

BIGGER ISN'T ALWAYS BETTER

Year End Appeal

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SPARK, The Children's Museum of Rochester





What will we cover?



**Audience
Questions**



**Donor Pet
Peeves**



**Old Mailing
Traditions**



**New Mailing
Tactics**



**Upcoming
Trends**

What does your organization do for a year end appeal?



Social Media

Are you Development and Marketing? Do you have a large following on your social media platforms? Have you found success with buttons on social media?

Mailed Letter

How many letters are you sending? How long is the letter? How do you decide who to send them to?

Text To Give

What subject line in the text has been the best response?

Email

Does your organization use a e-mail service like Robly or Mailchimp? Do you send to every e-mail in your contact list? Does your organization do A/B testing?

Peer To Peer

Have your organization ever done peer to peer fundraising? If so have you found success?

Pet Peeves of Donors



Using names, genders, titles improperly, or faux personalization



Guilt asks, too many asks, or no asks



Phone calls - DESPISED



Not telling what they gave last year



Perception that too much time and money is being spent on resources like mailing instead of mission

Old Appeal Tactics



What wasn't working?

- Expensive
- Non-targeted
- Low Open and Click Rates
- Weak Call to Action
- Lacking strategic plan (timeline, tactics)

Price Breakdown

6,765 Generic Letters
220 Personalized Letters
6,765 Return Envelopes
6,765 Regular Envelopes
Postage

Total \$3,734





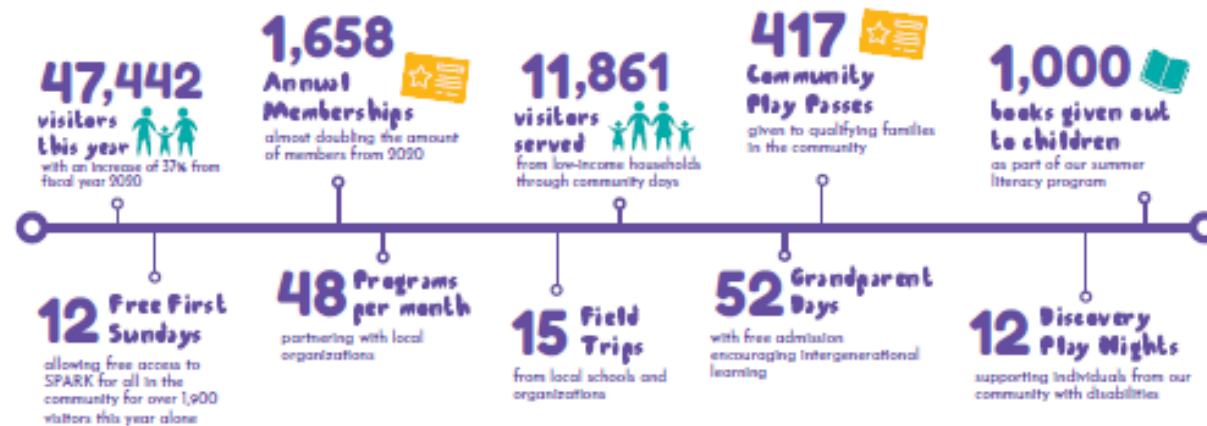
This holiday season,
give the gift of PLAY!

Greetings and Happy Holidays from SPARK!

Our mission is to enrich the lives of as many young learners in our community, regardless of financial barriers. SPARK provides a space where visitors can learn about STEAM, cultural connectedness, and health and well-being in a collaborative, open environment.

Contributions from community members like you are essential in helping our non-profit to continue providing the level of quality experiences for our families!

Look at how your donations have impacted children and families in our community in the last year!



This year, please make a donation that gives year-round, the gift of PLAY! From craft supplies in our Imagination Station to a free family night for our underserved families in the community, your donation to SPARK this holiday season gives children hands-on educational learning.

On behalf of the children and families we serve, we ask you to donate to SPARK this joyful holiday season!

Thank you for your support and dedication to our community!

Warm Regards,

Board President

P.S. You can make an impact TODAY! Complete the information below and mail in or scan the QR code to donate online.

Questions? Contact:
spark@sparkrochester.org

sparkrochester.org
1201 12th Street SW Suite 632
Rochester, MN 55902

YES! I want to help SPARK curiosity today!

Enclosed is my donation of: (Make check payable to SPARK)



Scan QR code
to pay with card!

- ☐ \$50.00 for craft supplies in the Imagination Station
- ☐ \$100.00 to support an educational program
- ☐ \$250.00 provides two families free access for a year
- ☐ \$500.00 gives underserved families a free night at SPARK
- ☐ Other amount: _____

NAME

ADDRESS

EMAIL

PHONE

SPARK



What did we learn from the 2021 mailing?

