RESULTS – Global Campaigns – National Webinar

Closed Captioning Transcript

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Joanne Carter, Executive Director: You have been doing amazing.  We don't have to wait for magic new technology.  It is whether it is a priority.  The good news and challenging news is the plan to make this a priority in congress, to put key reforms and strategy, rests with a small group.  There is a large group signed on.  We drive this priority.  You have generated the majority of media, co-sponsors, now we need to take it to the next level for greater media and getting congress to weigh in personally.

We need to be doing this work, and also need you in the conference in June.  Our collective ability in June will determine whether this bill goes to law.  I don't know the exact number, but I think if we can get a dozen members weighing in, we can push this over the top.

We have a great guest from the editorial editor.  It is critical to push the administration.

This gentleman has been a wonderful friend and ally in Connecticut, writes many editorials, runner up in a national contest, has several awards from 9-11, his work has appeared in many places.  I think he blows us away with his comments.  John I know you were at a conference.  I wanted to share a quick story to remind us of the work we are doing.  I want to talk about Grace who was new to RESULTS last year in Memphis.  She came to the media training.  Has never been published, but wanted to make a difference.

She met with the editor, who never wrote at that time.  She asked to do an op-ed and wrote a beautiful one with a personal story and a congressional request.  It was published in December 11, 2014.  On the 14th she heard from her member of congress.  Representative Cohn said he learned about Reach from the op-ed.  I think this is a wonderful example.  Grace and others met with the editor and shard that letter from the congressman.  It is a lesson about not always sharing the impact of some of these things with the journalists we work with.  John, welcome.  We are working with editorial boards.  An array of issues.  Can you talk about your inspiration?

John Breunig: A lot of communities are committed to community news.  Next to my RESULTS award is the first copy in 1829.  I am a student of waves of change.  From local, trying to bridge to the international.  I can speak from a news side on that.  Editorial pages, a lot of editors, are not educated enough.  It scares them.  This editor learns from the op-ed.  Issues of hunger hit home for everyone.

We actually have a letter from one of the members about the Reach Act in tomorrow's paper. It wasn't hitting me at this time, it was a Friday and we were doing a big anniversary project. it's not really about you guys, but it frustrated me a little bit; if you read our edit, we all have different takes on it. Personally, I am a little afraid that people say "oh homeless numbers are going down." On any given night in January you find 1000 homeless children - that is local. There is local homeless children in our towns. It's local and it is international. We can talk to people from any political party, and they will care if you are getting their attention. It's tough to get their attention. People come to us with letters or push for editorials. People on this call know the hardest thing to do is get the editorial. If it's not resonating as quickly in a local school or anything, the challenge is proving to them that those things are related.

Additionally I think we reach out to things like churches to find out if there is anyone in the congregation that is affected by a loss on the other side of the planet. I tend to think of you as journalists because you are out there trying to collect stories and facts, and data. You are on the side of angels, and most reporters are. If you can find those people with the stories to tell in your community, you do have people in your towns and around the globe, and you can make those connections to help persuade the editor as well.

Carter:  This is great, if you are trying to pitch an editorial, you have really helped trying to answer the question that is in the chat box now that is from Craig Roshaven. They declined to write about domestic issues, like ways that we are able to reach the Reach Act, by finding stories or people. Other thoughts about helping people write about things that they are willing to write about, but they feel like they don't have the space or capacity to do so? Other ways or other tips to get editorials?

