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Great public relations doesn't happen by itself - by Stanley Hurwitz

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Quick quiz question: What is the first and oldest public high school in America?

Hint: It's in Boston.

Answer: The English High School (EHS), my alma mater, celebrating its 200th birthday on October 2nd. The school's mission remains today as it has always been: To provide the children of working class and immigrant families a solid educational foundation, to prepare them for lives of 'honor and achievement.' Among well-known alumni: J.P. Morgan, Leonard Nimoy, and Herb Chambers.

The Alumni Association Board kicked off birthday plans with several goals: (a) promote the virtual celebration, (b) reconnect with as many "missing" alumni as possible, (c) polish the school's image, and (d) launch a \$1 million fundraising campaign. Although EHS has over 17,000 living alumni, the association lost track of contact information for some 9,000. They retained me as PR consultant.

This assignment would benefit from my years of experience in marketing /PR on behalf of business, education and non-profit clients. I have strategized and managed publicity for independent schools and helped to create excitement for fundraising events, often involving speakers such as Coretta Scott King, Henry Kissinger, Sen. Ted Kennedy, and special guests like Cardinal Sean O'Malley and singer Peter Dinklage. For 10 years, I used the promise of meeting celebrities to attract 1,000 volunteers to phone-a-thons at a Boston hotel. Over the years, volunteers got to meet the likes of Gov. Michael Dukakis, legendary wrestler Killer Kowalski, Rico Petrocelli and many more.

A favorite project was a ribbon-cutting for a developer client's new furniture store where owner Warren Buffett was the special guest. I posted the photo of us talking with the caption "World's richest man chats with the world's poorest man.'

To call attention to the fact that one primary goal of EHS's Alumni Association is to locate lost alumni ahead of its bicentennial event, I created a news story with the eye-catching headline "Boston high school launches The Great Missing Alumni Hunt." The lead paragraph said, "There are 9,000 people missing, but there's no need for the authorities to issue any missing person reports or all-points bulletins." The story was published in print and online and resulted in radio interviews.

(See www.englishhighalumni.org)

No matter the business or organization, experts recommend that businesses budget 5 – 10% of revenues to marketing/PR/advertising. Top execs should run their business and leave creative PR/marketing to a proven pro. Let's talk: stanhurwitz@gmail.com. My motto, "Great PR doesn't happen by itself."

Stanley Hurwitz is the founder of Creative Communications, Plymouth, Mass.

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