

P E M B R O K E



COMMUNICATIONS

**Little Star Fund
PRCA Award Entry 2007**

A. The Brief

Barretstown, The National Children's Hospital Tallaght, Our Lady's Hospital for Children, Crumlin and Temple Street Children's Hospital merged forces to launch a joint campaign to raise funds on behalf of sick children in Ireland. This was the first time that four of the largest national children's charities merged forces.

The Little Star Fund was launched in March 2006 and the primary message was to ask SSIA holders to give a once off donation from their SSIA windfall to help change the life of a sick child.

Pembroke was given the following brief:

To:

- Develop a national and regional communication strategy
- Innovative ideas for launching the project
- Patrons for the charity
- Seek corporate and media partners
- Work in tandem with advertising agencies to develop a cost effective ad campaign
- Raise awareness of those touched by the charities in question and the work of the four charities (paying equal attention to all four)
- Associate the Little Star Fund as THE SSIA charity

(i) Problems encountered

Pembroke Communications encountered a number of problems during the course of the campaign:

- This campaign is running for 14 months. At times it proved difficult to maintain the momentum.
- The Little Star Fund does not have a board or any history. This meant they did not have any resources to draw from, a legacy to follow or existing corporate partners to exploit.
- Due to the limited budget available and the lack of volunteers, Pembroke acts as both a project manager and also the PR experts for the campaign. This meant that Pembroke had a much wider canvass to work on than PR and strict media relations, although this still formed an integral element. Each concept had to be developed and followed through by the agency.
- The Little Star Fund had to compete not only with other charities, but also the individual charities' campaigns involved in the umbrella group. All of this needed to be taken into consideration when planning and organising events and media relations for the charity. Initial rivalries existed and were bound to crop up during the course of the campaign.

- The thorny issue of the location of the National Children's Hospital caused confusion and at times made it difficult for the campaign. This controversy captured much media attention and put the three National Children's Hospitals into direct conflict. This obviously raised issues for potential patrons, corporate partners and media partners but was overcome through clear messages which will be detailed in this document.
- After lengthy talks with a potential banking partner, they pulled out weeks before the campaign began. This seriously hampered the campaign in the initial stages as much of the planning counted on utilising this partnership.
- In terms of the core message of donating when SSIA's mature, we soon discovered that although the money was going into people's accounts, it was not being used as people were leaving the money sit or putting it into savings. This led to a reassessment of the communication messages.
- Through massive media hype preceding the first SSIA accounts maturing, SSIA fatigue developed in the public's mind. This meant that the agency had to develop innovative ways to capture the attention of both the media and the public bearing in mind the SSIA message was still important.
- The campaign was entering into a very cluttered market which made it difficult to reach and secure corporate partners.

(ii) **Opportunities**

- Increased money in the economy due to SSIA's put the Little Star Fund in a unique position to tap into this.
- The campaign was the first of its kind on the market to specifically target SSIA holders and the first to launch, with others following afterwards.
- The charity's main unique selling point was the fact that these are four of Ireland's largest children's charities coming together for the first time. Those wanting to donate to a children's charity did not have to make a choice about which children's charity to donate to. This helped us secure corporate partners, media partners and patrons.
- Research conducted in-house by the agency about children's charities showed that they were extremely popular with people wishing to donate so we were tapping into a reservoir of goodwill.
- There are endless case studies to show the magnificent work carried out by these charities. This made our job easier to call for donations on an ongoing basis.

B. Statement of the Objectives

1. To develop and communicate the key messages of the charity and have a strong call to action
2. Capture the imagination of all SSIA account holders
3. To raise money for the Little Star Fund and the charities involved, highlighting the fact that it is a once off donation
4. To highlight the work of the four charities

C. Programme Planning and Strategy

The strategy and planning for the campaign is running over three distinct phases. Pembroke devised a full campaign to last 14 months and to cover all aspects of media relations, corporate relations and advertising as well as a full awareness drive. The aim was to launch the campaign, maintain a strong presence and then culminate

with a very strong finish. We began from a standing start but had to gather momentum quickly.

Phase One - The Launch of the Little Star Fund

This was a crucial element of the campaign as it was our first communication with the media. The message had to be clear, concise and to the point. We had to develop key messages at this stage.