Breunig:  You're better at this than a lot of other writers, there's a pile on my desk from people that handwrite letters. What does that mean?  That means I have to translate the handwriting or type them in. I usually try to do that, because they are passionate enough to sit down and handwrite the letter. This means it takes more time though. People often pay attention to the bells and whistles, and it's possible that these people don't have the program you have. Some people may not have word, and they think to cut and paste the type. It's worth asking, I saw a case the other day, saying that they don't have space on the page but they will put it on the web. These days, it's a lot of what I'm doing today, I also offer e-edition. It is something to catch up on, because the cost of producing a paper can be more expensive and there is less print readers. We do have people that's going to want to read the traditional prints on their tablets or phones. This means we have unlimited capacity. I can always put them in the e-edition, and we do do that. We have put in extra pages that only go to those transcribers. Graphics help, photos help, photos of yourself don't hurt to send. Some people don't like that thumbnail photo of the people writing the letter- I talked to some members here on this and I enjoyed a comment that Bill Baker made, he wrote an op-ed and he ran it in one of our papers, and I told them well actually one paper ran as an out bed and one ran to the editor. We kind of changed the game board. He doesn't care, you care that you got your product into the paper and your message out. You always want to be careful, but editors are guilty of this; I see someone locally writing about something, and I see in the next town over someone is writing the same thing. Your instinct is thinking it's not original, "who wrote that?"  Editors tend not to run those. What gets the attention?  Keep it simple so you can grab it, if you're not getting attention for an out bed, they can be pretty effective, if you write one one day, and someone else writes one another day; they will pay attention to it, it's a snowball.

Carter:  Those are great, really specific and appreciated. Do we have folks where we can unmute and asked them questions?  Yes people can use the chat box, and you can unmute your lines where you can ask questions of John's. If you have questions, go ahead and unmute yourself to ask John. We have time for a couple of questions, don't be shy.

Question: What is your thought about submitting things that are linked to a time event?

Breunig:  Evergreen is good . . . and everyone is pumping out papers set for Saturday and Sunday. Friday is a bad day. If you say Monday morning can we chat, talk over coffee. Monday will always be better. It always goes downhill during the week. Also, during political season, everyone writes letters. It goes on for months. It goes on in September through November. Then it drops off a cliff. People are thinking about holidays and people are not interested. I wondered seeing what you guys did at the conference last year, if you ever write letters about just your experience there and if meeting with Congressmen is beneficial. You live in your community, you are entitled to voice that and make it personal. Do some storytelling like that. It doesn't always have to be timed. That's a good time when there is no holidays floating around.

Carter:  People from California said that people used this to hook the paper to lobby, it's a great hook that you flagged it and used it to make a link about what local people are doing and to make it more real. Another question?

Question:  People often say they don't have time for meetings. It's people scrambling around from day-to-day. What is a good hook to get a meeting?

Breunig:  Every editorial is a different personality, the editorial page editors have different personalities; they know the community and can voice opinions. If you are just not making any progress, I can't get them on the phone; they never pick up the phone. You have to be very careful with email, I'm sure you train people on persistence. Persistence is everything. I have three or four separate spam buckets that I'm tracking down to see if there is things in there that I missed. But you can also send me a letter and I will think "this is great, I will run this." I will make note of this on the computer and a week later I will have forgot and missed opportunity. I will have local celebrities that will write things, but it just slips past you. One thing you might try to do is don't rely on that editorial page editor. There's columnists, some are news columnists, and some have religion pages. If you reach out to the columnists, and you write about the work you are doing - you are the local hub, if they can see that. They have a lot of readers. If you read it from the columnists instead of words from the stranger. I appreciate your pain, it's hard to get your foot in the door. We are writing editorials, editing letters, I physically put that together. It's a lot of colliding together.

Carter:  Thank you for sharing John, I know it's hard for even you to get editors on the phone. It gives us a little perspective on that, and the value of persistence. I think that's about time. I feel like we can talk to you forever, again, I feel like when you spoke at the conference last year I feel like it was one of the most powerful conversations I've ever heard from a journalist. I appreciate all of your passion. How do we keep getting this stuff there?  I love that after the election, there is dead space for each of us to get work through the end of the year. Any final thoughts?

Breunig:  This is random, I'm thinking about something Ken said to me the other day, and a message I want to communicate because it feels like you're in a vacuum. The project I've been working on could not be further from what you folks do. It's the city's anniversary and I'm doing a project about people in history, famous names, who have passed through this town. This week I'm writing about cartoonists. Flash Gordon, is what I'm doing, Ernie Bush is who Nancy did. The first line is "being one of the lesser ones in the united features, I sometimes have the feeling that no one knows I exist." It's from Charles Schultz. Peanuts had started two months earlier. The thought that Charles thought that he's never going to reach his audience, he thought he was sitting there and failing. He reached a bigger audience than anyone could possibly hope to reach. There is a lesson there in persistence. Also, keep in mind I write all the time, it helps. We just acquired a paper near Connecticut, I was writing some editorials for them last week, when I wrote one about a local issue; I had some suggestions. It was refreshing for me to see it in there the next day. . . . it helps that I knew I could make a difference.

