

# Maiden campaign a \$7 million success

An integrated approach helped ensure Cerebral Palsy Alliance's first capital campaign was a success. **Kate Van de Peer** explains how the disability organisation raised \$7 million in 18 months.

A devastating fire destroyed Cerebral Palsy Alliance's centre at Allambie Heights on Sydney's Northern Beaches in 2007. Essential services for children and adults with cerebral palsy were disrupted as a result and the only way forward was the complete demolition and rebuilding of a state-of-the-art therapy facility.

An insurance settlement provided a good funding base and would cover the cost to house corporate support staff, making the capital campaign ask easier, as we would only be fundraising for client services. To implement our vision for a world-class therapy centre, we needed to raise \$7 million from our supporters in just 18 months.

## Doing the 'homework' pays off

A feasibility study was conducted ahead of the capital campaign, which identified that over 95% of participants agreed the centre should be re-built. This confirmed that the need resonated with our donors. This was no surprise as a fire is difficult to argue against.

Due to the limited time frame and being our first capital campaign, we decided to engage Mark Quigley from Social Venture Consultants to save us time and resources. We also conducted a wealth scan of our entire database, which provided the basis to our prospecting for the campaign.

It was important for CPA to ensure major gifts were in fact stretch gifts, and to be disciplined enough to leave out some donors who we felt would reduce gifts in other areas if we asked them. The decision was made early on not to cannibalise existing fundraising channels in reaching our capital campaign target, and during the two financial years that the campaign was running, the organisation surpassed fundraising targets in all key areas.

Our secret weapon throughout the campaign was chief executive officer Rob White. His work and respect for our donors really played an integral role in the success of the campaign, primarily because when the campaign began, the organisation didn't have an official major gifts program or a dedicated resource.

## Integrating the campaign across channels

In many capital campaigns a major gift officer would be stewarding donors for years prior to an 'ask'. Without this groundwork, we needed to get creative with our capital campaign and leverage existing fundraising channels, whilst ensuring we netted \$7 million in additional funds. This creativity included an additional mail appeal, an add-on to a raffle program, a radio appeal and an 'ask' to the NSW state government.

We attempted an emergency mail appeal for the first time, increasing our annual appeals to five for the year. We brought this to the attention of our donors and explained why, and asked them to give an extra one-off gift. The appeal went on to raise \$419,392 and didn't negatively affect the other appeals throughout the year.

For a three-month period, we also asked participants in our raffle program to donate an additional \$3 toward the building, raising \$20,000. A radio



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appeal which stretched 12 hours on ZUE also raised \$267,000 and saw the organisation acquire over 500 new donors.

NSW state government contributed \$1.5 million toward the education hub in the new building. Instead of asking for a hand-out from the government, we looked at what could benefit their current policies and looked for ways we could provide benefits to them and the sector as a whole.

The government's contribution was essential to the success of the capital campaign. The feasibility study had found that many donors felt a government contribution was really important to encouraging donations from both individuals and corporations.

Towards the end of the campaign we also ran a full page advertisement in *The Financial Review*, which was designed to appeal to the ego of the reader and encourage them to sign a \$1 million cheque. To date, we haven't received a gift directly linked to the ad, however, it created real awareness around the campaign in the networks we were keen to gain access to and many of our high-net-worth donors congratulated us on the innovative ad.

### Donors who made the campaign different

One major donor to the capital campaign came in the form of an established corporate partner, Aristocrat. It made both the first and the last donations to the campaign, which resulted in a commitment of \$850,000. Aristocrat even wrote the foreword to the case for support, encouraging other businesses to follow its lead. Its involvement was inspired by a staff member whose experience with CPA had made them passionate about the cause.

Another donor's journey to become a major giver was quite amazing. His first gift to the organisation was acquired over the phone through CPA's raffle program, where he gave \$50. The cause clearly resonated with him, as he made a \$1,000 gift via mail, followed by a second gift of \$5,000, before coming on board as a regular giver at \$500 per month.

Figure A: CPA campaign gift table\*

Gift amount (\$)	No. of gifts (donations)	Total (\$)	% of goal
\$1 million +	2	3,026,712	43
\$500,000-999,999	1	850,000	12
\$250,000-499,999	4	1,509,392	22
\$100,000-249,999	8	1,194,475	17
\$25,000-99,000	6	276,665	4
\$5,000-24,999	13	142,756	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>\$6,857,244**</b>	

\*Due to the campaign's integration, the gift table includes all gifts including individuals, government, bequests and appeals.

\*\*Balance raised from gifts under \$5,000 made through various asks/appeals.

We went on to nurture him as a potential major donor and ultimately secured a gift of \$250,000. In no way had the donor been affected by cerebral palsy, but in his mid-40s, he and his wife were incredibly thankful to have four healthy, young children of their own, so graduated from a \$50 gift to \$250,000 in under two years.

In all, CPA made around 200 meeting requests in relation to asks for the capital campaign. Of the 50 meetings that were secured, we succeeded in securing 34 gifts, with a total value of \$6.85 million for the campaign.

This capital campaign really helped us rejuvenate major gift prospects. It gave us a great reason to speak to our donors and provide them with an opportunity to be part of something really tangible, which would impact the lives of so many people with cerebral palsy, and their families. **1874**



#### Kate Van de Peer

Kate Van de Peer is the capital campaign manager at Cerebral Palsy Alliance.