

WORDHAMPTON

PUBLIC RELATIONS



SOLDIER RIDE

In 2004, an East End bartender, Chris Carney, decided to ride his bicycle across the country to raise funds and awareness for wounded soldiers. The ride was named Soldier Ride and directly benefited the Wounded Warrior Project, which meets the needs that injured soldiers face when they return to United States hospitals from war. The goal was to raise \$1 million, which would fund the backpack program, help fund visits from family members and create a job training and placement service for severely wounded soldiers. WordHampton's objective was to obtain as much exposure for Soldier Ride nationally as Chris made his way across country, thus generating donations.

WordHampton implemented a two-prong strategy: utilize media to gain as much exposure for Chris as he passed through each town, and create photo opportunities at smaller events such as visits to VA hospitals and VFWs. As Chris developed his cross-country route, WordHampton deployed outreach to media in each town he was passing through and arranged interviews, photo opps and visits to VA hospitals. As well three wounded soldiers rode a portion of Chris' ride with him in Colorado and Pennsylvania. A finale ride and party was set up at his final destination in San Diego, CA. Wounded Soldiers rode the last 10 miles with him as he approached the Pacific Ocean where he dipped his bicycle tire in the ocean (he dipped his back tire in the Atlantic Ocean when he began at Montauk Point) as momentous completion of the ride.

Soldier Ride was an amazing success, raising over \$550,000 and gaining the attention of major news network, FOX News, specifically Tony Snow. Fox News came on board as a media sponsor and distributed the message nationally on FOX & Friends morning show, the Tony Snow radio show and Neil Cavuto's show. Notable celebrities also publicly supported the campaign including Alec Baldwin, Bob Dole and Bill O'Reilly and also made monetary donations. As a result of the exposure several corporations came on board support WW programs with products such as Schick, Energizer and AT&T. The monetary donations and product donations enabled Soldier Ride to exceed its goal.

In addition, WordHampton has also successfully executed such events as Reader's Digest 10th Anniversary, Concours d'Elegance, Strides for Life 10K, Gimme Shelter Annual Benefit, Taste of the Nation, Great Chefs Dinner, Long Island Restaurant Week and Long Island Hospitality Ball.