

Client Stories

## Breast Cancer Resource Center (BCRC)



Over the years, treatment for breast cancer has gotten more sophisticated—and much more complex. BCRC assists Central Texans affected by breast cancer in overcoming obstacles related to accessing screening and treatment services, adhering to treatment plans, and in confronting the issues that erode quality of life.

Whatever the circumstances, BCRC provides all services and programs—free of charge—to anyone affected by breast cancer regardless of income, ethnicity, education, sexual orientation, or social support. With every act and for every client, BCRC strives to embody understanding, preserve dignity, and always see the woman as well as the disease. We believe no one should face breast cancer alone.

### Highlights

- In the year they adopted Greater Giving, Art Bra® Austin broke all of their previous fundraising records.
- With the help of Greater Giving's peer-to-peer fundraising tool, the model fundraising held leading up to the event brought in over \$100,000.
- Using mobile bidding allows guests to participate without leaving the ballroom, so the silent auction can go on all night—and even remote bidders can bid on items and win.

### Challenge

Art Bra® Austin is a juried art and design competition that culminates in a fully costumed, professionally produced runway show and auction. Artists and designers create and submit gorgeous, decorative works of “wearable” art—often over a hundred of them! Judges select 40-50 pieces for BCRC's silent auction, while the top selections are modeled at the event for live bidding. All models featured in Art Bra® Austin are breast cancer survivors and clients of BCRC, and play a key role in fundraising. Each model's story is showcased online via Join Me, Greater Giving's peer-to-peer fundraising tool, where friends and family are able to make donations to show their support.

Throughout the night, guests bid on art bras in the silent auction to take home. Then, during dinner, models showcase each of the bras on the runway and a few are selected for live bidding—where some of these beautiful, one-of-a-kind creations sell for as much as \$14,500. The additional elements of Art Bra® Austin change every year, and in 2019, sticking to their Casino Royale theme, it also featured a sponsored Kendra Scott mystery lock box; keys to the box sell for \$100 each. A giant plinko game costs \$50 per play. All in all, there are a lot of moving pieces to handle.

Originally, the Art Bra® Austin was run entirely by volunteers, but over the years it's grown and changed. Now it's run by a staff of two people, attracts about 850 guests, and makes up a third of the BCRC's fundraising budget. As the event has grown, so have its needs. From a small runway show and bras made out of pipe cleaners and pom poms to a Gala complete with dinner, VIP room, runway show and auction. The BCRC's professional benefit auctioneer, Gayle Stallings of FUNauctions, was already heavily involved in Art Bra® Austin. She saw that the BCRC clearly needed to automate, so she recommended Greater Giving.

## Tips from BCRC

- If your silent auction feels overwhelming, try cutting back on the number of items offered. The BCRC found that including fewer Art Bras raised the quality of each submission, and they were able to raise more money with less work.
- Find partners to work on your auction, like vendors and auctioneers, who will be ambassadors for your cause and really invest in your mission.
- Make sure your auction packages include good-quality photos (enough of them to do the item justice), and thorough descriptions to help attract bidders.
- Understand the platform you're using before event night to prevent mistakes and mishaps. Take the training courses and call support when you need help!
- Assign mobile bidding helpers to your auction room who can walk up to guests who need help and assist them with bidding. Consider equipping them with a variety of chargers in case a phone dies.

## Solution

Elizabeth, the Development Manager of BCRC, says her favorite part of the Greater Giving package is the look and simplicity of mobile bidding. It's easy to create auction packages and add pictures, so she can do justice to the gorgeous pieces of art in the auction. Mobile bidding also keeps guests in their seats during the entire program, but they can still bid on silent auction items on their phones. And guests who aren't even present can still participate, driving those final bids as high as possible.

The BCRC also utilized Join Me for the model fundraising element of Art Bra® Austin. With Join Me, models created their own fundraising pages featuring their unique story, where friends and family could then make donations to BCRC to show their support. Automating individual donations saved the busy staff even more time.

Another feature the BCRC loved was the ability to sell tickets through the very same platform as the mobile bidding and peer-to-peer fundraising solutions. Elizabeth appreciated that they could customize their ticket page to reflect their own branding and event, so it all went together seamlessly. And because all sales were handled within Greater Giving, they could generate and send out donor thank you letters right away!

## Results

In 2019, thanks to a user-friendly online registration, tickets to Art Bra® Austin sold out even before event night. Event staff also made the popular Kendra Scott lock boxes available for pre-sale, and they were all purchased before the auction started! With the new mobile bidding platform, an off-site bidder purchased one of the art bras for \$1,300. As Elizabeth says, "We will never do paper again!"

With all these changes implemented, the models raised over \$100,000 in and all previous fundraising records for Art Bra® Austin were broken! Overall, the event raised over \$680,000.

Now that the BCRC's Art Bra® Austin event is easier to manage, the staff were able to focus more on fundraising. This year they added another event in October called Mr. BCRC, where the men had a chance to fundraise and show their support for those fighting cancer.