

## Background

Slide Ranch is a not-for-profit agricultural and environmental education center located north of San Francisco. Its core mission is to reconnect the Bay Area to the Earth. Slide Ranch is the steward of 134 acres of land within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and offers numerous educational programs for schools, families and community groups. The curriculum is developed to encourage respect for animals, plants, the earth and each other while exploring subjects such as organic gardening, biodiversity, animal care and ecosystems. Participants are encouraged to consider their interdependence with other living creatures and their roles and responsibilities as humans.

Over the past 30 years, Slide Ranch has hosted over 130,000 on-site participants through programs serving all ages, though they concentrate primarily on elementary school children. In addition to programs that focus on agriculture and the environment, they also offer programs with a social service orientation. Slide Ranch encourages the participation of special needs and low-income populations, including urban youth from low-income communities, people who are homeless and adults with developmental disabilities.

## Problem

Perched on the coast of western Marin County, California, nearly a century of salt water, sea winds, land movement and rain have taken their toll on Slide Ranch's old wooden structures. Today, the facilities are patched together and in need of continual repair.

Rather than scaling back their programs to suit the battered buildings, Slide Ranch conceived plans for new educational facilities. These facilities have been designed to offer a range of programs and services that will enable Slide Ranch to carry on its mission. In order to sustain its future, Slide Ranch launched an aggressive capital campaign – looking to their donors for support. The goal of the

campaign is to raise \$8.3 million to renew and recreate the facility, which will expand their operational capacity and improve visitors' experiences at Slide Ranch.

With a 30-year-old organization inevitably comes a complex history of previous donors, volunteers and participants who have been involved with the ranch in many different capacities. Slide Ranch recognized that in order to grow and achieve its capital campaign goals, they needed to effectively communicate with their current donors and reach out to new ones. To support this, the organization looked for a solution that would replace their existing paper-based participant database with a more efficient electronic database that could better manage not only current participant information but also previous donor and participant information – allowing Slide Ranch to pinpoint communication efforts to all of its various constituents.

## Solution

In 2000, Slide Ranch implemented Exceed! Premier – Telosa's flagship fundraising and donor management tool – to track and manage its participant and donor information. Replacing manual and paper-intensive processes, Slide Ranch is using Exceed! Premier to manage a massive amount of current and historical information related to donors, prospective donors, volunteers and past participants. This efficient and easy-to-use system provides Slide Ranch with visibility into its information and makes the massive communication outreach that a capital campaign entails easier.

For example, in May 2002, several months before initiating the current capital campaign, Slide Ranch conducted a large-scale direct mail campaign to over 39,000 people. Using Exceed! Premier, Slide Ranch was equipped with the ability to track donations and gifts from this campaign in a robust relational database that allowed the organization to slice and dice the data in a host of ways – providing unprecedented insight into the information being collected. As a

result, Slide Ranch was able to take what it learned during the May 2002 mailing and apply it to the current fundraising effort.

"Exceed! Premier is so versatile that it has allowed us to track which people have visited the ranch, what their reasons were for coming, the number of times they visited, addresses, etc. It has also allowed us to track donation and giving history and make future decisions based on that information," added Jennifer Newman, director of development and marketing at Slide Ranch.

## Results

To date, with the support of Exceed! Premier, Slide Ranch is growing rapidly and has raised over \$2.5 million in the pre-launch stages of its capital campaign.

"For years, we've been operating status quo with regards to our fundraising efforts. We had been consistently communicating with current donors but were not expanding our outreach to include new donors, or reconnecting with donors who had made contributions many years ago, but have not donated recently," said Jennifer Newman. "Today we are communicating regularly with a larger Slide Ranch community than ever before and estimate that Exceed! Premier and its unique capabilities has helped us to double the amount of money raised thus far in our campaign to renew Slide Ranch."

With Exceed! Premier, Slide Ranch has a technology in place that can manage and make better use of its growing volumes of information so that it can focus squarely on its mission. By effectively raising funds to support its capital improvements, Slide Ranch is ensuring that the next generation of Bay Area residents will have the same opportunities afforded previous generations.