



ANGELS FOSTER FAMILY NETWORK PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN

DEMOGRAPHIC – GAY & LESBIAN COMMUNITIES

By:

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RESEARCH

Problem Statement:

Angels Foster Family Network is a non-profit organization that works to place young children with loving families that will ensure them the care, stability and development that they need. Angels focuses on placing one child or sibling set per household for the entire duration of their time in foster care. Angels encourages a wide range of individuals and couples to take part in the fostering network, including those who are part of the LGBTQ community. The organization currently has 79 certified foster homes and 15 more pending certification. Angels is looking to recruit more homes to foster children, with the LGBTQ community comprising of at least 16% of those homes to match the LGBTQ adoption rate in California. This is to be accomplished within a six month period.

SWOT Analysis:

Strengths: San Diego has a large gay community: Hillcrest. Society is moving in a positive direction in relations to the LGBT community.

Weaknesses: Predispositions about gay/lesbian couples fostering/adopting children. Finding willing and eligible couples.

Opportunities: Hillcrest is an affluent area, there are many opportunities for donations. Spreading more awareness and acceptance for the LGBT community.

Threats: Communities protests, Church protests, boycotting Angel's foster all together, losing a percentage of supporter base who don't agree with gay/lesbian couples adopting.

Organization: Angels Foster Care

Angels Foster Family Network is a non-profit organization, founded in 1998 by Cathy Richman when she deduced that children in foster care were best cared for when being the sole foster child in household. They focus on placing individual children or sibling pairs ages 0-5 with proper families in which they will get the care they need. They allow all types of foster parents including single parents, military families, and same sex couples.

Angels' annual budget is \$2.35 million dollars. 14% is used for fundraising and communications. \$273,000 is used for foster parent recruitment, training & certification. They have 79 certified homes and 15 pending certification with only 4 homes that are LGBT, all 4 are lesbian couples. Any adult 21+ is potentially eligible to foster, preferably someone who is 25, however there is no upper age limit.

The eligibility criteria are:

- No criminal record for anyone living in the home.
- Sufficient space for the child – they can share a room
- No income requirement, but adding a child/children cannot cause financial difficulties, so they need to have a positive balance when they do their monthly income/expense sheet as part of the application.
- Attending information session
- Fingerprint and child abuse index clearance
- Physical exam, TDAP, and TB test
- DMV printout, current auto insurance, and driver's license
- Successful completion of our specialized training program
- Home study and in-depth family interview
- Completion of MMPI-2 psychological screening.

Situation/Issue & Targeted Publics

California has the highest percentage of gay couples adopting children nationwide. Children raised by same sex parents fare just as well as children raised by “traditional” heterosexual couples, with no evidence to suggest that gay & lesbians are unfit to parent. LGBTQ is 4% of CA population, making up 16% of all CA adoptions; same sex couples are 4x more likely to adopt than hetero couples and 6x more likely to foster than hetero couples. Overall, foster care is strenuous on caregivers. Due to issues such as compensation, commitment, break-down events, issues with biological parents, tensions with “problem” child, and allegations, many caregivers will reject children or only foster short-term. There also needs to be specific types of fostering given on a case by case basis such as relative, long-term, task focused, short-term & respite. The stigma against gay and lesbians has been strong for decades.

In **San Diego** specifically 3.9% of the population identifies as LGBT, higher than the national average of 3.6%. According to the 2013 census, this would equal to around 53,000 people. The percentage of households with same sex couples is only 1%. The number of sexual orientation related hate crimes is 1.34 incidents per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the national average.

One of the advantages of San Diego is that it has an affluent LGBT community and a central cultural hub in the suburb of Hillcrest. This area houses the San Diego LGBT Community Centre, as well as the San Diego Pride march every year in July. There are many media outlets that specially serve the LGBT community, including the Gay San Diego newspaper and San Diego Gay & Lesbian News online publication which combined reaches over 30,000 people. However, in recent years the proportion of LGBT population has declined, ranking from the top 5 city in 1990 to no. 32 out of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the US currently. Overall, the connected LGBT community in San Diego allows for a good support system, making it a favorable place for foster care.

Secondary Research

Overall, in our research we found that the LGBTQ community is 4x as likely to adopt and 6x as likely to foster children over heterosexual couples. California also has the largest LGBTQ population in the United States, with 16% making up for total adoptions, according to the Family Equality Council. With these numbers, Angels has a large opportunity to grow their LGBTQ foster parents from their current number of 5% up to the state average of 16%. We also found that regardless of the social stigma projected upon the LGBTQ community regarding parenthood and child-rearing, there is no scientific evidence supporting claims against their ability to parent. On the contrary, evidence from a study titled *Parenting and Child Development in Adoptive Families: Does Parental Sexual Orientation Matter?* conducted by the University of Virginia, showed that children raised in LGBTQ homes fare just as well as children raised in the “traditional” environment. Finally, the book titled *Supporting Parents: Foster Carers: Why They Stay and Why They Leave* outlines the difficulties facing foster parents such as compensation, commitment, break-down events, issues with biological parents, tensions with “problem” child, and allegations, and child rejection or only short-term fostering.