Carter:  This is a little bit of a decision tree, is your member a cosponsor?  If not, the next is to ask the Congress member to sponsor this legislation. We are trying to get Democrats and Republicans. If your member isn't, keep trying. If you're cosponsor is and a member of the act, we will ask them to talk of the house of foreign affairs committee. On the Republican side that is [indiscernible] Royce, he is quite sympathetic to these issues, and we want to make sure his caucus members are hearing from him. On the Democratic side it is Eliot Engel, another member that we have worked closely with on tuberculosis. We want his members to reach this as well. As you can see, there are few bills this Congress doesn't support. We look for to seeing a lot of you at the International Conference where we will be talking about this and specific strategies to move this bill forward. We bowled double on these strategies. Thanks very much, I will turn in this over to Ken.

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Breunig: keep marching forward, do great work.

Carter: I will now turn over to John Fawcett, but I hope to see you at the conference.

John Fawcett: Ken, can you advance the slides?  I want to talk about where we are with the Reach Act, and where we are headed, and the progress we have made.  Since the introduction we have focused on co-sponsors.  We have done a tremendous job.  In addition we will reach out to leadership, Chairman Royce and the democratic ranking member.  To flag this issue so that they hear directly from colleges about the importance of passing this.  First, the sheet number of co-sponsors.  136 is a lot.  Even as those numbers rise, we have kept this bill balanced with republicans and democrats.  Over 40% are republicans.  A number of democrats.  We focused so much on early strong republican support, and are missing some important democrats.  A few folks like Ellison from Minnesota, Rosa DeLauro.  We finally convinced her we joked, because she has been a fan for years.  I also want to note that it is not just the number of co-sponsors, but strong representation among house leadership.  The policy committee chair, others.  80% of the deputy whip team.  These are the kind of leadership that help us move forward.  The horizontal axis is all the bills in the 114th congress.  There are over 70,000 bills.  The most cosponsors was 350 or something.  You see where that dot is, where the Reach Act is.  At 136 co-sponsors, there are about 100 that have more than the reach.

Ken Patterson: Thanks John, I will start out this call with Cindy Levin joining us. We have grassroots (board) vacancies opening up, we have three candidates. They are very important positions. Cindy, I will allow you to take over here and introduce our folks and tell us more about the position.

Levin:  Thank you, I am one of the grassroots board members. The important thing to know is that you, as active volunteers, can vote all the way up until Tuesday, July 5. That is the important date. We want to give you a chance to know these members. They're going to talk on the call right here. If you're coming to the International Conference, you will be able to meet the person and hear them speak. Tadeo Melean, Maxine Thomas and Charles Wallace, are you on today? We advise on major policies and we provide Judiciary oversight. Tell people who you are and where you're from.

Tadeo Melean:  Hi everybody my name is Tadeo. I am from Bolivia, I came to the US at age 9. I went to college at Stanford. The group that I founded focuses on US poverty. I first heard about this during a hunger fellowship program in Washington DC. That's when I learned about the importance of SNAP and all the other poverty issues. I changed the fellowship and had the opportunity to start a group here in Kansas City. In a couple of months I'm moving to Chicago where I plan on continuing with RESULTS. I'm starting a graduate program there. I want to do this because of my personal experience with poverty and I'm interested in increasing immigrants and people of color . . . I'm interested in researching how to build people power and how to engage in an effective grassroots policy. That's me, thank you

Levin:  Thank you and I'm sad I'm losing a grassroots member, is what I got out of that.