1

Very low return on investment (.3%)

2

Personalized mailing (50) saw three times the return than the ~7,000 bulk

3

Asked for too much or too little

4

Letter was visually appealing, but.....

5

Out-of-date database information



Happy Holidays from SPARK

This year, please make a tax-deductible donation that gives year-round, the gift of PLAY! From craft supplies in our Imagination Station to a free family night for our underserved families in the community, your donation to SPARK this holiday season gives children hands-on educational learning all year long.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE TODAY](#)

WHAT DOES YOUR DONATION SUPPORT?	
\$50	CRAFT SUPPLIES FOR ONE MONTH IN OUR IMAGINATION STATION
\$100	TWO EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS WITH A COMMUNITY PARTNER
\$250	FREE ACCESS TO SPARK FOR TWO UNDERSERVED FAMILIES FOR ONE YEAR
\$500	ONE COMMUNITY NIGHT FOR UNDERSERVED FAMILIES
\$1000	SUPPLY 25 NEW STEM BOXES FOR OUR MAKERSPACE



[CLICK HERE TO DONATE TODAY](#)

Email Appeal 2021

Support SPARK This Holiday Season

subject line

6,658

emails sent

1,877

opened

14%

click rate

14

people opted
out emails

New Appeal Tactics



What did we change?

- Took risk
- Less direct mailing
- All personalized mailings
- Peer-to-Peer Challenge
- A/B Email Testing
- Consistent Campaign Messaging/Visuals
- START EARLY

Price Breakdown

343 Personalized letters

Postage

Total \$285.75



2022 APPEAL TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY
Finalized year-end strategic communication plan	Refined list to 250-500 personal letters:	Mail drop on the 1st	A/B testing with 2 subject lines but same content	THANK YOU NOTES!
Design year-end appeal letter	Gave BOD 2 weeks to write personalized notes	Letters hit mailboxes between the 6-12th	Continued with social media posts	
Took photos for the letter	Determined if we wanted to send post card with QR code	"Thankful" phone calls & emails	Peer-to-peer reminders	
Researched lists in Altru system	Explored text to give costs	Pop up on the website	Designed thank you cards with photos	
		Peer-to-peer challenge	Final week to give with email to donors	
		Social Media		



Dear [Name],

Every year in Rochester, approximately 900 out of 1300 children (69%) enter kindergarten not prepared to succeed in school.* At SPARK, we are focused on helping change this statistic. But to do that, we need your help.

Our mission is to enrich the lives of young learners in our community, regardless of financial barriers. Contributions from community members like you are essential in helping our local, non-profit continue to provide the highest level of quality experiences for our families.

WHAT WE DO

At SPARK, we welcome everyone! Our visitors will learn about STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), cultural connectedness, and health and well-being in a collaborative, open environment. Experiences that span all knowledge levels and foster interest-driven and project-based learning abound.

WHY WE DO IT

Learning through play is essential to healthy brain development and allows children to express their creative and imaginative side while developing physical, cognitive, and emotional strengths.

For many historically marginalized families, museums function as community touch points, helping prepare a child for their K-12 education, and providing engaging pathways to knowledge and skill building in language, literacy, cognitive, social, and emotional areas.

YOU play a vital role in helping children thrive. Because of donors like YOU, in 2021, we served:

70,761

visitors

90

families at
discovery play

756

programs and
events

390

students on
school field trips

500+

GRANDPARENTS
attended Free
Tuesday Play!



5,672

VISITORS
attended Free
First Sundays!

As 2022 winds down, please make a donation that SPARK's joy, learning, curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and most of all, fun. Our goal is to raise \$40,000 this holiday season. Your donation will help fund twelve Free Family Nights for historically marginalized families, and materials like craft supplies for our Imagination Station, beakers and gears for Makerspace, or take-home books to support literacy. Your donation to SPARK this year will give the gift of access to children needing hands-on, educational learning.

On behalf of the children and families we serve, please donate to SPARK today. Your donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Warmest Holiday Wishes,

Heather Nessler

Heather Nessler
Executive Director

sparkrochesternm.org • (507) 218-3100 • spark@sparkrochesternm.org

*Data provided by Cradle 2 Career, measured by the Rochester Public School District kindergarten readiness screening, 2020.

YES! I want to help SPARK curiosity today!

