



# A Great Idea

communications

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## Partnering With Public Television on Health Issues

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

Contact: Rhonda Sanders, Director of Health & Legislative Affairs,  
rhonda.sanders@aradvocates.org

Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (AACF) and local PBS station AETN united to address the poor health status of Arkansas's children by focusing on a single at-risk group: Hispanic children. Arkansas has the fastest-growing Hispanic population in the country and these children suffer a disproportionate amount of poverty. The groups produced 11 public service announcements for television, radio and print in both English and Spanish.

### Key Elements

#### *Funding*

AACF and AETN jointly sought and received a grant from the Benton Foundation, which promotes the value of communications to solve social problems. The grant required a partner from the business community; Tyson Foods, Inc, a Fortune 500 company based in Arkansas, agreed to provide another grant and received recognition as a partner in the project.

#### *Content*

- 11 short rap songs like "Think Before You Stink" (anti-smoking) and "Talk to Someone" (depression).
- Five child issues (Insuring the Uninsured, Dental Care, Diabetes, Immunizations, Obesity) and six adolescent issues (Alcohol Abuse, Body Image, Risky Behavior, Depression, Smoking Cessation, Asthma)
- Local area school students participated as actors in the television spots.

AACF assisted AETN in developing the content—one of the hardest parts of the project was narrowing the health information into 30-second messages.

## *Talent*

AETN contacted local rap artist Al “Papa Rap” Lopez for help creating rap songs in English and Spanish. Lopez later performed at health fairs put on by AACF’s local partners, where campaign print materials were also available.



## *Partners' Roles*

AETN provided the creative element, and produced and aired the television spots. AACF provided technical support and the underlying health information, and also contacted health fair organizers and other distribution venues.

## *Staff Time*

An AACF staff fellow (and doctor who served children in the Hispanic community) acted as project consultant to ensure accuracy of health information. AACF’s Director of Health and Legislative Affairs also contributed to the project. Their work averaged a few hours per week over the one and a half years from conception to completion.

## **Results**

The campaign was a hit. AETN received national and international recognition for the PSAs with three awards in 2004. Health Raps successfully reached its target audience on Arkansas television and radio, at health fairs, through health educators, child-care providers and workshop participants, and via direct mail, print ads, and feature articles.

See <http://www.aetn.org/healthraps!>