals developmental gaps are evident beginning as early as 18 months, growing more pronounced in early childhood. Studies demonstrate dramatic inequities in vocabulary and IQ (117 versus 79) for low- and high-income children at age 3.

By age 4, children growing up in poverty are exposed to as many as 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers



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Read program. The theme of the static content was “investing in a prescription for literacy that works.” The layout was interspersed with relevant, engaging images of children reading books.

TARGET AUDIENCE & MESSAGING

The list for this campaign consisted of:

Active donors (individuals who had made a contribution to Reach Out and Read Colorado in 2013 or 2014)

Lapsed donors (individuals who had not given anything to the organization since 2012)


CREATIVE

The template for the personalized appeal was created by Reach Out and Read Colorado’s service provider taking care to adhere to best practices, which keep the donor engaged and present a logical approach for the donation transaction.

We are making a difference. Reach Out and Read helps transform parental attitudes and practices, and in turn improves health outcomes and equity. **Our families read up to 350 hours together prior to kindergarten.** Reach Out and Read is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP), and was included in the Campaign for Grade Level Reading as a successful intervention to help close the “readiness gap,” a disparity in the level of school preparation seen in children from low-income families.

Early childhood literacy sets the stage for healthy living and education success. In September 2014, NY Times columnist Nicholas Kristof highlighted Reach Out and Read as one of four programs that work to reduce the effects of poverty. In his 2014 book *A Path Appears*, co-authored with Sheryl WuDunn, Reach Out and Read is presented as a best practice for transforming lives and creating opportunity. The authors show you, through many amazing examples matched with objective evidence, **that you can make a difference in the lives of people trapped in misery.**

Kristof and WuDunn are particularly energized by the powerful data that demonstrates Reach Out and Read changes lives in a way that pays for itself many times over through the avoided costs of adult dysfunction. They relish the idea of taking the simple act of a medical provider handing a book to a kid and how this can have a profound impact. **Reach Out and Read is a low-cost, high-yield intervention that is a proven way to alleviate the debilitating cycles of poverty and illiteracy.**



In medicine, we’ve made so much progress over the years by using low-cost, high-yield interventions. Prenatal vitamins provide important nutritional value for children in utero, and can help reduce risk for some birth defects, preterm birth and low birth weight. With the polio vaccination, we stand on the brink of eliminating this devastating disease worldwide. **And giving books and prescribing reading to low-income families creates opportunities and permanently changes lives.**

As we enter this holiday season, I ask you to join me as a donor and champion of young children. I ask you to consider the perspective of Kristof and WuDunn, that Reach Out and Read is one of today’s most successful initiatives to fight inequity and change the landscape for the next generation. I ask for your support to purchase new, high-quality books – like *Goodnight Moon* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* – for families who may not have any books in their home.

I ask you to invest again in a prescription for literacy that works. Thank you for helping doctors like me across Colorado make a difference at a time when it matters most.

In partnership,

Dr. Matt Pflieger
Family Practice Doctor and Reach Out and Read Colorado Board Member

PS: Bill, we truly appreciated your most recent gift of \$3,000 in 2013, which we used to purchase 1,200 new, developmentally appropriate books for low-income children in Colorado. Any gift you make this year will be doubled, courtesy of the Witter Family Fund, so that you can increase the impact of your donation. We can really use your support in this year’s campaign, as we strive to serve more kids than ever before.

PLEASE FILL OUT THE RETURN PIECE BELOW, TEAR IT OFF, AND INSERT IT IN THE BLUE ENVELOPE

Yes, I want to help Colorado’s youngest children succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together, with a special focus on children growing up in poverty. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift to Reach Out and Read Colorado.

\$3,000 \$3,600 \$4,500 Other \$ _____

Please charge my: Visa Mastercard
Card Number _____ Expiration date _____
Name on the card _____ Security code _____
Authorized signature _____

Donor
Any Street
Any Town, USA

Or...visit our website to donate online: www.reachoutandreadco.org

Personalized postscript including donor’s name, amount of donor’s last contribution, and the number of books that were purchased with that gift.

Suggested donation amounts varied based on previous gift. Options were given to duplicate the previous gift, increase the donation by 20% and increase by 50%. An “other” category was also included to encourage any donation amount.

REASONS FOR SUCCESS

Reach Out and Read Colorado's success clearly illustrates the influence of personalization in marketing. Best practices learned from this campaign are:

- **Make it relevant.** By including messaging with donor statistics from a previous campaign, including gift size and how the gift was used, Reach Out and Read Colorado made a significant improvement in making their communications more meaningful for their donor base.
- **Build an on-going relationship with donors.** Relevant personalization in this appeal helped strengthen the relationship with donors.

CLIENT	Reach Out and Read Colorado http://reachoutandreadco.org/ Reach Out and Read Colorado prepares Colorado's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. By building on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers, Reach Out and Read helps families and communities encourage early literacy skills so children enter school prepared for success.
SERVICE PROVIDER	Solution Link http://www.solutionlinkims.com/ Solution Link Integrated Marketing Services works with institutions of all sizes and helps increase participation and revenue with their audience by combining innovative strategies with strong execution and effective creativity. Solution Link works with clients to determine efficient and effective methods to reconnect with donors and find out what's relevant to them, to generate interactive conversations that lead to audience engagement and ultimately giving.
HARDWARE	Konica Minolta C7000
SOFTWARE	EZ-VDP
TARGET AUDIENCE	Current and lapsed donors
DISTRIBUTION	1,250 letters
DATE	December 2014