Enclosed is my donation of: (Make check payable to SPARK, or scan QR to use card)



- ☐ \$25.00 (A day's worth of supplies in the Imagination Station!)
- ☐ \$50.00 (A couple gallons of glue for ooey gooey SLIME!)
- ☐ \$100.00 (More cars for our speedy race track!)
- ☐ \$250.00 (Clothing to expand our tailor shop and theater!)
- ☐ \$500.00 (New instruments for music time!)
- ☐ Other amount: _____

SPARK, the Children's Museum of Rochester, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) community supported non-profit organization. EIN: 04-2749957

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

What did we change for 2022?

1

Started in September

2

Less mailing, all personalized

3

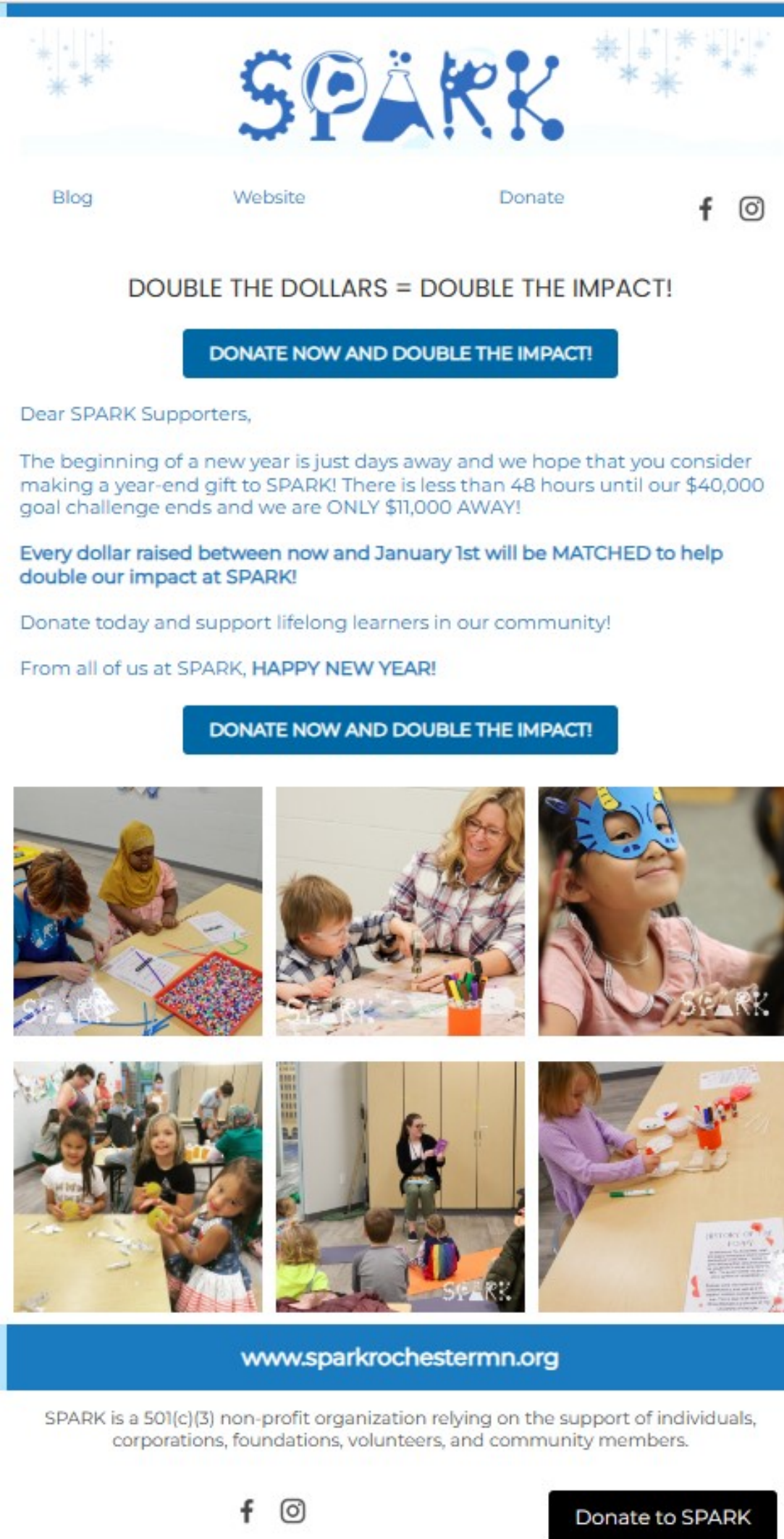
Two separate letters

4

Peer-to-peer challenge with BOD support

5

Emails were segmented for A/B testing



Email Appeal 2022

a

\$25 for Googly Eyes and Glitter?! ✨

subject line

25.57%

open rate

0.25%

click rate

b

Challenging You to Donate a Day of Supplies ✨

subject line

21

people opted
out of emails

7.94%

open rate

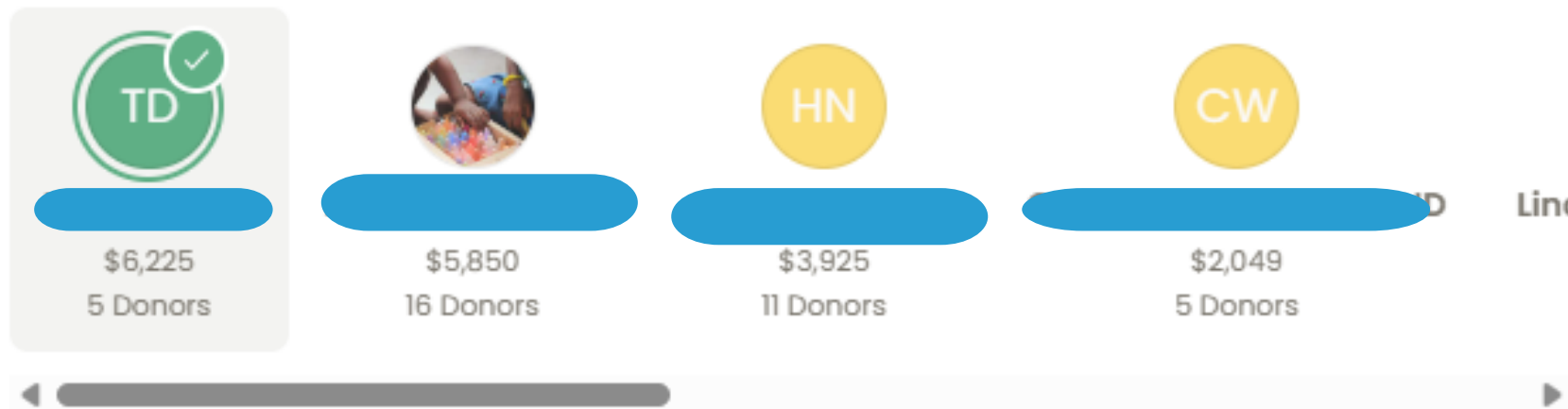
0.12%

click rate



Search

Edit My Page



