

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 18, 2013

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Community Renewal Team and Co-Communications win “Best in Show” at 2013 PRSA Mercury Awards

Regional agencies, corporations and non-profits take home trophies in the annual competition

HARTFORD—Community Renewal Team (CRT, based in Hartford) and Co-Communications (Farmington, CT/Mt. Kisco, NY) were named “Best in Show” at the 2013 Mercury Awards. The Mercury Awards competition is hosted by the Connecticut Valley, Southern Connecticut and Westchester/Fairfield chapters of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA).

Community Renewal Team won the Best in Show award in the tactical category for their revamped website (<http://www.crtct.org/>). Co-Communications took home the Best in Show honors for their nonprofit content marketing campaign, “Breaking the barriers toward degree completion”, developed on behalf of Graduate!CT.

In addition to the Best in Show awards, 38 trophies were handed out to winners in tactical and campaign categories. The awards were presented on Thursday, June 13, at the Pond House Grille by WTIC’s Joe D’Ambrosio. The Mercury Awards competition, now in its 18th year, recognizes outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing professions. This year’s awards were judged by a PRSA sister chapter from Alaska.

CRT also went home with another top honor, receiving Gold in the ‘Websites’ category for achievements in utilizing an interactive website to bolster and expand connections to CRT’s core audiences.

The website’s construction resulted through a partnership among CRT, East Hampton-based marketing consultant and web designer CPRdesignco and Lenox, MA-based Winstanley. CPRdesignco LLC, led by its principal communications consultant Cecil Phillips-Ritchey, worked alongside marketing agency Winstanley Partners and CRT staff on CRT’s agency-wide Integrated Marketing project that produced the revamped website along with a new branding portfolio.

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“This was a huge undertaking considering the technological components that needed building and the fact that we offer such a wide variety of services,” said CRT’s Director of Information Technology Joe Stanford. “The award proves that our collaborative efforts with our partners paid off and that the end product will benefit the community.”

Despite the site’s ease of use, it features approximately 250 separate web pages that offer concise program information, application downloads, workshop offerings and CRT site locations. CRT’s new YouTube channel is linked within the site—adding the agency’s first social media component and delivering videos about its programs, events and news highlights. Current plans are underway for launching a CRT Facebook page, continuing a trend to connect with multiple audiences and constituents in the community.

CRT is one of Connecticut’s largest human service nonprofit agencies, serving 130,000 families per year through more than 40 programs in approximately 60 towns. The robust new website offers quick navigation tools, expanded access to community resources and jobs, videos and key contacts for many services like energy assistance, Head Start preschool, food pantries and much more. The entire site, with the homepage www.crtct.org, is also completely bilingual (English and Spanish).

The Mercury Awards are hosted by the Connecticut Valley, Westchester/Fairfield and Southern Connecticut Chapters of the Public Relations Society of America and recognize outstanding creative and strategic work in the public relations, communications and marketing professions. The awards honor creative and strategic excellence and encourage outstanding performance in the communications field.

The Mercury awards were created in 1996 by the Connecticut Valley Chapter to recognize outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing disciplines. In 2004, all three Connecticut-based PRSA Chapters joined forces to make this a regional awards competition, reaching all of Connecticut, Western Massachusetts and Westchester County and the Lower Hudson Valley region in New York. Named for the Roman god of commerce and travelers - the messenger and guide of the gods - the competition is designed to honor creative and strategic excellence and encourage a higher level of performance. Information on the annual competition is available on the websites of the three PRSA chapters.

