

## PHILANTHROPIC BUSINESS OF THE YEAR (PRIVATE)



### R & R PARTNERS

Since its inception in 1974, advertising, public relations and marketing firm R&R Partners has emerged as the largest creative agency in Southern Nevada, with 175 local employees, and a companywide total of some 350.

While R&R regularly receives recognition for its memorable and award-winning campaigns, the firm is also quietly yet equally committed to supporting charitable organizations and causes that improve the quality of life on a broadly sweeping scope.

But rather than simply throwing money at a problem in the hopes of spontaneous resolution, the folks at R&R base their philanthropic efforts on teaching nonprofits to think creatively and strategically in a way that also provides R&R employees with an enriching hands-on experience. This is achieved primarily by in-kind donations of time, talent and services, according to Jim King, principal and chief financial officer with R&R who also serves as chairman of the R&R Partners Foundation, which was established in 2008.

"R&R has been in business almost 40 years, and throughout our history in Las Vegas and other markets we have been an active supporter of the community, providing in-kind creative and marketing services to numerous charities since day one," King said.

Case in point: Opportunity Village, which has been a pro bono client for three decades.

"We've been working with R&R Partners since I joined Opportunity Village 30 years ago," said Linda Smith, associate executive director of the organization, which provides services for Southern Nevadans with intellectual difficulties. "Company principals Sig Rogich and Billy Vassiliadis were responsible for the largest promotional button order ever in our nearly 60 years, when Opportunity Village was tasked with manufacturing 250,000 buttons for the Reagan/Bush re-election campaign, which put a lot of citizens with disabilities to work. I got a personal call from the White House and hung up because I thought it was a joke."

More recently, the folks at R&R have been helping Opportunity Village with a campaign to celebrate 60 years of serving the Southern Nevada community, and also helping the organization raise funds for a campus that will include housing, an employee training center and a specially designed park.

Other pro bono clients include Three Square, Catholic Charities, the Andre Aggasi Foundation for

Education and the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, which R&R recently overhauled from top to bottom, even changing the name from Clark County Legal Services to better reflect its mission of the preservation of access to justice and the provision of quality legal counsel, advice and representation for individuals who are unable to protect their rights because they cannot afford an attorney.

"R&R adopted us and taught us how to better tell our story with a focus on the relatable human side, instead of communicating like lawyers," said Barbara Buckley, executive director of the organization, adding that R&R Partners also helped the center raise funds for a new facility, despite the economic turndown. "They've been our angels. We just don't have the talent to do what they do, and we can't afford to pay them and take money from our mission, so by stepping in they have helped us serve more of the community in need."

While in-kind donations account for the lion's share of R&R's philanthropic outreach, the agency also supports internally driven initiatives that target specific causes of concern to company employees.

This includes R&R's statewide "Flip the Script" anti-bullying campaign, which was the brainchild of agency CEO Vassiliadis. Designed to heighten awareness and ultimately reduce the cycle of bullying in the community, Flip the Script launched in 2011 with public service announcements in print, radio and television, direct support from Gov. Sandoval, collateral including stickers and posters and a 90-minute Nevada-wide Town Hall meeting.

"We are not close to declaring the Flip the Script campaign a success," Vassiliadis said. "There continues to be too much bullying and too much violence in our schools and among our youth. While we are proud of helping to drive awareness and identifying programs to confront this issue, much of the credit actually belongs to the many high school kids that have gotten involved. We're also especially gratified by the support of dedicated companies like Cox, the Kish Foundation, NV Energy and the Nevada Broadcasters Association, who have made a lot of our efforts possible."

Since the R&R Partners Foundation began tracking giving five years ago, R&R has donated services valued at \$9.1 million. Last year alone, the agency donated 15,000 hours of employee work with a value of \$2.25 million to more than 20 charities in the eight cities where it maintains offices.

—By Danielle Birkin



R&R Partners, and its 175 local employees, are involved with a multitude of nonprofit organizations in Southern Nevada. The employees receive a hands-on experience with the charities, primarily by providing in-kind donations of time, talent and services.