

Marketing Strategies to Enhance ERSEA

Brandi: Hello, everybody. Welcome to Day Two of the ERSEA Institute. We're so happy to be back with you. Guess what? We've got to get started straightaway because do we have some amazing things in store for today.

I just want to connect with you on a couple of logistical bits before we get fully into our content and conversation. First and foremost, I want to welcome you back officially. Brandi, reporting live from ERSEA Institute Central. [Laughter] We're going to have so many exciting things for you today. We first start off with an incredible panel that you're going to meet here in just a second. We have a session later today on engaging families who are new to the United States. We have the tracks back. Many of you experienced the leadership track yesterday, the direct service tracks in English and Spanish.

We brought back everything that you told us you really liked about yesterday, like the gaming center. We're going to talk about that one in a second. We have the leaderboard ready for you. [Laughter] We're going to talk about the resources, the Wellness Center. We also have your certificates of attendance and CEUs if you're so inclined for those. You can find information about where to access all of that in the Help Center of the virtual conference space. We'll show you that, too, a little bit later in case you have any questions.

I also want to remind you of the Interpretive Widget. Many of you joined my friend Guillermo, yesterday on the Spanish line. The instructions are here on the screen for you, and [Throat clearing] in the Resources widget itself we also have the instructions available for you in Spanish. Please join us in the language of your choice. We're going to give you a couple of minutes to do that and get settled.

I brought back two of your most favorite people and mine from the Office of Head Start, everybody. [Laughter] Dave and Kiersten, how's that? Do you like the fanfare. Should we do a drumroll? [Laughter] How are you guys doing today?

David Jones: I'm great, Kiersten. What about you?

Kiersten Beigel: I'm so good. I'm so good. Thank you. It's nice to be with everybody. Good morning, Head Start! It's wonderful to be at the institute headquarters. I'm picturing everybody coming into the big open ballroom plenary right now. They're just hustling in with their coffee, their tea, [Laughter] or maybe sitting at their computers, but there's a lot of you coming in. You know we had over 6,000 of you registered for this institute.

Brandi: Kiersten, I mean record-breaking, record-breaking numbers for an institute of this size and this length. Incredible. Of course, showing up in true Head Start form. It's how we do [Laughter], but it gave us a huge indicator that this topic is right on time. We told you that you were the ones that offered this as a place that you'd like to focus your interest and energy. It's really thanks to you.

David and Kiersten, speaking of a little bit of reflection from yesterday, I know you guys wanted to check in with our colleagues out in the crowd and see what came up for them, and what they're thinking about today.

David: Yes, Brandi, we did. Sometimes there's so much energy and excitement with what this conversation, the OHS priorities, the central theme that sort of resonated through all of the presentations yesterday morning, and we know that people have their immediate reaction but then when you step away there's something that sort of – there's this epiphany or there's something that touches you in a way that you weren't thinking about that you want to share.

We want to take a few moments to have people drop into the chat, any emotions, experiences, thoughts, even questions that they may have based upon the content we shared yesterday. For a few very quick moments, we'd like to lift up a couple. Kirsten and I and others may respond to them.

Brandi: Yes. That would be great, David. I call it the "sleep on it" syndrome." [Laughter]

David: Yes, that's it!

Brandi: It's what's stuck with you. There are certain things that you carry with you in your own reflection and in your own sort of application. Yesterday there were so many emotions – you're right, that's the word that sticks with me David that you said – so many emotions that were brought forth for folks.

I'm going to give you guys one and see if this kicks off anything for you. There are several of you that told us yesterday that visiting the timeline – and David, that started with you, in the connection, again, to our theme: the roots, resilience, and relationships; it started in the conversation with you – and touching the timeline about where we were born and why we were born, and traveled through a couple of the sessions yesterday.

A few of our colleagues shared that they didn't know yet about the rich history of who we are. It stayed with me because it's our time to take the torch. I want to – it just stuck with me yesterday that we have this incredible opportunity to not only learn and listen and reflect on our legacy but continue building it.

David: Yes, Brandi. Also I see in the chat ...

Kiersten: Lots of stuff.

David: Connection to the history, which is really powerful, which is one of the goals that we had. We wanted people to be connected to the history. Why Head Start matters was another thing that came up and resonated for folks. Then the hard work and heart work – that's another one. Kirsten, others?

Kiersten: Yes. What I'm seeing rolling through here is that a lot of you felt hopeful from yesterday, that you've felt like you are part of a national family. I think that ... I'm really glad, because – you heard the plenary yesterday where we talked about resilience – that is a really important part of this. You're dealing with a lot of different challenges and staff shortages. Some of you may be working a couple of jobs at once in Head Start right now.

We are in a very challenging place, and these are the ways we can draw strength, from being part of something that's a little bigger than the immediate moment. I did want to just also say, we're hearing and seeing your questions. Even if we're not answering them, sometimes that's because we don't have enough information to answer your question because it's more local, and there's local policy that's impacting the way things are done. Sometimes it's because they really are programmatic decisions, and they're best made in conjunction and coordination with your Regional Office. Where we can answer national questions that are going to be applicable to all, we will do that.

