



CASE STUDY

MEDIA RELATIONS & THOUGHT LEADERSHIP: PARK 51

THE CHALLENGE

Leaders of Lower Manhattan's Muslim American community wanted to build a prayer space and a community center near the site of 9/11's Ground Zero in New York called Park51. The community, who lived and worked in Lower Manhattan before the World Trade Centers were built, planned to build a larger prayer space to accommodate the needs of families in the community. Right-wing media outlets, conservative pundits and elected officials like Sarah Palin and Rudy Giuliani, as well as leaders of national hate groups, attacked and politicized the project, preying on the fact that the prayer space and community center was to be built two blocks away from the site of Ground Zero. Even 9/11 families began to criticize the location, and the story became a global controversy as radical hate groups began protesting at the site and around the country, calling for Muslim-free zones in the U.S. The negative notoriety kept Park51 from securing bank loans and community board approvals, stopping construction and jeopardizing the future of the project.

THE STRATEGY

The TASC Group was hired to mitigate the international furor and misinformation that surrounded the project and shift public sentiment about what the project was and what it wasn't, highlighting it as a simple prayer space with a community center for all New Yorkers to join. Reaching out to journalists at both the local and national levels, TASC reworked the narrative as a story about religious freedom and American values while allaying the public's fears and introducing Park51's leadership to the public.

THE RESULTS

TASC managed thousands of media hits in national and international outlets, playing a major role in generating over one billion media impressions. These efforts culminated in an exclusive interview conducted by Scott Pelley with Park51's leaders on [CBS 60 Minutes](#) and a live feature story by [NBC's TODAY](#). Additional media coverage included [The Los Angeles Times](#), [The New York Times](#), NPR and [HuffPost](#). Due in part to TASC's work, the leaders were able to win the necessary approvals from community boards and local advocates as well as secure funding for the project. The 70-story residential and commercial building with a prayer space and community center was successfully opened in Lower Manhattan.

100+ MEDIA PLACEMENTS