SPARK's Passport to Play program aims to increase the number of children and families of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and income levels to participate in hands-on programming and educational exhibits. It also removes barriers such as cost and transportation, for families who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Community vitality is important to all of us, which is why the need to expand Passport to Play is critical.

PASSPORT TO PLAY

YOU play a vital role in helping children thrive!

TD on behalf of The Children's Museum of Rochester, Inc.



Donate



The Children's Museum of Rochester, Inc.
EIN: 84-2749957

Donations
49 total supporters

- Rochester, MN • 3 weeks ago
\$15 Donor [Redacted]
- Red Wing, MN
\$1,000 Donor [Redacted]

Peer-to-Peer Challenge 2022

32 people donated

Fun, friendly competition

Engaged BOD

Received donations from friends of BOD, staff (new donors)

APPEAL SUCCESS FROM 2021 - 2022



84% NEW
DONORS



401%
GROWTH
OVER 1 YEAR



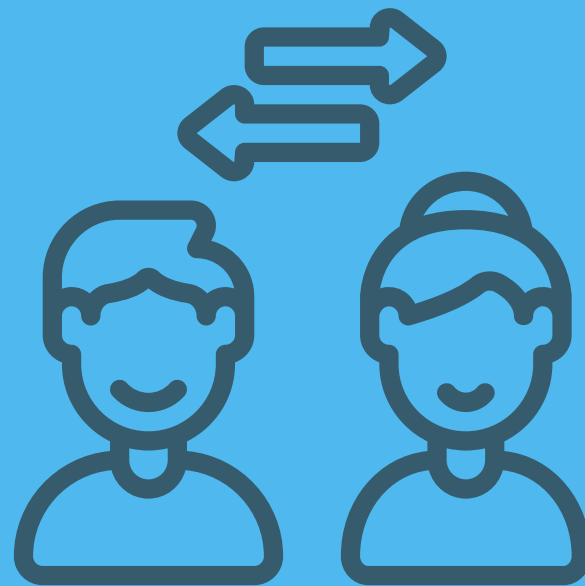
50% MORE
ONLINE
ENGAGEMENT



SAVED
\$3,448.25

2023 Mailing Trends

INCREASED
PERSONALIZATION



MORE EMAIL
A/B TESTING



PUMP UP THE
PEER TO PEER



thank you
for your support





Thank You



lhemker@sparkrochestermn.org



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