

The Credit Union and the App Helping Nonprofits Reap 100% of Donations with Electronic Bank Transfers

As COVID-19 began gripping the country in 2020, Dan Stoltz knew there would be collateral damage. The President and CEO of SPIRE Credit Union could see almost immediately that local nonprofits in his Minnesota community were taking it on the chin. He resolved to not only help, but to make sure the charities received as much of the donation as possible, without losing money to fees.

He was successful to the tune of a quarter of a million dollars, thanks to an app built around donating by ACH, or electronic bank transfers.

During the “SPIRE Gives Big” campaign, each of the credit union’s 50 departments and branches were given \$5,000 and marching orders. “We told them to get together as a group, find out where you think you can make the biggest impact, and we’re going to give that through NetGiver,” said Stoltz, referring to a unique app.

Credit unions across the U.S. are encouraging members to use NetGiver to make donations to their favorite charities. Once a nonprofit signs up—a process NetGiver says takes 3-5 minutes—it receives 100% of donations made through the app, which harnesses the power of electronic bank transfers via the ACH Network.

Electronic bank transfers typically cost much less for nonprofits to process compared to other forms of donations and tend to be far more effective at retaining sustaining donors, which are often a charitable group’s lifeblood.

SPIRE employees decided how to divvy up the funds. Stoltz’s lone requirement was that they inform receiving organizations that the money was coming via NetGiver.

“We gave to 187 local organizations. We used the NetGiver app. And we’re proud to say that \$250,000 went directly into the nonprofits’ accounts to really help their mission,” said Stoltz.

Beneficiaries included a fund that pays off students’ school lunch balances, a foundation that provided box lunches to first responders during a “Day of Thanks,” and a group that brings theater education to schools.

But that was hardly the end of SPIRE’s involvement with NetGiver.

During the 2020 holiday season, SPIRE ran its “Give Freely” campaign, offering to match up to \$20,000 of donations members made via NetGiver. When the membership gave \$23,883 SPIRE matched every penny.

That was quickly followed by the 2021 launch of SPIRE’s “50 in 50” campaign. Each week, one SPIRE department or branch selected a charity to receive \$1,000. After vetting, the charity was asked to register for the NetGiver app, if it hadn’t already, so that it could receive the funds.

According to NetGiver, after starting full-scale operations midway through 2020, it saved nonprofits more than \$17,000 in fees.

Today’s consumers want “a great experience,” Stoltz said, and when they know that 100% of their donation goes where it’s intended, he believes that’s mission accomplished.

Nacha’s Nonprofit Toolkit helps charitable groups get started with or enhance a program to receive donations by electronic bank transfers, or ACH. The Toolkit is available free at Nacha.org/Nonprofits.



Dan Stoltz, President and CEO, SPIRE Credit Union