



What is an Extra Life for Kids gaming marathon?

Extra Life for Kids (ELFK) gaming marathons are held by clubs, organizations, or groups of friends who want to help raise money for a good cause by doing what they love: *playing games!*

Any size of group can run a gaming marathon and they can run it in the way that best fits their interest. This document gives tips and pointers on how to run a gaming marathon, but as long as the core ELFK values remain, each event can and should develop its own character. We'd love to hear new ideas for future ELFK events!

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Core Values

These three values are the soul of ELFK.

1. Charity

The main goal of every ELFK event is to raise funds and awareness for a charitable organization.

Extra Life for Kids has chosen the Children's Miracle Network as its preferred charity. CMN contributes to a network of children's hospitals all across the United States to provide healthcare for underprivileged families and to research treatments for some of the world's most harmful childhood diseases. You can learn more about CMN at www.cmn.org

Unless otherwise specified, all CMN donations go to the local children's hospital in the area which donations were raised.

2. Positive Gamer Image

Games, especially video games, have been the target of an overwhelming amount of bad press and parental and legislative anger. When the only image that non-gamers get of video games is a violent one, we gamers are placed into narrow stereotypes and gaming as a hobby becomes increasingly hard to justify.

ELFK knows that gamers are awesome people! Charity gaming marathons are a great way to show that to friends, family, and the world at large.

ELFK is dedicated to promoting a positive image of gamers. We welcome good press and the participation of diverse gaming groups. As a part of promoting a positive image of gamers, we do not endorse the playing of violent video games by children who do not meet the ESRB specified age for those games, we want all gaming marathons to foster a spirit of community, and we do not condone the use of alcohol or drugs at any ELFK event.

3. FUN!

Of course, games are all about fun!

ELFK gamers should have a great time playing all sorts of games with their friends and make new friends through the event itself. A good gaming marathon will leave its participants with excellent memories and an itching to

do it again! We encourage multiplayer game play, tournaments, challenges, and contests to liven up the event.

As a part of having fun, gamers should not overdo it. Each person has an individual limit to how much gaming they can take. No one should be forced to play when they are ready to quit, breaks need to be taken at least once every couple of hours plus bathroom breaks, and a marathon lasting longer than 48 hours is a bad idea in most circumstances. There need to be individuals who are not playing in the marathon to make sure everyone is having a fun and safe event. This is serious – people have become ill and have even died in extreme cases of marathon gaming.

The third goal of an ELFK event is to ensure that everyone has a great time from start to finish.

Contacting Children’s Miracle Network or “How to get the CMN hook-up”

First, visit <http://www.cmn.org/hospitals.php> and select your state or enter your zip code.

Select a CMN hospital to sponsor and email or call the appropriate CMN contact and let them know about your ELFK marathon. Your CMN rep will be an invaluable source of information regarding running a charity event.

Important things to ask your CMN representative:

- How do you want us to handle donations? (cash, check, credit card)
- How should we handle donors who request receipts and tax-deduction information?
- What local businesses can sponsor our event or help out in another way?
- Can you contact the local press to spread the word of our event?
- Can we have any CMN signs, banners, donation balloons (write the names of donors on paper balloons and then place them in a public area), lanyards, and anything else that would make our event more official-looking?
- What else can we do together to make this a successful charity event?

Marathon Setup Tips & Tricks

Length of Marathon

- A 36 hour marathon is the recommended length. This allows the gaming to start one morning and end the next night so gamers only miss one night of sleep. Most hardcore gamers can complete a 36-hour marathon, but it is still quite a feat!
- Short marathons (less than 24 hours) are possible and might be ideal for public spaces where you want to get lots of people in on the action.
- Longer marathons up to 48 hours are difficult for most gamers to play through.
- Marathons over 48 hours long are **not** recommended. Serious health risks may be associated with staying awake for over 48 hours. We do not want ELFK to negatively impact someone's health.

Gamers

- Successful ELFK marathons have been held with between 6 and 30 attendees! A small group can still make a big difference and is much easier to setup for. We'd love to see a really huge ELFK marathon someday!
- Gamers should keep the core values of ELFK in mind and act accordingly.
- Gamers can ask for flat donations from friends, family, and co-workers, as well as per-hour sponsorships, as in a dance-a-thon. Gamers can also ask for donations for completing personal gaming goals like finishing a game or leveling up an online character.
- Know who your gamers are and how to contact them. If donations are not collected, then they don't do any good for the children!

Support Staff

- If at all possible, support staff who are not actually playing in the marathon should be around to look after the gamers and make sure things are running smoothly.
- It is best to run support staff positions in shifts, so that they don't need to be awake for the entire marathon. Someone should be alert and ready to take action if any issue arises.
- Friends and non-gamers who would like to help but are not interested in playing for the entire marathon are ideal candidates for support staff.

Space / Location

- The more space, the better. It's amazing how quickly televisions, consoles, and gamers fill up what looked like plenty of space.
- A public location can be used to get passersby into the games or to collect donations, but is also a greater property risk.
- Take power considerations into account. Identify all electrical outlets in the space you are using and obtain all necessary extension cords and power strips ahead of time. Overloading or daisy chaining a power strip can be a fire hazard!

- Can people eat in the space you are gaming? Are there trashcans? Restrooms?

Games, Consoles, and Personal Computers

- Gamers need enough systems and games to play through the marathon.
- As the marathon continues, many gamers prefer single-player games.
- An excess of televisions, computers, systems, and games is recommended in a “free play” setting where gamers can jump from system to system.
- Having gamers bring the games and systems they will be using, with each gamer responsible for having enough games to individually play through the marathon, is ideal.
- ELFK was started with video games in mind, but we acknowledge all types of games, from board games to card games to pen-and-paper games.
- Portable and handheld game systems are also great for a marathon and require little setup.

Breaks

- Gamers should take at least a ten minute break every three hours. Some gamers will complain that they don’t need to take a break, especially early on, but breaks are required to reduce eye strain and fatigue and to maintain sanity.
- Gamers should also be able to take restroom and food breaks when needed.
- If a gamer falls asleep or leaves the event, however, it would be wrong to count those hours for donations if he or she is being sponsored per hour.

Food

- Gamers need energy to make it through the marathon!
- Local restaurants might be able to donate food for the event. Ask your local CMN representative about how to approach them.
- Gamers can also be asked to provide their own nutrition.
- Water bottles are necessary for hydration, and caffeinated beverages should be used with caution.
- Fresh fruit can provide energy as well as nutrients that are vital to staying awake!

T-shirts / Prizes / Gifts

- Please use whatever means, within good taste, to encourage participation and donations for your marathon!
- If sponsors and donors receive T-shirts or other items by donating, those donations are probably not tax-deductible.
- A great way to encourage sponsorship is to offer prizes to the gamers who raise the most money. Donations of old games and consoles make great prizes.
- ELFK will share t-shirt designs with you, but each event is on its own in terms of ordering and deciding how to use t-shirts.

Get the word out!

- Tell local and campus newspapers and stations about your ELFK marathon.
- Your CMN rep may be able to help you with an official press release.
- Post on web forums, news groups, and email web masters about ELFK.
- Let other groups know about ELFK so they can hold their own marathon!

Disclaimer:

By agreeing to host or organize an Extra Life for Kids gaming marathon, you agree that ELFK, the creators of www.extralifeforkids.com, and other ELFK groups are under no liability for any personal injury or damage to personal or public property that results from the setup of or participation in said ELFK gaming marathon.

For Contact Information, please visit www.extralifeforkids.com