



By Aidan Ricotta, Alexandra Pucci-Schaefer, and Jordan Wethington COM 650 - Fall 2025

Executive Summary

King Urban Life Center (KULC) is a nonprofit dedicated to the education and development of youth located on Buffalo's East Side. Operating in the historic former St. Mary of Sorrows Church, KULC provides academic support, cultural enrichment, family engagement programs, and community events. While the organization's headquarters is a familiar landmark to many, many residents are unaware of the range of programs and opportunities offered inside. This has led to a gap in community recognition and program participation.

For our communication plan, our group analyzed KULC's communication practices and public visibility. Through this, our group identified several key challenges: Inconsistent branding, low social media activity, outdated informational resources, and limited visibility compared to other organizations. These factors may reduce KULC's abilities to reach families and increase participation in events.

Based on these findings, this communication plan outlines strategies to strengthen KULC's brand, enhance awareness of programs, and improve engagement with key publics such as parents, youth, donors, schools, and community partners. Recommended strategies involve increasing digital content, updating outdated materials, expanding school partnerships, and targeted media outreach.

Evaluation methods, such as tracking attendance, community surveys, social media analytics, and donor metrics will be able to guide ongoing improvements. Implementing these suggestions will help increase visibility, strengthen community relationships, and support KULC's mission to provide education and opportunities for the youth and families of Buffalo's East Side.

Formative Research

Analysis of Organization

Kings Urban Life Center (KULC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit based in the east side of Buffalo that has been serving the Buffalo community for over 20 years, providing programs that support youth development, cultural enrichment, and educational opportunities. Its mission focuses on fostering leadership, mentorship, and community engagement among students and families.

KULC occupies the former St. Mary of Sorrows Roman Catholic church before it was decommissioned and slated for demolition in 1985. Due to the importance of the building to the community, the building was restored and re-opened in 1996 as King Urban Life Center.

KULC's overall mission is community education and historic preservation. Its programs emphasize early childhood support (ParentChild+ Program), school-age enrichment (free STEAM after-school program), cultural and recreational outlets, and summer camps for younger children. Beyond education, KULC partners with local schools, businesses, and other organizations to provide programming and access to resources. KULC has strong ties to Buffalo's East Side community, but students particularly in the 6-18 age group, are typically unaware of program offerings or how to get involved. This is partly due to limited digital engagement and reduced in-person outreach.

Analysis of Situation

Internal: KULC operates in a historic building with a 99-year lease, providing the organization with long term stability and a strong feeling of community connection. However, frequent staff changes and outdated materials have contributed to inconsistent branding and communication efforts across the organization. These internal challenges have directly affected how families and community members perceive KULC reliability, professionalism, and the identity of the

organization. This further complicated the organization's attempts to increase its program participants and outreach efforts.

External: KULC primarily serves immigrant and low-income families on Buffalo's east side, a population that has benefited from the education and cultural programming provided by the organization. However, KULC competes with several larger and more widely recognized non-profit organizations such as Say Yes Buffalo and the YMCA. Buffalo's ongoing revitalization efforts also present real opportunities to build and expand partnerships with local businesses, schools, and community groups. Partnerships like this could enhance program visibility, expand outreach efforts, and overall increase KULC overall presence in the community.

King Urban Life Center faces persistent challenges with fully reaching and engaging the diverse publics it aims to serve on Buffalo's East Side. While KULC offers essential education and cultural/family support programs, awareness of these programs and offerings remains widely unknown among residents. This is due to several factors, as many community members recognize the building, but few understand the wide range of programs offered inside. As a result, KULC's mission to strengthen families, promote education, and emphasize community is not always communicated effectively to families, school-aged youth, or surrounding neighborhoods.

Inconsistent branding and messaging present a challenge for KULC. Due to frequent staff turnover and the increasing importance of social media and the internet, the organization has struggled to maintain a unified brand identity across promotional materials, website content, social media, and in-person community outreach. As personnel changes, so do messaging

priorities, creating confusion among families and patrons about program offerings.

Communication at KULC is conducted primarily in person, but without unified messaging across in-person outreach, the website, and social media, the organization has struggled to maintain consistency. Without these clear and cohesive communication strategies, KULC risks losing opportunities to engage new families or re-engage families who previously interacted with the organization. By aligning these communication channels, KULC will be better positioned to consistently reach its target audiences and strengthen its overall outreach efforts.

