



Computer Design & Integration proves itself as one of JDRF's biggest supporters

Leading infrastructure services firm comes through for Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation Imagine coordinating a national fundraiser for one of the world's most successful and active nonprofit organizations...and having the telephone database crash on the eve of the event.

It happened recently at the Park Avenue, New York City chapter offices of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which had been preparing for its annual "Walk to Cure Diabetes" weekend. The major leg of the event was taking place at three separate walk sites throughout New York City. Because JDRF walks draw more than half a million participants across the country each year – with New York's walks being among the best attended – the prospect of conducting them without telephone communications at one of its key offices was unthinkable.

"Our telephone system provides a critical information portal for walkers, cyclists and donors, particularly during event weekends," explains Ernest Spatafore, Director of Network Operations & Information Technology at JDRF. "From giving automated directions for the different starting sites to enabling ground personnel to communicate changes from the field to headquarters, the system simply had to be operational," Spatafore notes. The problem, of course, was that JDRF had less than 48 hours to fix it.

Enter Computer Design & Integration, JDRF's infrastructure services consulting firm. The company had been working on network upgrades at JDRF for about a year before the crash, and so the CDI team was able to hit the ground running when they received Spatafore's call for help.

"The Unity telephone system had not only crashed, but its hard disk was badly damaged," recalls Joseph Hubbard, account manager at CDI. "Recreating all of the data on that disk alone could take more than 48 hours – in addition to the time needed to fix or upgrade the system," he adds.

CDI's team, led by Senior IPT Technical Consultant Ray Ortega, arrived at JDRF's Park Avenue offices on the Thursday morning before the NYC walk weekend. Ortega and his engineers worked for 24 hours straight, through the night, until the system was operational at approximately 10:30 a.m. on Friday. "We were able to rebuild and upgrade the Unity system, restore the software, and salvage all information from the damaged hard disk – saving valuable messaging data and complex greetings, while eliminating the need for JDRF to re-input any of the phone system's data," Ortega reports.

For Spatafore, CDI proved itself as one of JDRF's most important supporters that day. "Our organization thrives on the support it gets from so many different communities, be it private donors, volunteers, corporate sponsors or government researchers," Spatafore explains. "But on that day, CDI reinforced a level of partnership and support with JDRF that reflected its commitment not only to helping us with our technical needs, but also to supporting our mission," he adds. "The entire CDI team took the urgency of our project and made it their own, and much of the success of our New York City walk weekend was thanks in part to their innovative and determined work."

While the CDI team's tireless dedication to seeing the job through to completion impressed Spatafore and JDRF LAN/WAN Engineer Eric Smith, it was their expertise that struck them the most.

"When we first connected with CDI, we quickly realized that this firm was unique," Spatafore notes. "They began with a comprehensive look at JDRF's existing needs, and came back with a proposal that was clearly customized to address our organization's unique IT challenges," Spatafore remembers. "As we began implementing the network and router upgrades, CDI's high level of expertise became apparent; there were no 'surprises' that usually result from an unanticipated problem, because CDI had foreseen and planned for every possibility," he adds. "But, it wasn't until we worked on the telephone crash that we really got to see CDI's depth and breadth of knowledge in action," Spatafore concludes. "Working with precious little time to analyze a situation beforehand and design a solution can be difficult, but Ray Ortega and his team made their 'on the fly' execution look like it had been planned for months!"

Both before and since the telephone system success, CDI and JDRF have been working together on a number of growth-oriented projects that will solidify their partnership for years to come. In addition to ongoing projects involving Cisco's IP Telephony, routing and firewall technology and future plans for video conferencing upgrades in its headquarters, JDRF chose CDI to implement a Microsoft Active Directory conversion at the organization's four major offices in New York, Washington, DC and Chicago.

"Active Directory is the backbone of our IT future at JDRF," Spatafore predicts. "It provides 'AAA' security [Authentication/Authorization/Accounting] for our web-based offerings, which include opportunities to sign up for volunteer work and fundraisers, as well as to donate online," he adds. The migration is near completion, and Spatafore's staff is already reaping the rewards of easier, more efficient data management.

"JDRF couldn't be more fortunate to have an IT partner like CDI," Spatafore concludes. "From the top down, it's a firm that supports its clients at the technical level...but goes much deeper than that as well."

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Success Stories Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation

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Director of Network
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