

# Email Marketing Case Study

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## At a Glance

Name: Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times

List Size: 3,649

Open Rate: 38.6%

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Since: June, 2006

URL: [www.campronaldmcdonald.org](http://www.campronaldmcdonald.org)

## Camping for a Good Cause

*Email marketing helps this camp for children with cancer coordinate its volunteers, donors*

Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times is a place for children with cancer to get away from the daily rigors of battling the insidious disease. Based in Los Angeles, the camp offers five week-long sessions in the summer for kids, four-day weekend camps during the winter months, and a number of family weekends for children under eight and their families during the spring and fall. Part of the Ronald McDonald Charities organization of Southern California, the organization gets a small percentage of its income from the McDonald's corporation and must raise the rest through donations and camp fees."

## Challenge: Reaching out to donors and volunteers

There are a number hurdles to clear in order to keep the camp running smoothly for the children it serves. First, there's the issue of raising money, which helps cover the costs for children that qualify for a free camp stay. Fundraising is always a challenge, even more so with the down economy.

Second, there's a need to coordinate all the volunteers that are needed to staff the various sessions throughout the year. The camp has some 600 people listed in its volunteer database, though not all are active each year, says David Garry, camp volunteer coordinator for Camp Ronald McDonald for Good Times.

## Solution: Email expedites the process

The camp created a Constant Contact account a number of years ago, but didn't start using it regularly until late 2009. "I thought it was a good idea to try to keep in touch with people and thought it was a great tool to try," David says. "We started



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to see results, so other departments started using it more as well.”

Now, David and his team use a number of lists to keep information flowing to volunteers, donors, and other supporters. David sends out a regular newsletter to volunteers with schedules for the year, ways to sign up for camp duties, other volunteer opportunities (such as the Halloween Carnival Fundraiser), and staff get-togethers like Movie Night in the Parking Lot — yet another fundraiser. “The newsletter is a great way to keep the information flowing out there in an expedient manner,” David explains.

Because of the speed and ease with which David can get his emails out to his contact list, he likes to use the reporting tools to see who is the first to open a message. And a lot do open it, as evidenced by the camp’s greater than 38% open rate.

## Result: More timely volunteers

By switching from an occasional paper-based newsletter to Constant Contact, the camp has seen an increase in volunteers. “It definitely gets people excited to sign up to volunteer more quickly,” David says of his newsletter efforts.

The emails also drive traffic to Camp Ronald McDonald’s website, since David peppers the communications with links that direct readers to more details about specific opportunities. As a nonprofit, the camp’s constituents love that the camp uses email for its communication as a way to cut down on cost and staff time while reaching out more effectively. “Email marketing saves the camp money, yet it’s professional and looks great,” David says.

