**Section 1 – Introduction**

Dallas Independent School District (“DISD") is a large public school district, and it has students with many different types of disabilities. Visually impaired students require special technology for learning, and DISD does receive enough funding to provide this technology. Providing visually impaired children with special technology early in their education will give them the opportunity to achieve higher academic levels. Cigna Health Insurance, along with All Blind Children of Texas, is sponsoring a social campaign to raise money to purchase the technology needed for these children.

Cigna Health Care is hosting the event “Stand-Up for Visually Impaired Students of Dallas” on October 4, 2014 at the Granada Theatre in Dallas. The event is a stand-up comedy show, and it will include guest speakers to help raise awareness about the benefits of the technology for visually impaired children. The goal is to raise $75,000.00 from event ticket and raffle ticket sales. The success of the event will not be measured solely by the amount of money raised. Cigna will also measure the success of the event from feedback by our guests, the teachers and parents of the children receiving the technology, and by the social media presence.

Cigna Healthcare is committed to helping people they serve improve their health, well-being, and sense of security. The social campaign for visually impaired students supports Cigna’s commitment, because a strong education will provide these children with a foundation for a successful future.

The estimated budget for the event is $24,000.00, and Cigna is asking the Dallas Chamber of Commerce to invest $12,000.00 in the event. The higher level of education for visually impaired students will positively benefit the Dallas/Fort Worth workforce and economy.

**Section 2 – Background & Problem**

***Organization***

Cigna is a global health service leader that provides medical, dental disability and group life insurance to more than 14.5 million customer. Cigna is dedicated to helping people improve their health, well-being and sense of security. Each year the Plano, Texas office of Cigna Healthcare sponsors a social campaign that supports its mission. Cigna Healthcare’s 2016 social campaign is to raise money to purchase the technology for the visually impaired students of Dallas Independent School District.

***Nature/Evidence of Social Problem***

 The education and employment levels for visually impaired adults is significantly lower than sighted adults. Approximately 24% of visually impaired adults do not have a high school diploma or GED and only 13% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (Blindness). The higher education rate is much lower than the national average; 34% of adults in the United States hold a bachelors’ degree or higher (National). There is even a greater disparity between the employment levels of visually impaired adults compared to sighted adults. Only about 40% of adults with significant vision impairments were employed in 2013 (Blindness). The national unemployment rate ranges between 5% -7% (Shinner), so a 60% unemployment rate is very significant.

 A way to improve the education and employment levels for visually impaired adults is to set a strong foundation early in their education. Visually impaired students benefit from public school education (Blindness). Public schools generally have higher academic standards than specialized schools or home schools. Public schools offer a wide variety of extra-curricular activities which provides more social opportunities. The social opportunities the visually impaired students experience in their public school education are similar to the real world experience they will encounter as adults. The real world experiences help the children adapt as adults to higher education and employment with sighted adults.

 Cigna chose the visual impairment program at DISD, because the program is underfunded compared to the other disability programs in the district. The visual impairment program at DISD is not provided enough funding to purchase the technology for its program. There are approximately 110 visually impaired students in DISD and it only receives about $13,000.00 of annual funding. This equates to only $120.00 per student per year. In comparison, the auditory program has approximately 400 students and it receives $238,000.00 of funding or $513.00 dollars per student year per year (Singleton).

**Section 3 - Proposal**

***The Project***

Cigna is proposing to raise the funds needed to provide assistive technology to visually impaired students in DISD. The plan is to raise money through the “Stand-Up” event. The event is a comedy show featuring three comedians and two special guest speakers, Aurora Hernandez and Christine Sahliyeh. Aurora Hernandez is a counselor at the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services; she will deliver the informational portion. Christine Sahliyeh is a passionate board member of All Blind Children of Texas, the non-profit organization Cigna is partnering with. Christine will provide an inspirational presentation about her father. Her father spent most of his life blind, yet still managed to earn a PhD and become a college professor (Who). The event will also feature a raffle drawing to maximize revenue.

