

**2005-2006 Club Achievement Report, Public Service  
Austin Advertising Federation  
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**Introduction**

Public Service Question of the Year:

*What do you do when your club's "Premiere Public Service Client" nearly goes under from almost too much success?*

Answer: Don't walk away, but hold your client accountable to your recommendations for rebounding.

That's what happened with the Austin Advertising Federation and the Sims Foundation, which provides low- and no-cost mental health services to Austin musicians and their families. That story and its valuable "lessons learned" are described below, along with details of better-than-ever results generated by the Austin Ad Fed and its other 2005-06 public service clients – the Hill Country Ride for AIDS and Art From the Streets.

**Public Service Objectives**

1. Provide a firm hand to the **Sims Foundation** as it reorganizes by not allowing deviation from advertising tactics that will help diversify the nonprofit's funding sources.
2. Support the **Hill Country Ride for AIDS** (HCRA) as it strives to reach its biggest challenge ever – raising \$500,000 for people living with HIV/AIDS in Central Texas.
3. Rally more Austin Ad Fed volunteers around **Art From the Streets** (AFTS) after waning support over the last several years.
4. Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to Ad Fed members.

**Objective 1 Achieved: Grammy-Winning Musician Ray Benson Rallies Fellow Sims Foundation Board Members to Commit to Fundraising**

*Background:* After interviewing several prospective clients, the Austin Ad Fed took on the Sims Foundation as its premiere public service client for 2004-05. That year, Ad Fed volunteers contributed market research, a new brand identity package, and an ADDY-winning musician outreach poster series. [exhibit **Sims Posters**] In addition to the Ad Fed

support, Sims also generated more community interest thanks to its successful 2004 outreach campaign and the establishment of the “Health Alliance for Austin Musicians,” which provides comprehensive health benefits.

Because of all the activity, requests for Sims services in 2005 increased more than 50 percent over 2004, and with that success came the financial strain of serving a larger client base. So, at the conclusion of the Austin Ad Fed’s promised one year of advertising assistance, we knew we couldn’t walk away. In June 2005, we decided to continue our service to Sims with the caveat that anything we produce must support significant fundraising efforts. We laid out these terms in a presentation to the Sims board of directors on June 16, 2005. **[exhibit Sims Fundraising PP]**

*Sims Reorganizes:* Over the next several months, Sims placed a moratorium on patient services to assess capacity for accommodating the increased demand, and the Sims board and staff were reorganized. Meanwhile, the Ad Fed and Sims continued to negotiate the terms of working together in 2005-06. We knew Sims is successful at reaching out to musicians, but has very little awareness and understanding among Austin’s affluent and influential (aka: potential major donors). Sims currently receives some 90 percent of its funding as the beneficiary nonprofit of the KGSR “Broadcasts” CD sales. **[exhibit KGSR Broadcasts CD]** That kind of reliance on a single major funding source – one that is never guaranteed for any given year – is worrisome to the Ad Fed, so we have worked hard to encourage Sims to explore new fundraising alternatives.

The Ad Fed agreed to continue to help Sims only if its board committed to diversifying its income. We insisted they employ significant fundraising tactics, including a high-profile concert gala that would serve as the nonprofit’s “debut” to potential major donors. We also asked Sims not to waste their time or ours on insignificant endeavors – like “bowl-a-thons” or tip jars at bars – that don’t target major funding sources. To demonstrate their commitment to our strategy, Grammy-winning musician and Sims board president Ray Benson made a presentation to the Ad Fed board in October 2005. Joining him were Sims’s new executive director and development director, who presented our board signed commitments to fundraising from each of the members of the Sims board. **[exhibit Sims Board Commitment]**

*Work Resumes:* Once our 2005-06 partnership was formalized and Sims's moratorium on services was lifted, the Ad Fed announced to its members the continuation of the relationship and called for volunteers. **[exhibit Sims Volunteer email]** A newly formed Sims Public Service Committee convened in January 2006, and is working with Sims to develop a comprehensive marketing plan. **[exhibit Sims Marketing Plan]**

Some outstanding projects initiated in 2005 have resumed, including a new stationery package designed by LatinWorks and printed pro bono **[exhibit Sims stationary]**, a redesigned newsletter, and a refreshed web site. Project briefs have been initiated for a fundraising video and package. **[exhibit Sims newsletter, web reprints]** The Ad Fed continues to advise Sims on fundraising initiatives and will support the proposed gala by creating a theme, invitations and posters.

Other recommendations for 2006 include increasing Sims awareness among the general Austin population with a television PSA **[exhibit Sims TV spot]** and a trendy promotion akin to the "LiveStrong" wristband of the Lance Armstrong Foundation. Of course, the call to action for all advertising and marketing is "if you do anything to support Austin music, give to the Sims Foundation."