Maxine Thomas:  Hello I am with US poverty RESULTS. I joined in 2014 and that was my first international conference I attended. From there, I learned of the many issues that results were supporting and advocating on. When I was there in 2014, I was taken to the global issues because I didn't have an understanding on the domestic versus global. I had a passion to just have a voice for so many people across . . . issues on tuberculosis and fetal medicine. I felt like I needed to do something about it. The night before lobby day I learned about the issues in the United States that actually affect the earned tax credit and the child tax credit and the provisions were about to expire. The passion ignited even more. Those issues could directly affect my family if they were to expire. I went home to Indy and started a group for RESULTS after that conference. From there many opportunities for me opened up to come on the experts panel to share my story. From that opportunity, I've had even more opportunities that have really helped my community here in Indianapolis and across America; hopefully across the world, to meet so many great advocates. It was an honor for me to receive a nomination to join the board. I felt I had the tools that I needed to bring to RESULTS and to the founder. I just wanted to share a little bit about how advocates and what they mean to me. I'm looking forward to bring about change, so thank you.

Alright voting ends Tuesday, July 5, if you're going to the International Conference you may vote in person at the conference if you want to hear all three speak. Thank you Ken.

Patterson: Thank you so much, your experience and desire to serve. Charles Wallace who didn't join us today, is a former TB controller and a longtime RESULTS advocate. Scott Leckman did send out a place where you can go online and vote. There's a link right there. While it's fresh in your mind, you might want to consider voting now. I want to go ahead and continue in our Grassroots here by building on some of the comments from John Breunig, thought he was just fabulous. RESULTS does prep media better than any other organization that I'm aware of. There is a reason for that. There is a next guest here, she will tell us a little bit of her group. Misty I want to see if you are on the line here.

Misty Novich: Hi everybody this is Misty in Atlanta, Georgia. I just want to share a little bit of media work that we've done here in Atlanta. We have a journal called the *Atlantic Journal Constitution*. It's a conservative paper. Back in the fall, we were working really hard and we were trying to get a meeting with Rebecca Nantanda, a visiting pediatrician in Africa. We were having a lot of trouble with that. We left for messages for the editor. We just got a message saying that it wasn't local enough. We kept pushing like the Pope coming to town. We had more people media trained coming to town as well. We tried to get . . . a board meeting. This didn't go through either and nothing came through. It went on for months. We did get some traction with the Athens paper and the University of Georgia, but it was just a little too late. It wasn't local enough or there is no response at all. Nothing was working. Misha put on an event for world TB day, she wrote a letter and finally got it published. It was in the *Marietta Daily Journal*. We were excited about this. Later on I joined a protest against the KKK. I'm very friendly and I make a point to speak to media anyway. This one person that I did speak to didn't have a camera but he was a member of the AJC. When Sarah and Misha were both media trained and they put events on before Mother's Day. Sarah got published again. All this training and all this hard work and over time, we finally got an out bed with the AJC. It's because we sparked a conversation with a random person at a protest and not giving up. We finally got an out bed published. I was one of the people that graduated. I got one of my cohorts to write an out bed with me, and we finally got published. One of the lessons we learned is keep your relationships with people and journalists. Another one is we are the members of the community, we are the local story. Anything you do in the community matters. Last but not least, do not give up. Contacting the editor over and over again, he knew who we were. All this over time he did not give up. Good luck everyone.

Patterson:  Thanks Misty and thanks for all of your work that you have done. What I have heard there was relationship-building and skill-building, as well as persistence. Thank you for showing us what it takes. A lot of our papers are interested in what local people are doing. We heard that from John Breunig as well. The other part of this is I'm finding that papers are shorthanded as well. If you could submit a well written out bed and it has a link to local people, it will help them out in getting something published. In just the past week, we used Mother's Day as a broad link. Around Mother's Day, we had nine out beds and 16 letters to the editor published. At least 25 pieces of media were published on Mother's Day from our volunteers. Stay with it. The other thing I was going to suggest is we also have states where there is no media yet. We are still working on Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Nevada, Wyoming. We don't have any media on those dates yet. If you're feeling ambitious and you want to help get one of those states, a letter to the editor would be great. Willie Dickerson is the master of doing that. They find it very interesting that someone from out of state is looking at their paper. Consider that as well. I'm going to move on to the International Conference and talk a little bit about that.