KULC's challenges are compounded by the presence of larger and more widely recognized organizations in the area, specifically the YMCA and Say Yes Buffalo. These organizations benefit from brand recognition, extensive funding resources, corporate partnerships, and more established community networks. As a result, families may turn to these organizations for youth programs, often overlooking smaller community-based centers like KULC. Due to their larger resources, they naturally attract a broader audience, even when KULC might be more accessible or tailored to youth's needs.

Key Publics

The recognized publics for Kings Urban Life Center (KULC) are as follows.

Primary Publics

- Primary: Parents and families in Buffalo's immigrant and low-income neighborhoods.
- Secondary: Local schools, educators, donors, volunteers, and local media.
- Tertiary: City leaders, Buffalo Common Council, and potential business sponsors.

Enablers

- Local Schools: Buffalo public schools, private schools, and others that benefit from KULC's services to students and families with school aged youth and teens.
- Media Outlets: Can assist in sharing information about program announcements and community events.
- Partner Organizations: small businesses, faith-based groups, and other groups located on the east side that could amplify outreach efforts.
- City initiatives: Frequent or new collaborators who have an interest in community-based nonprofits.

Limiters

- More recognizable organizations: YMCA and Say Yes Buffalo, offer similar youth programs and therefore draw potential participants away from smaller centers like KULC.
- Limited Visibility and messaging: With limited personnel, these reduce the organizations' effectiveness in reaching new families.
- Resource Constraints: Staffing challenges and limited budget hinder KULC's constant outreach efforts.

Strategy

Vision for Success

King Urban Life Center (KULC) has been a landmark on Buffalo's East Side for decades. A place families recognize, even if they don't always know everything happening inside. Our vision is to turn that recognition into true community understanding. We want parents, students, educators, and local partners to see KULC not just as a historic building, but as a lively educational hub that supports youth development, family connection, and cultural pride.

Buffalo's East Side is built on neighborhood identity and shared support systems. Because of this, we believe families will choose to engage with KULC once they understand the organization's mission and long-term investment in the community. When key publics are informed about the programs and opportunities, they are more likely to participate and spread the word to others.

Our vision is that KULC becomes a household name on the East Side. Through increased awareness and stronger digital outreach, KULC can strengthen relationships and reinforce its role as a community anchor.

Goals and Objectives

Because KULC's core challenge is low visibility and inconsistent messaging, the goals of our campaign focus on building recognition, strengthening that digital engagement, and increasing participation across all programs.

Goal 1: Increase Community Awareness and Brand Recognition

KULC has a strong mission but limited public knowledge of its programs. Our first goal is to increase awareness of KULC's offerings among families, friends, schools, and partner organizations. This includes recognition of all programs and the organization's long-standing role in community education. By increasing awareness, we reinforce trust and expand KULC's reach.

Goal 2: Strengthen Digital Engagement and Online Presence

Consistent digital communication is essential for connecting with modern families and competing with larger organizations like Say Yes Buffalo or the YMCA. Increasing engagement

across platforms such as Instagram and Facebook will help unify KULC's message and make program information more accessible. Doubling digital engagement aligns directly with KULC's objective of growing awareness across Buffalo residents

Goal 3: Increase Participation in KULC Programs

Awareness and engagement should lead to increased participation from students and families.

This includes expanding enrollment in after-school programs, summer camps, family events, and fundraising events (such as the gala). Strengthening enrollment (from 25 to 60 students per year) is central to sustaining KULC's long-term impact on Buffalo's East Side.

Goal 4: Expand Donor Support and Community Partnerships

Donor contributions and local partnerships are essential for sustainability. A key goal of this strategy is to increase visibility among donors and local businesses to help achieve the organization's target of a 25% increase in donor contributions, particularly through annual fundraising events.

Proactive Strategies

Our proactive strategies are designed to reach families, friends, schools, and community organizations before they seek out youth services elsewhere. These strategies position KULC as a trustworthy, community-centered organization.

1. Strengthen Digital Visibility and Brand Consistency

KULC needs consistent messaging across all communication channels. Creating unified visual branding. This, including updated templates and logos, will eliminate confusion and present KULC as a cohesive, reliable resource. This aligns with the campaign plan's recommendation for refreshed branding, consistent digital content, and more modernized materials presented and released.

2. Meet Families Where They Already Are

Because many families are unfamiliar with the extent of KULC's programming, our strategy focuses on bringing information directly to them. This includes regular school visits, community-based outreach, distributing materials in immigrant and low-income neighborhoods, and participating in neighborhood initiatives like Buffalo Clean Sweep. By connecting directly with families, we remove barriers to participation and increase trust.

