SG Gives site gets $13m in donations
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Record sum raised last year as online giving catches on

SINGAPORE’S largest donation website, SG Gives, raised a record sum of more than $13 million last year, up from its previous best of more than $11 million in 2013.

The National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC), which runs the site, told The Straits Times yesterday that more people are using it to give to charity, with 13,234 unique donors last year - a 24 per cent rise from 2013.

As with previous years, December was the top month for giving, with about $5 million raised. The month was also when the NVPC held its Giving Tuesday campaign, with more than $683,000 raised in the first week of its Dec 2 launch.

The campaign was first started in the United States in 2012 to counter the consumerism of the Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales held on the first Friday and Monday following Thanksgiving.

"Individuals who were approached were enthusiastic to help spread the message of giving," the NVPC said. "Companies on board were also keen to push the giving campaign as a regular feature in their corporate giving efforts."

Donations made to celebrate the birthdays and weddings of loved ones are also becoming more popular, it said.

"This suggests that Singaporeans are being more generous," said Professor Lam Swee Sum, director of the National University of Singapore Business School’s Asia Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Philanthropy.

"With greater affluence, people are more willing to get friends to donate to charity instead of receiving gifts from their friends. Sometimes the gift could be wasted if the recipient doesn’t like it, but money is more fungible and can benefit people directly."

The NVPC said the number of corporate donors increased from 99 in 2013 to almost 140 last year. They raised $230,590, about $9,000 more than in 2013.

Donating online has been growing in popularity, according to Children’s Cancer Foundation executive director Neo Lay Tin. "SG Gives provides a round-the-clock and easily accessible platform for donors to show their support for our beneficiaries," she said.

Singaporean Iouri Verchok, born in Belarus, donated more than $10,000 last year via SG Gives. The 51-year-old father of two said the site is convenient to use and allows donors to get more information about the charities they donate to.

The director of an investment company added: "I know some kids are not in the same fortunate situation like my own children, so I personally support children-related causes."

SG Gives serves more than 330 charities and has raised more than $43 million since it was launched in 2010.