



Co-op Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT)

Communications Issue

In the late 1990's, the residents of Alexandra Park, a public housing project located at Dundas and Spadina in Toronto, voted 79% in favour of converting their public housing units into co-op housing. It took five years to happen, and involved a tremendous amount of community organizing, door knocking and debate. The goal of co-op conversion was to encourage safety, develop leadership skills, promote opportunity for youth and promote stronger ties in the neighbourhood.

CHFT was instrumental in enabling Alexander Park to make the transition and wanted to facilitate a campaign to use the experience of Alexander Park to create a model for other public housing projects.



Communications and Brand Response

It was clear that people who were working in co-op and affordable housing communities were the small but highly motivated audience for this campaign. In addition, the messaging needed to be simplified in to order to appeal to potential funders and the media. Therefore we started by building a case around the campaign that included the descriptive tagline "Strong Communities - From Public Housing to Co-op Communities." Print and video were used as distribution channels. The messaging and campaign identity motivated the seven-member Leadership Group, enabled them to speak with confidence, and stay on message. The campaign was launched at a well-attended media event at the co-op. We then followed up with pre-selected funders (corporations, individuals and foundations.)

Result

The campaign received a significant amount of earned media in Toronto - over \$100,000 in donations within six months of the launch, and the Leadership Group continued to work successfully on raising money and awareness based on the strategy and materials we prepared.