3. Expand Reflective, Human-Centered Content

Storytelling is extremely effective for youth-centered organizations. Highlighting student achievements, family testimonials, historic restoration efforts, and "day in the life" snapshots helps humanize the organization. This type of content naturally increases reach and showcases the real impact of KULC's programs; a key tactic recommended by the campaign plan through student spotlights and testimonials.

4. Build Strategic Community Partnerships

Partnerships with local schools, churches, small businesses, and cultural organizations help amplify KULC's mission. These partners serve as enablers by distributing resources, promoting events, and connecting KULC to new audiences all around. Engaging with partners also fosters credibility and strengthens community ties.

Reactive Strategy

KULC must also be prepared to respond to emerging needs, new opportunities, or limitations caused by budget and staffing constraints. Because internal staffing changes and outdated

materials contribute to inconsistent communication, our reactive strategy focuses on timely adaptation to challenges that may come up during the campaign.

1. Adjusting Outreach Efforts Based on Community Response

If certain neighborhoods or age groups show low awareness or enrollment, KULC should shift its outreach tactics. Actions like visiting additional school partners or adjusting messaging to better reflect needs may work.

2. Responding to Digital Trends and Engagement Patterns

As engagement grows, KULC may need to adjust posting frequency or respond to community questions and feedback. Because digital usage patterns can shift quickly, staying responsive ensures that the organization's online presence remains active, clear, concise, and aligned with public interest.

3. Addressing Reputation or Messaging Confusion

Given the historical nature of the building and past inconsistencies in messaging, KULC should be ready to clarify program details and reinforce brand identity whenever communication gaps appear.

Message and Media Strategies

Consistent Messaging Across All Channels

To make sure all is clear and worded correctly during this campaign, KULC will adopt unified messaging that emphasizes its core identity: a community-centered, historically rooted educational hub. Consistency across flyers, digital content, the website, and in-person outreach will build trust and recognition.

Key Message Themes

- KULC as a place where youth grow academically and socially

- Accessibility: free and low-cost programs for families who need them
- Community pride and cultural enrichment
- The restoration and meaning of the historic St. Mary of Sorrows building
- Opportunities for families to engage, participate, and contribute

These align with the campaign plan's key messages, including "Where every child belongs, learns, and grows," and "Reviving a historic landmark through learning and community"

Strategic Use of Digital Media

Instagram and Facebook will be primary platforms due to their reach within Buffalo's East Side. Posting branded templates, flyers, reels, videos, and testimonials will increase visibility and maintain consistency. A monthly posting calendar will help sustain engagement and ensure messaging remains unified.

Use of Community-Focused Media Outlets

Local outlets such as the Buffalo News, WGRZ, and community radio channels will help amplify program announcements and special events. Invitations to cover Family Fun Fridays, after-school program highlights, or the Annual Gala can diversify KULC's audience reach.

Tactics

The tactics portion of the communications plan for the King Urban Life Center (KULC) focuses on a coordinated, multi-channel set of communication activities designed to strengthen community relationships, reinforce internal consistency, elevate public visibility, and drive measurable increases in enrollment and donor support. These tactics align closely with KULC's strategic priorities of brand consistency, community engagement, media visibility, and fundraising, and directly support the stated objectives of increasing community recognition, boosting digital engagement, raising enrollment numbers, and elevating donor contributions. The

following tactics are organized into **four** essential communication areas: *interpersonal communication*, *organizational media*, *news media*, and *advertising*. Each section includes a recommended timeline and budget, integrating seamlessly into the organization's overall campaign plan.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication serves as the foundation of KULC's outreach strategy because community-based organizations thrive through relationship-building and direct engagement. Given KULC's audience of immigrant and low-income families, face-to-face communication creates trust, credibility, and cultural understanding. Key interpersonal tactics include Family Fun Fridays, school visits, and participation in community initiatives. Family Fun Fridays will function as recurring, on-site engagement events designed to attract new families, introduce them to KULC's programs, and foster a sense of belonging. Each session will feature interactive activities, program demonstrations, parent Q&A sessions, building tours, and opportunities for families to meet staff. Because many families in the surrounding community rely heavily on trusted personal relationships when selecting after-school programs, these events are essential for cultivating comfort and familiarity. Staff and volunteers will receive training prior to each event to ensure they can communicate clearly and responsively with diverse cultural groups represented in the East Side neighborhood. Family Fun Fridays will be hosted monthly from January through March, aligning with peak community engagement months. A budget of **\$300** will support supplies including snacks, activity materials, signage, and volunteer thank-you items.

