

TARGETED MAIL

INCREASED RESPONSE

BY OVER 50%

FOR ALDER HEY

CHILDREN'S CHARITY



Royal Mail

MarketReach

BACKGROUND

Like most charities, Christmas is a critical fundraising period for Alder Hey Children's Charity. Money raised at Christmas has a huge impact on the lives of the children and families at Alder Hey Children's hospital.

In previous years, the approach was to send an unsegmented mailing to as many donors on the database as possible. With diminishing ROIs and falling response rates, the charity knew they had to be more targeted in their approach.

Additionally, during 2014 the charity had made several requests to warm donors for gifts towards life-saving medical equipment, enhancing the patient experience and crucial medical research on childhood diseases. So the Christmas appeal had to recognise that many donors had already supported Alder Hey.

With this in mind, Alder Hey Children's Charity set themselves a stretching objective for Christmas 2014:

- To generate more income from fewer donors than previous years.

SOLUTION

Their starting point was to clean up their database; by removing opt-outs and 'gone-aways' they could be more confident mailings would reach the right people with less wastage. The next step was to suppress individuals who were being targeted personally by fundraisers and those who had just donated to the Autumn appeal.

Regular Givers – individuals who donate to the charity every month – were included in the mailing file for the first time in the hope they would give an additional gift this Christmas.

This left a mailing file of 11,204 individual givers. To boost this file, the charity included a list of 812 corporate donors. Although this list was quite old it was felt that the potential high value gift would make it a worthwhile test.

The total mailing file of 12,016 was significantly smaller than the 25-30k of Christmases gone by, yet Alder Hey were optimistic that this more targeted audience could achieve their goals.

The file was further segmented by 'giving behaviour', 'frequency' and 'value'. This allowed for tailored asks by segment. The highest ask amount of £250 was sent to corporate givers. The lowest ask was £25, with steps in between.

The mail pack used the powerful story of an incredible little girl called Grace, who had a serious and incurable form of congenital heart disease. The pack remained upbeat by talking about her hopes of becoming a singer. A weblink to Grace singing was included in the letter to bring the case study to life.

To ensure the story integrated within pack, the letter was from a fundraiser who happened to be Grace's Godmother. The belief was that this very personal request for a donation would resonate with donors – many of whom were parents, grandparents and neighbours of children who had spent time at the hospital.

The call to action was simple: 'Please make this Christmas remarkable for children like Grace'.



Within the pack was a paper bauble. Donors were asked to use it to write a message to the children spending Christmas at the hospital and the baubles would be hung around the wards and clinic areas for the children, families and visitors to see and enjoy.

“The engagement device was integral to the success of the mailing. It seemed highly unlikely that someone would send a message on a bauble without sending a donation too.” Ashley Flint, Alder Hey Children’s Charity.

Alder Hey Children’s Charity also pulled on the experience of the charity team at MarketReach to enhance the effectiveness the mail pack. Using their charity and mail expertise, and the Eyetracker tool, the team helped optimize the message, layout and format of the mail pack to maximise response and income.

Finally, the timing of the mail pack was crucial: too close to the previous Autumn mailing could suppress response; too close to Christmas itself would mean that donors didn’t have enough time to respond. The pack landed on the third week of November – just as Christmas was becoming a reality in donor’s minds.



RESULTS

The mailing delivered an uplift of 56% on the previous year.

With an overall mailing response rate of 6.7%, the right targeting and messaging made Christmas 2014 'remarkable' for the Alder Hey Children's Charity and children and families at Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

All segments delivered. The average response rate from warm donors on the database was 8.35%. With the lowest ask segment (£25) responding at 14.4%.

Sending the mail pack to Regular Givers was a risk that paid off; with a response rate of 10.9%, they were the second best performing segment. For the majority of segments, the average gift was higher than the original ask amount, proving that the pack had moved donors to get their cheque books out.

Corporate donors responded at the lowest rate – possibly because of the age of the data. However, with an average donation of £140, this group's absolute value was significantly higher than individual givers making it a worthwhile test.

The optimized pack was proven to engage all the audiences and it has now become the charity's 'banker' pack – the one to beat in coming years.