We will also be taking some of those tricky pieces about the changes you're seeing in over-income families, of course, to our policy division, and trying to feed those questions that you have back into some of the work we're doing in the office. I know that sometimes you're just putting those questions out there, just hoping to get a clear answer for yourself. I just want you to know that we are seeing them, and we are doing our best with your questions from this moment in time. OK?

David, you want to say something? [Crosstalk] I want to get to our speakers, Brandi, because that's the real thing. No offense to David and I, but that's the good. [Laughter]

David: No, I agree. I think you coined it nicely; and, again, we want to be responsive. And we want to do it from a place of integrity, as well, to make sure we're giving you the answers that's going to help you make the decisions that you're trying to make.

Kiersten: Yes, and we do look forward to answering some more policy questions later at the end of the day. We are consulting with our policy division on some, so things that we can give answers to we're going to try to do that. Right, David?

David: Yes. Have a great day. We're looking forward to the panel. That's it for us.

Brandi: Thank you, Kirsten, David. Well two things from me before we turn it over to the panel. One quick thing: don't forget your heart notes. You guys write up the connection to Head Start is hard work and as Dr. Futrell told us yesterday: heart work. We're collecting your words all through the course of the conference this week. Don't forget to send us your heart notes in the Q and A widget as you think of folks that have impacted your Head Start journey. Or we asked you also to think about your own impact in the Head Start world. Please share those with us as they occur to you.

I want to share one more piece from you this morning also that came through the chat as we transition. We had reflected on yesterday – it just resonated with me – that relationships are at the core of every encounter we have with staff, with parents, with families, and other community agencies, and with ourselves. I just love this connection because you can see that thread. It's not just lip service. It truly is a real connection to and through each other, and it absolutely makes an impact. I think you're going to see that manifested this morning on our panel, as well. With that too, as promised ... [Vocal percussion and claps] Leaderboard! I should have come up with a real jingle, Jackie. [Laughter] That was weak. I will do better tomorrow. [Laughter]

Jackie Muniz: Remind me. I'll find something.

Brandi: This is the leaderboard. All right, yeah Jackie. We can get some real music. Jackie will do it up right. We have the leaderboard from the game center. Now, I love my Head Start family because – guess what we got in the email overnight? Notes from you all saying, “Excuse me. I answered the questions, and I didn’t get my points.” [Laughter] We’re looking at making sure that you have access and that your answers are counted exactly as they ought to be. Thank you for letting us know.

It goes to what we said yesterday, Jackie, about the competitive nature of those of us who live and love in Head Start. It’s just a real thing. I know that you might not be able to see all of the names, and likely this order has even shifted because you guys have been busy in the game center already this morning. But go back and visit. You’ll have new quiz questions today; and, of course, you get points for coming to the sessions, and those are logged for you there, so go check out who’s where on the leaderboard. Speaking of sound effects, Jackie, I’m so excited, you guys

Jackie: [Vocal percussion] [Laughter]

Brandi: Yes. Jackie is with us. Listen. We’ve worked together for a whole long time, and to get the honor to stay in this space with her is, just as we’d say back home, “more than a notion.” I want to introduce you guys to one of my favorite friends and colleagues: Jackie Muniz, everybody!

Jackie: Thank you, Brandi. [Laughter] I’m so excited to be here. My excitement is just like on a whole other level. [Laughter] I’ve been – we’ve been working ... I’m Jackie Muniz, and I’m the Assistant Director of Communications for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. My team has been working really hard to bring this virtual event to life. I just want to take a second to say “thank you” to the entire communications team and everybody else who’s been working on this.

I’m so excited for this day because, as we were putting together this entire event – and we work very closely with our T and TA team – our communications team is, we’re always behind the scenes. We want to make our T and TA Team look good. We want to make sure they have all the resources they need to do their events. We want to make sure that we produce resources that you can use out in the field, that you can use to enhance your practice and family engagement.

Sometimes we don’t get that sense that we’re really connecting with all of you. I kept thinking about, “Well what can the communications team do on our end?” I was thinking about something that we’ve always said at the National Center, which is “Family engagement is everybody’s business.” Well, recruitment is everybody’s business.

I kept thinking, “OK. We have to do something.” My vision for this was that all of the National Centers, the Office of Head Start, we all have communications people, experts on our teams. What if we could bring them all together, or as many as we could, to this institute and just have this wonderful, creative space where we can have this conversation about what we know and what you know and what you’ve been doing in the field, and just come together and just share information that will take our recruitment strategy to the next level.

That's my hope for today. As folks were introducing themselves, I caught this – and I'm going to call out Maria Marquez [Laughter]. She made a comment here. She said she wanted to let us know that what stuck with her yesterday is the fact that she's not alone in the struggle of recruitment. That's what I want you to take away from today is that you're not alone. You have a team at the national level that really wants to support you in your efforts at the local level. That's my heart note to you [Laughter] this morning. That's what I want you to walk away from. We're here to support your efforts at the local level.

