



Going Forward with GIFTS®



Christopher Reeve Foundation

In a single year, the number of grant applications they received doubled. The year was 2003, and to say that the Christopher Reeve Foundation was experiencing tremendous success would be a blatant understatement. The Foundation is dedicated to curing spinal cord injury by funding innovative research, and improving the quality of life for people living with paralysis through grants, information and advocacy.

"We had started to award more grant money as spinal cord research was expanding at all universities, and interest in the research we were funding was growing almost exponentially," said Douglas Landsman, Ph.D., who serves as Director, Individual Research Grants Program for the Foundation.

Spreadsheet process lacks robust reporting of a relational database

Like many grantmaking organizations, from the outset, the Christopher Reeve Foundation had been tracking their grants through a spreadsheet. However, Foundation managers realized this method of tracking grants didn't provide a complete solution to meet their needs. One of the biggest challenges they faced was the inability to produce in-depth reports on scientific research trends.

"We knew we needed a relational database," states Dr. Landsman. The spreadsheet method didn't offer the extensive structure and organization of data they needed, and it didn't facilitate the assessment and projection of trends. "We wanted more in-depth coding in order to track trends in science. With the ability to report on and analyze the

coding in a relational database, we knew we could better anticipate where the science was going."

Additionally, the foundation had a twice yearly cycle for grant applications, and they were mired in administrative details. The huge influx in hard copy applications meant increased postage costs. And a much higher volume of paper had to be moved through the office, which created considerable file storage demands.

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Director, Individual
Research Grants Program

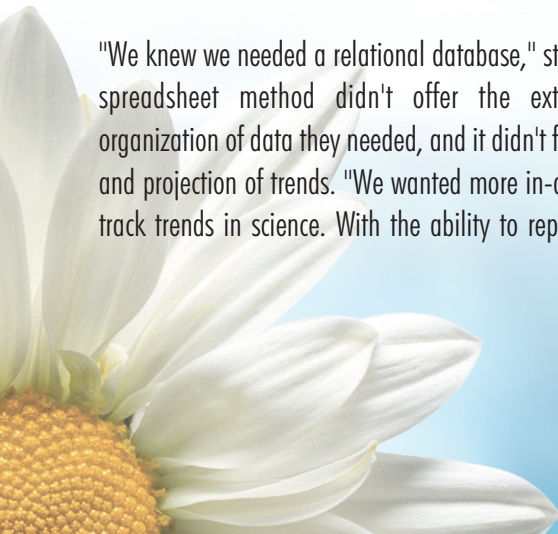
"I made some phone calls to counterparts at other organizations, and found that many of them were using MicroEdge GIFTS," remarks Dr. Landsman. They also heard about IGAM Integrated Web Forms for Giving, and how it would enable them to accept grant applications online. IGAM was relatively new at the time, but they were very excited about its potential to streamline their administrative processes.

More robust reporting through GIFTS

Their motto is Go Forward, and indeed that's what they did with GIFTS grants management system. In

2003, the foundation closed their spreadsheets and opened their grantmaking potential by implementing GIFTS along with IGAM.

"We have much better tracking of all aspects of our grants program based on the depth of scientific coding that we are able to assign to our grants," concludes Dr. Landsman. The foundation has reaped other benefits as well, including increased efficiency and the ability to maintain more timely grantee contact through easy mail merges. "But for us, the biggest benefit of GIFTS has been the instantaneous reports that we can produce." Landsman goes on to maintain that "the ad hoc





reporting is great for our power users, and we are also able to quickly prepare reports for board review — it's so much easier to get the numbers we need with GIFTS."

Although reporting was the primary reason for seeking an improved solution, through their streamlined workflow and online application process the foundation achieved a significant reduction in paperwork — they now manage almost two-thirds less paper than they used to!

A second GIFTS system for the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center

"GIFTS has been very effective for the Christopher Reeve Foundation. We've recommended it to a number of foundations," says Dr. Landsman. "In fact, we even purchased a separate GIFTS system for the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Resource Center (PRC)." The PRC, a program of the Christopher Reeve Foundation, promotes the health and well-being of people living with spinal cord injury, paralysis and mobility impairment by providing comprehensive information, resources and referral services. Because their methods are so different, a second, separate instance of GIFTS allows the PRC to more efficiently track their Quality of Life grants.

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