



PennState Health
Children's Hospital



**Children's
Miracle Network
Hospitals®**

CASE STUDY

CAUSE-MARKETING PARTNER



AUGUST 2021 // PREPARED BY JOE WATERS OF SELFISHGIVING.COM

FOR THIS HARDWARE RETAILER, GIVING BACK MEANS BUILDING A STRONGER BUSINESS

Ace Hardware is an international chain of local hardware stores with 25 stores in south central Pennsylvania. Stores are independently owned and operated by local entrepreneurs.

Ace Hardware's goals for partnering with Penn State Health Children's Hospital, a member of Children's Miracle Network Hospitals (CMN) include:

- To raise funds for an outstanding local organization that shares the company's mission to help others in the community.
- To host store fundraisers that are successful for CMN, easy to execute, and popular with Ace's customers and employees.



Before becoming a national partner of Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals in 1991, Ace Hardware funded dozens of nonprofits with mixed results.

“We were donating to a lot of charities, but we weren’t having much of an impact,” said Christine Doucet, Director of the Ace Hardware Foundation & Employee Engagement. “That’s when Ace shifted course and CMN became our main charitable partner.”

Ace Hardware chose CMN because all the dollars raised by local stores - regardless of where they are in the country - would stay local and go to the nearest CMN member hospital.



“Our brand is that Ace is your local hardware store,” said Christine. “It’s incredibly important to our independent store owners that whatever money is raised goes to local families that shop in the community.”

Customers often ask store employees where their donations are going. “Ace employees in south central Pennsylvania can say that 100 percent of donations are going to the nearest CMN member hospital, Penn State Health Children’s Hospital,” said Christine.



Celebrating
ACE BUCKET DAYS



Locally in south central Pennsylvania, Ace Hardware raises \$100,000 annually for CMN. Most of the money is raised through three signature fundraisers.

1. An annual round-up program at the register.
2. A Miracle Bucket promotion in August. Customers make a \$5 donation to Penn State Health Children's Hospital and get a miracle bucket and 20% off whatever fits in it.
3. Change for Kids, an employee payroll deduction program. This is a key fundraiser for Penn State Health Children's Hospital as one of Ace Hardware's 15 national warehouses is located in south central Pennsylvania.



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In addition to our signature fundraisers, we give our stores and employees a lot of flexibility in how they raise money. There are grilling events, golf outings, candy sales and all sorts of good things happening at stores.

-Christine Doucet, Director of the ACE Hardware Foundation & Employee Engagement

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Ace Hardware's work with CMN both nationally and locally has been an impressive success for both partners.

- Nationally, Ace Hardware has raised \$140 million for CMN since 1991. Over a million dollars has gone directly to Penn State Health Children's Hospital.
- In-store fundraising programs have been successful and popular with customers and employees. Store participation has spiked from 800 to 3,700 stores over the past decade, increasing donations to CMN by 600%.
- Working with CMN has given Ace Hardware a competitive edge in hiring as job seekers are eager to work with companies that give back to their communities.



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We've asked our employees how supporting CMN makes them feel. One employee said it made her feel grateful because her grandson was treated at a local CMN hospital. Another said her store's efforts on behalf of CMN made her work feel even more important.

-Christine Doucet, Director of the ACE Hardware Foundation & Employee Engagement

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For companies that are new to supporting a cause, Christine shared her advice for success:

1. **Culture beats strategy.** “Giving back has to be in your company’s DNA,” said Christine. “You can walk our halls on any given day and see at least half of our staff wearing a CMN logo.”
2. **Persuade don’t demand.** “As a retail co-operative we can’t tell our stores what to do, they have to choose to support CMN,” said Christine. “We educate them on the value of the partnership, and if they decide to join, we make it easy for them to participate.”
3. **Be creative and flexible.** “Five years ago, a new Ace retailer reached out and asked if they could sell World’s Finest Chocolate bars at his store to raise funds,” said Christine. “We are now their largest retail partner and last year sold over two million bars, raising over million for CMN.”