With that, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Luisa and the rest of the panel to introduce themselves. Luisa?

Luisa Soaterna-Castañeda: Buenos dias. Good morning, everyone. Thank you, Jackie. I'm excited to be here with all of you. As you can see, we are marketing experts or gurus or have some type of marketing element because, if you look at this slide, many of us, including myself, are dressed up for you just like my picture. I did that on purpose so we would be unforgettable. I saw someone in the chat put "talofa." I believe she's from the territories.

I am Luisa Soaterna-Castañeda, and I am with the National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning. It's a [Inaudible], and what I do here is project management and technology. I'll turn it over right now to Ms. Karen. Karen?

Karen Reddish: Hi, everyone. I'm also looking forward to today's discussion. My name is Karen Reddish, and I lead the resource promotion team for the Head Start Information and Communication Center out of the Office of Head Start. I have a focus on digital communications, particularly social media and email. I will turn it over to Anthony.

Anthony Houghton: Now that it unmuted – well, fashionably late. I'm Anthony Houghton, and I do choose to dress as my picture because that's what I wear pretty much every day. I'm a parent ambassador alumni, and the technology director at the Maine Parent Advocacy Network, which is a little group of people that we started to help do exactly what we're doing here today: bridge the gap, because being a parent and not knowing your resources and now having all the information or majority of the information, I can now give back, and that's what we're doing here. I'd like to pass it over to Matthew now.

Matthew Schiff: Good morning, everyone. I am so excited to be with you all today. My name is Matt Schiff, and for the past 15 years I've been practicing and advising on communication strategies for federal and state governments as well as nonprofit organizations. From 2008 to 2012, I was actually a communications adviser in the Office of Head Start in Washington, DC. It's great to be back with all of my Head Start family today. Brandi, back to you.

Brandi: Thanks, Matt. Thanks, everybody. Do you guys see what I was telling you about the illustriousness of this panel? But that's not all, everybody, because in the background we have more folks to answer any specific questions that you have that come through. We'll be cataloging all these questions.

You see the experts on the screen. Daniel and Andrea are colleagues of Karen's at HSICC, and of course, we have Dr. Jhumur Saeed on the line also from PFCE to support any questions and

curiosities that you might have along the way today. Jackie, I know you want to take folks on a little bit of a tour on what we hope to accomplish in this short amount of time.

Jackie: Yes, and it's very, very short, Brandi. [Laughter] We're going to do our best to get through these. At the end of this session my hope – our hope – is that you will walk away understanding the importance of preparing to develop your recruitment plan. We want to talk about what we know: marketing channels and tactics that you can use in your work at the local level. Also we want you to have a list of things that you can walk away with today and say, "I'm going to implement this in my program tomorrow." That is the hope, small hope. [Laughter] But we're going to get through it.

Brandi, can you switch over to the next slide? Thank you so much. OK. Today we want to talk about effective recruitment strategy. Someone said on the chat there this morning they're looking for some strategies they can use. In order to have strategies that you can use we have to do some work up front.

An effective recruitment strategy, one of the things that we have to think about is, we know that our plan has to reach and inform families with eligible children. We know that it has to include specific activities to locate and recruit children with disabilities, children experiencing homelessness or living in foster care, and then other children that are considered vulnerable populations. Those are the things we know that we're required to do when we're creating our plan.

Therefore, we want to make sure that our plan is strategic. It's intentional. It's data informed. Of course we're looking at our community assessments, any other information that we have from previous recruitment efforts that will inform our work. Then we want to make sure that, when we create a plan, that we have some measures in place: How did we do? What did we say we were going to do? How did we do? What can we change for the next time?

Since we only have 50 minutes, we're just going to talk about the prep and the planning. What I want you to think about as far as prep and planning [Laughter] is that, remember when you were in school and you had a paper to do, and your professor or your teacher said, "I want to see an outline first." That was the dreaded part of putting together a presentation, a paper, whatever it was, this outline, because you had to sit down and really do the work, think about what you were going to do. But once you were past that, then you had the opportunity ... it was free flow. Then you can do your writing. Then you can prepare your presentation. That's what I want you to think about today as we're talking about preparation and planning.

Brandi, can you – OK. There we go. [Laughter] I was thinking about what would be the most important things to consider when you're doing your planning. I had these, what I call six components to consider when preparing an effective recruitment strategy. The first one I had was "building your recruitment team." Now I know all programs do things a little differently, so I wanted to throw this out to the group right now: Do you have a recruitment team? Or do you have a dedicated person that does the recruitment in your program? Just to give me a sense of what is happening at the local level as far as your recruitment team. Brandi, if you could help me look to see what's coming in.

Brandi: Absolutely. We have a couple of folks already saying that they absolutely do have a recruitment team. Some folks are given specific resource roles, like the family service team. There's one person that wrote in all caps, "It's me. I'm the recruitment team," [Laughter] which is real. That's real. A few folks are saying, "one person."