Ray D'Arcy, Aoife Cogan (Irish model) and Bryan Cullen (Dublin footballer) were secured as the first patrons of the Little Star Fund. Through issuing images and a press release to all the national news desks and photo desks we secured blanket coverage in the national news papers the day after the launch. This was despite the fact that we inadvertently clashed with probably the most high profile charity event of the year – Roy Keane's Guide Dogs for the Blind annual photocall. By securing The Clarence Hotel as a venue we were able to put together a launch at minimal cost.

Free radio advertising was secured by the charity and this ran in conjunction with the launch. This was co-ordinated by Pembroke.

Our sister agency QMP designed a creative print advert for the charity highlighting all of their key messages as part of their CSR (see appendix).

As June 1st, 2006 was the first date of SSIA maturation, we developed a media strategy to support this. At this point copy cat campaigns had already begun.

Our strategy included:

- As regional radio is becoming more and more prominent we secured local radio interviews for our spokesperson from the Little Star Fund throughout Ireland.
- Issuing a press release to keep our presence in the media citing relevant and interesting information for the appropriate journalist. Again this achieved national coverage.
- Developing a project management strategy to pull together all four charities with a Pembroke Executive assigned to this task.
- Issuing research on SSIA's and donations.

Phase Two - Development of the Media Strategy/Awareness Campaign

This consisted of maintaining a prominent position in the media ensuring we were at the forefront of people's consciousness through a variety of ways. This was the most difficult stage and involved mainly media relations and publicity generation.

1. Regular features in the national media

In order to maintain a regular presence in the national media we have repeatedly secured features for the Little Star Fund in papers such as the Irish Independent, Irish Sun, Irish Mail and Irish Mirror and on national radio.

2. Research

In order to maintain media interest we commissioned an in-house service called Ask-chilli to conduct a survey on behalf of the Little Star Fund. This was produced at minimum cost and dealt with SSIA holder's attitude to money and charities. The famous illusionist Keith Barry agreed to launch this for the campaign and it was well received by the media being covered in six national papers.

3. Media Partners

Pembroke secured a media partnership with the Irish Daily Star. This aided the campaign in securing further free advertising space and also coverage of any upcoming events that they had. They also agreed to run features on behalf of the charity. It is estimated that the Star gave over €150,000 worth of media space to the LSF and will fully get behind the Little Star Day (see phase 3)

4. Sports Events/Mascots

As part of our awareness campaign, Pembroke utilised our contacts with Irish sports organisations such as the FAI and GAA to secure a presence at major events. Mascots at various sporting events were arranged through the FAI and GAA. These included the first game of the season between Dublin and Tyrone in Croke Park which was the first ever game under lights and with an attendance of 82,000, Steve Staunton's first match against Sweden and numerous other sporting occasions such as the Ladies Gaelic Football Final. The charity was announced to the crowds and a full colour page with details on the charity and how to donate was secured in the programme.

5. Ray D'Arcy's Marathon Run

In order to promote the charity, Today FM DJ, Ray D'Arcy agreed to run the Adidas Dublin Marathon for them last October. This provided over 20 corporate partners and raised over €100,000. This was supported by an aggressive media campaign including press and television interviews for Ray and a photocall announcing the initiative.

The Evening Herald acted as a media partner for Ray's run and they agreed to highlight this in the run up to the marathon.

Standard Life also came on board as a corporate partner by supporting any employees that ran in the marathon. The amount raised by the runners was matched by the company and it secured over €20,000 for the campaign. Again the Evening Herald agreed to support these runners and featured them before the marathon.

6. Tug-o-war

Little Star Fund's Battle of the Media Giants Tug-o-War took place between media rivals Today FM and TV3. The purpose of this was to raise awareness for the charity. The event received coverage on radio, television and in national newspapers

Phase three – The Final Stages

During this stage the final SSIA accounts will mature. In order to capitalise on this we have implemented an extensive media campaign in a number of ways.

The campaign was devised so that it would come to a crescendo in March/April 2007 with a burst of awareness, wide ranging local and national coverage and a strong call to action.

