Carroll & Company Communications, LLC

Case Study: Persistence Pays Off In Media Relations

The Challenge:

The Oasis Institute is a nonprofit organization that promotes healthy aging through lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement. A cornerstone program for Oasis is an intergenerational tutoring program that fosters literacy in children in kindergarten through third grade.

Each year, the program trains and deploys 2000 older adult tutors to more than 23 school districts in the St. Louis region. The demand for tutors continues to grow, so media coverage is a critical element of the annual recruiting plan.

The Pitch:

For television coverage, Carroll & Company recommended pitching KMOV Channel 4 for the tutor recruiting story. Channel 4 attracted the broadest audience in Oasis' targeted demographic and was looking for human interest stories, particularly for their Imagine a Better St. Louis series.

The First Result:

Channel 4 was interested in the Oasis tutoring story; however, to be most effective for recruiting, the story needed to run in the summer. Scheduling the shoot when school was not in session was challenging. Securing a news crew during peak vacation season and just after extensive coverage of the solar eclipse was also a challenge.

Oasis was able to secure two tutors and eager students for the shoot. Unfortunately, the segment was taped and scheduled to air on a heavy news day. Instead of a feature story, the segment was a short 1 minute piece that included numerous factual errors and aired only during the late morning and mid-day news cast.

Take Two:

Unsatisfied with the story and when it ran, Carroll & Company appealed to the Channel 4 news director to, at minimum, correct the story errors. The following day, Channel 4 offered to redo the story at Oasis's convenience.

Oasis elected to reshoot the story in November in preparation for the spring semester recruiting season. The more robust feature story aired on the 5 p.m. news cast and Oasis began receiving inquiries from potential tutors the following day.