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A Glimpse of Normalcy

September 5th finally ended the streak for me. The streak of over 200 days without a live, in-person fundraising or benefit auction event. For the first time in months I was able to raise money in a live fundraising setting and finally, have a glimpse of normalcy. I, as well as many of you, have had events canceled, postponed, or moved to a virtual platform left and right since mid-March when the Coronavirus crisis hit. Although virtual events have been an incredible alternative to ensure organizations are still able to raise funds, I truly believe nothing beats the dynamic and environment of a live auction setting.

This was a small event for my hometown golf club. Each year on Labor Day weekend, locals from around the area gather to partake in a two-day golf tournament and Calcutta auction. This year, the event was held entirely outdoors to ensure there was plenty of room to properly social distance and comply with the guidance for gatherings put forth by the Minnesota Department of Health, and it went off without a hitch.

It was initially a worry that attendees were going to be more hesitant to spend money at fundraising-type events like this one following the impact COVID-19 has had on our economy and the increase in unemployment, but I can tell you this small event has proven the complete opposite. This year we were able to nearly double our total number of dollars raised compared to 2019's event, and years prior. In 2019, we raised a little over \$17,000, and this year, we soared past \$30,000 with ease. The guests were happier than ever to be there and be able to gather with one another and enjoy a night out that they have longed for, for the last 6+ months. The attendees were never hesitant to spend money; they were high energy all night, and I believe this foreshadows the successes we will have in the upcoming fundraising and benefit auction season. This event just reinforced the fact that I love what I do, and I am looking forward to fully getting back to live events very soon. This event gave me hope. Hope that we will soon return to "normal," whatever "normal" may be moving forward.