THE STORY BEHIND INTENT MEDIA

Every strategy has an origin.

Before the strategy, *the start line.*

For the better part of two decades, I helped build Canada's largest peer-to-peer fundraising movement, a national undertaking of extraordinary scale. As a strategic media partner to CauseForce, the producer of these events, I led the media behind many of the country's flagship campaigns, in service of its leading cancer foundations. The strategic philosophy I formed in those years is the one that would eventually shape Intent Media.

A reflection by Geoff Seigel, founder of Intent Media.



Thousands at the start line of the Ride to Conquer Cancer, Toronto.

18 yrs
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, 2003 TO 2020

$712M+
DOCUMENTED FUNDRAISING REPRESENTED ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO

3
COUNTRIES · CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIA

01

Executive Summary

Every strategy has an origin. Mine began in 2003, at two start lines at once. That year I helped launch Canada's premier peer-to-peer fundraising movement; the same year, my wife, Paula, was diagnosed with breast cancer. From the first day, the work and the cause were inseparable, and the distance between a good intention and a completed gift stopped being an abstraction. It was measured in real human effort, some of it our own.

From 2003 to 2020 I led media strategy, planning and buying across many of these events, first with CauseForce, their producer, and later through my own practice. Over those years I became one of the senior strategic leaders responsible for participant acquisition, integrated media, sponsorship and fundraising growth across the Weekend to End Breast Cancer, OneWalk to Conquer Cancer and the Ride to Conquer Cancer. Together, the platforms in this portfolio represent more than $712 million in documented fundraising, part of a broader CauseForce portfolio that generated close to a billion dollars worldwide.

The work was never abstract. Every registration was a personal decision, and every city and foundation was different from the last. What moved donors in Toronto did not simply carry over to Vancouver, Calgary or Montreal, and learning to see those differences clearly is much of what shaped how I think.

Those years left a philosophy I still apply to all my work: that fundraising is ultimately about people, that media is a tool rather than the objective, and that durable growth is built patiently, one community at a time.

> *I did not spend two decades marketing fundraising events. I spent them learning that people do not give to campaigns, they give to one another, and that the truest work of media is only to help them find the way.*

THE SCALE OF THE EXPERIENCE

YEARS

18 Years

Strategic leadership across Canada's premier peer-to-peer fundraising platforms.

EXECUTIONAL FOOTPRINT

12 Major Markets

Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Winnipeg • Toronto • Ottawa • Montreal • Halifax • Baltimore/ Washington • Philadelphia • Indianapolis • New York City

With additional strategic consulting supporting peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns in Australia.

HOSPITAL FOUNDATIONS

10+

Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation • BC Cancer Foundation • Alberta Cancer Foundation • Jewish General Hospital Foundation • Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation • Sunnybrook Foundation • North York General Hospital Foundation • IWK Foundation • CancerCare Manitoba Foundation • Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center • Penn Medicine Abramson Cancer Center • and others

DOCUMENTED IMPACT

$712M+

Documented fundraising represented across the event platforms during Geoff Seigel's period of involvement.

02

The National Portfolio

The scale and enduring impact of this experience are perhaps best understood at a glance. Grouped by strategic platform rather than by individual event, the portfolio below spans nearly two decades, multiple Canadian and international markets, and many of Canada's and the United States' most respected cancer hospitals and foundations. Collectively, these platforms represent some of the largest peer-to-peer fundraising events in Canadian history. The story that follows explains why that breadth mattered.

NATIONAL EVENT PLATFORM	YEARS	PRIMARY MARKETS	PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES	DOCUMENTED FUNDS
Weekend to End Breast Cancer → Weekend to End Women's Cancers → OneWalk to Conquer Cancer	**2003–2020**	Toronto • Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Ottawa • Montreal • Regional Markets	Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation • BC Cancer Foundation	**~$168M (Ontario)+**
Ride to Conquer Cancer (Canada)	**2008–2020**	Ontario • British Columbia • Alberta • Quebec	Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation • BC Cancer Foundation	**$520M+**
The Underwear Affair (Canada)	**2006–2014**	Vancouver • Calgary • Edmonton • Toronto	BC Cancer Foundation • Alberta Cancer Foundation • Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre	**$18.7M+**
Ride to Conquer Cancer (United States)	**2014–2015**	Baltimore/Washington • Philadelphia	Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Center • Penn Medicine Abramson Cancer Center	**$5.5M+**

DOCUMENTED FUNDRAISING REPRESENTED ACROSS THE PORTFOLIO **$712M+**

The documented funds shown reflect the scale of these fundraising platforms and are not intended to imply sole responsibility for those totals. Figures noting a single province reflect the portion documented for that market.