School visits will complement on-site events by bringing KULC directly into the daily environments of its primary audience. These presentations will occur in Buffalo Public Schools, charter schools, and any English-language learner-type programs. Each visit will include a brief presentation, program information packets, and invitations for families to attend upcoming events or tour the facility. School staff are among the most trusted communicators for many families, making these visits a meaningful, high-impact tactic. Presentations will occur twice each month from January through May, timed to support enrollment push periods. A budget of **\$150** will cover printing costs, transportation, and presentation materials.

Community initiative participation, such as joining the City of Buffalo Clean Sweep events, will further strengthen KULC's community presence. By contributing to neighborhood beautification and revitalization, KULC positions itself as an active, invested community partner. This visibility also reinforces the organization's brand message of revitalizing a historic space and uplifting families. Clean Sweep involvement will occur April through June, taking advantage of warmer weather and increased outdoor activity. Costs will be minimal, restricted to volunteer T-shirts, water, and printed handouts, totaling approximately **\$100**.

Organizational Media

Internal communication is critical to KULC due to previously identified challenges such as outdated materials, inconsistent branding, and frequent staff changes. Strengthening internal media ensures the organization speaks with one unified voice and presents a modern, trustworthy brand to families, donors, and community partners. A refreshed internal media kit will serve as the central tool for improving consistency. This kit will include redesigned brochures, flyers, intake forms, onboarding materials, PowerPoint templates, business cards, email signatures, and

a brand guide featuring updated colors, fonts, and key messages. All materials will be created using Canva Pro, which is already included as an organizational expense. The media kit development timeline spans October and November, coinciding with the official brand rollout. Printing costs for flyers and brochures will total \$350, supporting distribution throughout the East Side.

A monthly email newsletter will serve both internal and external audiences but will play an especially important role in keeping staff aligned. Internal versions will include staff announcements, reminders about brand updates, communication tips, and upcoming event schedules. Externally, the newsletter will share success stories, student achievements, community partnerships, and enrollment reminders. Using an email marketing platform budgeted at \$200, the newsletter will launch at the end of November, with new issues released monthly throughout the campaign period. Staff communication training sessions will ensure that all employees understand the new brand identity, can articulate KULC's mission clearly, and know how to respond to common parent questions. These sessions will help address prior issues with inconsistent messaging and prepare staff for high-engagement months. Training will occur quarterly beginning in December, with minimal costs, approximately \$50-\$150, primarily for refreshments.

Lastly, KULC will establish a digital internal resource hub on a password-protected section of its website. This hub will house brand guidelines, downloadable templates, event scripts, stock photography, sample captions, and approved messaging. This resource ensures continuity and

reduces the learning curve for new staff. Development will be completed by December at no added cost.

News Media Tactics

To increase visibility and public recognition, KULC will implement an active media relations strategy that includes press releases, targeted story pitches, and events designed to attract coverage. The objective is to secure consistent earned media that amplifies KULC's impact stories and revitalized brand. The Branding Launch Media Push will occur in late October and early November. A formal press release will announce the updated logo, refreshed materials, and renewed organizational emphasis on community empowerment. KULC will invite journalists for an on-site media briefing to tour the facility, meet staff, and learn about upcoming programs. Costs for press packets and light refreshments will total \$100.

