

Raise Me Up

Building awareness, inspiring action

Raise Me Up is a bold, multimedia campaign designed to help raise awareness and inspire action on behalf of children in foster care across America. In September, Atlanta residents will awaken to a series of ads on television and radio, in newspapers and on billboards, all seeking to drive Austinites to RaiseMeUp.org, an Internet launching pad for individual and community action.

The rationale for the campaign is straightforward. Building public will requires an army of advocates who are personally invested in bringing about positive change. Those advocates need two things: First, they need to better understand why issues associated with foster care are important, but they also need a personal involvement. Personal involvement will give them a sense of ownership and keep them engaged.

Raise Me Up will inspire people to begin to consider a broad list of things they can do to safely reduce the number of children in care and to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families. In summary, the campaign will:

- Increase awareness and knowledge through paid advertising.
- Provide opportunities for community engagement with the child welfare system and its partners.

How the campaign works

1. Raising awareness through paid advertising

The paid advertising will raise public awareness on key issues related to children and youth in foster care and draw people to the campaign Web site. The ads will use compelling images, stories and statistics to show how children unnecessarily struggle when growing up in foster care. They can become homeless, end up in prison or bounce from one placement to another – unless caring adults intervene to make a difference.

Components of the paid advertising:

- Sixty days of television (30-second ads)
- Sixty days of radio (60-second ads)
- Newspaper ads
- Outdoor ads
- Online advertising

2. Building awareness and community engagement through the campaign Web site

The Web site is the connector, and re-connector, between the community and the child welfare system. Not only will it educate people about the facts of foster care in their state, it will give them a way to make a real difference in their community by raising their hand, raising their voice and raising awareness. The Web site will:

- Offer a menu of volunteer activities with featured local organizations, as well as other activities that support the child welfare system and promote community engagement.
- Develop a network of people willing to get engaged through social networking tools and techniques.
- Educate people about child welfare issues/initiatives by state.

3. Building knowledge and community engagement through media and community relations

In concert with the paid advertising, the child welfare system and its partners will engage the media on key issues and ways to increase community action. They can do this by:

- Hosting a kick-off press conference to draw media attention to the ads and purpose of the campaign.
- Participating in editorial board meetings hosted by the child welfare agency and community partners to gain editorial support for the campaign.
- Engaging broadcast media sponsors to extend coverage of the campaign and produce special programming.
- Placing guest opinion pieces by-lined by political and child welfare leaders to add context to issues raised by the campaign and encourage community action.
- Promoting letters to the editor to get partners and their members, as well as interested citizens, involved in the campaign.
- Joining partner -sponsored media activities.
- Promoting media interviews with constituents or hosting issue-focused media events to put a face to the work of CPS and its workers.
- Building on existing events related to prevention, reduction and improved outcomes for foster children.

4. Conducting research to measure effectiveness

We want to understand the campaign's reach and success building awareness, engaging the communities and changing the dialog about the foster care system in America. We will do this in two ways:

1. Quantitative research

- Increased awareness will be measured through polling research, Web site visits and specific actions taken by target audiences.
- Tracking the number of new advocates enlisted through RaiseMeUp.org.

2. Qualitative measurements

- Positive media coverage of the child welfare system and its reform efforts
- Policymakers participating in the campaign
- Constituents and community based organizations participating in the campaign