It's coming up in five weeks that I want to share some highlights. We are having a flash sale this weekend, the early bird rate for volunteers is $125 before the rates went up after April. Just this weekend, you can register again for the same hundred and $125. The code is EARLYBIRD125. Register now and take advantage of the sale. Other things that are going on now, if you have folks in your group who are not coming for financial reasons, please let us help you out. We have financial support available fora range of needs.  Don't think that you are taking money. I encourage you to apply. We also have a couple of great workshops available. One (pre-conference) on group growth, and post-conference, an op-ed writing workshop to help us pivot the Global Fund replenishment. Join us for those, there I've included an International Conference checklist to use for preparing for the conference. You can also find this on the Weekly Update is a link to join. We want to know who is coming just so we know how many to expect. Those workshops do include lunch. Please use these for reference to prepare.

When you're setting up meetings for senators and representatives, make the request now. I've pointed this out last month, but right now there is a good chance that the House will be on recess during our visit to Washington. They may not be in Washington at that time. This is not ideal, but it shouldn't turn us. What we can do in Washington is make sure we develop that personal relationship with the policy aids and we could schedule a couple minutes to meet with your scheduler. . . . This person is a gate way to the schedule. Having that personal contact will help you.  It's a huge opportunity to get in with your senators. Please get in person with your senators while in DC. One of the other things here is we are accepting nominations for the Bob Dickerson Award. Bob Dickerson, for more than 15 years - from Seattle, Washington - was a grassroots volunteer. He was tireless in his advocacy and he was a generous financial supporter. Bob epitomized this the best of what it means to be a grassroots volunteer. Two grassroots volunteers will be awarded at the conference this year, and you can send your nominations to this email address - IC2016@results.org. We need those by June 11. In your nomination, tell us who you want to nominate and include how the volunteer has achieved the mission of RESULTS, why they are a powerful citizen advocate, and how they inspire you.

The next thing I want to do is talk about the fundraising opportunity that Joanne mentioned. We encourage your group to sign up for the Olympics-based Road to Rio Friends & Family Campaign. You and your group can help raise $50,000 through this online fundraising campaign. You can also bike, run or walk 5000 miles, the distance to Rio, to show our commitment to ending poverty. You will also see participation from Canada and the UK. At the IC, we will hand off the torch to UK. Set a fundraising target with your group. Set up your page on the website also, if you need support, Jen DeFranco can help you with that - she is at jdefranco@results.org. You can also find out more under the “donate now” tab or on the website. It would be wonderful if you had 30 or more groups doing this.

I do have an exciting announcement here. One of the donors has made an exciting a commitment the road to Rio commitment effort. I want to bring Pankaj Agarwal on the line to tell us more about what he's planning.

Agarwal:  I just wanted to address this briefly and let you know that for me, we can make sure that by 2030 poverty has ended and there's no one living under a $1.25 a day, or it's going to be business as usual. 2030 will come around in 2040 and we will still be lobbying our congressmen (sic). . . . We can collectively raise $35,000. I've set up my page and you can see it on the fundraising group page. I also wanted to let you know that whatever other resources we raise . . . can make a difference in the world. As Joanne said many times we want to make sure that no one lives on less than a $1.25 a day. We can put in this extra push. . . . Otherwise, after 2030 they will continue to make these calls. Let's make these calls today and get it over with. I hope you join us, and we will complete this campaign.

Patterson: Pankaj will match (our $35,000) with $15,000 - only because of the power of your advocacy will he do that. Our goal is to hit $35,000, if we can do the first 35,000 they will donate 15,000.

The last thing that we have is the laser talk. We’re not going to teach it today - we are running out of time. We have a laser talk to get familiar with this new request that we've got around to calling our leadership in the house to move the [Reach Act] forward in 2016. It's in the slides and website I encourage you to get to know this. Just in the past week I've had two people to have randomly run into their representatives. If you don't have this information down you won't be able to pull your laser talk out of your pocket. You need to internalize this information. Teach it to each other in the room today if you need . .

[Farewells]