



AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2022**

Best Communications Campaign by a Registered Charity



Harry Greenen (9) and his dog Rocky pictured in Greystones Co Wicklow taking part in Pieta's Darkness Into Light 2021, proudly supported by Electric Ireland. Picture Andres Poveda

Campaign

Pieta, Darkness into Light 2021

Description of Campaign

During a year where COVID-19 restrictions inhibited an official walk from taking place, Legacy Communications strategically worked with Pieta to pivot external constraints, creating a powerful movement that broke PR records and achieved a 37% increase on fundraising objectives, raising a total of €7.4 million through online donations.



Public Relations Consultant

Legacy Communications



Client

Pieta

Background to the Campaign

Pieta is Ireland's leading suicide-prevention charity and as its flagship fundraiser, Darkness into Light 2021, was set to be a campaign like no other. Now a national and global movement, Darkness into Light is an annual fundraising walk that helps shine a light on suicide and self-harm while raising vital funds for Pieta's lifesaving services.

On May 8th, 2021, for a second year in a row, the traditional Darkness into Light walk had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 as there were restrictions on the number of people that could gather. This threatened Pieta's main fundraising avenue at a time when the demand for mental health services was in huge demand across the country.

Using the new creative platform, 'One Sunrise Together,' an ambitious target was set to drive public donations and retain registration numbers, as well as instilling brand and sponsor awareness with Electric Ireland, and position Darkness into Light as an iconic movement, bringing people together mentally, but socially apart in 2021.

Legacy Communications, Pieta and Electric Ireland collaborated to deliver a record-breaking fundraising year amid the COVID-19 drawbacks by appealing to the Irish public through informative, educational, innovative, and emotive content that was translated across TV, radio, print, digital and social channels to three target demographics, male/female 18-24yrs, female 30-35yrs, and mature parents 45-60yrs.

Pieta's Darkness into Light allowed Legacy Communications to flex various PR touchpoints that would not only cut-through the noise but make a long-lasting impact on people's lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement of Objectives

As Pieta's flagship fundraiser, Darkness into Light 2021 took place during unprecedented times and had to be an event like no other. The key goal was to drive awareness for Pieta's services, increase donations to the charity and position Darkness into Light as an iconic national movement, bringing people together mentally, but socially and physically apart during the year that was.

Alongside aiming for blanket media coverage around the event, there were supplementary objectives set out to achieve maximum exposure and campaign success:

1. Increase donations to Pieta from Darkness into Light by 10%.
2. Increase Darkness into Light awareness and drive #OneSunriseTogether messaging.
3. Increase sponsorship association (prompted awareness) of Electric Ireland for its sponsorship of Darkness into Light.
4. Build on PR coverage with a focus on national radio and TV.
5. Drive 200,000 Darkness into Light registrations on the island of Ireland, delivering 25% (50k) of these by April 1st with the remaining signed up before the event on May 8th, 2021.
6. Deliver a digital first initiative to increase awareness and encourage participation among the younger male/female 18-24yrs demographic.
7. Use campaign ambassadors to maximum benefit, publicising Pieta's social channels and campaign hashtags across all content.

Programme Planning and Strategy

As Darkness into Light is traditionally a social event where people come together, it was imperative that considerations were made as to how people's habits had adapted to spending time and the restrictions imposed by pandemic regulations. At the time, everyone was exercising alone and within their own 5K and there was nothing to suggest that those regulations were going to ease at any time. Legacy needed to consider people's new habits; how they received information, how they reacted, how they conversed with colleagues digitally and how they planned to take part differently in Darkness into Light 2021.

Through observations and consumer research it became apparent that while some people found solace in the natural, silent countryside, many listened to their favourite music or podcast as an escapism or a foundation to ground their thoughts. Aside from its entertainment value, music is known to have incredible positive effects on our brain. It can change the way we act, feel, and think, and trigger particular emotions, memories, and thoughts, often leading to more positive mental wellbeing outcomes.

By using this platform and tapping into the cultural insight surrounding music and positive mental health, we married the two together to create pockets of storytelling opportunities and elevation tactics to seed out over a six-week period through editorial and partner channels.

We engaged our three core audiences, male and females 18 -24, female skewed 30 – 35 and mature parents 45 – 60, to educate, excite and position Pieta and Electric Ireland at the forefront of mental health through an impactful communications strategy.

We also utilised our ambassadors, by creating consistent, eye-catching content to generate a positive affinity and conversation online, encouraging User Generated Content along the way.

