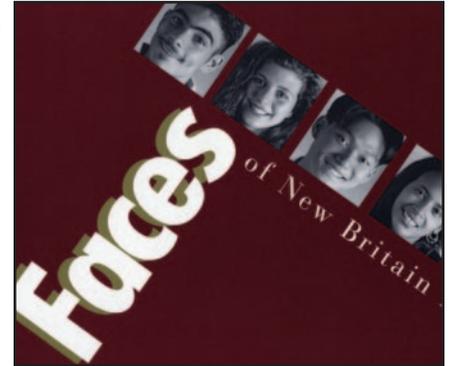


New Britain Public Schools



Challenge:

A school district faced the challenge of serving a student population that represented one of the most diverse ethnic, social and economic urban communities in the state. Over the years, community concern had mounted over the safety and quality of the public schools. A number of factors, including the deterioration of some facilities, incidents of gang-related violence at the schools, and overcrowding due to the temporary closing of a middle school contributed to the negative perception.

Solution:

First Experience Communications produced a special series of three brochures and a poster that would have a long shelf life for reuse and flexible distribution. These communication vehicles were used to enhance the public schools' image throughout the city, and especially among these key audiences:

- families, particularly home-buyers, moving to the community;
- parents of fourth and fifth grade students choosing between a parochial and public middle school education;
- parents of students entering high school choosing between a parochial and public education
- city businesses, legislators and civic organizations.

In consideration of these audiences, the project was specifically designed to:

- depict a progressive school system that serves the needs of every student through innovative curricula and high-quality facilities;
- raise awareness of school resources and opportunities;
- present the district's unique diversity as a source of strength and pride;
- promote the schools' advantages through first-person testimonials from students and families representing the city's ethnic mix;
- ensure readability by keeping copy to a minimum and highlighting compelling photography.

Results:

As a result of distribution of the brochures and poster, 60 families chose to withdraw their children from parochial schools and enroll them in the public schools. In addition, a survey indicated growing satisfaction of middle school parents about the schools; 29% more parents felt schools were safer and 25% felt the learning atmosphere was better than compared to the previous year. At the high school, the dropout rate fell from 10.8% to 9.2%.