



# A Great Idea

## *NACA Better Communicates Its Message by Changing Its Name*

### Communications

#### **Summary**

The National Association of Child Advocates (NACA) officially changed its name April 21, 2003 to Voices for America's Children. It did so to better communicate what it and its members do to the public, policymakers, funders and the media. The new name and new website, which was launched the same day, are a better reflection of the network's efforts to speak out for children. Since the name change decision was announced in June 2002, four members have followed suit and several others are considering doing so as well.

#### **Background**

For years, NACA staff noticed that many people had misconceptions about the organization when they heard its name. It was hard for foundations, reporters, and the general public to fully understand the organization's mission and its purpose. People often thought NACA was either a group of individual case advocates or just another Washington bureaucracy. The staff realized that the organization's very name planted the wrong idea in people's minds.

In June of 2000, NACA published *Voices for America's Children: The Progress and the Promise* which provided an overview of the child advocacy movement, the need for state and local child advocacy, and the work of the NACA network. The publication and its name were well received, as many felt they concisely described the work of NACA and its members.

After more than a year using the phrase "voices for America's children" as a tag line, NACA's leadership began to understand why its members in Alabama, Connecticut, Illinois, and Nebraska were already using variations of the Voices name. Thinking NACA might need to follow suit, staff conducted research and presented its findings to NACA's Board of Trustees. The decision was unanimous - NACA would become Voices for America's Children.

#### **Key Elements**

- ◆ In early 2002, staff conducted research on the name change. The research included web and telephone listing searches to determine if other organizations were using similar names and video interviews to gauge the public's response to NACA's current and potential future names.
- ◆ NACA secured an organizational effectiveness grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation to help support various elements of the name change process.
- ◆ A trademark attorney providing significant pro bono assistance was retained to provide legal services for trademarking and other matters.
- ◆ NACA hired a public relations firm specializing in nonprofit branding to develop the new logo and provide promotional support.
- ◆ The website, already being redeveloped, prompted NACA to delay the change in order to identify with the new web/email addresses and use the new logo in its design.
- ◆ NACA notified the Internal Revenue Service, the D.C. Department of Employee Services and other entities of the name change.
- ◆ NACA began using the term "voices for America's children" in verbal and written communication, including on its postage plug, in a more directed way to help set up the coming change. Additionally, a postage plug stating "formerly NACA" was purchased for use following the actual change.
- ◆ New materials were developed such as letterhead, business cards, notepads, a new door sign, banners, etc.
- ◆ Postcards were mailed to all of NACA's contacts - foundations, media and national organizations - announcing the change.
- ◆ Key publications, like *Youth Today* and *Connect for Kids*, were strategically targeted with articles and announcements of the name change.

### *Staff Time*

- ◆ One staff member spent approximately 1 hour conducting web and telephone searches on switchboard.com and developing interview questions while two more spent approximately 8 hours each conducting the video interviews.
- ◆ Another staff member spent approximately 4 hours investigating possible website domains.
- ◆ Senior staff, including the President, spent approximately 14 hours following up and researching member concerns.
- ◆ One staff member spent approximately 20 hours developing the grant proposal and finalizing a workplan with the PR agency.
- ◆ One staff member spent approximately 40 hours working with the trademark attorney and completing paperwork required by the IRS, the state of incorporation, state(s) in which the organization is soliciting funds, Employment Services, etc.
- ◆ Three staff members, again including the President, spent approximately 40 hours working with the PR firm on the new logo, materials and media outreach.

### *Things to Think About*

- ◆ Voices took great care not to lose the equity built into its old name. It is printing "Formerly the National Association of Child Advocates" on most of its materials. It also provided a forwarding link for people who used the old web site address, and forwarded e-mail sent to staff members' old accounts to their new accounts.
- ◆ Voices was realistic about the costs involved in the name change and provided itself with a financial cushion for unexpected costs.
- ◆ There are a number of creative ways to communicate such a change. See the February 2003 *A Great Idea!* to learn about a creative strategy to introduce it to state legislators implemented by Voices for Virginia's Children.

### *Costs*

- ◆ Public relations firm: \$30,000 (included logo and materials design, additional research, media contacts, a review of NACA's audiences, editing, etc.)
- ◆ Publication masthead re-designs: \$1,600.
- ◆ Announcement postcard printing: \$600.
- ◆ Costs for printing new letterhead, envelopes, etc. were not included as the organization would have had to purchase that material anyway.

### *Outcomes*

- ◆ The organization has received positive feedback about the new name and logo.
- ◆ Staff report there has been less difficulty explaining the organization's mission to the media, potential funders and the public.
- ◆ Many of the organizations within Voices' network are changing or considering changing their names thereby underscoring the presence of the Voices' network nationwide.

### *Member Organizations that Changed Their Names:*

- ◆ Voices for Virginia's Children (Kathy Glazer)  
**Kathy@vakids.org**
- ◆ Voices for Florida's Children (Jack Levine)  
**jack@floridakids.org**
- ◆ New Mexico Voices for Children (Bill Jordan)  
**Billjordan7@yahoo.com**
- ◆ Voices for Utah Children (Karen Crompton)  
**Karen@utahchildren.net**

### *Contact Information*

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