



Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Oregon and Southwest Washington

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC®) of Oregon and Southwest Washington is an independent, locally funded and controlled chapter of one of the world's most recognized and respected philanthropic organizations, serving children and families in more than 50 countries and regions. The most visible aspect of RMHC is its Ronald McDonald House® program, which provides a "home away from home" for families and their seriously ill and injured children who travel far to receive medical treatment at Portland hospitals. RMHC of Oregon and Southwest Washington supports Oregon's two Ronald McDonald Houses in Portland, Oregon.

Highlights

- By utilizing Greater Giving Online Payments, RMHC now has a Web-based strategy to regularly communicate with their donor base and encourage year-round giving.
- The ease of Greater Giving allows RMHC staff to focus on other aspects of the event, helping to create a more successful event each year.
- Greater Giving Event Software and Auctionpay terminals have helped to consistently streamline the data entry and payment process at their event—ultimately enhancing the guest experience.

Challenge

One of RMHC's primary fundraisers, the Hearts & Hands Auction, was publically considered a resounding success. Yet behind the scenes, the auction committee knew they needed organizational change. They wanted to find a way to focus on increasing guest attendance and items procured rather than spending time creating different lists and databases to stay organized. They also were interested in developing a strategy to regularly communicate with their audience to encourage year-round giving.

Solution

RMHC was an original user of Auctionpay terminals, and event organizers recognized how the payment technology enhanced the guest experience at their events. So they decided to try Event Software to streamline pre-auction planning and manage bidding activities during the auction.

The software allowed RMHC to shed cumbersome Microsoft® Excel® lists and piles of paper in favor of an intuitive database linking information about procured items, catalog, donors, bidders, payment and more. It also saved staff even more time through its ability to sync with Auctionpay terminals, helping event organizers keep track of bidders who registered credit cards during registration for express check-out at the end of the auction. "Event Software helped us organize our auction from start to finish," said RMHC's Development Manager Kimberlee Harper Hanken. "It has really helped ease management of our auction and has provided a more efficient, better experience for our guests."

Once the event process was simplified, RMHC created a process to regularly communicate with their audience to encourage year-round giving—not just event-driven donations. They have overhauled their Website and began using Online Payments to encourage online giving. And all of their print pieces, letterhead, brochures, and quarterly donor newsletter point to their Web site, which helps to consistently keep the RMHC message and mission in front of potential donors. RMHC also uses Online Payments for registering their guests for the event and have seen steady growth each year, with more of their guests registering online. Hanken says "Online Payments is a key component of our overall Web-based strategy and is important to aligning all our fundraising efforts."

Tips from RMHC

- Use direct mail pieces to drive potential donors to your Web site for year-round giving.
- Send out a quarterly e-newsletter to help keep your organization's message and mission in front of donors on a regular basis.

Results

Since they began using Greater Giving products in July 2002, RMHC has steadily grown attendance at its Hearts & Hands Auction. Event Software and

Auctionpay ease the work involved in managing their auction; save staff time, and improve their guest experience. And with Online Payments making it easier than ever to register, they have seen steady growth each year and are focused on continuing the trend.

Most importantly, RMHC has developed a strategy to regularly communicate with their audience to encourage year-round giving, so they are no longer dependent on events as a main source of fundraising. For the children and families who look to RMHC for a respite— that is great news.