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See list below for all winners:

PRSA announces 2013 Mercury Award winners

The following awards were presented in the Tactical categories:

Best in Show

Community Renewal Team (Hartford, CT): Revamped website strengthens connection to core audience

Media Relations For-Profit

Gold: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): Clean energy communities program

Saver (Tie): Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Hartford Business Journal 40 Under 40

Silver (Tie): Georgetta Lordi Morque (Rye, NY): GolfPosturePOD

Media Relations Not-for-Profit

Gold: Family Centers (Greenwich, CT): Associate board's polar bear plunge

Newsletters – Print

Gold: Connecticut Education Association (Hartford, CT): *CEA Advisor*

Annual Reports Not-for-Profit

Gold: Family Centers (Greenwich, CT): Family Centers 2012 annual report

Brochures

Gold: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT): Is your building retroFIT?

Silver: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT): "Music Lessons" calendar 2013

Special Purpose Publications

Gold: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT): St. Mary's Episcopal School

Silver: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT): Connecticut College campaign brochure

Direct Mail/Direct Response

Gold: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT): Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital wish book

Video Programs

Gold: Robin Leedy & Associates (Mt. Kisco, NY): Santa style holiday video

Speeches:

Gold: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): First Niagara Walter Camp awards dinner remarks

Bylined Articles

Gold: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Appealing to high net worth individuals

Silver: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Communication planning in a real-time media world

Editorials/Op-Ed Columns

Gold: Mason, Inc. (Bethany, CT): Boost bottom line through energy efficiency

Research/Evaluations

Gold: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): CL&P/CEEF public opinion research project

Silver: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Understanding the challenges and opportunities for transforming education

Creative Tactics

Gold: Bauza & Associates (Hartford, CT): Latinos united for professional advancement

Silver: Mason, Inc. (Bethany, CT): The Great Give 2012

Websites – Marketing/External

Gold: Community Renewal Team (Hartford, CT): Revamped website strengthens connection to core audience

Silver: Connecticut Economic Resource Center, Inc. (Rocky Hill, CT): CT data collaborative

Websites – Online Media Room

Gold: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): MetroHartford Alliance

Digital Communication

Gold: Adams & Knight, Inc. (Avon, CT): Defend your income

Silver: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Co-Communications nonprofit hub

Blog – B2B

Gold: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Co-Communications blog

The following awards were presented in the Strategic Campaign categories:

Best in Show

Co-Communications (Farmington, CT/Westchester, NY): Breaking the barriers toward degree completion

Reputation/Brand Management

Gold: The Wire Association International (Guilford, CT): WAI membership 3000 testimonial campaign

Special Events & Observances 1-7 days

Gold: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT): Inaugural EnvisionFest

Silver: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): 2012 eesmarts student contest ceremony

Special Events & Observances Greater than 7 days

Gold: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): First Niagara De Novo branch openings

Public Affairs Campaign

Gold: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Putting nutrition on the agenda

Marketing Products and Services

Gold: Mason, Inc. (Bethany, CT): The UI Company: Residential energy efficiency programs

Silver: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT): New ARMOR rugged mobile computers

Crisis Communication

Gold: Mason, Inc. (Bethany, CT): Hospital shooting: what to do when the SWAT team and satellite trucks arrive

Integrated Communications For-Profit

Gold: Gaffney Bennett Public Relations (New Britain, CT): Environmental champion awards 2012

Integrated Communication Not-for-Profit

Gold: Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (Wethersfield, CT): CT DMV teen safe driving video contest

Content Marketing For-Profit

Gold: Mintz & Hoke (Avon, CT): Legrand healthcare capabilities

Content Marketing Not-for-Profit

Gold: Co-Communications (Farmington, CT): Breaking the barriers toward degree completion

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In its 50th anniversary year, Community Renewal Team, Inc. is the designated Community Action Agency for Middlesex and Hartford Counties and is the largest non-profit provider of human services in Connecticut. The agency's mission is Preparing Our Community to Meet Life's Challenges. The mission is achieved each day by helping people and families change their lives and create their own opportunities in becoming self-reliant while making sure basic needs are met. CRT's programs include Head Start, Meals on Wheels, energy assistance, supportive housing and shelters, and many others, serving people in more than 60 cities and towns in both our core catchment area and throughout Connecticut. Visit the NEW www.crtct.org today!