   

***The Importance***

Cigna's proposal is vital for visually impaired students of DISD so they aregiven the same educational opportunities as sighted students. Today, technology is used in nearly every aspect of education. Therefore, visually impaired students should have the proper tools to fully utilize this technology. The money raised will give every five impaired students access to a closed-circuit television (CCTV), ZoomText software, and a large print keyboard. In addition, it will provide every visually impaired student in DISD with a magnifier, stand, and monocular. The CCTV magnifies the text/image from printed media on to the screen (CCTV/Video). The ZoomText software can zoom the image of the computer screen up to 36 times (ZoomText Magnifier). The large print keyboard is colored and sized for ease of use. The magnifier, stand, and monocular are portable devices that can be used in the classroom or taken home for homework. To provide equal learning opportunities for the visually impaired in DISD, the goal is to raise $75,000.00.

***The Benefits***

The proposal will provide many benefits, not only to the impaired themselves, but to the community and economy around them. The assistive technology will unlock and provide full access to education and learning. In return, it will give these students an overall higher education level and social experience. The higher education will produce a stronger local workforce, which will positively impact the economy. The social skills learned in public schools will improve their quality of life. All of these benefits will create a stronger and better foundation for future generations to come.

**Section 4 - Plan & Schedule**

In order to reach the goal of $75,000.00, Cigna is sponsoring a raffle drawing, and a stand-up comedy show at the Granada Theatre in Dallas, Texas. Starting on January 4, 2016, the Cigna 2016 social campaign committees will contact local businesses in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area to market and promote the comedy show and sell the raffle tickets.

The cost of each raffle ticket is $100.00, and will be sold until the comedy show begins on October 4, 2016. At the end of the comedy show, one of the committee members will pick two tickets, and announce the winner. If the winners are not present at the event, the committee members will contact them on October 6, 2016 to provide the winner with the details. The grand prize winner will receive a 2016 Ford Mustang donated by AutoNation Ford in Frisco, and the second prize winner will receive a $1,000.00 cash prize.

One January 4, 2016, Cigna will begin selling tickets to the comedy show at the Granada Theatre. The comedy show tickets cost $50 each and can be purchased up to the day of the event on October 4, 2016. Details of the Stand-Up for DISD Comedy Show schedule can be seen below. Both the raffle tickets and comedy show tickets will be available for purchase at the Cigna Plano Office and online at [www.standupfordisd.com](http://www.standupfordisd.com).

**Stand-Up for DISD Comedy Show Schedule**

**October 4, 2016**

***Pre-Event***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 5:30-5:45 PM | Cigna Social Campaign Committee meeting to go over event schedule |
| 5:45-6:00 PM | Setup Raffle Table at the entrance of the Granada theatre |
| 6:00-6:10 PM | Hand in presentations on USB drives for speakers to Granada technology department |
| 6:10-6:25 PM | Hang-up promotional posters of the raffle tickets throughout Granada |
| 6:25-6:30 PM | Committee members to be at entrance to sell raffle tickets/ hand out surveys |

***Event***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 6:30-6:45 PM | Doors Open/Raffle Tickets available for sale/hand out surveys |
| 6:45-7:00 PM | Opening Introduction by Cigna Social Campaign Committee |
| 7:00-7:20 PM | 1st Comedian Routine |
| 7:20-7:40 PM | All Blind Children of Texas guest speaker-Christine Sahliyeh |
| 7:40-8:00 PM | 2nd Comedian Routine |
| 8:00-8:20 PM | Texas Dept. of Assistive and Rehabilitative Service guest speaker- Aurora Hernandez |
| 8:20-8:40 PM | 3rd Comedian Routine |
| 8:40-8:50 PM | Raffle Drawing |
| 8:50-9:00 PM | Closing Statement by Cigna Social Campaign Committee |

