



## CASE STUDY

# HEADstrong Foundation: An Agile Storyteller

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**RALLYCORP**

**What They Do:**

Help families financially, emotionally and residentially that are affected by cancer.

**Founded:**

2007

# 25,709

Patients and families assisted.

**Learn more:**

[HEADstrong.org](http://HEADstrong.org)

## ABOUT

The HEADstrong Foundation offers financial, residential, and emotional support to families affected by cancer. Essential resources can be scarce, so HEADstrong is a teammate for families during their fight with cancer. Based in Philadelphia, they offer guest housing through Nick's House, but also meals, financial support, comfort kits, and peer support to patients and their families throughout the country.

**"We try to be on the cutting edge. We are small, but we want to be agile and really be able to communicate with our supporters wherever they are. Being able to dial right in to hundreds even thousands of people with one click of a mouse with a text is really powerful."**

**-Jeff Baxter,**

**Vice President of  
Community Engagement**

“You don’t really know the full extent of your health insurance until you need it,” Baxter said.

HEADstrong Foundation’s founder, Nick Colleluori, played division one lacrosse in college before succumbing to cancer. He called the lacrosse family a “brotherhood,” and that community has rallied around the HEADstrong Foundation, with many players sporting the organization’s distinctive lime green shoelaces.

“The smallest gestures go a long way when you’re going through something tough like cancer,” Baxter said.

## BIGGEST CHALLENGES:

### Raising funds:

Like every nonprofit, fundraising is a constant challenge. “Every year we start at zero,” Baxter said.

### Differentiating themselves:

“Another challenge is standing out from the crowd.” The HEADstrong Foundation is laser focused on helping patients and families in their fight with cancer. They’re not working toward a cure or offering parental housing similar to organizations like the Ronald McDonald House, and they have to constantly work to zero in on their mission of helping patients and families.



### Changing communication:

“How people communicate has vastly changed. People get so many emails now that you're just inundated with emails. So finding ways to communicate with your donors, whether through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, text messaging—what's the best method?”

## HOW ARE THINGS GOING LATELY?

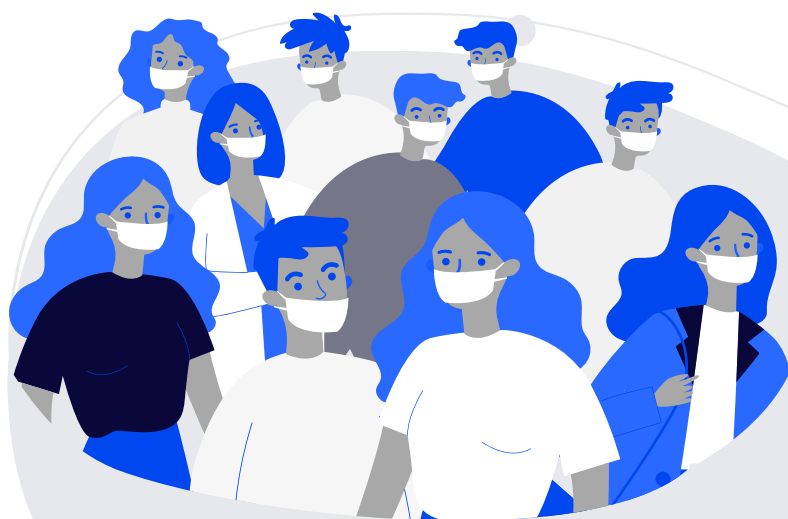
The HEADstrong Foundation has nearly doubled their fundraising in the last five years, even during a tumultuous time.

### COVID-19:

“There was definitely a period of time, six to eight months, where we didn't have a lot of funds coming in, but then we started seeing the light at the end of the tunnel,” Baxter said. “People were very generous toward the charities they supported because they didn't want to see them go away. And so we were able to weather the storm there.”

### Moving forward:

“We came out of that on the other side of that storm almost in a better position because we had to really challenge ourselves and be creative on how we rally our supporters and really dial them in.”



### How have you used Rally?

The HEADstrong Foundation has used Rally for fundraising campaigns, reaching out to donors, events, and more.

Baxter recently tried **ringless voicemail** for the first time. He wanted to test it out, so he used a targeted group of HEADstrong Foundation supporters they wanted to reengage. The voicemail shared how important the supporter was to the organization's success in 2022 and how they wanted them back in 2023.

It worked: "It's just another thing that somebody's going to get to remind them to get on board," Baxter said.

## WHAT HEADSTRONG TEXTS:

- Updates, encouragement, and reminders for national fundraising campaigns.
- Last-minute event updates, including weather notices or location changes.
- Announcements during an event, like reminding people to get their bids in for the silent auction before it closes.
- A reminder about a detailed email that recently went out with a direct link to the email: "If somebody was really busy or maybe it got lost in the sauce in their inbox, they can catch that email and get it right on their phone."

### Great Reminder

Baxter received a response from a recent text: "Great reminder. Thank you. I'm going to register today."

"That's all I wanted to do," Baxter said, "I wanted to shake somebody loose who wants to get involved."

### Value of story

"If you're in the charity world, you're a storyteller. So the more honed in and polished your storytelling capabilities and communication lines are, the healthier you're going to be," Baxter said.

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE RALLY?

### Better features:

They were looking at multiple platforms, but Rally had more options, including the ability to text images, personalization, and two-way communication.

### Dedicated phone number:

"Rally Corp has a dedicated phone number for our organization. It's actually a two-way communication line where the other tools we were looking at were just a one way to get the message out." Baxter can also forward that number to his Google Voice and get calls directly to his phone.

### Human support:

"A lot of these organizations, you can never get a human on the phone. Everything's done over chat," Baxter said. "But James and his team have been there to answer any calls."

### Intuitive:

"We use so many different platforms, whether it's fundraising software, registration software, auction software, customer relationship management—you're just adding another tool," Baxter said. "But James and his team made it rather intuitive to use."

**See how Rally can work for you. Go to [RallyCorp.com](https://RallyCorp.com) to book a demo.**