*"We are readying ourselves for taking SIMS to the "next level," and we are very aware that we wouldn't be doing so at the current rate without the sincere interest and support that we have seen in all of the Ad Fed volunteers."*

*– Emily Erickson, Sims Development Director*

*Lessons Learned:* Because of the experience with the Sims Foundation, the Austin Ad Fed has learned some valuable lessons that can be passed down to its future leaders and shared with other American Advertising Federation clubs:

1. Scrutinize a nonprofit's financial stability before committing the club. Has the organization been audited recently? How diverse are their income sources? Although we reviewed the Sims budget before committing in 2004, and set a goal of increasing their income by 10 percent, we were unaware that the 10-year-old

Sims Foundation had never been audited, or how an increase in patient load could threaten the organization.

2. Work closely with the nonprofit's development leadership from the start. Ask about development plans before you commit. Do they have strong, stable leadership? Does leadership know what they're doing when it comes to real fundraising?
3. Get a written commitment to marketing goals from the nonprofit's leadership before you begin work.
4. Don't get talked into creating materials that don't support the nonprofit's primary goals.
5. Don't walk away if the nonprofit runs into financial trouble. Realize that the advertising community has tremendous power to contribute to a rebound. We look forward to sharing that rebound story for Sims in 2007.

**Objective 2 Achieved: HCRA Fundraising Spikes By \$40,000 in '05 and is Poised to Reach \$500,000 Goal in April '06 Ride**

*Background:* The Austin Ad Fed tapped the Hill Country Ride for AIDS (HCRA) as its premiere public service client in 2003-04. HCRA is a cycling event that distributes funds to 10 local nonprofit agencies that provide basic services like health care, food, clothing and counseling to some 2,500 Central Texans living with HIV and AIDS. Our original agreement was for one year of work, but the Austin advertising community has rallied around HCRA as a favorite cause and is now in its third year of collaboration.

The results have been stunning – both artistically and financially. HCRA was already the largest AIDS/HIV fundraiser in Central Texas when the Austin Ad Fed came on board in 2003. However, illustrating the power of public service advertising, our campaigns have helped HCRA increase fundraising by 56 percent since 2003. We know more riders means more money raised, and have helped HCRA increase ridership by 85 percent from 175 riders in 2004 to 325 in 2005.

In our first year, the “Hill Country Ride for AIDS” was considering renaming the event simply the “Hill Country Ride.” The Austin Ad Fed conducted research that showed supporting the AIDS/HIV cause was the primary reason riders participated. So we

recommended keeping the name intact, created a new brand identity package (now in its third year of use), and continue to feature real people and their personal reasons for riding in our materials. The redesigned logo appeared in the 2005 CA Design Annual. **[exhibit HCRA 2005 Campaign collateral]**

Results of our approach were immediate, with funds raised spiking 42 percent from \$290,000 in 2003 to \$412,000 in 2004. Our second year campaign bolstered another \$40,000 increase to \$452,000 after the 2005 ride. Overall, fundraising has increased by \$162,000 (or 56 percent) since we began working together in 2003. On the creative side, the Austin Ad Fed's work for HCRA has won ADDYs every year, and the 2005 Campaign appears in the 2006 HOW International Design Annual.

*“Before our relationship with the Ad Fed, not many people even knew about the Ride. Because of the excellence of the work, every year more and more people know about us. The materials created by Ad Fed members have captured the unique spirit of the Ride in a way that not only continues that spirit, but grows it, and makes the Ride a more powerful experience for everyone who rides, crews, and donates.”*

*– David C. Smith, Director, HCRA*

*Biggest Challenge Ever:* HCRA threw down the gauntlet early this year when it announced its 2006 goal of raising \$500,000 with the April 29 event. **[exhibit 11]** While that calls for a \$48,000 increase over 2005, early results are promising. Two months out, over \$70,000 has already been raised, which is ahead of this time last year. The Austin Ad Fed's work for HCRA this year has been heartening, with a committee of 11 volunteers producing a stunning new campaign. **[exhibit 2006 HCRA Campaign]** The creative, which continues the “What Moves You?” theme, was produced by nFusion, with photography by Ad Fed President Scott Van Osdol, web site by Ad Fed webmaster Don Roach, Convio, printing donated by Horizon Printing, media relations by EnviroMedia, and paper donated by XPEDX of San Antonio. Guerilla marketing was a new tactic this year, with HCRA ribbon promotions looped over bike handlebars at events like the Austin City Limits Music Festival and passed out at art street fairs on South Congress Avenue. **[exhibit HCRA guerilla marketing photos]**

### **Objective 3 Achieved: Two Dozen Volunteers Help AFTS Break Sales Record**

*Background:* After seven years of support for “Art From the Streets” (AFTS), participation by Austin Ad Fed members in promoting this annual art sale fundraiser had dwindled to one person. AFTS provides a safe and encouraging environment for Austin’s homeless to work on art. The effort culminates every November with a two-day show and sale that features the work of some 100 homeless and formerly homeless artists. Proceeds help the artists with food, clothing, medical care and housing. This year, Ad Fed volunteers rallied around the cause like never before with an AFTS campaign that rivaled the strength of our Hill Country Ride for AIDS and Sims Foundation campaigns.