PLANNING

Goal

Our goal is to recruit more gay & lesbian couples to foster through Angels Foster Family Network.

Increase number of gay & lesbian foster parents to 16% so that the Angels Foster Family Network amount matches the state & national average. (Angels is currently 4% gay & lesbian)

Increase Instagram following by 3 times (current 92), increase Facebook following by 1.5 times (current 3,000), increase Twitter following by 5 times (current 300).

Targeted Publics

Our target publics for this project is the gay & lesbian population of San Diego. Hillcrest is an area that we will work in the most.

Strategy & Tactics

We want to Increase social media presence of Angels by posting more overall, daily in Instagram, and utilizing hashtags to spread message and encourage retweeting/sharing

- Place ads in local newspapers e.g. Gay San Diego
- Place ads in local radio stations
- Place sponsored ads on social media
- Get involved/sponsor events for the LGBT community
- Produce promotional videos for social media accounts. The videos should be personal (i.e. story telling) and informational. Focus on emotional value.
- Regular fundraisers, possibly marathons/5k, restaurant events, silent auctions, all specifically targeting Hillcrest area
- Create media kit
- Create campaign slogan and logo that is geared toward the LGBT community (e.g. rainbow colors, Be Proud. Be You. Be a Parent)
- Involve celebrities

Budget

We have \$2.35 million for communications and fundraising annually, \$2000 - \$5000 weekly for radio ads and \$25-\$60 per column inch for newspaper ads.

IMPLEMENTATION

Activities & Messages

Angels is an NPO that places children 0-5 with families, families include single parents, military families, and same sex couples. Only 4 homes are LGBTQ and all 4 are lesbian couples, when LGBTQ is 4% of CA population and 16% of all CA adoption. Any adult 21+ is potentially eligible for foster, but Angels prefer someone who is 25 or older. Angels has 60 children currently placed with foster parents within the network.

For the LGBTQ Community, Angels is looking to expand their network of families in order to assist more children that need a foster home. Angels is looking to increase its number of Gay & Lesbian households

For the Angels Family Foster Network, Hillcrest is an affluent area, there are many opportunities for donations. We should spread more awareness and acceptance for the LGBTQ community. Angels needs to increase its community presence offline and online. We will send out an email to all employees, workgroups, managers and supervisors letting them know about our program and

objectives. We will then hold a video broadcast with all employees announcing the program and everything we're trying to accomplish for the company.

For Donors, a budget is needed to spread awareness of the foster network within the LGBTQ community of San Diego. We will organize and host fundraising events throughout San Diego, but mainly in Hillcrest.

For the public, we will have a large presence on the Foster's family website, advertisements online and print, and a instagram, twitter and facebook account.

Schedule & assigned positions

Increase awareness by placing advertisements in local media: Long term advertising investments (6-12 months) in radio and print publications. A Marketing/Communications Director should be responsible for this.

Increase dedicated following by raising social media audience: Continuous posting over the next period of 6 months, at least 2 posts per week each on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. A Social Media Intern should be responsible for that.

Increase interest in fostering by implementing emotional appeals via videos, stories etc. through Instagram and a Youtube channel that can also be run by the Social Media Intern.

Increase number of sponsored events and fundraising events: One-off events e.g. Restaurant Week (September and January). Person in charge should also be the Marketing Director.

Tactical communications

Increase social media presence of Angels by posting more overall:

- daily posts on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter
- increase Instagram following by 3 times (current 92), increase Facebook following by 1.5 times (current 3,000), increase Twitter following by 5 times (current 300) through the aforementioned daily posts
- utilize hashtags and trends to spread message and encourage retweeting/sharing
- advertise/market upcoming Angels Fosters events through social media
- do live feeds at the office (personal and sociable, such as an employee talking about what Angels is working on that day and implementing emotional appeals with the children)
- do live feeds during events
- post photos and tag attendees after events

Place advertisements in appropriate ad spaces:

- radio (be a part of “Clips for Charity” on STAR 94.1 with Jesse Lozano in the Morning)
- local newspapers (i.e. Gay San Diego)
- buses and bus stops, trolleys
- free standing mall displays
- incorporate slogan into all advertising methods (Be Proud. Be You. Be a Parent.)

