

ANNE KLEIN COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

A Legend's Legacy One in a Series of Award-Winning Solutions

The Challenge:

To honor the life of Russell Byers by establishing his legacy, the Russell Byers Charter School, as a pillar within the Philadelphia community that is worthy of funding and support.

Results:

- The comprehensive news coverage crystallized the fundraising effort and bolstered the positioning of the project as uniquely worthy of financial support.
- The extraordinary media response served to create widespread awareness, and the involvement of two local elementary schools and the president of the Spring Garden Community Association helped to attract and solidify broad-based community support.
- At least 20 broadcast "hits" from the news conference were recorded, including multiple broadcasts on all six major network-affiliate TV stations in Philadelphia.
- The New Jersey chapter of PRSA presented Anne Klein Communications Group with a Pyramid Honorable Mention award for Special Events, and the Philadelphia chapter of PRSA honored the firm with a first place Peppercorn award for Outstanding Special PR Programs.

Background:

Russell Byers, newspaper columnist and civic leader, believed in a better future for the city of Philadelphia. He also believed Philadelphia's declining population and economic base was caused by the departure of middle-class families fleeing from the city's crumbling public school system. Byers was convinced that the only real solution existed in the introduction of accountability and competition to "the largest monopoly in America." Tragically, Byers was killed in a 1999 robbery.

The columnist's widow, Laurada Byers, wanted to establish a charter school in Russell's memory to serve as a model for reform. She evaluated various Philadelphia neighborhoods where a charter school could make a difference for the future and chose Spring Garden, a diverse community in transition. To make the school a reality, Laurada needed to create widespread awareness and support for both logistical and fundraising purposes. She selected AKCG for communications counseling and media relations.

The Campaign:

AKCG wanted to include and attract the media as part of a high-profile event to announce plans to start the charter school. The creative team selected Russell's birthday as the date for the news conference and a journalism theme for the event. Some of the creative elements included name tags designed to resemble a press pass, matching lanyards imprinted with the charter school name and a mini "reporter's notebook."

To honor Russell Byers at the conference, Laurada produced a video on her late husband's life and on education reform. The video was shown at the event on a massive 10' x 16' video wall. Prominent community, civic and political leaders participated.

To learn more about how Anne Klein Communications Group can grab media attention for your event, and gain community support for your cause, please call and ask for Anne Klein or John Moscatelli.