*Unprecedented Support:* The Ad Fed’s AFTS committee’s 24 volunteers rose to the occasion in a big way, providing everything from direct mail to a fundraising calendar and even promotions for the screening of *Art From the Streets: A Documentary* produced by Ad Fed member Layton Blalock of Elephant Productions. Deliverables also included print ads, a brochure, posters, and fliers for a guerilla marketing campaign. **[exhibits AFTS Campaign collateral]** Wide-ranging support came from volunteers and services from White Hat Creative, Dandy Idea, Scott Van Osdol Photography, TGSL, Ginny’s Printing, O-K Paper, Hispanic marketing Strategy, Elephant Productions, GSD&M, Big Daddy’s House of Sound, The Peters Group, Communication Werks, EnviroMedia, St. Edwards University, and the University of Texas “Texas Advertising Group.”

*“The Show & Sale places a spotlight on the talents of Austin’s homeless community, who are often seen in a negative light. By drawing attention to their creativity and hard work, we’re helping them improve their quality of life by generating financial resources that can help them get off the street.”*

*– Bill Jeffers, volunteer co-director, AFTS*

*Highest Sales Ever:* During the November 5-6 show and sale, a record-breaking \$80,000 in art was sold to some 1,500 attendees. Those sales represent a 30 percent increase over 2004, and include some \$4,000 in revenue generated by sales of the Ad Fed’s calendar. Ad Fed volunteers also generated more than 20 print and Internet news stories and 18 minutes of broadcast coverage. **[exhibit: AFTS press clipping book, Art Sale photos]**

**Objective 4 Achieved: Provide meaningful volunteer opportunities to Ad Fed members.**

*Background:* “Give it away, it comes back” is this year’s new brand message for the Ad Fed volunteer campaign. It seems to resonate with our members: volunteer numbers are up 100% over last year; we have a committed, capable new volunteer coordinator; and we see one or two new volunteers sign up every week.

Providing meaningful volunteer opportunities is one of our most successful membership recruitment and retention tools. Our members feel engaged, make new friends and professional contacts, learn new skills, produce portfolio pieces, and earn the chance to win ADDYs while donating their professional skills to deserving non-profit organizations. Many volunteers are new to the Ad Fed, and join after their experience working with our Public Service teams.

We promoted the brand message with an email broadcast directing people to new web pages that describe our public service campaigns. The homepage features a new “Get Involved” button, and our highly trafficked web Job Line contains new Volunteer Opportunities listings for each of our three public service campaigns. Volunteers can sign up by emailing committee chairs directly from the project descriptions. **[Exhibit: austinadfed.com Volunteer Pages]** The web homepage has a link to the newsletter subscription form, which has a space for people to volunteer. The form is sent to several officers, including the volunteer coordinator, who contacts potential volunteers by phone and email. In each newsletter the Letter from the President speaks to the value of volunteering, with hyperlinks to the volunteer web pages **[Exhibit: newsletters]**

The response has been overwhelming, with several dozen new volunteers steered to pro-bono campaigns. We get one or two new volunteers per week off the newsletter subscription form. It’s been a bit of a task, hooking up all the new requests with ongoing committees. Fortunately, after several failed attempts, we finally found a highly motivated and effective volunteer coordinator. The coordinator also works closely with the university ad club’s volunteer coordinators. The end result is an unprecedented number of new

volunteers working on club projects like the ADDY Awards and our public service campaigns. **[Exhibit: Volunteer List, HCRA, AFTS Contact Lists]**

### **Conclusion**

Our 2005-06 public service story is an interesting one. We're sticking with a nonprofit that's in fragile financial condition, reinvigorating our commitment to long-time public service partner Art From the Streets, and are working to take the hugely successful Hill Country Ride for AIDS to the half-million dollar mark. This real-world combination of successes and challenges is a great reminder that successful public service is not about hitting home runs at every turn. It's about compassion, counsel, willingness and commitment.

Not only have we helped three critical Central Texas nonprofits raise well over half a million dollars, we're making a real difference to our members and our community. We provide great volunteer opportunities to our members. We're helping to give back to the music community that's so important to Austin's economy, providing practical resources to help the homeless get back on their feet, and improving the reach of an organization that provides health care, food, clothing and counseling to Central Texans with HIV and AIDS.