In order to achieve our objectives and goals, Legacy mapped out a clear tiered approach using SMART principles that would utilise all touchpoints and assets available:

1. Media Relations

All three target audiences were considered within the strategy of the campaign. Legacy Communications proposed and activated an extensive media relations campaign. Legacy amplified editorial reach by pinpointing key talking points throughout the campaign from launch right through to event day and beyond, strategically uplifting key moments throughout to drive registrations and donations.

Central to this was the profile of Pieta representatives, ambassadors, and service users to portray their stories across The Late Late Show takeover, radio soundbites, interview opportunities, and standout photography that drove affinity and talkability with the unique yellow t-shirts.

2. Ambassador Activity

Ensuring engagement with high profile and relevant ambassadors was key to this campaign. It was essential that there was a wide range of ambassadors present in the campaign in order to reach each of the three key demographics. Ambassador engagement with Louise Cooney, Caroline Foran, Lawson Mpame, and Jack McGrath played a key role across social and media. Each of the ambassadors had their own personal reasons for becoming involved in the campaign and supporting Pieta. The authenticity of these ambassadors played an essential role in ensuring the campaign retains true to its cause. By telling their own stories, each tapped into various demographics to drive awareness, encouraging high-profile names to join the conversation like Laura Whitmore, Robbie Keane, Chris O'Dowd, and Donie O'Sullivan.

3. Media Partnerships

Bringing in back in the insight that people find a positive solus in music and knowing that people would be walking alone due to COVID-19, Legacy partnered with Today FM to curate a downloadable Darkness into Light playlist and pre-promoted with ad placements, ambassador interview, native articles, and digital support. Legacy also partnered with TheJournal.ie to promote service stories and take a deep dive into what the charity offers in the form of online and direct therapy.

4. Social Amplification

Content was king for the younger demographic, so Legacy partnered with social media giant Snapchat to educate, excite, and position Pieta front of mind using video adverts, handing people an opportunity to join with trackable swipe up links to register. This spurred on a wave of organic content creation, and UGC on May 8th.

5. Corporate Engagement

With many professionals working from home, Legacy created a smart, effective way to generate awareness and encourage registrations with branded meeting backgrounds. Partnering with six artists, James Crombie, Fatti Burke, Tracey Sweeney, Enda Bowe, Chris Judge, and Paula McGloin, Legacy worked with each artist to develop eye-catching meeting backgrounds depicting 'One Sunrise Together' with 'text to donate' graphic overlays as a direct CTA. The meeting backgrounds were used far and wide by multi-national companies and SME's both at home and abroad.

Measurement

The campaign generated millions in earned media coverage as well as key opportunities to see or hear about the fundraiser through TV, radio, social and digital publications.

- €7.4 million raised for Pieta in 2021 – a 37% increase in donations from 2020.
- 400+ pieces of editorial coverage:
 - > The Late Late Show takeover.
 - > 4 TV pieces on RTE News, Virgin Media News, Ireland AM, RTE Today Show.
 - > 4 front page photographs with extended captions.
 - > Multiple radio interviews, soundbites, and live reports across Pat Kenny Show, RTE Radio 1, KFM, Newstalk and regional stations.
 - > Dedicated radio show with Crossy and Emma on FM104 on May 8th with representative interviews.

- Total campaign reach of 25million+.
- 38% of coverage included Electric Ireland mentions.
- 98% of coverage included key campaign imagery.
- 40+ interview placements with Pieta representatives and campaign ambassadors.
- #1 trending social conversation on May 8th #OneSunriseTogether.
- Blanket print and online coverage on May 9th with imagery and commentary from brand ambassadors.
- 460k visits to the DIL website between March 31st – May 8th.
- Snapchat was the second highest social media driver to the DIL website with 47,533 swipe ups from the target audience, also generating 5.6million impressions as part of a digital partnership series.
- 99,942 Instagram feed posts generated for the public using the dedicated campaign hashtags.
- The four exclusive Pieta ambassadors (Louise Cooney, Caroline Foran, Lawson Mpame & Jack McGrath) achieved over 280k in Instagram reach alone.
- Over 4.7million impressions across digital partnership with Today FM and The Journal.
- Corporate artist collaborations with James Crombie, Fatti Burke, Tracey Sweeney, Enda Bowe, Chris Judge, and Paula McGloin to create meeting backgrounds generated 77% increase in website traffic.

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