

Catholic Health: WomenCare “Helping WomenCare Flex Its Muscles”

Research & Planning

Catholic Health is a non-profit healthcare system that provides care to Western New Yorkers across a network of hospitals, primary care centers, imaging centers and several community ministries. In June 2012, Catholic Health launched **WomenCare**, a new service line which focuses on all aspects of healthcare, but specifically for women and their families. It includes a microsite which serves as a one-stop, comprehensive source of information where women are invited to use a search engine tool to “ask anything” or find a doctor, offering access to expert opinions without having to leave their house.

Catholic Health sought help from Travers Collins (TC) in extending the buzz and word-of-mouth promotion surrounding the WomenCare launch through a debut event. The event would celebrate the introduction of the WomenCare program while also demonstrating Catholic Health’s desire to encourage better health and wellness.

Research played an important role in exposing the appropriate audience to the debut of the WomenCare service line. Women are responsible for 80% of healthcare spending. It was crucial to select a physical activity which not only encouraged a healthy lifestyle but engaged as many of these key healthcare decision makers as possible. Yoga was selected due to its overwhelmingly female [participation rate](#) (with 72.2% of those practicing yoga in 2012 being women) along with its growing popularity and trendiness. It was also important to position WomenCare as the total healthcare experience for women and their families, and yoga seemed like a natural fit as it’s a means to achieve total body health and wellness. As a new service launch, the first **Yoga in the Park** event was an ideal offering in an effort to garner as much potential media coverage as possible. Buffalo never hosted an outdoor, community yoga class of the proposed size (150-200 participants) which added an exciting angle for local media.

The overall goal of the campaign was to raise awareness and extend the promotional push for the WomenCare launch. Supporting objectives:

- To meet our mark of 150-200 participants with a specific focus on target publics, including women aged 18-64 who use the internet.
- To increase the number of unique visitors to the WomenCare microsite.
- To garner media coverage positioning WomenCare as well as Yoga in the Park as a Catholic Health exclusive experience.
- To offer an alternative outdoor and physical fitness event as opposed to the common run and walk events which crowd the typical summer calendars.

Research was also conducted to establish a list of local yoga instructors who would serve as moderators for the event as well as recruiters. The instructors would presumably encourage students in their individual classes to attend the event, therefore providing additional turnout. In an extra effort to boost attendance, promotional posters were placed in places where target publics who likely enjoy practicing yoga spent time.

The total client budget for this engagement included \$13,700 for public relations and account services and \$10,600 for creative services which included the design of promotional posters, event signage and email blast template.

Execution

As a first-time event, Yoga in the Park had many logistical challenges. Delaware Park, the flagship of Buffalo’s renowned Olmsted Parks System, was chosen as the event’s backdrop. Fourteen instructors from well-known yoga studios were recruited to lead the community class.

Travers Collins maintained constant communication among all 14 yoga instructors in the hopes of organizing a yoga class suitable, yet engaging, for all skill levels. A relationship was also established with

Wegmans, a large Western New York grocery store chain, to secure a donation of granola bars and water for all participants.

The promotion of the event was largely based on street and word-of-mouth marketing. Posters, which encouraged passerby's to join the excitement of the inaugural event, were deliberately hung in area hot spots that enjoy a high level of foot traffic. Area boutiques and coffee shops in Buffalo's trendy Elmwood Village, suburban Village of Williamsville and North Buffalo were all targeted. The poster also informed of the complimentary WomenCare-branded yoga mat for the first 300 participants as well as how the proceeds would benefit the Neonatal Intensive Care Units of two area Catholic hospitals.

TC informed a larger audience by tapping into the event's yoga instructors, too. Each yoga instructor was provided with promotional posters to display in their studios in addition to an email blast which offered another opportunity to share with their unique followers to attend in support of them.

During the event, TC ensured Catholic Health had a prominent platform to educate participants on WomenCare through a welcome greeting as well as a prominent presence of event signage in the registration tent. Attendees were also invited to approach the event emcee, Aimee Gomlak, vice president of the WomenCare service line, with specific questions on how they could personally take advantage of the program offerings.

The weather forecast called for rain, which certainly could have dampened enthusiasm for this initial offering.

Results & Evaluation

In a rare error for Buffalo meteorologists, the weather for Yoga in the Park was sunny and in the low 70s. More than 250 participants gathered in Delaware Park for the inaugural event and raised over \$3,700 for local Neonatal Intensive Care Units in Buffalo.

The first-time event was able to secure advance media coverage due to the popularity and visual nature of yoga. *Winging It! Buffalo Style*, a lifestyle show on a CBS affiliated channel, promoted Yoga in the Park by featuring a chosen instructor as well as Gomlak demonstrating several yoga poses. Buffalo.com, a Buffalo News sister site, featured the event in an article that previewed outdoor summer yoga classes.

In the words of Gomlak, "Yoga in the Park served as the perfect platform to re-launch the WomenCare service line. It gave us a captive audience of people within our target publics and exposed them to the unique offerings of our newest service line."

The local CBS and ABC affiliates both covered the event with interviews from Aimee Gomlak, of Catholic Health, who was able to speak to WomenCare as Western New York's only comprehensive program specifically for women.

The exceptionally visual event also enjoyed a prominent picture in the following day's edition of *The Buffalo News* on "The Picture Page." The photo succeeds in capturing the popularity and success of the event in that it shows rows and rows of yoga enthusiasts performing the same position simultaneously.

Due to Yoga in the Park's overwhelming success, participating instructors immediately offered to share their talents for future Catholic Health events and proceeded to give glowing reviews. "It was flawless and I think people really enjoyed themselves. Please keep me in mind for next year," said Stephanie Limoncelli-Vealey of Blue Sky Yoga.

The WomenCare microsite saw a 500% increase in page views in the two days following Yoga in the Park. During a time when outdoor runs and walks fill social calendars, Catholic Health was able to break from the monotony by bringing an exciting and never-been-done-before event to Buffalo. Yoga in the Park with a beautiful back drop exposed over 250 new people to the many benefits of the WomenCare service line.