

## Hepatitis B Foundation hits the road to raise awareness

### STRATEGY

The campaign focused on utilizing social media to better reach Ellis' age demographic. "It was our first concerted effort to reach the younger folks," says Joan Block, executive director of the Hepatitis B Foundation.

Additionally, the team planned three major events, including the kickoff June 2 in Pensacola and the conclusion party June 23 in Philadelphia. Ellis blogged about his experience during the three-week bike ride and spoke to local media outlets during the trip to raise awareness and encourage people to donate to the Hepatitis B Foundation, says Gina Rubel, president and CEO of Furia Rubel.

### TACTICS

Ellis wrote a blog almost every day, posted videos of the ride to YouTube and photos to Flickr, and kept in touch via Facebook as a "way to build momentum," Rubel says. The chase van was wrapped with the sponsor's logos and Baruch Blumberg, the Nobel Prize winner who discovered the hepatitis B virus, joined the last leg of the bike ride.

### RESULTS

More than \$21,000 was raised from the campaign, says Leah Rice, senior account coordinator for Furia Rubel. Media hits included the *Pensacola News Journal*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and *Bicycling Magazine*.

### FUTURE

The foundation will continue to work with Ellis, now a college freshman, when he is available, Block says.

Jaimy Lee

### HEPATITIS B FOUNDATION

**PR TEAM:** Hepatitis B Foundation and Furia Rubel Communications (both Doylestown, PA)

**CAMPAIGN:** Believe in the Cure Cycling Tour

**DURATION:** April-July 2008

**BUDGET:** \$10,000

John Ellis, a then 17-year-old with hepatitis B, decided to ride his bike from his hometown of Pensacola, FL, to Philadelphia, PA, to raise awareness about the disease for the Hepatitis B Foundation.

Furia Rubel Communications, the foundation's AOR, helped develop a PR campaign – utilizing social media venues – to generate buzz and media interest.

