

National Vehicle Donation Program Marketing Strategies from the Field

The National Vehicle Donation Program (NVDP) was implemented by the National Council of the United States as a means to increase awareness and funding to provide direct assistance for individuals living in poverty. Since NVDP was launched in 2010, a total of over 5,600 cars have been sold through this program, netting over \$3.3 million total.

The National Vehicle Donation Program continues to grow month after month, thanks to the marketing efforts of local conferences and councils across the United States. There are many excellent techniques being used across the United States, with just a few mentioned in this article.

In Detroit, MI, there has been significant growth over the last few years in their vehicle donation program. Larry Griffin, manager of donation relations, explained some of their “secrets to success.” Larry stated that by “treating car donations just like any other donation” you will have success. He went on to explain this more in-depth by requesting vehicle donations on all avenues of communication, including flyers in the thrift store, regular mailings, and even adding “vehicles” to the list of accepted items on their donation bins.



In Orlando, FL, Executive Director Trace Trylko has been working very hard over the last few years to grow their National Vehicle Donation Program. One of Trace’s strong skill sets is his ability to get free advertising. When the Diocese of Orlando’s radio station asked Trace to appear as a speaker, he graciously accepted. While at the station, Trace spoke with the general manager and asked her to consider airing a public service announcement on the National Vehicle Donation Program. Without hesitation, the general manager agreed, and Trace has now aired both English and Spanish PSA’s for free on that station.

In Denver, CO, Executive Director Chris Strassburger said that their successes have been a direct result of their local marketing efforts. Starting with small ads in the local Denver Catholic Reporter netted good results, but the council members soon realized that they wanted to do even more. As a result, Denver Metro went one step further and placed a large ad in a December issue, reminding everyone to take advantage of the year-end tax deductions. The results of this ad quickly became evident, as the vehicle donations increased. To supplement these newspaper ads, many of the local conferences also run ads in their parish bulletins. Chris also emphasizes that advertising doesn't have to be expensive. Even though there are some costs associated with advertising, Chris points out that they spend only eight percent on advertising costs; a great return on investment!

In Atlanta, GA, Executive Director John Berry has been a long-term supporter of the National Vehicle Donation Program, having helped create the program. One method John Berry has used to drive donations is billboard advertisement. You can see the photo below of one of his billboards. Billboards have been used by other local SVdP's as well, and a photo is also included below of one that Trace Trylko of Orlando, FL obtained at a discounted rate.



There are many advertising templates (billboard ads, television ads, magazine ads, bulletin ads, radio ads, etc.) available to conferences and councils enrolled in the National Vehicle Donation Program. To access the templates and/or learn more on how you can advertise locally, please contact National Development Programs Manager Nathan Martin at (314) 576-3993 x218, or nmartin@svdpusa.org.