

Guadalupe Center 2019 Holiday Direct Mail Donation Appeal - Division B, Category 8B (Other)

Situation Analysis: Guadalupe Center provides educational services to approximately 1,300 children living below the poverty line in the migrant community of Immokalee, FL. Immokalee is an extremely poor area, with 41.6 percent of residents below the poverty line. Similarly, 97 percent of Immokalee's students qualify as economically needy. The Center, which was established in 1984, has three program areas, which address students' needs at each educational milestone (from cradle to career) – 1) Early Childhood Education, 2) After-school and Summer Enrichment (tutoring), and 3) High School Tutor Corps (college-preparatory). Informal primary research of the Center's programs show the results of these programs are outstanding, with Guadalupe Center students surpassing their community average in kindergarten readiness, grade level score increases, and high school graduation and college entry rates. Guadalupe Center relies almost entirely on private donations to provide these programs, which primarily come from a loyal pool of donors who give year after year. There is a growing waiting list for the Center's programs which could be met in part by additional financial support. As Guadalupe Center approached its final fundraising campaign of 2019, Priority Marketing was engaged to develop an attention-grabbing year-end/holiday giving direct mail campaign targeting affluent full-time and seasonal residents in Collier County, primarily 40-75 years of age, with an interest in children- and/or education-focused missions.

Planning: For the best chance at achieving the fundraising goal, two factors were critical – 1) The direct mail appeal needed to be delivered to the target audience the week before Thanksgiving before potential donors are inundated with other year-end charity requests, and 2) The appeal needed to stand out among competing appeals and capture the target audience's attention through a visually engaging design combined with inspirational and warm storytelling that clearly expresses Guadalupe Center's mission and programs, the case for support and the positive impact the donor could make by giving.

Objectives: 1) To generate \$35,000 in donations by Dec. 31, 2019; 2) To exceed the industry standard direct mail response rate of 5.3 percent (*source: www.nonprofitsource.com*); 3) For the direct mail piece to arrive in prospective donor mailboxes one week before Thanksgiving (November 21, 2019) to engage support over competing campaigns.

Implementation: To position Guadalupe Center as the holiday charity of choice among potential donors in the Collier County market, Priority Marketing conceptualized the creative theme, "Give the Gift of Education... Transform Lives for Generations to Come." The concept reinforces that providing the students of Guadalupe Center with an opportunity for a high-quality education will have such a positive,

life-changing impact that it could change the course of a family's destiny across generations. Simply put, donors could help break the cycle of poverty. The folded printed piece was designed to open like a Christmas present, with sweet pictures of Guadalupe Center students appearing on gift tags. To further illustrate the concept, heartfelt key messaging included the personal story of a family where all four siblings are enrolled and being helped by Guadalupe Center. Through this story, each of Guadalupe Center's three core programs are identified to underscore how the organization is "impacting lives from cradle to career." The story was succinct and formatted in three sections, featuring authentic photography of the children and encouraging titles conveying to donors that their generous gifts will "Inspire," "Educate," "Empower," and ultimately "Matter." The concluding call-to-action includes three ways to come together with Guadalupe Center to transform lives of students in Immokalee through education – 1) Mail a donation using the enclosed remittance envelope, 2) Donate online, or 3) For the first time used, text-to-give. Priority Marketing also designed the remit envelope outlining the donation levels. The exterior mailing envelope was of shimmering gold translucent paper so the artwork of the direct mail appeal could show through and entice the recipient to open. Guadalupe Center provided a mailing list of 3,246 individuals, which comprised past and current donors and volunteers, as well as prospective donors in their database. The direct mail appeal was supported with digital graphics that Guadalupe Center used for its website, social media and emails, creating a consistently executed campaign.

Evaluation: 1) Donations totaled \$85,000 by the end of December 2019, exceeding the goal by \$50,000 (143 percent); 2) 260 people from the mailing list of 3,246 responded with donations, resulting in a response rate of 8 percent - exceeding the industry standard of 5.3 percent; 3) The direct mail appeal was mailed on November 18, 2019 and delivered to potential donors as planned the week before Thanksgiving on November 21, 2019.

Budget: \$6,145.20 Total (including \$1,870.70 in professional services for copywriting, design and project/production coordination; \$3,277.50 in printing costs for printed 3,500 pieces; and \$997 in mailing services and postage). Priority Marketing offers Guadalupe Center a 15 percent non-profit discount rate for professional services.