Whether you’re trying to hit a fundraising goal for the first time or the fiftieth, these are the steps that the best fundraisers take to become leaders on the fundraising scoreboard.

**STEP 1**  
**PERSONALIZE YOUR PARTICIPANT CENTER**

After registering, the best way to start fundraising is to personalize your fundraising page through your Participant Center. Historically, all of the top RMHC fundraisers have customized their page by sharing their story and posting a picture.

From the Participant Center, you can send emails to friends, family members, and coworkers asking them to support your marathon journey. To make things easier, we’ve included sample emails (see page 4) — all you need to do is personalize them, and then hit send!

**STEP 2**  
**START FUNDRAISING EARLY**

Begin fundraising 3-4 months before race day. If you hit your fundraising goal early, increase it and see how high you can go!

If you get a late start, don’t worry! Be sure to utilize online fundraising as much as possible.

**STEP 3**  
**BE SURE TO TELL YOUR RMHC STORY**

This is about YOU! When your donors contribute, they consider themselves to be supporting YOU and a cause that YOU care about. Sharing your personal reasons for running may help people understand how important RMHC is to YOU and the families served by the organization.

You can also send handwritten notes to those close to you! Adding a personal touch makes it more likely that your friends, family and coworkers will feel compelled to donate to your campaign.
STEP 4
EMAIL AND THEN EMAIL AGAIN

Whether you use your personal email account or your Participant Center, make sure to email your friends, family and coworkers asking them to support your marathon journey. Make sure your message is personal by sharing why you’re running and why supporting Ronald McDonald House Charities is important to you. They will be excited to hear about how they can contribute to positive impact and transformation you are supporting. There is a customized toolkit to help you with your messaging!

Send more than one email. Everyone gets busy and a reminder or two may help to keep your donation request top of mind. Remember that after you cross the finish line you can still send your supporters an email encouraging them to make a donation to your fundraiser.

STEP 5
USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are great places to share your reasons for running and passion for RMHC. Through your Participant Center you can share your personal fundraising URL in a few easy steps and reach your extended network (aka people you don’t have emails for). Be sure to use the hashtag #KeepingFamiliesClose.

STEP 6
DOUBLE YOUR FUNDS WITH MATCHING GIFTS

Matching gifts are an easy way to increase and even double your fundraising total. You should ask all of your supporters if their employer participates in a matching gifts program. Some companies require a paper form, while others complete the entire process online. You may need our Global Office address (110 N Carpenter Street, Chicago, IL 60607) and Tax ID # 36-2934689.
**STEP 7**

**GET CREATIVE**

There are hundreds of ways you can fundraise for before race day. Come up with fundraising ideas that work for you! Here are a few ideas — all tested by event participants like you:

- **Make a Video.** Film yourself running or telling people why you’re running and share online. The more they know about your story, the more likely they are to be moved and donate.

- **Virtual Bingo.** Tired of the same old boring zoom meetings, conference calls and webinars? Give Virtual Bingo a go! Run your bingo night with Virtual Bingo Cards and Zoom.

- **Trivia Night.** Everyone loves some good trivia competition. Host a virtual trivia night and winner takes half the pot! The best part, now that everything is virtual, here’s a step-by-step on how to host a virtual trivia night.

- **Virtual Cooking Class.** Team up with a local chef or ask a talented volunteer to help lead the class. This can easily be held virtually using a tool like Zoom and sending out an ingredient list ahead of time.

- **Playlist Fundraiser.** Invite your friends, family and co-workers to donate for the privilege of adding a song to your training or marathon playlist.

- **Finish Line Fundraiser.** Invite your friends, family and co-workers to cross the finish line with you by donating for the privilege of adding their name to your race day shirt. The larger the donation the more prominent a spot.

**NOTE:** Please stay safe and follow social distancing guidelines in your fundraising efforts.

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**LAST STEP**

**DON’T FORGET TO SAY THANKS!**

Last but definitely not least, make sure you thank your donors. Saying thank you will increase the likelihood that your supporters donate year after year.

The Participant Center gives you the option to automatically send your donors a thank-you email when they give online. However, it’s always a good idea to personally thank each person who donates by sending them a handwritten note, an email, calling them, or giving them a shout-out on social media.

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**Thank You Cards**

Print out the blank thank you cards and send a personal hand-written message to your donors.
Sample Email Messages

Despite what may be going on in the world around us, the need to provide compassionate care and resources to families of ill and injured children continues. I have joined Team RMHC so that I can help parents and families stay together and close to the resources they need to support their child. This year, on October 10th, I am running 26.2 miles in hopes of making it possible for even more families to access critical services. Please support me by making a donation to my personal fundraising page. Every $100 raised can help provide an overnight stay. Join me as Team RMHC makes an impact for those in need.

This year, with every mile I run I’ll be supporting RMHC families around the world. RMHC help makes it possible for families with ill and injured children to access vital healthcare services by saving families over $935 million in out-of-pocket expenses, predominantly in meals and lodging. Every dollar you donate to my running journey can help make it possible for a family to receive a free meal or night stay at a RMHC program somewhere in the world. More importantly, every dollar raised allows families to stay close to what they need most—each other. Would you consider making a $XX donation to my campaign.

“Your child is sick” is something no parent wishes to hear. RMHC is an organization committed to keeping families together during the most difficult times. This year, I am joining Team RMHC to fundraise and train for 26.2 miles on October 10th. Please support my efforts by making a donation to my personal fundraising page.

The last year has been challenging, which is why I wanted to send you a quick note to share with you something I am looking forward to. The Chicago Marathon has been scheduled for 2021 and I am committed to training, fundraising and running 26.2 miles this October no matter what. My miles will make an impact on families of ill and injured children when they need it most. Check out my personal page to follow my journey and learn why RMHC is so important to me.

Imagine a world where every family is able to stay together near the hospital, while their ill or injured child receives vital treatment at a nearby hospital. RMHC works every day to provide this opportunity to all families. I believe in the RMHC vision and mission and that’s why I’m running 26.2 miles this October! I hope you’ll support me with a donation of $XX this year.