***Post-Event***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9:00-9:20 PM | Collect post-survey cards from guests as they exit the theatre |
| 9:20-9:45 PM | Take down promotional posters/take down raffle table |
| 9:45-9:50 PM | Collect USB drives from Granada technology department |

**Section 5- Success Measures**

The success of Cigna's 2016 social campaign will not only be measured by the amount of money raised for the visually impaired students of the Dallas Independent School District but also by the amount of awareness and interest raised within the Dallas/Ft. Worth community. By analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, Cigna will determine how successful the 2016 social campaign has been for the students as well as the community. Cigna will also be able to determine if this particular campaign should be continued for other school districts within the Dallas area.

***Micro-Level Metrics***

 Cigna's goal of $75,000 will be measured based on the amount of raffle and comedy show tickets sold. In order to obtain the goal of $75,000, Cigna anticipates selling 800 tickets to the comedy show at $50 per ticket. The sale of 800 tickets will raise $40,000 which is more than half of the minimum goal. In order to raise the remaining amount of the $75,000.00 goal, Cigna anticipates selling a minimum of 350 raffle tickets. The number of raffle tickets for sale is unlimited, therefore there is the potential to sell more than 350 tickets and exceed the minimum goal of $75,000.00. Raffle tickets will be available for sale online as well as at the comedy event. If less than half of the comedy show guests purchase a raffle ticket at the show, the goal will be met without any online or outside sales.

***Macro-Level Metrics***

 After the comedy show, Cigna will continue to measure the success of the social campaign by evaluating the impact and awareness of the campaign throughout the community. Cigna will measure the impact using social media, post event surveys, and request impact statements from parents and teachers of the visually impaired students. By analyzing this information, Cigna can conclude how effective the campaign was at creating awareness throughout the community and if the guests are interested in participating in similar future events.

 Cigna is promoting the event using social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Cigna is encouraging people to engage with the social media community by posting tweets about the event and pictures using the hashtag “StandUpforDISD”. The campaign committee will continue to monitor the social media sites for questions and concerns about the comedy event, as well as measure how many people are posting about the event. Cigna is measuring the success of the overall event by determining the amount of times the hashtag was used as well as how many positive comments were received about the event.

 On the night of the event, each guest will sign in and provide their email address. Cigna will use the sign in information to send a post-event survey. After the event is concluded, the committee will email each guest a survey that will ask for feedback on the event, and if they would consider joining future similar events. The survey will include a rating system of one through five. Each guest can rate factors such as the overall comedy show, and if the information provided on visual impairment gave them valuable insight on why it is an important cause for the community.

 The money Cigna raises, will be given to All Blind Children of Texas as a donation, and All Blind Children of Texas will purchase the technology for the visually impaired students of DISD. Approximately six months after DISD receives the technology, Cigna will contact the parents and teachers of the visually impaired in order to allow them to provide impact statements and feedback. The feedback and impact statements will help Cigna determine if the technology has helped to improve the students’ grades and also the students’ confidence in their education.

**Section 6 - Staffing**

***Staff Recruiting***

To successfully hold the event, employee involvement will be imperative. Every year, Cigna employees donate their time to the annual social campaign hosted by Cigna. Employees are encouraged to get involved and mirror Cigna's mission to promote the well-being and a sense of security to the community. To encourage participation, employees can submit suggestions and recommendations for future campaign events. Various employee teams will be formed to handle different functions pertaining to the event. There will be twelve teams of ten volunteers working on marketing through various outlets; such as flyers, social media and radio advertisements. There will also be five teams of six volunteers working on organizing and budgeting, and eight teams of six volunteers working on entertainment and the event program. Other teams formed will focus on post event surveys and feedback to determine the impact of the event.

Staffing will be provided by the Granada Theater as part of the facility rental cost. Granada Theater staff will serve the food and beverage as well as usher guests to their seats. The Granada Theatre staff will also assist with directions, parking, facility oversight and any security needed during the event.