Jackie, I know when we were thinking about this together, we were also wondering about two things: that folks have had some extra monies come into their programs recently, and we were wondering about ambassadors and/or liaisons that can go into the community to do this kind of focused recruitment.

I also know about our Head Start family, that they have all kinds of different teams that could potentially be repurposed for something like this. I remember when I was a director, of course we had a whole self-assessment team that was multidisciplinary. I'm also off to the side, Jackie, wondering a little bit about – for those of you that might have a person or a roll of folks – are there ways to expand the purpose of a team that might be in existence for something like this?

Jackie: One of the things that I was thinking about, if I had to design a recruitment team, I would think about who knows this program best. You have the program director. You have the family services professionals. You have the teachers, teachers' assistants, the bus driver, the parents who are in your program – wondering how you can tap into all of those folks and create a team so you don't have to have one person carrying the load of recruitment. Something to think about is how can you bring in others. The one thing we want to stress also is using the power of your Policy Council. You have staff, and you have parents in the Policy Council. How can you recruit them to be on the recruitment team?

Once you have a recruitment team or at least a few folks, think about the strengths of that team. Maybe there's someone on that team that really loves to speak about the program, and they tell whoever wants to listen about the wonderful work that your program is doing. That person can be the spokesperson.

Maybe there's someone who is on top of their game as far as social media, and they know everything. They know TikTok. They know Instagram. They know Facebook. Maybe you have someone with that skill set. They can be your social media people. [Laughter] They can up your game there. Maybe there's someone on your team that's very creative and loves to design, and maybe they're the ones who take the time to create the flyers for your organization and your program.

When thinking about your recruitment team, think about who you have within your program that can serve on this recruitment team so that you don't have to carry it alone. There's strength in numbers. [Laughter] As you can see, I brought reinforcements today. I don't have all the answers. [Laughter]

Now that we have the recruitment team out of the way, [Laughter] let's think about key audience. As I was thinking about this, we know what the eligibility requirements say: who we need to locate and recruit for our programs. But what else do we know about our key audience? In marketing, when we have a service to sell or we're creating a product, we want to get to know the people we want to sell the product to. Is this product ... will they appreciate this product that we're putting together that we want to sell? Will they buy it?

We want to get – I keep thinking about Dr. Brazelton. Dr. Brazelton, T. Berry Brazelton, he used to like to get into the psyche of the baby. What is that baby thinking? What is our key audience thinking, our potential families? What do they care about? What are they looking for in child care? What's in it for them to sign up to enroll their child in your program? That's what we have to get to the bottom of.

When we really know our key audience, then we can start to think about how we're going to reach them and what are the things that we're going to say ... thinking about what we're going to say, our key messages. If you had five minutes with a parent – let's say I'm the parent – you have five minutes to sell me your program. Why should I put my child in your program? In the chat, one or two words. What would you say to me?

Brandi: Oh, Jackie. I can't wait for this. Let me get down here. [Laughter] Let me scroll. One or two words. Jackie your charge to the audience is: What would your key message be in one or two words? How could you convince Jackie and I as mamas – and Jackie is a new grandmama – to bring our most precious babies right to your doorstep?

"Quality care." "Opportunity." "Self-confidence." "High quality." Oh, my gosh. I love you all. I'm home! [Laughter] "School readiness." "Comprehensive." "We're family." Oh, Jackie. You've got to take the mic. I'm going to get emotional. [Laughter]

Jackie: This is a wonderful exercise to do, and this is a wonderful exercise to do as a team in your organization. Everything that you're putting in that chat right now – hopefully we're going to gather all of this together – but all of that that you have written in that chat, pull all that together, and then you start creating your key messages. This is what you're going to say. Then everybody in your program needs to know those key messages because if you're out there shopping, you run into a family, you want to be able to be ready to tell them why they should enroll the child in your program. Think about those, and hopefully we're going to ... Yes, Nina says we're going to save everything so that we can share it all with you at the end.

Now I want to get to recruitment team, the recruitment area ... the recruitment area. We know where we have to locate families. We have that sense of where. But we really want to get into where we can find those families. Where do those families congregate? Where do they shop? Where do they go to church? Where do they hang out on the weekends? What events do they go to? We have to become – I don't want to say spies, but we have to get really stealthy and find out exactly.

Matt's laughing. [Laughter] We really want to get into where are these families. We need to find them. Then, so we have to ... I think about it as like an onion. We're just peeling it back. We know the recruitment area. Now let's go deeper. Where are they? That's how we need to be thinking. If you're a marketer, that's what you're thinking, as well. Where are they?

The next one I want to go to is "key messengers." Who are the people that you can count on to partner with you to share your message? Whether it's parents in your program, the program staff, community partners – make sure that whatever messages you create, that all of those people, your key messengers, have the same messages for consistency, and that they're sharing the same information.

I love that someone said, “Where they eat, pray, and play.” I love it. I [Laughter] love that. I love that. Then “recruitment budget.” We can’t go crazy. We know we have to stay within budget, so always keeping the budget in mind. I won’t go into details about that.

