

The Desert Christian Schools' Story
By
John Corfield

I would like to share with you an incredible capital campaign story. In working with Desert Christian Schools in Tucson, Arizona, CCS has been truly blessed. It is a school that has such a zeal for the Lord and His children that the parents and other constituents do whatever they are asked to do to raise the funding to build a \$3.5 million K-8 facility.

Led by a very godly administrator, a very determined director of development, and a great campaign team and other volunteers, they have much of that accounted for in just three months. It is the best example of what a capital campaign should look like in my 21 years of major fundraising.

DCS started back in the 80's with a Christian high school on the east side of Tucson. As time went on, they added an already existing middle school once run by a local church. God led them to buy a tennis complex and convert it to a middle school/high school campus. The school was completed as a K-12 when an elementary school that left its church home was added and temporarily housed by a local Baptist church.

Kimm Cray was hired as Development Director 2 1/2 years ago to handle the fundraising for DCS. Since accepting this role, she has helped the school raise a record \$2,000,000 to purchase a 16 acre property for their new K-8 facility. This was extremely important because the Baptist church currently housing their elementary school has asked them to find another facility. They were initially given five years to relocate; CCS was contacted when only two years remained on their current lease. That contact was made as a result of a Development webinar that I led last summer.

Kimm Cray had been researching fundraising organizations to assist with the building phase of a capital campaign. As a RenWeb/Donor Connect client, Kimm attended one of my development webinars. That day, as Kimm recalls, "I heard a voice that answered more than just my questions about development software, but also those regarding our campaign. That voice belonged to our eventual campaign consultant, John Corfield." She adds, "John was an answer to prayer."

Kimm contacted CCS about a feasibility study possibly followed by a capital campaign, if the survey indicated sufficient support from DCS constituents. Kimm urged Headmaster, John O'Hair and the DCS Board of Trustees to consider John Corfield and the CCS process and they agreed to a contract. As you will see, we are glad they did.

Let me tell you about Kimm; a person of tremendous Christian character. What she has learned in fundraising, she implements. She is zealous for the Lord, her family, the school and the campaign that she runs. Once she received our campaign plan, she & her team worked it to the letter.

Why is that important? It is essential that those who have never entered into a major capital campaign for new facilities follow those that know how to maximize giving. Knowing this, Kimm and the DCS leadership were committed to keeping the volunteers

on task and the campaign schedule moving forward. Because of her confidence in the plan, DCS succeeded in ways CCS has rarely seen.

When we first talked, Kimm's initial question to me was, "How and where do we get the needed volunteers needed to run a successful capital campaign? We find that just a few do everything and same ones volunteer over and over again." I told her that all of that would be explained in the plan and that we would lead them through it step by step.

At the constituency-wide Campaign Kick Off banquet, Kimm announced that the campaign team had recruited over 150 volunteers and put together the Kickoff event in less than 6 weeks through CCS's systematic approach to building a team. This has been the best start to a Christian school campaign ever witnessed by CCS. What an incredible blessing to the DCS constituency and to CCS. And, there is much more to come.

I cannot close this without sharing the many firsts that occurred during this wonderful campaign to raise \$3.5 Million for a new K-8 facility. They are:

- 82% of survey participants attended the leadership diner; the average – 40%
- Schools rarely recruit all 18 campaign team members; DCS did in the first month
- The campaign team led the way by pledging \$202,000 – a first by a wide margin
- The board, admin, faculty, staff & survey participants pledged over \$1,200,000
- A year-end appeal letter prior to the campaign brought in \$500,000 in cash
- A surprise pledge of \$500,000 was made from a past giver out of the blue
- \$560,000 in cash is now in the bank as I write this to begin building
- DCS had 150 volunteers; the most volunteers CCS has ever witnessed
- The KO banquet was packed; some who had not RSVP'd came anyway
- CCS felt overwhelming joy because Scriptural FR principles were followed
- DCS has 300 families to see plus over 400 grandparents, businesses, alumni, etc.
- God is bringing a new unity to the three schools that make up DCS
- The Glory belongs to the Lord; the joy is ours

Much more could be said about the efforts of the constituents of this school but I think you get the point. [The program works if it is worked properly; God will see to that.](#)

You are welcome to contact Kimm Cray at 520 901-5499 to ask her what she has learned from this endeavor. You can also contact CCS at 866 933-7973 to find out what we learned from this incredible experience. It is obvious that God's Spirit had gone before us and created great excitement, joy and unity. It may be your turn to let the Lord go ahead of you in meeting your capital funding needs.

Sincerely,

John W. Corfield

John Corfield
CCS President