Inform through promotional videos:

- Youtube advertisements
- displayed on digital platforms
- include information and appeal to the viewers’ emotions

Host and Participate in Community Events:

- sponsor a parade float for San Diego Pride and have a delegation made up of foster parents, staff members, and kid actors
- partner with restaurants during Taste of Hillcrest to do fundraisers
- organize a 5K race/walk in Balboa Park or Harbor Island
- do a silent auction at a bar/restaurant in Hillcrest

Spread the message of the campaign slogan: “Be Proud. Be You. Be a Parent.”

EVALUATION

Plan & Timeframe

In order to reassure the effectiveness of the program, an evaluation is needed to measure the impact the program had on its intended publics. Some of the items that should be evaluated are:

- Money fundraised
- Awareness of foster program at Angel’s
- Website traffic (via traffic tracker)
- Followers, retweets, regrams, etc. on all social media platforms
- New foster families from the gay/lesbian community
- Clip counting/ content analysis
- Angel’s expectations

The proposed timeframe to evaluate these items is as follows:

- Prior to program: survey gay & lesbian community on their awareness of fostering
- Prior to the program: determine Angel’s expectations for the program
- Monthly: website traffic count

- At 3 months: count social media followers
- At 3 months: content analysis of media clips/ coverage
- At 3 months: conduct focus groups with gay & lesbian community to assess program
- At 3 months: evaluate budget - are we going over or staying within limits?
- At 4 months: count money fundraised
- At 6 months: content analysis of media clips/ coverage
- At 6 months: measure amount of gay/lesbian foster parents
- At 6 months: survey gay & lesbian community on their awareness of fostering to measure growth and impact of program
- At the end of the program: determine whether client program expectations were met

Measurement & Reports

There are various ways to measure the outcomes of the program. Each outcome would need a different measuring method in order to get the most accurate depictions of the success, or lack of success, of the program.

The amount of money that has been fundraised needs to be reported by using monetary figures. A budget would keep track of how much money is being spent on the campaign, while a separate account would keep track of the money that is being donated through the fundraisers.

The awareness levels of prospective foster parents from the Gay & Lesbian community would be measured by conducting surveys. The findings of the surveys would be presented through percentages from the representative sample to be surveyed.

The website traffic will need to be collected by using a traffic tracker. The total numbers of visits would be tracked on a monthly basis as long as the programs runs.

The number of followers on each social media platform needs to be noted at the beginning of the program in order to determine if there has been an increase of followers during the course of the programs. These numbers would be collected at total number of followers, total new, total per platform, as well as a percentage of new followers in general and per platform.

The new number of foster parents would be gathered in the same fashion as the number of followers. While the number of followers would gather the numbers for all types of followers, the number of new foster parents to be collected would focus on the new Gay & Lesbian foster parents.

In order to provide the findings of the evaluation to the client, a report would need to be formulated. In the report, figures such a sums of money and percentages will be included in text format. In order to have a better understanding of what the numbers mean, visualizations would

need to be created in the forms of different charts that are the most appropriate for the figures that are being analyzed.

The media coverage received by Angel's during the program should be accounted for and analyzed. A total number of articles/stories (clip counting) will be collected. The analysis of the media coverage will code the coverage as being positive, negative or neutral.

In order to report the money that is being fundraised, pie charts would need to be created. One pie chart should include the total amount of budget that has been approved for the campaign with percentages depicting how much of it was raised at which fundraising event. A second chart should depict the amount that is being spent in the program and how that amount is broken down into the different areas of the program.

The awareness levels of Angel's Foster among the Gay & Lesbian community would need to be represented using pie charts as well. The charts would show what percentage of the community is aware of Angel's at the different points in time during the program when the surveys are conducted. Other charts could depict the amount of knowledge in different areas such as fostering, the process of fostering, and the cost of fostering. A bar graph should be constructed to compare the awareness levels at the beginning of the program and the awareness levels at the end of the program.

A bar graph would also be suitable to keep track of the trends in the website traffic throughout each month of the programs. Bars can be constructed to show daily, weekly, or monthly website traffic.

To report the number of followers and new foster parents, two types of graphs should be utilized: bar graphs and pie charts. The bar graphs would be used to compare the number of followers at the beginning and end of the program: one chart for the total number of followers on all social media and the other broken down by platform. Another bar graph would compare the total number of Gay & Lesbian parents at the beginning and end of the program. The pie charts would be used to depict the previously mentioned figures by using percentages.

To report the media coverage, a bar graph can be used to depict how much coverage has been received at different points during the program. The content analysis can be reported by using pie charts that are broken down into percentages of positive, negative, or neutral coverage received.

