

RVAH2O Storm Drain Art Project

Local Market Media Relations



In 2016, marketing firm West Cary Group tasked Windy Campbell to assist them in media relations to help launch Richmond DPU's *RVAH2O Storm Drain Art Contest*. The media relations budget was \$7,000. Using the theme "It All Drains to the James," the project sought local artists to paint storm drains along the James River in Richmond, with a theme conveying the importance of keeping the river pollution-free.

In proactively engaging local news media, Windy Campbell sought to influence a variety of audiences, including Richmond residents and artists. Windy's media relations efforts were designed to: entice local artists to submit designs; raise awareness of the RVAH2O initiative and educate citizens of keeping streets and waterways clean; and encourage citizens to view the artists at-work, and the painted storm drains upon completion. Windy Campbell developed components of a media kit, to include the following:

- Press release: "City Seeking Local Artists for RVAH2O Storm Drain Art Initiative"
- Press release: "Five Local Artists Selected for City's First Storm Drain Art Project"
- Media advisory: "Mayor Jones, with Richmond DPU and local artists, to unveil completed Storm Drain Art Project"
- Bio's of selected artists – and their winning designs
- Maps of storm drain locations
- Photos of artists at-work on their storm drains

As a result, 55 artists submitted designs, exceeding the client's expectations in the project's first year. Six artists were selected to paint storm drains in July. Numerous citizens engaged positively with the artists at-work, as well as the completed drain art.

Windy Campbell also was successful in engaging with local media and secured significant local news coverage for the project. Over the three-month period, the project appeared in 17 news articles in local Richmond media. News articles about the artists, their designs and the location of the storm drains enticed the public to view the project. News media followed the project and photographed the artists at-work. Windy fielded multiple requests from media organizations to interview Richmond DPU on the project. Known circulation from these 17 news stories surpassed an audience reach of 900,000. Media relations results exceeded Richmond DPU's primary goal of reaching 20 percent (43,000) of the City's 215,000 residents with a water quality message.

NOTE: For this project, Windy Campbell received an Award of Merit in the Media Relations category from the 70th annual Virginia Public Relations Awards.