Today, these legacy fundraising platforms continue under new identities, including The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation Ride and The Princess Margaret Cancer Foundation Walk, carrying forward the peer-to-peer fundraising legacy established through these pioneering events.



The Ride to Conquer Cancer at Toronto's Princess Gates. Across Canada and beyond, cyclists in the tens of thousands rode multi-day routes in support of the country's leading cancer centres.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Beyond Canada, Geoff also contributed strategic media support to Ride to Conquer Cancer and Weekend to End Women's Cancers campaigns in both the United States and Australia, extending his experience across three countries and reinforcing the global application of CauseForce's peer-to-peer fundraising model.

ENDURING LEGACY

While the years shown in this publication reflect Geoff's direct involvement, these fundraising platforms continue to operate and evolve today, inspiring new generations of participants while raising millions of additional dollars each year for cancer research, patient care and life-saving innovation.

Their continued success reflects the enduring strength of the peer-to-peer fundraising model and the extraordinary hospital foundations, volunteers, participants and community leaders who continue to carry the mission forward.

03

Strategic Role

While these events evolved over nearly two decades, my role evolved with them. What began as media planning became senior strategic leadership. Over time I became a senior strategic leader responsible for participant acquisition strategy, integrated media planning and buying, media sponsorship acquisition and activation, fundraising growth, performance optimization, and the way each campaign evolved from one year to the next, across multiple Canadian markets.

The work was integrated by design. It ran from national and regional media strategy through the planning and buying that carried it out, across broadcast television, radio, print, out-of-home and digital. It also included media sponsorship, from strategy through acquisition and activation, which extended each campaign's reach well beyond paid placements.

This is what set these events apart from ordinary awareness campaigns. Long before anyone reached a start line, they committed to a significant fundraising minimum. Success did not come from being seen. It came from attracting the right people, understanding what moved them, and then converting awareness into registrations, registrations into fundraising commitments, and those commitments into a community that came back year after year. We ran the work closer to high-yield performance marketing than to advertising, measured against the cost of each registration and, in the end, the cost of each dollar raised. That discipline was led through my own media practice, the agency that would become Intent Media, and it still shapes how I approach acquisition and growth for health charities today.

None of it was possible without seeing every registration as a personal decision, someone choosing to give months of their life to a cause, and planning the media accordingly. It meant disciplined reporting, continuous refinement and clear strategic recommendations, and it meant advising leadership teams on how each campaign should evolve and grow over time.

None of it could be run from a single template. Every market required its own strategy, because every hospital foundation served a different community with different fundraising objectives. Holding those differences together, across platforms and years, is where the professional foundation of Intent Media was formed.

> *The role was not to be present while these events grew. It was to help shape how they reached people, and how that reach became participation, and participation became support.*

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

- **National Media Strategy**
- **Participant Acquisition**
- **Integrated Media Planning & Buying**
- **Media Sponsorship Strategy**
- **Campaign Growth**
- **Performance Optimization**
- **Executive Reporting**
- **Multi-market Leadership**

04

The Beginning

Peer-to-peer fundraising arrived in Canada in force in the early 2000s. Rather than asking the public to give, it asked them to participate: to ride, to walk, to raise money among the people they knew, and in doing so to become the campaign themselves. The producer behind much of it was CauseForce, which brought this model to national scale and helped reinvent how Canadians raised money for cancer research and care, turning walks and rides into movements that generated hundreds of millions of dollars. I joined that work as the first Weekend to End Breast Cancer events took shape.

My introduction to this world arrived at almost exactly the same moment as something far closer to home. As the inaugural Weekend took shape, my wife, Paula, was diagnosed with breast cancer. The cause I had been hired to help promote was, suddenly, our own, and it changed how I understood this work for good.

Paula did not watch from the sidelines. She walked in Toronto's first Weekend to End Breast Cancer, among the thousands who turned a diagnosis into motion. She became one of the three women whose raised arms inspired the event's logo, cast today as the bronze sculpture pictured here, outside the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.



At the Weekend to End Breast Cancer sculpture outside the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, walking with team Paula's Posse. The raised arms of three participants became the event's enduring emblem.

> *From the very beginning, this was never only professional. I was helping build the media behind a movement my own family was living inside of, and I have never since been able to see a registration as just a number.*

05

Building a National Movement

What began in a handful of cities became a national undertaking, and then an international one. Each expansion added complexity, not just scale.

