

Levi's Launches Campaign for Harvey Milk High School

Razorfish and Other Partners Back Effort to Raise \$500,000

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Levi Strauss & Co. is launching the "Give Them Hope Now" campaign today to raise \$500,000 for the Hetrick-Martin Institute, a nonprofit organization that supports Harvey Milk High School. The New York school is dedicated to helping lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning students.

While Harvey Milk is a public school, HMI manages the facility and runs after-school programs and support services. Funds raised will go to the HMI Liquidity Reserve Fund, establishing a financial safety net for the organization.

"Levi Strauss & Co. believes deeply in the importance of equality, social justice, community involvement and corporate citizenship, and has a rich history of standing up for the rights of the LGBTQ community," says Robert Hanson, president of Levi Strauss Americas. "The Hetrick-Martin Institute, home of the Harvey Milk High School, is positively contributing to the lives of many LGBTQ teenagers, and we are proud to do our part to help raise money and awareness for this important cause."

Levi's worked with a number of partners on the campaign. Its digital agency of record, Razorfish, created the campaign's website, www.givethemhopenow.org. It also developed a digital effort -- with banner ads, e-mail outreach, social media and community outreach through Facebook and Twitter, pre-roll video and editorial coverage -- and it reached out to online publishers that have worked with Levi's, including AOL, Glam, Hulu, MSN and Yahoo

"We've put together a very impactful social media outreach strategy. We'll be reaching out to bloggers and like-minded organizations and people in the LGBT community," says Rob Toledo, senior account director, Razorfish, Seattle. "[The program] literally saves lives. These kids are in crisis; they've been kicked out of their homes. They have no one else to turn to."

"When you compare it to other schools, this school is highly successful," he adds, citing the school's almost 90% graduation rate.

In addition, Regent Media, owner of Out magazine and The Advocate, has given online and print media space, and photographers Jenny Gage and Tom Betterton have donated their services. The effort will include monthly fundraisers sponsored and hosted by celebrities, including Lance Black, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of "Milk."

The campaign is set to run through November or until all the funds are raised.

"We were really excited when Levi's came to us with this project," Mr. Toledo says. "This is relatively new for Levi's and for my team. We've seen a lot of great examples of using social media for raising funds for great causes. We'll actively keep the content fresh and new, and see that we give them the most up-to-date information about the campaign."

LGBTQ issues have long been important to Levi Strauss. In the early 1980s, the company began promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and education. Standing by its commitment to progressive employment policies and practices, it became the first Fortune 500 company to extend full medical benefits to domestic partners of employees in 1992. More recently, it was the only California company to file an amicus brief with the California Supreme Court in support of same-sex marriage and was co-chair of the Business Council for No on Proposition 8.

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