Now that we’ve done all that prep work, now comes the fun part. [Laughter] This is what I call the fun part, and I know those wheels of TikToks there’s a song, it’s “let’s get to the good part.” This is the good part. [Laughter] Now we’re going to talk about the marketing channels and tactics that we’re going to use.

The channels are the pathways, the medium we’re going to use to get our key messages to our key audience. Then the tactics are the specific activities that we’re going to commit to do. I’m going to give you an example, and then I’m going to turn it over to Karen. A good example of a channel might be digital.

We’ve decided that we – actually, let’s do print. We’re going to do print as a channel. Then, we’ve decided that we’re going to design a brochure so the tactic would be designing the brochure. Another tactic would be that we’re going to take those brochures, and we’re going to go over to the health clinic and different pediatrician offices, and we’re going to leave those brochures there. We’re going to get permission. We’re going to leave those there.

Those would be our tactics. Print is the channel. Designing the brochure is a tactic. Delivering those brochures to different community partners and key messengers, that would be another tactic. Keep that in mind as we go through the different channels that we’re going to talk about today with our panel.

Brandi, can you ... perfect. These are the channels to reach our families that we’re going to talk about today. We’re going to talk about digital. I believe I saw someone say that they wanted to learn more about digital. Karen, [Laughter] just know that that’s a biggie. Print, in-person, word of mouth, radio, TV. We’re going to cover all of those today. Then we want you to have questions. Go ahead, and we’re going to answer as many as we can as we go through each of these channels. Karen, take it away. [Laughter]

Karen: Thank you, Jackie. I really appreciate it. When we’re talking about our digital channel, we’re talking about the platforms that you’re going to be communicating on. Every program is going to have some different types of channels, but here are some really good examples of them. For example, you might have your program website. You might have your own social media accounts. There may be opportunities for you to partner with some other local organizations in your community to put messages out on their social media accounts as well.

You could look into local online parenting communities, like Facebook groups. You may have a texting service that you use to send information out. This is a great way to connect with current parents who are already in your community and that they can then share that information maybe with family and friends that they already know.

You may also have email services set up. You may have a newsletter that you put out, or a routine parent communication. There also may be opportunities for some local listservs that might serve your wider community, and you might be able to post there. Then other apps, like

if there's a local app like Nextdoor that your audience might use. That's also a great way to connect with them.

As Jackie said, these are channels. They're the platform that you would communicate on. The tactics are the specific activities that you'll do on these platforms to connect with your audience. You may, like Jackie just said with the brochure, you may have more than one activity per platform, especially if you have more than one audience.

You may have an audience that's parents, or you may have an audience that's health care providers and telling them about your program so that they can share it along to their patients. The best tip that I can give you about digital communications is just what Jackie said earlier, is really understanding your audience so you know where to reach them.

Digital's only one channel. It may work great for one audience, and it may not work for another audience, but the only way to know is to try. Don't be afraid to try. You can then go back and look at your posts. You can check the engagement on each message, and you can see what people are connecting with. That way you can tailor your messaging even more in the future.

I'm going to give you a couple examples also of tactics that you can use. One tactic might be regularly updating your program website with information about open enrollment and eligibility. I would suggest that you think as you're posting that information about including important keywords for your community like, for example, "Head Start information for ..." then you would put in the area that you serve. That's for "search engine optimization" so when somebody googles "Head Start information" for the area that you serve, hopefully your information will pop up in Google or another search engine.

Another example for an activity or a tactic that you can do is to create a regular schedule of social media posts for your own channels. Within that you can also earmark some that you may ask community partners to highlight. This could be one to three posts a week. It really doesn't matter exactly how many you do as long as you're doing it on a regular basis.

For social media, I would also suggest that you always include an image with your posts, whether it's a custom graphic that you make on a service – there are lots of free or low-cost services out there – or just a photograph from one of your program activities or events. The social media algorithms show a lot of preference to posts that have pictures and video, and people tend to engage more with posts that include these things. Again, that would just be an easy way for you guys to make sure that your posts are hopefully being seen in people's feeds.

You also want to make sure that they're easy for community partners to share. I promise you, if you have community partners, their social media team is also looking for content. Anything that you can do to provide them with out-of-the box content that they can either share or plug into their social media calendar – they'll love you for it.

Then, finally, another tactic might be sharing enrollment and eligibility information on community channels like local Facebook groups, local online parenting communities, or those apps like Nextdoor, something that's hyper local. This is just a form of digital word-of-mouth, and it's a way for you to connect with people who may not have heard of your program or heard of Head Start.

That's just some examples, some rundowns. You can ask any more questions in the chat, and we'll take a look. I'm going to hand it over to Luisa who's going to talk about in-person and print communications.

Luisa: Thank you, Karen. I think all of you are your own experts in terms of communications. I'm loving all the activity in the chat, and you are offering ideas to others in terms of their own strategies and strategies that have worked for you. As you have mentioned in the chat, and I think our colleagues here they have talked about, it's important to understand who the members of your community are, what they need, and what motivates them to find support for the little ones.

