EMPOWER21

2026

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PMCG - COMMUNITY GIVING PROJECT

Panther Creek High School
6770 McCrimmon Parkway
Cary, North Carolina, 27519
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Initiating

Statement of the Problem

Founded in 2003 by Nancy Gianni, GiGi's Playhouse is a **national nonprofit organization** dedicated to changing society's perception of individuals with Down syndrome through **education** and **vocational training,** empowering these individuals to success. Following Gigi's Playhouse Raleigh's **expansion to a larger location** in 2023, the Playhouse has faced increased operating costs and **financial pressures**, making sustainable fundraising and community support a necessity now more than ever.

Project Scope

Our project, **Empower21**, aims to improve GiGi's Playhouse Raleigh's fundraising and community awareness efforts. The project focuses its efforts on **enhancing their annual "I Have a Voice" Gala,** one of the Playhouse's largest fundraisers, crucial to determining the scale of events run for the following year. By partnering directly with GiGi's Playhouse and leveraging its existing community support, Empower21 helps **maximize donations** to fund program growth and sustain services at the organization's new location.

Planning and Organizing

Project Goals

1 Increase Total Revenue

Raise Gala revenue by our symbolic target of 21% by improving donor engagement, auctions, sponsorships, and ticket sales.

2 Improve Guest Acquisition

Attract first-time donors through complimentary tickets, partner outreach, and strong pre-event communication.

3 Enhance Marketing Strategy

Improve social media marketing, emails, sponsor updates, and phone outreach to boost engagement and visibility.

4 Document Full Process

Establish a standardized planning process to allow consistent and repeatable execution of future Galas.

Human Resources Management Plan's Chain of Command


Dana Ramsey


Hadi Niazi


Jocelyn Scheel


Sandy Hankinson


Adithya Gottimukkala


Mary Haddad

Gen G Youth Board/Volunteers

The Gala used a structured, top-down communication approach for clarity and efficiency. The **Executive Director** (Dana Ramsey), directed **Project Managers** (Hadi Niazi, Adithya Gottimukkala), who delegated tasks to **staff** (Jocelyn Scheel, Sandy Hankinson) and the **GenG Youth Board Advisor** (Mary Haddad). **GenG** coordinated with staff for event logistics, ensuring smooth operations and timely decision-making.

Schedule

1. Initial meeting with Dana Ramsey (June 15th)
2. Complete project approval (July 27th)
3. Early bird ticket sale launch (August 13th)
4. Gen-G youth board meeting (August 14th)
5. 2025 "I Have a Voice" Gala (October 10th)
6. Post-event evaluation meeting (January 17th)

Quality Management Plan

We created **4 key metrics**, each of which numerically corresponds to their according project goal. These metrics hold us accountable and help us track the success of our project.

Key Metric 1: Total Net Revenue Growth (21%)

Key Metric 2: First-Time Donors (40)

Key Metric 3: Marketing Engagement (60%)

Key Metric 4: Standardized Gala Playbook (100%)

Risk Management Plan

Less-than Expected Attendance or Ticket Sales: Low attendance would directly reduce total revenue and weaken the overall success of the Gala.

Sponsorship or Major Donor Shortfalls: Insufficient sponsorships or a lack of gifts could significantly limit revenue growth

Auction Under Performing: Weak bidding activity would negatively impact one of the Gala's largest revenue streams.

Proposed Project Budget

The project budget covered all key aspects of the Gala, including **venue**, **catering**, **entertainment**, **photography**, **technology**, **décor**, **auction items, and a budget buffer**. Additionally, discounts from venue partnerships and in-kind donations from sponsors helped reduce costs.

Proposed Budget: $65,387.50

Actual Budget: $63,598.28

Execution

PHASES (DATES)	KEY EVENTS	DESCRIPTION
Phase 1: Goal Setting (May 21st - June 15th)	1. Initial Meeting 2. Goal Development	Established project objectives, reviewed past Gala performance, and defined responsibilities.
Phase 2: Sponsorship Development (June 15th - August 14th)	1. Early Sponsor Outreach 2. Auction Integration	Secured and enhanced sponsor partnerships, restructured sponsorship tiers, and planned the auction to maximize revenue and engagement.

Phase 3: Marketing (August 14th - October 9th)	1. Marketing Strategy Expansion 2. Guest Acquisition	Implemented a multifaceted marketing campaign to increase ticket sales, attract new donors, and boost awareness for the Gala.
Phase 4: Event Execution (September 2nd - October 10th)	1. Pre-Event Operational Planning & Alignment 2. Event Day	Coordinated volunteers, vendors, and program segments on the day of the Gala to deliver a seamless and engaging experience.
Phase 5: Post-Event Review (October 10th - January 17th)	1. Documentation of a Gala Playbook 2. Post-Event Meeting	Analyzed event outcomes, gathered lessons learned, and compiled comprehensive documentation to support future Galas.

By splitting our execution into 5 phases, we were able to efficiently distribute work amongst sub-teams while also having collectively shared deadlines in mind. Additionally, the phased approach provided us the leeway to overlap deadlines when needed, and account for any potential setbacks without disrupting the project schedule heavily.

Monitoring and Controlling

Monitoring

Schedule Monitoring
Biweekly milestone reviews ensured tasks stayed on track and delays were addressed early.

Budget Monitoring
Expenses and in-kind donations were monitored to control costs and maximize revenue.

Project Quality Monitoring
Quality was evaluated through mission checks and post-event feedback.

Controlling

Issue	Response
Issue: Delayed sponsor confirmations	**Response:** Set deadlines and conduct follow-ups
Issue: Check-in bottlenecks	**Response:** Added stations and reassigned volunteers
Issue: Low early auction bidding	**Response:** Promoted items and encouraged bidding through MC
Issue: Attention loss during transitions	**Response:** Shortened transitions and refocused guests

Closing the Project

Evaluation of Key Metrics

32%	total revenue growth from 2024
52	attendees were first-time donors
72%	of tickets sold early
100%	of Gala documented and approved

Lessons Learned

- Established roles created efficient and centralized communication systems
- Positive interaction decreased potential communication barriers

Future Recommendations

- Earlier sponsor outreach, especially for any new sponsors
- Implement a digital donation pipeline to reduce barriers of access