

NWEA Possibilities Project

Imagine the possibilities when all kids learn.

Assignment

Help Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) announce their headquarters move to downtown Portland while increasing awareness of their work and mission among community leaders.

Background

NWEA is one of the largest education non-profits in Oregon that most folks have never heard of. For over 30 years, the organization has pioneered adaptive assessments, measuring individual student growth. Upon moving their headquarters to a high-profile building in the heart of downtown Portland's "giving row", NWEA wanted to produce a memorable event to inaugurate their space and build relationships with city, education and community leaders.

My Role

I was the senior producer on the project at 52 Limited. I partnered with NWEA, the account director and narrative designer to develop an engaging project strategy. I managed and executed the day-to-day operations of the project, which included developing and managing the project budget, schedule and deliverables; creative talent acquisition/management and event management.

Approach

Our first challenge was differentiating the NWEA open house event from the typical non-profit wine and cheese soiree. Instead of simply approaching this as an event, we came up with an engagement strategy that aimed to demonstrate the NWEA kid-centric mission through a series of hands-on workshops well before the event as a way to increase awareness and promote attendance.

- **Concept** – 52 came up with an idea we named the “Possibilities Project”—a community engagement effort asking participants to create their own personal expression of *what the world look like when all kids learn*.
- **Community Engagement** – 52 partnered with renowned speaker and catalyst Kevin Carroll to conduct a series of participative workshops with school kids, the local neighborhood association, elected-officials and NWEA staff. The workshops gave NWEA the opportunity to engage participants in a dialogue about education and supporting individual learners.



- **Branded Environment** – All of the participant submissions from the workshops were collected and 52 created a Gallery of Possibilities, showcasing over 120 ideas and expressions. The gallery included a series of window wraps and several freestanding displays telling the story of the Possibilities Project.
- **Grand Opening Event** – On January 20th, NWEA opened their doors inviting supporters to an evening of celebration and inspiration. 52 Limited produced the grand opening event emceed by Kevin Carroll. The evening included a cultural performance by local Chinese lion dancers, a participative USnaps photo booth and keynote presentation on what adults can learn from kids by 13-year-old TED speaker and author Adora Svitak. The event was well attended by education and community leaders including Oregon Senator Ron Hyden, Portland Mayor Sam Adams and former State Representative Darlene Hooley.
- **Beyond** – The Possibilities Project was such a success, that the gallery displays were kept in tact and have traveled to other NWEA events, inviting attendees to participate by creating their own submissions.



Outcomes

- 250 submissions from workshop participants.
- Over 125 attendees at the grand opening event.
- Television and print coverage of the opening event.
- Expanded participation in the project through ongoing events and conferences.

Credits: Kevin Carroll (emcee/catalyst), Kelsey Snook (narrative designer), Jen Wick (graphic designer), Mark Ford (creative director) Ryan Gallagher (account director) Denise Ransome (senior producer), Brooks Gilley (strategy).