"By having a more focused and targeted approach we proved that mail is a key tool for driving income for the charity" Ashley Flint, Alder Hey Children's Charity.



Please make an extra gift this Christmas to help remarkable children like my god-daughter Grace

Dear Fiona,

My name is Irene Axon, and I'm sure that many of you will know me as one of the fundraising team here at Alder Hey. I've been working here for 19 years now and have met so many remarkable and inspiring children. The work that Alder Hey do for children and their families is truly amazing, and I've seen first-hand how much every donation, big or small, is appreciated.

I'd like to tell you all about my remarkable god-daughter, Grace Lee.

When Grace was just eight days old, she was diagnosed with a serious and rare form of congenital heart disease. Grace was transferred to the intensive care unit at Alder Hey where she had to have emergency open-heart surgery.

Grace is now nine years old, and since her surgery she has travelled with her family many times from their home in the town of Macclesfield to have treatments at Alder Hey Children's Hospital. She has sometimes lasted months and Grace has had countless operations, with two more heart surgeries to come.

As a young ambassador for Alder Hey Children's Charity, Grace wants to use her talent for singing to help raise money and awareness for Alder Hey's new hospital - Alder Hey in the Park.

Despite everything Grace has gone through, our family have been keen for her to have as normal a life as possible and encourage her to follow her dreams just like her friends. Our young nine-year-old is a talented singer, performing in productions and singing videos.

Grace's dream of being a singing star recently came true in front of an audience of more than 1,000 people.

Grace sang 'Lean On Me'. Just as we go to print Grace's performance has been watched by more than one million people. If you have not seen the video, then please visit our website www.aiderheycharity.com/thisisgrace.

Seeing Grace standing on an stage and being so brave a testament to how remarkable the support at Alder Hey is, helping children like my god-daughter singing and smiling, were in the hands of heaven.

See the lasting difference you make

£25 Helps to buy arts and crafts materials like those that cheer up Christine who can get the treatment she needs.		£50 Could help to buy more life saving equipment like those that helped save Grace.	
£100 Could help to fund research into the prevention and treatment of childhood diseases - bringing hope to so many families.		£250 Could help to buy a parent bed so that long stay children can have a loved one by their side.	

Support our remarkable children this Christmas

Whether or not you can afford an extra one-off donation this year, we have included a special bauble so you can send a Christmas message to children who will, unfortunately, be spending the festive season with us here at Alder Hey. These baubles will be hung around the hospital for the children, families and visitors to see. Please use the Freepost envelope included to return your tag.

If you would like to make a donation you can use the form provided, go online to aiderheycharity.com/donate, or call the Alder Hey Charity team on 0151 252 5716.

I'd like to thank you so much for your crucial support of Alder Hey Children's Charity. This Christmas you can continue to help even more children like Grace by making a donation of £25. Everyday, I am first-hand that even the smallest of donations really do make such a lasting difference to young lives here.

Wishing you all a very happy festive season and a peaceful new year.

Irene Axon
Senior Community Fundraising Manager
Godmother to Grace Lee

Thank you for your ongoing support throughout the year. Your crucial support really does help to change the lives of remarkable children like Grace every day.

**Ms S Hopkins
223 London Rd
Leicester
LE2 1ZE**

Make this Christmas remarkable for children like Grace

**ROYAL MAIL
TO BE REPLACED BY PAIN TEX
POSTAGE PAID BY
SOUTHAMPTON 2308**

Merry Christmas!

This card was designed by Rebekah Stocks

Whether or not you can afford to make a donation this year, it would be greatly appreciated if you could send a Christmas message to children who will, unfortunately, be spending the festive season with us here at Alder Hey. These baubles will be hung around the wards and clinic areas for the children, families and visitors to see and enjoy.

My message to the children of Alder Hey

**Alder Hey
CHILDREN'S CHARITY**

Please use the Freepost envelope provided to return your tag. If you would like to send a donation with your bauble you can use the form included, or go online to aiderheycharity.com/donate or call the Alder Hey Charity team on 0151 252 5716.