



Track Data Now for Future Benefit

At our November 2008 conference, one of the many invited philanthropists mentioned something very interesting. When he was a child, he grew up in an area that was rife with anti-Semitism. Jewish Camp was a refuge for him, a place where he could be himself in a safe, happy environment. However, his family couldn't afford the tuition, so he went to any camp that would offer him a scholarship. Over eight years, this philanthropist attended six separate camps!

How does this apply to your camp or organization? Despite being a very successful businessman who just happens to be a prominent philanthropist, not *one* of those six camps has ever reached out to him for a donation. Not one of those six camps has ever even sent him a newsletter! Obviously, these camps do not have a good process of tracking their alumni and keeping them connected to their camp.

What should you do? First, make sure you are tracking your current campers and parents effectively. Keep your data in a central location, and keep it up to date.

Next, include details about the campers that may prove useful later in life. Did they receive a scholarship to help defray the costs of camp? Track it! Scholarship recipients may be more likely to donate to a scholarship campaign someday. Were they especially interested in your arts, theater, or sports program? Track it! These campers may be interested in supporting those programs when they need help in the future.

Finally, clean up all those old alumni records and start reconnecting. Who knows? Maybe this particular philanthropist received a scholarship from YOUR camp!

Do you have any creative ideas for reconnecting with alumni? Do you track details about your campers and camper families that might prove useful in the future? Let us know! We are sure that others can learn from your experiences.