



Connect with Kids

CWK Network Partners with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) To Reduce Truancy and Increase Student Attendance

Case Study/Summary

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) selected CWK Network to develop the *Count Me In!* campaign to address the specific problems of absenteeism and truancy in the district. The district goal was to reduce truancy by 2 percent by the end of the campaign. LAUSD successfully implemented the program in November and by May, the district had already achieved its goal. The Communications Director for LAUSD said in a released statement, "Daily attendance at LAUSD schools has improved by approximately 225,000 students. More of our city's children are in school today because of the efforts of CWK Network, and we look forward to working with them as we continue our campaign."

Media Outreach and Events

The *Count Me In!* campaign kicked off with two weeks of television media promoting the upcoming *Connect with Kids Count Me In!* half-hour television special on KABC. CWK Network produced this original video promotional spots, allowing us to tailor the messages to the district's needs, in coordination with LAUSD personnel, to best suit the target audiences. The half-hour program aired in November. CWK produced the original program, which featured students, teachers, parents and experts from the Los Angeles area. It was created in both in English and original Spanish.

Following the broadcast, CWK held a viewer phone-in/phone bank, supported by local authorities, counselors, school officials and CWK Network personnel. The phone bank was an enormous success, receiving hundreds of phone calls from parents and the community – two of LAUSD's target audiences.

School and Community Tool Kit

Following the television broadcast, CWK Network delivered a classroom version of the program to the district for use in 800 of its targeted schools. The classroom version included supporting student and teacher materials, researched and written by CWK Network's educational team. CWK Network further produced and delivered 10 90-second on-topic video segments, also designed for classroom use. The curriculum also included resource guides, classroom activities, school posters, backpack flyers, and an introduction and implementation letter from the District.

Custom Community Website

To effectively support LAUSD's educational needs, CWK Network developed a custom website ensuring ease of use for educators in the district. The website includes all of the programs in streaming video, correlated discussion guides, student handouts and suggested classroom activities. All materials were delivered in both English and original Spanish.

The district distributed materials to more than 800 schools in late December (following Winter break). The stated goal of the district was a 2% increase in attendance by the end of the 2004-2005 school year. In May, just five months after the campaign launch, Stephanie Brady, the district's director of communications, announced that LAUSD had attained its goal, with an improvement in attendance of 225,000 students daily.

CWK Network continued to support LAUSD through a technical assistance/implementation support toll-free line, and a quarterly technical assistance newsletter.

The *Count Me In!* Campaign overview:

- **Media Outreach:** A custom half-hour special for television exploring the many aspects and consequences of the truancy issue. The program featured real students from the districts sharing their individual stories, along with local authorities, counselors, educators and experts. This program is also tailored for classroom use along with supporting teacher and student materials.
- **Phone Bank:** In conjunction with KABC, CWK Network's television station partner in Los Angeles, CWK Network hosted a community call-in following the half-hour televised special. The "phone bank" was manned by local community officials, counselors, personnel from LAUSD, CWK Network and television station representatives. Members of the community were able to call in their responses and questions pertaining to the content of the truancy special. The call-in received hundreds of calls.
- **School Backpack Flyers:** Backpack flyers were created and e-mailed to every school in the district. The backpack flyers were duplicated by LAUSD school staff and sent home with students, announcing the upcoming television special and encouraging parents and students to watch together.
- **Instructional Video Shortcuts:** Ten originally-produced video stories (90 seconds) for use in LAUSD classrooms. Each story explored a different aspect of absenteeism and truancy and was supported by student discussion and self-reflection questions. Teachers were able to use these segments over a period of weeks to continually reinforce the messages of the initiative.
- **Custom Website:** A unique *Count Me In!* website with downloadable materials and streaming video of the half-hour classroom program and the 10 short video stories, along with easy access to student and teacher resources, in both English and Spanish.
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Staff Training and Technical Assistance and support for the LAUSD truancy initiative were provided throughout the program including onsite program implementation training for schools and community organizations and on-going telephone consultative support.