As a mom, I reflect on the fact that I'm lucky that I have a partner, that my challenges are not relevant or like what members in my community are facing. They have heavier loads, so I have to think about that empathy and think about how to connect with them with the stories that reflect their own realities.

Many of you have reflected about this in the chat and have talked about the fact that you do use ambassadors in the community. Some of you have also mentioned that those ambassadors are not necessarily as evident to you, but there have been some great questions and suggestions in the chat. I invite you to really think about that.

I invite you to loop in your Policy Councils and boards, as you have discussed in the chat and as our colleagues have stated. I think it's important to attend community events and make yourself known, or have that ERSEA team outreach and recruitment strategy team be known, or that one individual who's your "do it all for you" be out there in the community, and really have that individual, as you know, be reflective of what you want to share – perhaps be able to set up a table at the local clinic, perhaps connect with your WIC clinics and make sure that whoever is doing the breastfeeding support to moms can actually tell them, "Hey. There's a great program in our community that could help you as you now have a lot of other things on your plate and are about to become a new mother."

Think about community organizations who are doing the work for you, who you can really partner, and really connect with them in helping you serve as ambassadors, because they will. It's all about connections and stories. That's what has been very evident in today's session. It's important that you are taking advantage of that.

I think it's also important for you to think about how you design and distribute flyers. There are many tools that exist out there that are free, that are great tools to create flyers. You don't have to go out and have this big marketing team but that you can use to your advantage, because you'll create something that's very vivid and catchy for your audiences.

I think if you don't have the time of the world and really go through every resource fair – and right now communities are in different ways in terms of how those resource fairs are being hosted, what's really happening, who's being allowed to come into the local health clinic, then try to think about those nuances – but really pitch a story around what you're sharing. Someone earlier in the chat posted, "How do I get folks to come to us when we are competing amongst so many others?" Use the stories that you have in house.

I'm going to go really quickly to the next one because I really want you guys to hear from Anthony. Can we go to the next slide, which is "word of mouth." From word of mouth. We know this. Yesterday I happened to take my little one – he's not so little; he's 9, very active – to a local check-up because we have spring break here in our area. I sat there with other moms. We were all Latinas, and we were all talking about our kids, and things like that. Again, word of mouth, as we know, is important. When we're looking for any service as moms, as family, as parents, as dads, we always ask folks in our networks, "What would you suggest? What would you do? What was your experience?"

Word of mouth is excellent as a perspective, and one that you have noted in the chat. I really want you to hear from Anthony as to how important it is. One other thing that I would say in terms of your channels is just really think a little bit beyond, especially for those of you who reside in communities where you have a large influx of immigrant communities.

In my experience we use WhatsApp. We use Teams to communicate. We have channels that we have with our friends, and we talk about that. Use those platforms, as well. I know many of you have mentioned texting, flyers, etc., but use those traditional channels, and use the power of your own ambassadors and storytelling to sell your program. That's really what you're doing. You're selling how wonderful you and your staff are via word of mouth. Having something really short, where you have a grandmother – some of you talked about grandparents – it's phenomenal. But last and not least, I'm going to turn over the floor to Anthony, who's going to share his own perspective and his story as a parent around his own efforts. Anthony? Over to you.

Anthony: Thank you, Luisa. I thought I was going to get cut off for a minute as it froze. [Audio interruptions] I have a unique story and perspective to tell because I didn't know where all the Early Head Start or Head Start or [Inaudible] what's Head Start all work together. I was trying to working a 9 to 5. Mom's is at home with the kids, doing my best for that. Learn what I can when I get home, and it just wasn't working [Audio delay] and it wasn't what I wanted to do, and no false calls through CPS that brings the workers in or if we had to call CPS. Any of these people you need to call, nobody wants to talk to [Inaudible] or deal with them.

We got connected with another program, and they got us into Early Head Start. At that point – it was about 2016, 2017 – I didn't even know what any of this was. Again, I was still doing the dad thing. They come in the house, do we really want them in the house, to come and play with the kids. It doesn't make any sense [Audio interruption] to me. One of the workers there, Miriam, researched me out and sent me an email and asked me if I wanted to be a part of Policy Council and Parent Ambassadors.

If you don't have the Parent Ambassador program around, make one. It's probably the best thing that's ever happened to me and our community. I got this email, and I started attending this thing. Had no time, no money to do anything, and they provided time and money to be able to learn how to do certain things and advocate for myself as parent. [Audio delay]

Luisa: I think we're having, expecting a little bit of audio issues.

Anthony: ... because that's not what I had. Issues. OK. Yes. So, communication. Should I stop?

Brandi: I think you're back, Anthony.

Anthony: Refreshing my page [Inaudible] ... stop talking and I come back. I guess I'll just make it short. Word of mouth is very important, and the best way is communication and delegation. Keep in contact with the parents, because I knew nothing of any of this, and now I am able to tell the story about what can help you guys better in recruitment and reaching out. It is communication. The Parent Ambassador Programs taught me how to talk for my kids, and it taught me that I'm just another human being just like everybody else in here trying to do the same thing.

