

Help Us Help Your Kids

Political Action Campaign

“If anyone understand the diverse needs of groups like ETT, it’s the expert staff at Stratcom.”

Martin Long
President

Elementary Teachers
of Toronto

The Client



The Challenge

In spite of widespread criticism of its education policies, the government of Mike Harris felt little need to respond to charges that underfunding was wrecking the province’s public schools and driving away teachers.

The Solution

The opposition was largely uncoordinated and reactive, but the Elementary Teachers of Toronto, using opinion research and communications strategy from Strategic Communications, set out to provide a focus for province-wide campaigns to overturn the cuts.

‘Help Us Help Your Kids’ (rolled out in the fall of 2002), was a unique campaign in which ETT members showed up at one school after another with local parents, a giant mobile billboard, and campaign literature to highlight crumbling, mouldy buildings, silenced music programs, and staffing cuts. In the helpful glare of local TV cameras and on a dedicated website (www.fairfunding.ca), the campaign exposed the government’s

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false claims about the state of the city's schools, the state of the classroom environment, and most importantly the state of parent concern. 'Help Us Help Your Kids' demonstrated the growing ability of parents and teachers to make common cause in fact as well as in theory, thereby laying the basis to make education a key election issue.

The Results

With a clear focus on funding and the recommendations of the Rozanski report, the campaign was renamed ('Vote for Fair Funding'), re-organized (for targeted political action) and rolled out in 2003 in two vulnerable Conservative ridings in Toronto. There, with a visible campaign presence by the elementary teachers and concerned parents, the Liberal Party reaped the benefits, winning both seats in the 2003 provincial election. ❖



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