



## March of Dimes

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Ed Erenberg  
Manager of Technical Development  
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# March of Dimes® finds improving IT efficiency is a worthy cause

The mission of the March of Dimes® is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. Established in 1938, the non-profit health organization today has chapters in all 50 states and Puerto Rico with 1,600 employees and three million volunteers. The March of Dimes funds programs of research, community service, education and advocacy to save babies, and in 2003 launched a campaign to address the increasing rate of premature birth. The organization is headquartered in White Plains, New York and operates 250 local and regional offices.

## The challenge: effectively sharing information across the organization

With 250 large and small offices across the United States and a shortage of funds for sufficient bandwidth to connect them, March of Dimes data operations had evolved into a collection of autonomous, local information centers running applications on PCs or local area networks. “Many of our offices created databases for tracking donors and volunteers, but we didn’t have an effective way to share the information in those databases,” said Alan Kauffman, CIO. “It was difficult or impossible to share data or files across the state, let alone nationwide.”

A related issue was the amount of time and effort required to support, upgrade and maintain software, servers and PCs in all these local offices with an IT staff of 12. Many employees were running Microsoft® Office 97 and other outdated software versions. Consistent back-up of data was also a challenge; in the larger offices, back-up procedures were spotty, and smaller offices had no solution at all.

In addition, March of Dimes employees were unable to access applications or data from outside the office, although three-quarters of the organization’s 1,200 concurrent users travel extensively. “Many of our staff travel frequently on business, and wanted to be able to access online resources from the road. Others wanted the flexibility to work from home as needed,” said Kauffman.

## Implementing a Citrix solution to streamline IT

To solve its information access needs, March of Dimes worked with MTM, a Platinum Citrix® Solutions Advisor, to implement a Citrix solution with Microsoft® Windows Server® 2003. “A major reason for the implementation was Citrix Password Manager,” noted Alan Brogdon, director of IT Operations. “We wanted enterprise single sign-on to make things easier for our users, who may not be technologically sophisticated.”

March of Dimes is now upgrading to the Citrix Application Delivery Infrastructure to obtain the benefits of new functionality, such as the universal print driver, the application isolation environment and increased user density per server provided in Citrix Presentation Server™. The solution will ultimately be deployed to 1,600 employees, and more than 40 applications are being delivered via the system. All users — remote and local — will use the Web and Citrix Access Gateway™, a universal SSL VPN appliance, to securely access a desktop of Windows®, Web and database applications such as JD Edwards, Microsoft Office and commercial auction and event-management solutions running on Citrix Presentation Server. User PCs are locked down to minimize support requirements and prevent security and administrative problems.

### Key benefits

- Greater information sharing improves strategic planning and operations
- Server centralization and web access support business continuity
- Centralized IT management strengthens data security and administration

In addition, March of Dimes Uses Citrix® GoToAssist® to provide remote help desk support to users working from home or the road. Because GoToAssist is a hosted service, the IT team was able to get the solution implemented in less than 48 hours. “With GoToAssist, we simply provide a code and a Web address, and with this we are able to immediately establish a connection to the user’s PC to diagnose and troubleshoot the issue for them,” said Ed Erenberg, manager of Technical Development.

## IT consolidation enables strategic information sharing

The Citrix solution has enabled March of Dimes to centralize applications, databases and other resources that previously resided in local offices, and make them available across the organization. Information sharing across state offices and at the national level has been instrumental in improved strategic planning and decision making. Employees in local offices can share successful educational campaigns and learn from each other’s experiences with fundraising to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency.

Kauffman explained, “The Citrix technology is strategic to our business because it allows our staff and volunteers to act as if they are all sitting in one office, and provides the foundation for centralized databases to give us a nationwide view of information about our fundraising.

“As we build the business case for implementing Citrix, the deciding factor was the capabilities it affords us. Previously, we couldn’t share data; we had very limited email functionality; there was no access from home or back-up or disaster recovery solution and people were having all kinds of problems getting resources. With the Access Suite we have gained — for essentially the same cost as before — a system with capabilities that are orders of magnitude better,” he said.

## On-demand access raises employee productivity and satisfaction

With access to centralized information via the Citrix solution, March of Dimes employees can connect to the applications and data they need from anywhere. “Our employees love being able to work from home or wherever they choose,” said Kauffman. “For example, I was at one of our chapter offices and everyone was raving about flexible access with Citrix. One employee who was ill at home for months could get all his work done while having therapy. The operations director couldn’t say enough about how great it is to have everything he needs wherever he travels — without having to email files to himself. These are the kinds of stories we are hearing.”

## Fast remote support for home-based and traveling users

March of Dimes has been using Citrix GoToAssist remote support, delivered as Software as a Service, for nearly a year. Prior to implementing GoToAssist, March of Dimes used another remote support product, which operated poorly over slow connections. “The minute we introduced home users — who are behind a router or firewall — into the equation, we were unable to access their machines to help them,” said Erenberg. “GoToAssist brought us the ability to remotely control machines anywhere, on demand, and help users if they’re having trouble with their local computer.”



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