

A “Branding Program” Puts El Proyecto on the Map



Ms. Weiss is a Santa Monica, CA-based health care consultant and speaker.

For 34 years, El Proyecto del Barrio (“the neighborhood project”) was one of the best-kept secrets among not-for-profit organizations in southern California. The health and human services agency, based in Arleta, CA, in the San Fernando Valley, had built an enviable record of success for clinical excellence. It provides a full range of medical and health services to underserved populations at clinics throughout a 400-square-mile area in Los Angeles County. El Proyecto serves people of all ethnic backgrounds, but the vast majority of its more than 100,000 clients are Latinos who live well below the federal poverty guidelines. A key benefit to its community, the agency was nevertheless all but invisible in the media and among key decision makers.

That’s not true anymore.

“BRANDING” EL PROYECTO

A highly effective “branding” and marketing program, launched in late 2004, has brought El Proyecto more publicity in nine months than the agency was able to inspire in its previous 33 years altogether. The agency has been featured in newspapers; on network-affiliated, Spanish-language and local TV stations; and in numerous radio stories. And the campaign has recently helped El Proyecto to catch the attention of elected officials.

This new public attention has been the result of design, not luck. El Proyecto’s leaders began by engaging Waskul

serves (see **Graphic**). The new logo features an illustration of a mother, father, and baby. The words “hope,” “commitment,” and “excellence,” selected to represent what the organization stands for, were placed below “El Proyecto del Barrio” on the logo. The illustration was augmented with the organization’s traditional “Esperanza” (Spanish for “hope”) slogan. These elements are used on every El Proyecto document, on signs, and even on the organization’s mobile medical clinic.

Along with the branding effort, Waskul produced a corporate portfolio of written materials that would tell El Proyecto’s story to the news media, community leaders, and elected officials—three of the not-for-profit’s most critical audiences. The company also designed new business cards, a letterhead, envelopes, and a variety of other materials.

“El Proyecto had a great story to tell, and for the first time, it had the ability to tell that story with materials that matched the quality of its services,” says Greg Waskul, the company’s president. “The fact sheets were turned into stories in local and regional newspapers and on television stations. Suddenly, El Proyecto’s name was everywhere. The organization had come alive in the consciousness of the community.”

NEW SERVICES

And not just in the community’s consciousness. A briefing package containing program descriptions and client photos and testimonials was sent to elected officials. This has helped El Proyecto tell its story in Washington, DC, and Sacramento. These forces have combined to create momentum at a time when many community providers were making cutbacks. El Proyecto’s branding and marketing program has paid off in increased recognition, increased funding, multiplication of programs, and, most importantly, increased services to those who need help.

El Proyecto del Barrio

HOPE • COMMITMENT • EXCELLENCE



ESPERANZA

World Wide Communications, Glendale, CA, to “brand” the agency with a logo that would foster an emotional link between it and the people it

Among these new services are the following:

- **Reopened Clinic** El Proyecto will reopen a health clinic in Azusa, CA, which had been closed by Los Angeles County budget cuts. This spring, Rep. Hilda L. Solis, (D-CA) announced that the agency would receive \$417,000 in federal funding for the clinic. The announcement sparked extensive local media coverage.

- **Christmas Party** The agency's "Navidad en El Barrio" event provided a Christmas treat for 2,500 community members who couldn't afford to buy Christmas trees or toys for their children. The largest such gathering in El Proyecto's history, it was attended by local, state, and congressional officials.

- **HIV/AIDS Services** Through the help of Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), El Proyecto received a grant with which it was able to double the HIV/AIDS ser-

vices provided at its West San Fernando Family Health Center. The HIV/AIDS caseload there had doubled over the past two years. The announcement of the grant received coverage by both English- and Spanish-language television and print media. A front-page story in the *Los Angeles Daily News*, describing the increase of HIV/AIDS in the Latino community, prominently mentioned the work done by El Proyecto.

- **"Access Point" Status** The agency recently was awarded federal "Access Point" status by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Access Point program, initiated by the Bush administration, is intended to improve health care access for the poor. As a federally qualified health care agency, El Proyecto will receive more than \$600,000 in additional funding annually and will also be eligible for

further sources of federal funding.

- **Child Care Initiative** El Proyecto has recently been appointed by Los Angeles's municipal government to lead a new, city-funded child care initiative in the East San Fernando Valley; the initiative will provide a safe daytime environment for hundreds of children.

EXPANDED OPPORTUNITY

"Our branding and marketing program played a central role in bringing new opportunities to reality," says Corinne Sanchez, El Proyecto's CEO. "It provided consistently high-level visibility that put us on the map, emphasizing the level of excellence that we strive for in everything we do. The bottom line of our branding and marketing effort is that we will now be able to better fulfill our mission to provide critical health care services to people in need throughout the communities we serve." ■



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