

## Los Angeles Children's Charity Receives National Recognition for Public Relations

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(PASADENA, CA)— Year over year, the finalists for PR News' Nonprofit PR Awards raise the bar for doing well by doing good, and 2009 was no exception. This year's finalists, which represent industries and interests as diverse as organ/tissue donations, influenza preparedness and hunger prevention, overcame economic, social and political barriers to deliver results that exceeded even the loftiest of expectations. Hillsides, a foster care children's charity serving families in Los Angeles County, including Pasadena, was among the winners at the Nonprofit PR Awards held at the National Press Club in Washington D.C.

"Hillsides is extremely honored to be recognized in such a meaningful way. Foster Soles is the brainchild of dedicated staff and Board members who care deeply about the foster children in our care. Foster Soles is yet another way for Hillsides to support our mission of creating safe places for children," said Nancy Garni, the children's charity director of development.

PR News' Nonprofit PR Awards Luncheon saluted the winners and honorable mentions of the Nonprofit PR Awards. This must attend industry event honored the most talented communicators and teams in the nonprofit sector. Hillsides was the winner in the Event PR category and was a finalist in the PR on a Shoestring Budget category.

The statistics surrounding foster care in America are staggering: More than 500,000 children are in foster care nationwide, with more than 102,000 in California alone. What's more, 40% of former foster care youths end up homeless within 18 months of discharge. To combat this rampant problem, Hillsides sought to generate interest within the entertainment industry. The hook: Foster Soles, an online auction in which the public would be able to buy shoes donated (and autographed) by a host of celebrities.

To generate interest in Hillsides Foster Soles, the PR team conducted aggressive media outreach, with specific tactics including social media presences on MySpace and Facebook, blogging, an e-mail newsletter and a landing page on the charity's web site, [www.Hillsides.org](http://www.Hillsides.org) with tracking identification. Each individual effort was fully optimized with strategic keywords.

Then, the team tapped into Hillsides board members and volunteers who had celebrity connections. A board-sponsored kickoff event at Bar Celona in Pasadena was the crown jewel of promotion efforts.

"Thanks to a team effort and our effective communications strategy, Hillsides Foster Soles received 68 pairs of autographed shoes from the likes of Elton John, Billy Joel and Denzel Washington. The efforts also resulted in a 76% increase in traffic to Hillsides' Web site, and \$9,500 in funds for its residential program," said Marisol Barrios, the children's charity director of communications and advocacy.

According to PR News website, the communications professionals behind each and every one of these campaigns once again prove that the power of PR can transcend the most challenging limitations to help communities around the world.

To learn more about the foster care charity, visit [www.Hillsides.org](http://www.Hillsides.org).

As a Pasadena foster care charity founded in 1913, Hillsides creates safe places for children at risk and their families by providing residential care, mental health services to break the cycle of domestic violence, special education, and advocacy. To learn more about Hillsides, visit [www.Hillsides.org](http://www.Hillsides.org).

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