If it wasn't for the strict communication or the reaching out from the workers, none of it would be happening right now. I'll try to answer any questions you guys have in the comments there, in the chat. I'd like to pass it on to Matt, I believe?

Matt: Thanks, Anthony. I just got to echo what my colleagues have said. There were so many great ideas flowing through the chat that I'm even going to take some of them and add them to my repertoire. I was really struck by one of the comments in the chat in the beginning when there were reflections about yesterday. Jackie highlighted it, talking about ... it reminded us how important relationships are to the core of what we do. Then Jackie had us in the opening today think about our recruitment team.

I want people to leave here today thinking about having the local media as part of your recruitment team, part beyond your team to help amplify your message. In order to have them be part of your team, you got to develop relationships with them, keep them informed of what's going on. I'm going to tell you about local TV and radio today.

One actionable item that I'd like folks to leave with here today and do tomorrow is get out a piece of paper and think about where do people get their ... what do people listen to in the morning to find out what the weather is going to be like, what's their traffic report, and just make a list. You're going to find that that is your local media.

Then next thing, you want to get in touch with them. Go to their website, you might know their phone number. Reach out and introduce yourself. You want to start to build that relationship with them so that they know, when Matt calls me, Matt's part of a Head Start program. Matt does something with early education, does something with children and families.

Because you don't want to just reach out to them once a year, because then they're going to have that frosty memory, or people might change at the news station. You really want to start to develop a habit of treating your local media, especially your TV and radio stations, as part of your team and keeping them up to date.

I want to share a couple different tactics and suggestions for how to engage with TV, and how you can use them. One – I saw people mention in the chat – you've invited them to tour the facility. You've kept them informed of recruiting or open-house events. All great ideas. Also, usually TV stations, especially in the morning news programs, have a community calendar, and it doesn't usually cost anything to have your upcoming event or information posted on it. Feel free to send them things to post for their community calendar.

Oftentimes, I know in some local markets, local TV stations are very busy. They're short-staffed, like all of us, and they might not be able to come to your event or be able to interview in person, so I'm going to give you all one tip that will actually work these days is your smartphone. If you can offer to film for them an interview or some footage of your Head Start program and send it to them. A lot of times they'll take the footage – cell phones these days are high quality enough that they'll be able to use that right in the air. The key tip for this is make sure you film horizontal and not vertical, so film horizontal, not vertical.

Another thing that you might want to be able to do with your cell phone is for radio stations. Oftentimes local radio stations will give free, 30-second spots for public service announcements. You can use a voice-memo function on your cell phone and record a 30-second advertisement for your program. Oftentimes local radio stations will take it and run it for free once, twice, three times, however strong your relationship is. If you want more than that, you might have to pay for it, and you might have to factor that into your budget, but oftentimes they'll at least do a couple for free. You can film that. You don't need a high fancy studio. You can film it right on your cellphone. A good tip for that is don't record it in a big gymnasium. Do it in a storage closet or a small space where it's not a high ceiling.

The biggest thing I want to stress – and I'll jump in and answer questions in the chat – is you want to build the relationship. There's a lot of good ideas out here, but in order to implement them, you want to form that relationship with your local media. Stay in regular touch, and don't be afraid to pitch them ideas. The worst thing that they'll say is "no," or "we can't cover it at this time." Don't be afraid to get a "no," because then maybe the next time they'll take it. Just stay in regular touch. With that Brandi, I'll turn it back to you.

Brandi: Thank you so much, Matt. I have never seen this level of excitement. Well, I have, but I need to tell you how excited the chat is. [Laughter] We have almost 1,200 comments from you guys this morning. [Inaudible] A couple of things I wanted to mention just quickly because I know Jackie and Karen, you want to tell the people about this incredible Head Start campaign that we have in the mix, as well, which I can't wait for you guys hear about.

I also want to say we've collected so many incredible ideas from you, and you've had several questions about "can we have this chat?" "Can we see this chat?" We're going to work that out for you all. We're going to figure out a way to turn this around into a tip sheet, so it's value for you back to you [Laughter] so that you can save the gifts of the wisdom that we've collected from each of you today, and anchor them in the ways that you've experienced these different channels from our panel of experts. Jackie and Karen, would you like to do some showcasing of your newest OHS campaign?

Karen: Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much. We are so excited because the Office of Head Start is kicking off a new campaign this month. It's called "Get a Head Start." The purpose of this campaign is to increase the visibility of Head Start to eligible families and to promote how Head Start's comprehensive services help children succeed in school and beyond, while also supporting the needs of their families.

I think we can go to the next slide, Brandi. We'll talk a little bit about what is available for you guys there. As part of this campaign, the Office of Head Start and the National Centers have

come together to create resources to help support your recruitment efforts. You'll be able to view or download these from the ECLKC to use in your programs. You can also find a link to this collection of tools in your Resources widget on the console.