The early years belonged to the Weekend events, long-distance walks across Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa and Montreal, each one supporting the leading cancer foundation in its own region. Then the portfolio evolved. The Ride to Conquer Cancer brought cyclists in the tens of thousands to multi-day rides across Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec.

As the Canadian Ride matured, the model expanded across the border, carrying the same peer-to-peer philosophy to leading American healthcare organizations and cancer centres in cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. My own leadership stayed focused on Canada, but taking part in that wider evolution confirmed something I already suspected: the principles held everywhere. Participant acquisition, fundraising strategy and community building worked the same way whether the start line was in Toronto or on the eastern seaboard.

Every new market meant a different media landscape, a different hospital foundation, and a community with its own history and its own reasons to give. A plan that worked in one city could not simply be copied into the next.

Some of what I learned could not be found in a media plan. I watched thousands of people gather at a start line before sunrise, quiet and nervous and determined. I saw the same campaigns return year after year, carried by people who had made them part of their lives. And I came to understand how genuinely different every city and every foundation was, and how much that difference mattered to the outcome.

Growth, I learned, was not a matter of doing more. It was a matter of understanding each place well enough to earn its trust.

STEVE'S CYCLE PATHS

One relationship captured all of it. Over many years I watched Steve Cohen grow from a single participant into the leader of Canada's most successful Ride team, Steve's Cycle Paths. Told in full in its own Featured Experience, his story showed me the long-term power of community, of fundraising built on relationships, and of one person's leadership compounding season after season. Today Steve's Cycle Paths has raised roughly $16 million, a measure of what community, leadership and sustained fundraising can achieve over time. It is the clearest proof I know that these events were never transactions. They were the start of something people carried for the rest of their lives.

06

Strategic Perspective

Working across so many organizations, cities and causes left me with a small set of principles I still apply to all my work. They are not slogans. They are conclusions, earned in the field.

01

Every community is different.

What motivated donors and participants in one city rarely translated intact to another. Local knowledge was not a nicety. It was the difference between a strong result and a disappointing one.

02

Strategy must reflect local realities.

A national platform succeeds only when it makes room for regional difference. The most effective plans were built to flex around each market rather than imposing one approach on all of them.

03

Fundraising is ultimately about people.

Behind every registration and every gift was a person with a reason. Technology and media could enable that motivation, but they could never replace the human purpose at the centre of it.

04

Media is a tool, not the objective.

Reach mattered only when it moved someone to act. The work was measured not by impressions but by registrations, and in the end by the cost of each dollar raised. Attention was only ever a means to participation, and the donations that followed.

05

Sustainable growth requires long-term thinking.

The strongest results came from programs treated as long-term relationships rather than annual events. Trust and momentum compounded when the work was allowed to continue, year over year.

07

Lasting Impact

These lessons did not stay in the past. They became the way I work, and I apply them to every engagement now. The belief that every community is different shapes how I approach strategy. The conviction that media is a tool, not the objective, is why I measure the work by action rather than attention. And the knowledge that fundraising is about people is why I treat media spend for health charities as seed capital rather than overhead.

When I eventually built Intent Media, I did not set out to invent a philosophy. I already had one. It had been forming for nearly two decades, at start lines and finish lines, in boardrooms and hospital foundations, across a dozen cities and one very personal cause. Intent Media was simply the place to keep practicing it. The vocabulary has changed, from participants and pledges to funnels and attribution, but the discipline has not.

> *Thousands of participants. Countless volunteers, donors and families. One belief that has never changed: connect people to purpose, and meaningful change follows.*

Reflection

In the end, these were never only events. They were the making of a strategist, and of a person. I came to this work beside Paula, at the first Weekend, and carried it through the Rides, the hospital foundations, and the thousands I met at start lines who showed me what a movement truly is. In time I came to know these cancer centres from the other side, as a patient myself, and the cause I had spent years helping others support became, in the most personal way, my own. That is the lesson no media plan could teach: behind every campaign is a person, and the work only matters when it reaches them. Paula's raised arms still stand in bronze outside the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. Somewhere across those two decades, my philosophy and my own life stopped being separate things. They became one, and it is the perspective I now bring to every organization I work with at Intent Media.

THE WEEKEND → THE RIDE → INTENT MEDIA

The start line was the strategy. *It still is.*

Nearly two decades of peer-to-peer fundraising, across Canada's flagship events and its leading cancer foundations, shaped the strategist behind Intent Media, and the lessons I apply to every engagement today. Connect people to purpose, and the results follow.

Intent Media · Connecting people to purpose.