Here's how much Give STL Day raised this year

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Give STL Day, a 24-hour, online fundraising event held Thursday, raised just shy of $2.135 million for about 823 local nonprofit organizations, according to preliminary results released Friday.

The St. Louis Community Foundation, led by President and CEO Amelia Bond, organizes Give STL Day, now in its fourth year. Thursday's event garnered 19,536 donations.

Last year's Give STL Day was continued until noon a second day after technical problems with the event's online site, GiveSTLDay.org, held up donations. In 2016, Texas-based Kimbia was the software company driving that website and similar sites for some 53 other communities holding "giving day" events nationwide, most on the same day. This year, the St. Louis Community Foundation joined a group of over 25 foundations to use a "giving day" platform run by a new vendor, Denver-based CiviCore. The St. Louis foundation also decided to hold the local event on a different day than other communities. "Everybody decided being part of the national day just wasn't important," Bond said.

"We had CiviCore's undivided attention" as no other giving days were planned Thursday, she said.

"This year's goal was to have a successful day that went smoothly, and it did," Bond said. "We were thrilled and relieved with that."

For comparison with this year's results, "I think you have to look at 2015," Bond said, as last year's event had stretched to 36 hours. Give STL Day brought in $2.1 million in 2015, and in its longer, troubled 2016 incarnation, the event raised more than $2.15 million.

During Thursday's event, St. Louis ThriVe, a pregnancy counseling center, raised the most overall, at nearly $78,000 from 43 donations. In the human

services category, Wings of Hope, which provides humanitarian aviation support, came in first, raising $55,000. Among education organizations, Saint Louis Priory raised $52,500 from donors, and Miriam: The Learning Disability Experts, raised $47,000. The arts and culture category was led by St. Louis Public Radio, which raised nearly $8,250.

Since the St. Louis Community Foundation introduced the day-long Give STL Day in 2014, the event has raised over $7.5 million for local nonprofits, officials said. "I think we've shown St. Louis consistently supports our nonprofits," Bond said.

Hitting nearly 20,000 donations this year was "huge," she said, adding, "My goal is to grow it." As to the 2016 dollar total, "Would I have loved to raise $15,000 more? Yes," Bond said.

She said she's sure the foundation will hold Give STL Day for a fifth time in 2018, but wants to "mix it up."

"We need to come up with some creative ideas to help nonprofits engage their donors and increase what they raise, that's our goal next year," she said.

This year's Give STL Day, as last year's, offered prizes to both nonprofits and donors. Donors randomly could win St. Louis Cardinals tickets throughout the day. Nonprofits competed for extra dollars from the foundation in several categories, including most unique donors and most dollars raised. The foundation also offered "lift" donations, giving organizations a boost for every dollar raised during a given time period.

Sponsors for Give STL Day included U.S. Bank's Private Client Reserve, Centene Corp., Archford Capital and Wells Fargo Advisors.

The St. Louis Community Foundation is composed of more than 570 charitable funds with total assets of about $350 million.