



## **RIDING TO THE TOP** **Therapeutic Riding Center**

### **Capital Campaign and Challenge Grant Completion Report**

January 2007

It is with great delight that we share this Capital Campaign Completion Report. As of January 30, 2007, Riding To The Top has raised a total of \$1,644,227 having exceeded our Campaign Goal of \$1,600,000 and met our Kresge Challenge! Thank you for your generous support.

Our Capital Campaign began in 2002 and by December 2005, Riding To The Top had raised \$1 million and received a Kresge Challenge Grant. We quickly put a multi-prong action plan in place to reach our goal. The Challenge spurred our volunteers to put extra effort into several areas of the Campaign and brought many new donors to our aid. It is perhaps most fitting that in the last weeks of our Campaign, relatives of one of our clients were moved to make a \$100,000 gift which took RTT's Campaign "over the top".

#### **Things Learned During The Campaign And Challenge Grant**

- 1) The Campaign reinforced that when people come to see our program "in action" the impact is palpable and appreciation for the services RTT provides is deepened.
- 2) While it is typically a small committed group that does the bulk of the work in a Campaign, RTT also benefited from a broad army of volunteers who wrote letters, did research, said thank you and went out into the community to speak on our behalf. We kept these volunteers engaged in ways they were comfortable with and they inspired many gifts.
- 3) Our program is visual and photographs and video have a real impact. Our final mailing, which was designed with many programmatic photos, was appealing and very successful.
- 4) We made the right decision to build our new facility in phases. Building our heated indoor arena prior to our program and office wing, demonstrated that RTT was committed to making significant improvements to our property. Aside from the obvious benefits to our clients, the arena made it possible to bring donor prospects out to see our program all year and gave us the opportunity to present our case for the attached program and office wing.
- 5) We learned about the effectiveness of on-line donations and how the internet opens up a whole new world of donors. We had donors from 34 states and 7 foreign countries as a result of our volunteers creating personalized on-line sponsorship pages. This was an effective tool for engaging people who were uncomfortable with direct solicitations but wanted to help.
- 6) We learned that networking is critical to spreading our message. We used the internet and email to tap into the "RTT Family's" networks. Our volunteers, client families and key donors helped open doors with foundations, businesses, civic groups and donor prospects.
- 7) RTT did not have a public relations plan for the Campaign per se but we soon realized the power of good press and public relations. We luckily had multiple opportunities for both TV and print exposure highlighting our program and increasing public awareness and interest. The resulting increased name recognition was helpful not only with donors but with volunteer recruitment and new client referrals as well.

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8) Endowments provide legacies. Several families connected to our program that had lost a loved one during our Campaign period asked people to make memorial gifts to RTT. This thoughtful generosity moved RTT to establish a gift policy that all memorial gifts, unless otherwise indicated, be placed in our endowment. This policy provides a way to memorialize individuals in perpetuity.

### **What Surprised Us**

- We had very few multi-year pledges to the Campaign.
- The “horse community” was not as generous to us as we anticipated.
- The number of online donors was much larger than we predicted.
- The Campaign took a much greater toll on our small staff than we expected.
- We received a higher percentage of foundation support than the national average:

### **Rtt Statistics**

55% Donations from Individuals  
0% from bequests  
36% Donations from foundations  
8% Donations from corporations

### **National Statistics**

75% of donations are from individuals  
8% of donations are from bequest  
12% of donations are from foundations  
5% of donations are from corporations

### **Legacy of The Campaign For Future Fundraising at RTT**

- Our donor base which was under 100 at the beginning of our Campaign has grown to over 1300 giving us a whole new donor pool for the future.
- Our increased visibility has improved Board recruitment and we have several excellent new members many of whom like fundraising and have now experienced success.
- We have created strong and lasting partnerships with businesses and civic groups and have new organizations interested in exploring collaborative possibilities.
- We have developed a group of major donors who are now deeply invested in RTT.
- We have established a successful on-line donation program that we hope to grow.
- We now have a series of special events which were designed for the Campaign but which will continue and raise funds for our annual fund – a big boon for operations.

### **Conclusion**

Riding To The Top's Capital Campaign is a reflection of what a determined and dedicated group of people can do with vision and drive. The combination of the hard work of many volunteers, a program with a reputation for excellence, several truly fortuitous gifts and unforeseen public relations opportunities enabled RTT to reach its Campaign goal. While we are thrilled to have reached our financial goal, we are also excited that RTT is in an overall position of strength on many fronts as we complete this effort.

We extend a tremendous thank you to the Kresge Foundation for its strategic role in our ultimate success and to all who responded to our requests for support with generosity of spirit and financial support.

Respectfully submitted by: Tory Dietel Hopps, Campaign Director