***Compensation***

There are no funds dedicated to staffing expense since employee volunteers will be overseeing the event project. The staffing at the Granada Theatre is included in the rental fee of the facility.

***Selection***

Employees volunteers will take a survey to determine what team will best suit each employee. Based on the results of the surveys, employees will be placed on the appropriate teams.

***Training and Management***

Since the teams formed will be internal, there will not be formal training. Assignments will be delegated from the events department to the teams. Teams will submit progress reports to upper management, and the events department will ensure that the event is progressing accordingly.

**Section 7- The Budget**

***Total Cost of Project***

The total cost of the event is $24,000. Cigna will split the cost of the event with Dallas Chamber of Commerce, with each contributing $12,000.

 An itemized summary of the estimated costs is listed below. The breakdown includes the facility rental, food and beverages, comedian fees, raffle expenses, as well as other administrative costs.

***Budget & Staffing***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Venue Rental | $ 3,500 |
| Comedian Fees | $ 1,500 |
| Food & Beverage | $ 16,400 |
| Raffle Expense | $ 1,000 |
| Administrative Expense | $ 1,600 |
| Staffing Expense |  $ -  |
| Total Cost of Event | $ 24,000 |

***Justification***

The Granada Theatre is a popular venue in the Dallas/Fort-Worth area, is centrally located, and easy to access. The theatre holds up to 800 people and will cost $3,500 for four and a half hours. The Granada Theatre chares $21.50 per person for appetizers and non-alcoholic beverages. The cost for 800 guests is $16,400. Cigna's event is incorporating entertainment as well as educational components by featuring a stand-up show and guest speakers. The guest speakers will educate the guests about the importance of helping visually impaired students in the Dallas school district. Each of the three comedians that are performing at the event will be paid $500 for their services.

 The raffle drawing costs $1,000 due to the second prize winner's cash prize of $1,000. AutoNation Ford of Frisco will donate a 2016 Ford Mustang to the grand prize winner. Cigna employees are donating their time to help run the event, which allows Cigna to cut the cost of staffing expenses. The $1,600 administrative expense is allocated to flyers, radio advertisements, social media campaigns, and post-survey supplies. With a $24,000 budget, Cigna will be able to help 110 visually impaired students at a cost of $218 per student. By hosting this event, Cigna will be able to raise $463 more dollars over the cost for each of the 110 students in DISD.

**Section 8 - Conclusion**

 The Dallas/Fort Worth area will benefit from our social campaign. The benefits of the social campaign align directly with education mission of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. The social campaign will allow visually impaired students to obtain higher levels of education. The higher levels of education will provide a strong local workforce, which will positively influence the economy of Dallas/Fort Worth. All of these factors will help build a strong foundation for future generations. With the Dallas Chamber of Commerce’s $12,000 investment a minimum of $75,000 will go directly back into the education of Dallas’ children. The Dallas Chamber of Commerce’s return on its investment will exceed 500%.

**Section 9- References**

Blindness Statistics. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2015, from https://nfb.org/blindness-statistics.

CCTV/Video Magnifier. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2015, from http://afb.org/info.

National Organization of Parents of Blind Children - A Brief Look At The Education Of Blind Children: An Overview. (n.d.). Retrieved November 13, 2015, from http://nopbc.org/search-articles/editor-s-choice-articles/item/29-a-brief-look-at-the-education-of-blind-children-an-overview.

Shiner, R. (1998). Why is the U.S. unemployment rate so much lower? NBER/Macroeconomics Annual (MIT Press), 13(1), 11.

Singleton, Michael (2014). Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Retrieved November 15, 2015, from http://www.dallasisd.org/far.

Who We Are. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2015, from http://www.abctx.org/who-we-are

ZoomText Magnifier/Reader. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2015, from http://www.zoomtext.com/products/zoomtext-magnifierreader/.