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ROTARY CAMPAIGN EARNS TOP CHICAGO PR AWARD

By Greg Hazley

Rotary's International's "This Close" campaign featuring public figures emphasizing the group's push to eradicate polio won top honors at the Publicity Club of Chicago's annual Golden Trumpet Awards today.

Rotary's PR unit, which is based in the Evanston, Ill., recruited participants from a range of cultures and industries, including Bill Gates, Queen Noor of Jordan and violinist (and polio survivor) Itzhak Perlman, for the public service campaign. Rotary, after 25 years, says it is on the brink of eradicating polio and is using the PR push for awareness and fundraising.

PCC said 172 entries were submitted for this year's Trumpet competition, the 53rd annual event. Dave Somlensky, COO of Resolute Consulting and president of PCC, said the record number of entries is a good sign for PR. "Communications activities are a leading indicator of the economy, and optimistically the significant response [we] received this year is indicative of the recovering economy," he said.

Top creative honors at the Trumpets went to the Lincoln Park Zoo for its ChimpCare educational iPad app. The Allstate Foundation and Fleishman Hillard earned the Jeffrey D. Bierig Brand Builder Award for enhancing and promoting a brand, earning recognition for the "Purple4 Purple: Domestic Violence Awareness" effort. And Public Communications Inc. and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago earned the Edwin J. Shaughnessy Quality of Life Award for the top campaign noted for improving the quality of life.

Edelman (Hilton HHonors), GolinHarris (Dow Chemical) and Altabull (vascular scaffold) took home Golden Trumpets for international PR campaigns, while new media honors went to MSL Chicago (Chevrolet), Henson Consulting (Land O' Frost lunchmeats), Edelman (Slim Jim) and the Lincoln Park Zoo.

Michelle Flowers Welch, CEO of Flowers Communications Group, won the club's lifetime achievement award for 2012.

Chicago-based SJ PR earned Golden and Silver Trumpets for its work with the Illinois Organ & Tissue Donor registry. SJPR and Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Network earned silver in the events category after it launched a nationwide and local media relations campaign with the brother of former professional boxer Francisco "Paco" Rodriguez, whose organs were donated after he died following a 2009 bout. Rodriguez's brother, Alex, served as Gift of Hope spokesperson at the 2012 Rose Parade and appeared on a float that featured a "floragraph" portrait of Paco made of floral materials.

SJPR also held a press conference and garnered 156 media placements overall in top Hispanic and general market media outlets, driving 2,421 newly registered organ donors.

The firm won gold in the special events category for its Gift of Hope work focused on National Minority Day Awareness Day. A media event at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago included a tree-planting ceremony and Cook County Commissioner Robert Steele as spokesperson for the event, drawing media attendees, professional medical staff and other influencers like donor recipients and families.

That push garnered 107 media placements in targeted Hispanic and African-American media outlets and added close to 3,000 new organ donors to the Illinois Donor Registry, the firm said.

Complete list of winners is at www.publicity.org/.

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