

# National Foster Care Month

*Client: The National Foster Care Coalition and Casey Family Programs*

## **Period of Performance: 2004 - 2006**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Creating awareness for any issue on national scale requires careful planning, persistence, and a crystal clear media pitch. For the three years between 2004 – 2006, True Insight (Stewards of Change) was selected to manage the marketing and PR for National Foster Care Month.

This annually returning event during the month of May is a partnership set up by fourteen child welfare organizations. By building on each year's experience, True Insight worked toward this year's ten-fold increase in visibility for the NFCM, driven by unprecedented exposure in national media such as Time magazine, Dr. Phil, and the Today Show.

## **Challenge**

In 2004, True Insight was hired by the National Foster Care partners to secure national press coverage, supplement outreach in select local markets, demonstrate the viability of the NFCM as a national platform for issues affecting children in care and to cultivate relationships with media outlets for future events. NFCM did not have the same visibility as other, more established child-care related platforms such as Adoption Month. NFCM spokesperson, the actress Victoria Rowell (The Young and Restless) was one of the factors contributing to the campaign's higher visibility that year. Despite a limited time frame, True Insight managed to reach 68.23 million people in 46 states with print and broadcast media, such as NPR, Parade, Univision, and the New York Times.

## **Strategy**

With a time frame of nine months for the 2005 campaign, True Insight was able to focus on the larger context of the National Foster Care Month by reinforcing its brand ID. Seeing the successful trickle-down effect of national coverage translating into regional and local exposure, True Insight reduced its local coverage from its marketing strategy for the subsequent campaign in 2005. Based on the company's experiences in the previous year, more effort was put into brand development, Spanish language accessibility, expanding the website and streamlining the strategic message among the campaign's fourteen partners and their publicists to avoid competition in pitching to the media.

True Insight incorporated the Blue Ribbon into the NFCM tree logo - a unified visual that allowed partners to maximize the brand ID within the framework of their own communications. True Insight also redesigned and expanded the website to support year-round visibility. This strategy paid off when Yahoo named fostercare-month.org "Yahoo! Notable New Site", which led to 2.3 billion page views a day. The total impressions from the 2005 campaign doubled from 2004's 68.23 million to 144.84 million. Regional coverage was given a boost by NFCM spokesperson Victoria Rowell.

## **Results**

By starting work on the 2006 campaign even earlier than nine months before the event, True Insight was able to refine the core message that there are hundreds of ways to get involved in foster care. The aim was to increase visibility by 10%. By having more time to create a consistent message among the partners, True Insight and its PR partner, Kitchen PR, were able to pitch successfully to national and long-lead media.

After two years, the NFCM finally had a national kick-off event in the form of a gala evening at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, celebrating spokesperson Victoria Rowell's tour of art made by people in foster care. Rowell was joined on the red carpet by fellow actor Samuel Jackson and California State Assembly Woman Karen Bass.



The longer preparation time, synchronized core messages, and persistent follow-ups lead to an unprecedented amount of national coverage, surpassing the original goal with an increased number of impressions of 108%, resulting in 291 million impressions. In or around the month of May, an impressive line-up of national media outlets devoted time to foster care issues, such as Time magazine, Dr. Phil, the Today Show, Univision's Despierta America, the Ziggy cartoon character and the Dear Abby column - both of which are syndicated in around 600 newspapers.