

CASE HISTORY

North Coast Community Homes Gets Noticed



Situation

Established in 1984, North Coast Community Homes (NCCH) was founded to provide safe, comfortable and affordable housing in Northeast Ohio for individuals with mental retardation, mental illness and other disabilities. In 2007, NCCH held its first fundraising gala with an aggressive goal of raising more than \$100,000. The event also served as a platform to raise awareness of the organization and its mission throughout the four counties it serves.

Target Audience

The local philanthropic community as well as others likely to support or require NCCH services.

Public Relations Challenge

Our challenge was to work with the event's publicity committee to garner exposure for both the organization and the fundraising gala from suburban media outlets. An important consideration was minimizing the risk of negative publicity that sometimes results when opponents to group homes organize, as well as protecting residents' privacy and dignity.

Our media strategy was to create empathy by accurately profiling the compelling and courageous life stories of selected NCCH residents, thereby putting a human face on the need for NCCH services.



Home Sweet Homes: An Evening at BeauRavine Farm

The fundraising gala, organized by benefit chairs Stacey and Howard W. “Hoby” Hanny IV, was sponsored by National City Bank, hosted by WKYC-TV’s Dick Russ and held at picturesque Beau Ravine Farm in Waite Hill. Attended by approximately 400 guests, the evening of country elegance featured cocktails, dinner catered by Gavi’s Restaurant, silent and live auctions, and live music.

Public Relations Tactics

- Worked collaboratively with other committee members to coordinate PR efforts.
- Developed profiles of NCCH residents and other press materials.
- Submitted event information to media community calendars throughout Northeast Ohio.
- Pitched customized stories with unique angles to suburban media outlets throughout Northeast Ohio.
- Followed up to ensure results.

Results

- An in-depth cover story in *The News-Herald*, highlighting the event and profiling the life of an NCCH’s resident.
- A front page story in the *Cleveland Jewish News*, which included multiple photos and another resident profile.
- Supported or contributed to additional media exposure, including front page coverage in *Currents*, and hits in *Cleveland Magazine* and *Crain’s Cleveland Business*.
- The aggressive fundraising goal was not only met but exceeded and awareness of NCCH and its mission successfully increased.