The collection includes things like outreach flyers and brochures, a social media toolkit, flyers for families who are new to the United States, and those awesome Head Start alumni videos. I know some people were mentioning in the chat earlier how powerful those were, so hopefully you'll get a chance to go and look at those. We also have resources in several languages, and you'll be able to personalize them with your program's contact information as well. Then I'll turn it over to Jackie to talk about a few more of the resources.

Jackie: Thanks, Karen. I'm so excited about all of these resources, and I'm excited for all of you to get your hands on them. [Laughter] They will be available. They are available on the ECLKC. We have those brochures, flyers. We have a few videos that you can use on social media, and we have this wonderful social media toolkit. You can see here on the screen some of the graphics that we created and with sample messages that you can tweak and make your own. We also have them in Spanish.

Brandi, can you ... ? Now this one is close to my heart. A few years ago, we created the Celebrate Fathers posters in different sizes, and we had diversity as far as fathers, male caregivers. At that time we were asked, "Can we have more posters around families?" When we were thinking about this session, we were thinking about "What do you do when you have someone new coming to your house?" You clean up. You prepare your home. You create this welcoming environment for your guests who are coming. I thought, "Maybe now is the time to ... it's spring. Let's take a look at our programs and what can we do to freshen up our programs? What messages do we want parents to get, potential families to get, when they come to our program? What do they see, hear, feel when they enter our programs?"

This is like another heart note [Laughter] for all of you. It serves two purposes. These are posters, and we'll have some available on the ECLKC, but we're in the process of creating more. These are just the sampling that you have right now. What we've done is we've taken a strengths-based attitude and created messages. We've received input from our Program Family Voice Committee as far as these messages, but they're all based on the strengths-based attitudes. When parents ... if you put them up in your program, you'll see all of these wonderful families. Then you'll also be able to be reminded each day to hold onto your strengths-based attitudes when you're with family so that they'll feel that.

That's our gift to you, and we're working hard on just getting all of those created for you. The other piece I wanted to say is, based on the strengths-based attitudes, we created – Jhumur Saeed and Sara Rowland from our content development team have been really hard at work creating – this wonderful [Vocal percussion] video. It's an animation. It's going to come with a guide that you can use in your recruitment efforts. Let's play it so you can see and get excited because we're excited about it, too. This is just a sneak peek.

[Audio interruption]

Brandi: Jackie, I do not see it playing. What we might need to do is show our alumni video and bring this back in our closing. Christina, if you see it, please feel free to push it to the audience. That would be wonderful.

[Video starts]

[Music playing]

Female 1: Lots of people know Head Start and Early Head Start are great places for babies and young children.

Female 2: But Head Start is so much more.

Male 1: Head Start cares about your whole family.

Female 1: Once my kids were all in Head Start and Early Head Start, I wanted to go back to work. But I was scared. Would anyone want to hire me after being at home so long? The staff at Head Start suggested I get some experience by joining the Policy Council. I was nervous, but I did it. I became really confident sharing my opinions about how to improve our Head Start program. One of the other community members on the council told me about a job opening in town. They hired me!

Female 2: When we moved to the United States, we felt completely alone. Our refugee program helped us sign up for Early Head Start. It was amazing. Our home visitor worked with us to teach our daughter both Arabic and English. But what really surprised me were the monthly gatherings with other families in the program. The other parents were so welcoming. We feel like we're part of a new family.

[Video ends]

Jackie: Brandi, you have your tissues? [Laughter]

Brandi: Yes, girl, let's not, don't get me started. [Laughter] What do you guys think? I mean several of you were telling us what you think in chat. But come on! One side note, Anthony, you reminded us, you reviewed this video. Yes? You helped to give us guidance on how to make it real.

Anthony: [Bell ringing] Yes. They asked me to watch it and tell them if it felt right; and it felt spot on to my experience and I could relate it to a bunch of others at the same time.

Jackie: Stories work – our takeaway for today. [Laughter]

[Crosstalking]

Brandi: Well, Jackie, I can't think of a better place ...

Jackie: Well, Brandi, I think the time has come.

Brandi: I know. I can't believe it. It just went so fast today. I really believe that we couldn't end on a better note than Anthony giving us his wisdom and guidance and reflection about his experience. I'm excited that we have all these wonderful things to share with you guys. Many of them were inspired by you.

We are actually next going to have a little bit of a wellness break, about a 10-minute wellness break, then when we come back – guys, come on back – because you're going to love this next session, too. It's about engaging families who are new to the United States. You saw a few parallels here based on some marketing materials and the OHS campaign and what we're going to do together next. Enjoy your wellness break. Jackie, the last word from you for this incredible panel. We'll leave it to you.

Jackie: I just want to say thank you for the opportunity. Thank you for sharing all the wonderful, wonderful ideas in the chat. Just remember, we're here to support you. Keep the ideas coming and let us know what we can do to support you. There's a phase two, phase three. We want to be here. Recruitment is everybody's business. Have a good day.