Partnership with Pat the Baker

Through the creative input of Pembroke Communications, Pat the Baker, has agreed to wrap one million sliced pans in April with the Little Star Fund logo, details on the charity and a strong call to action. This will not only raise awareness for the charity but increase its profile in the public's mind. A press release and photocall will

be organised to announce this partnership and unique marketing idea. A business story in the Sunday Business Post was organised and sports stars Malcolm O'Kelly and Ciaran Whelan agreed to attend the photocall. Changing the loom of a bakery's packaging was a marketing first. (see appendix)

Regional and National Features

As regional newspapers and radio stations are becoming increasingly important, Pembroke is placing features in various publications across Ireland. The families used will be from the constituency so as to create a news angle for the paper and follow up with local radio. It is crucial to emphasize that the four charities were national charities so numbers were attained to underline this fact.

Centra Art Competition

Pembroke worked closely with Centra to devise a nationwide art competition which was launched in April 2007 with Don Conroy in the Hugh Lane gallery.

The mechanic allows children all over Ireland to compete in an art competition. The top 12 entries would be used for a calendar which will be sold with all proceeds going to the Little Star Fund. Centra launched this nationally and locally and put up posters in every store around Ireland and this helped considerably in raising even more awareness.

TV Advertising

Pembroke and our sister agency QMP worked tirelessly to try and secure advertising free of charge. QMP drafted and scripted TV ads and Brown Bag Production created an ad for free. Pembroke then liaised with all the TV stations in Ireland and secured FREE space on Setanta, Living TV, Channel 6, SKY and E4 at the time of writing. In addition, we secured free ad space from the Carlton cinema group. We cannot put a figure on how much this was worth, but we do expect it to be in the hundreds of thousands of euro. What is important to note is that this did not cost a penny.

Little Star Day

At present we are in discussion with Today FM's Ray D'Arcy and patrons such as Grainne Seoige to launch the first ever Little Star Day. This day will run in conjunction with the final SSIA accounts that will mature on April 30th. We hope to generate not only awareness of the charity, but also raise funds for its needs. It is expected the Little Star Day will continue in years to come, leaving a lasting legacy and keeping up the work that has been started. Longer term, with the relocation of the National Children's Hospital, having the charities work together is a template for the future.

D. The Measurement Stage

The campaign has been so successful that the charities are looking to continue to work together after the SSIA's have matured.

The work of the four charities was also highlighted.

As a direct result of the campaign the childrens' hospitals came together recently to arrange the 98fm Radioathon – the first of its kind in Europe. Which was a by product of the Little Star Fund, also raised over €600,000. We are not counting this in the

funds directly raised for the Little Star Fund. (Note: Barretstown did not take part in this as it is not a Children's Hospital)

Already over €250,000 has been raised by the charity with 70% of SSIA accounts still to mature. We fully expect that by the end of the campaign, the charity will have reached its target of €500,000 and more. In addition, donations have been promised that will come to fruition in 2008.

We secured constant coverage for the Little Star Fund through features in the national papers and after close monitoring, we discovered there was a direct correlation between the time the features appeared and an increase in donations. This shows the value of PR and publicity and the direct link with donations which was extremely useful.

There were a number of "firsts" in this campaign. It was the first time the charities in question worked together, the first time a Little Star Day was organised and the first time an Irish company used its packaging to support a charity in such a novel way.

We discovered over time that several corporate partners sought us out as their nominated charity. This showed that our awareness was high.

We secured a huge amount of free media space in advertising terms for the charity. We were struck by the generosity of the TV stations, production companies and ad agencies that all deserve credit.

The charity managed to overcome the potential problems associated with the re-location of the National Children's Hospital through clearly communicating that the charities were working together and that the new hospital would not be ready for at least seven years so funds raised would be of huge benefit to Irish children. The charity managed to stay in fact despite their being disagreements over this issue and this has actually made it stronger.

E. Budget

We were given an over all budget of €30,000 to include fees and all third party costs for 14 months. Pembroke worked on a significant discount of up to 60% on fees as part of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility.

F. Appendix

Included:

- Press releases
- Press cuttings
- Sample Adverts
- Pat the Baker draft packaging
- Centra school's letter
- Testimonials
- Sports Programme
- Disc including radio advert, TV advert and TV script