

Research/Situation Analysis:

Domestic violence can come in many forms – physical, verbal, emotional or sexual – but is most always hidden away from the public by both the abuser and the victim. Victims are often intimidated by their abuser, or in fear for their life, and will not seek the support they need for themselves or their dependents until it is too late. Organizations such as SafeSpace, a 501(c)(3) Florida non-profit serving victims of domestic abuse in Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties, rely on community partnerships and advocates to fund programs and services for these individuals. Unfortunately, much like the abuse that is silent, so is the public conversation about this situation that affects one in every three females. In 2011, to increase awareness about domestic violence, and to strengthen community partnerships, SafeSpace launched the “*Walk A Mile In Her Shoes*” event – challenging men in Martin County to wear 4-inch red stilettos while they walked one mile in popular, historic downtown Stuart, Fl. In addition to walkers, community members could also support Safespace with a donation or by attending the walk. In 2012, Safespace sought to increase attendance and broaden outreach beyond its usual supporters, as well as encourage the “sideline supporters” to put on the heels and walk in support of the mission. After its first year, the event became known as “the red heel event.” SafeSpace wanted to capitalize on the power of social media to garner excitement and funds for the Martin County walk, but also educate the general public in order to communicate the true purpose of the event. To achieve this goal, SafeSpace decided to create a video as the promotional tactic to promote the *Walk A Mile In Her Shoes* event while bringing into sharper focus the hidden pandemic and reality of domestic violence.

Objectives:

1. To increase registered walker attendance for the Martin County *Walk A Mile in Her Shoes* by 25% in 2012 compared to 2011.
2. To generate buzz for the *Walk A Mile* event through a promotional video shared on Facebook and YouTube and viewed at least 500 times prior to the event in October 2012.
3. To increase funds raised though Walk A Mile event by 50% by October 2012.
4. To increase the number of Facebook likes by 10 percent within two weeks of sharing the promotional video.

Implementation:

In July 2012, SafeSpace secured pro bono services from a local public relations firm to increase awareness about the 2012 Walk A Mile In Her Shoes event and produce the promotional video. In order to keep costs low for this project, a pro bono photographer and videographer was also secured to shoot footage for the video. Local dignitaries

such as the Fire Chief, County Commissioners and other elected officials, police officers and athletes, as well as five key event sponsors, were filmed at their businesses wearing high heels instead of their typical business attire or uniforms. Not only did this make the video memorable, it helped break the stereotype that some community members had about participating in the event. Using Aretha Franklin's song "RESPECT" as the audio background, the video reflected an upbeat tone, but with strategic messaging interspersed throughout the video. Relying on SafeSpace and external research, the public relations firm developed a series of 12 slides that presented alarming statistics about domestic violence in the U.S. as well as the services of SafeSpace. These slides were placed throughout the video to inform the viewers on the sobering and disturbing data on domestic violence while they enjoyed the rest of the more lighthearted video showcasing the men in red, high heels. Once produced, the video was shared via email communications, on Facebook by the organization and through its Facebook friends, as well as posted to SafeSpace's YouTube account.

Evaluation:

1. In its second year, registered walkers totaled 135, a 121% increase from 2011.
2. The "*Walk a Mile*" video was shared on Facebook and viewed on YouTube 2,195 times – more than 4 times the goal of 500 views.
3. Funds raised were 300% higher than in 2011 including private donations, walker registration costs and sponsorship dollars combined.
4. The number of Facebook "likes" increased by 21% within two weeks of sharing the video. Additionally, 18 'shares' were viewable through the SafeSpace's Facebook page, and these shares garnered 43 public 'likes' and 12 public comments. (Due to privacy settings of individual users, not every Facebook post or share of the video can be tabulated).

Although increased print media was not an objective of this public relations tactic, the event also saw an increase in media outlets covering the event which had not previously covered it in the past. Using the video as a teaser when sending press releases before and after the event engaged reporters more than they had been in the past two years, resulting in an increase of print media for the fundraiser and the organization as a whole.

Budget: Expenses: \$0. Value of in-kind services donated to Safespace: \$8,000. Pro bono videography (\$4,000); public relations firm's time for video coordination, slide production and promotion ((\$4,000).