Appendices

Appendix A: Meeting Minutes

Meeting 1:

- September 15, 2016; from 8:00am to 9:15am
- All team members present
- Parts of research delegated to prepare the research worksheet

Meeting 2:

- September 28, 2016; from 9:00am to 9:47am
- Morgan Hernandez, Susan Leamon, Jessica Xiao, and Hector Zermeno present
- Further research to be conducted and problem statement to be completed

Meeting 3:

- October 6, 2016; from 8:30am to 8:45am
- Collette Carroll, Flavia Simoes, Jessica Xiao, Hector Zermeno, and Morgan Hernandez present
- Welcomed new member, Flavia, to group and to extend research
- Calendar to be made to coordinate all members' schedules

Meeting 4:

- October 21, 2016; from 8:15am to 9:15am
- Collette Carroll, Flavia Simoes, Jessica Xiao, Hector Zermeno, and Morgan Hernandez present
- Planning worksheet to be completed

Meeting 5:

- November 15, 2016; from 5:00pm to 7:30pm
- Collette Carroll, Flavia Simoes, Hector Zermeno, and Morgan Hernandez present
- Implementation worksheet now completed
- Evaluation worksheet to be completed

Meeting 6:

- November 29, 2016; from 5:30pm to 7:30pm
- All team members present
- Preparation on presentation for December 1, 2016
- Powerpoint completed

Appendix B: Research

Interview transcripts between Hector Zermeno and Elizabeth Perlin, the Angels Foster Family Network Educator and Recruiter:

Zermeno: Hello,

My name is Hector M. Zermeno and I am in the JMS-480 class that is doing the PR Plan Project for Angels Foster. I had a question regarding the demographics of the families currently in the foster network.

My group is working with the Gay & Lesbian demographic. I would like to know a few things regarding this group.

How many homes currently at Angels is gay or lesbian?

How many are lesbian?

How many are gay?

How many of those homes are single foster parent homes, if any?

How many are couples?

Is there an average age for the foster parents?

Thanks in advance and I hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,

Hector M. Zermeno

Perlin: Hello Hector,

Thanks for getting in touch. We're excited about your class project and happy to help.

We currently have 4 homes whose parents are lesbian couples. We do not have any homes with gay parents and we rarely get males or male couples that are interested in fostering.

At Angels, we require our parents to be over 21 (prefer 25) and we have no upper age limit.

Please let me know if I was able to answer all your questions or if you need more information.

Best,

Elizabeth Perlin

Foster Family Educator and Recruiter

Zermeno: Hello Elizabeth,

This is perfect. You have answered all of my questions. Thank you so much for your prompt response.

Just one more question regarding the requirements to be a foster parent. I found these on the website.

Are there any other requirements, like income?

Basic requirements include:

- Attending orientation
- Fingerprint and child abuse index clearance
- Physical exam, TDAP, and TB test
- DMV printout, current auto insurance, and driver's license
- Successful completion of our specialized training program
- Home study and in-depth family interview
- Completion of MMPI-2 psychological screening

Thanks

Perlin: Hello Hector,

Here are a few other things that we talk about at our orientation:

No criminal record for anyone living in the home.

Sufficient space for the child – they can share a room

No income requirement, but adding a child/children cannot cause financial difficulties, so they need to have a positive balance when they do their monthly income/expense sheet as part of the application.

Let me know what else you might need.

Best,

Elizabeth Perlin

Foster Family Educator and Recruiter

Former Angels Foster Parent

Zermeno: Hello Elizabeth,

I want to ask a couple of more things about the network.

How many children are placed under your system?

How many are awaiting placement?

Thanks,

Hector Zermeno

Perlin: Hi Hector,

At the moment, we have 60 children in our care. In foster care, there are not really children waiting because they all have to be placed somewhere, a long term foster home, the hospital, a temporary foster home or the Polinsky Center, which is the emergency shelter for children in foster care. Ideally the children are only in temporary locations for a few days until there is space in a long term home, but many of the children have to be moved multiple times before that is the case. This is why Angels was started, so that the children could stay in one placement with a great family until permanency is determined by the Court and the County.

I am not sure if I was able to answer your questions. Please let me know if you need more clarification.

Best,

Elizabeth Perlin

Foster Family Educator and Recruiter

Former Angels Foster Parent

Zermeno: Thank you so much, Elizabeth. You answered the question completely. You're very thorough. I appreciate all your help.

Sincerely,

Hector

Appendix C: Tactical Examples

1. Increase social media presence
 - post daily on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter
 - increase followers on all platforms
 - utilize hashtags and trends to spread message
2. Appropriate advertisement placement and informational videos
 - radio and newspaper advertising
 - mall displays and trolley stops
 - Youtube advertisements
3. Host and participate in community events
 - Sponsor a parade float in the San Diego Pride parade
 - organize a walk or marathon for Angels
 - partner with restaurants for fundraising