

## Background

Ronald McDonald House (RMH) is a national nonprofit organization that provides comfort, care and housing to critically ill children and their families. Today, there are 207 Ronald McDonald Houses in 20 countries. More than 3,000 bedrooms are available every night in Ronald McDonald Houses around the world.

The Ronald McDonald House based in Palo Alto, California has been operating since 1979 and houses over 1,200 families every year. To support its operating expenses, RMH Palo Alto has built a \$2.4 million endowment, in addition to the average \$1.5 million the organization raises each year to cover annual non-capital expenses.

To accommodate the growing needs of the local community, RMH is currently expanding its housing capacity from 24 to 46 rooms. The need is so great that RMH Palo Alto estimates that more than 500 families are turned away each year given the limited space in the current house. In order to support this expansion, the organization reached out to the community through an extensive capital campaign to raise money for the remodeling expenses.

## Problem

For RMH's fundraising campaign to be successful, the organization must both communicate effectively and target its marketing efforts efficiently. In addition, RMH must constantly look to maximize its finite cash and human resources to achieve optimal operations. Effective communication and productive marketing efforts are crucial elements in a successful fundraising campaign.

Historically, RMH relied upon a cumbersome, paper-based process to track and manage interactions

with its donors, as well as with its volunteers and guests. As a result, volunteers and RMH professional staff spent much of their time on administrative tasks, especially initiatives such as direct mail and reporting. Also, RMH could not personalize communications to all of its 15,000 donors and could not easily analyze the results of their fundraising campaigns. "Given our communication and marketing limitations, we were not certain that we were realizing the maximum potential of our fundraising efforts," said Alan Beach, development director at RMH.

## Solution

Since 1989, the organization has used Exceed! Premier – Telosa's fundraising and donor management software solution – to track and manage its donors. By using Exceed! Premier, the RMH staff has the ability to manage all of their donors in one centralized location, enabling them to personalize donor communication based on the donor's individual history with the organization and stated preferences – connecting RMH with constituents like never before.

For example, if a particular donor is interested in supporting cancer patients, RMH can personalize its communications based on cancer-related programs and campaigns. In addition, due to more efficient record-keeping and reporting capabilities, RMH can slice and dice its data to provide detailed information to donors on how their specific contributions have positively impacted the organization's mission.

Through a customized module, Exceed! Premier also enables RMH to track its houseguests, more efficiently assign rooms and manage occupancy rates. By tracking this type of information,

RMH can easily calculate what percentages of families are staying with related illnesses, such as cancer or heart transplants. In addition, by using Exceed! Premier RMH has vastly improved its operational efficiency and volunteer communication through its ability to track volunteer hours, projects, history and much more. Finally, with the unique mailing features found in Exceed! Premier, RMH can now automatically generate thank-you letters to donors and volunteers, usually a time-consuming, manual task.

## Results

Today, RMH professionals have the ability to develop and foster one-to-one relationships with donors in a way that is usually expected from smaller-sized organizations with fewer donors. RMH is spending less time on administrative tasks and has improved its record-keeping and reporting, raising the overall potential of its fundraising campaigns.

In just nine months, RMH raised \$21 million to complete its capital campaign to remodel the house.

"We substantially surpassed our capital campaign fundraising goal! We estimate that with the support of Exceed! Premier, we more than doubled the amount of money raised from \$9 million to \$21 million, thanks in large part to improved communication to our donors," remarked Beach.