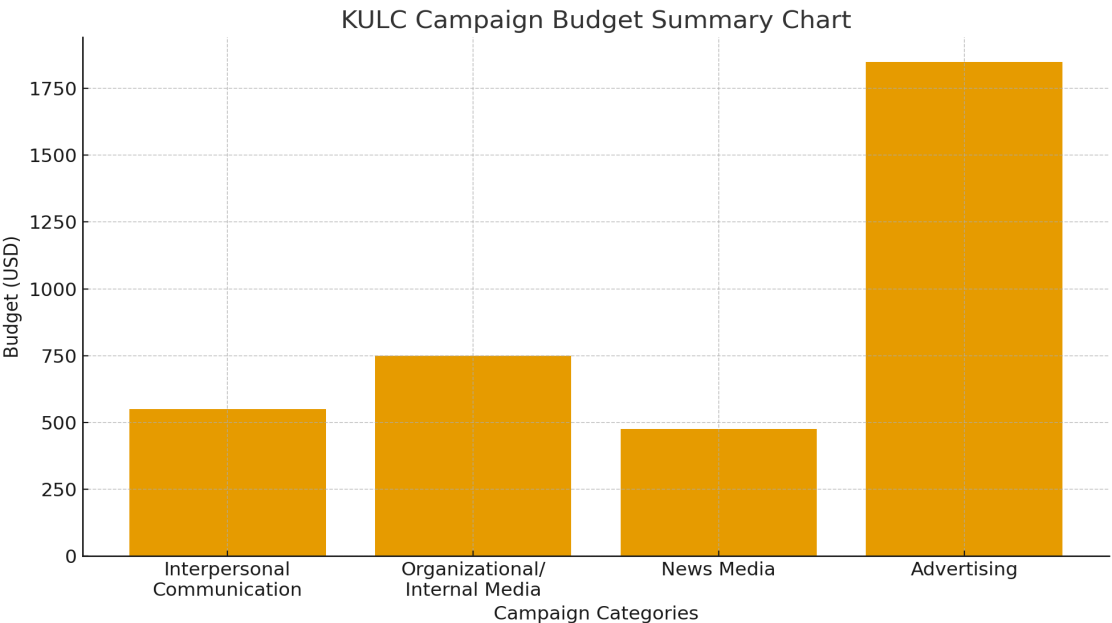
Throughout the campaign, KULC will send monthly story pitches to local outlets, highlighting student successes, family testimonials, cultural programming, partnerships, and special events. These stories will help broaden KULC's visibility beyond its immediate neighborhood. Earned media requires no direct financial expenditure. Media attention will also be cultivated around the Annual Gala in December, which traditionally draws donors and supporters. This event presents opportunities for feature stories, interviews, and post-event coverage. Approximately \$300-\$500 of the existing Gala budget will support photography, press materials, and media seating. In April, KULC will host a Spring Media Open House to connect with multilingual media outlets and expand its reach into communities often underserved by mainstream press. This event will

cost approximately **\$100-\$200** for signage and refreshments and will highlight spring program success stories and enrollment opportunities.

Advertising Tactics

Paid advertising will supplement interpersonal and earned media efforts by ensuring KULC remains visible in highly competitive environments. Social media advertising will be the primary channel due to its affordability and precision targeting. With **\$1,500** allocated over six months, Facebook and Instagram ads will target families within a 10-mile radius of Buffalo’s East Side. Ads will run monthly from December through May, with heavier investment during the April–May enrollment push. To increase visibility among families who may not be active on social media, KULC will launch a micro-budget display advertising campaign. With **\$200**, two bus-shelter or community board advertisements will be placed along Genesee Street for four weeks during March, a peak decision-making time for parents evaluating summer programs. Google Search ads should enhance discoverability for families searching for after-school or summer programs. A budget of **\$150** will support keyword-targeted campaigns during March and April.

Budget Overview:



Executive Research

There are several ways that the effectiveness of a campaign can be measured, but for King Urban Life Center (KULC) evaluation should be directly tied to the campaign's main goals of increasing awareness, strengthening digital awareness, increasing program participation, and enhancing donor support. Because our campaign is grounded in visibility, community, and consistent messaging, our evaluation process will use both quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess if our community strategies are encouraging more involvement among KULC's key publics.

Goal 1: Increase Community Awareness and Brand Recognition

A primary metric for evaluating the first goal would be surveys given to new families, returning families, school partners, and community participants. By administering pre- and post-campaign surveys KULC will be able to measure the perception change of KULC's name recognition, KULC's role in youth development, and knowledge of available programs. These surveys could also help track efforts such as new school partnerships, increases in flyer distribution at community sites, and attendance at recurring events like Family Fun Fridays.

Goal 2: Strengthen Digital Engagement and Online Presence

The method to evaluate the success of this goal is simply monitoring social media metrics. Since strengthening KULC's digital awareness is a major goal in our campaign, Facebook and Instagram analytics are fantastic tools for showing whether engagement is increasing. Analytics are able to track follower growth, likes, comments, and shares. Analytics can also show the impact of including different content like student stories, program updates, and community events. If posts receive more likes or shares than usual, this indicates that viewers are engaging with KULC content, and that showcases an increase in digital visibility.

Goal 3: Increase Participation in KULC Programs

One of the simplest methods is to track enrollment numbers in after-school programs, summer camps, and family events throughout the campaign. KULC can compare these numbers to previous enrollment and participation numbers. Attendance at other major events like the Annual Gala or monthly Family Fun Fridays will also help determine if the campaign is effective in raising awareness and community involvement. Tracking participating families will provide additional insight into whether the campaign is actually expanding KULC's reach.

Goal 4: Expand Donor Support and Community Partnerships

Donor and partner engagement is another very valuable metric. An overall 25% increase in donor contributions is one of the campaign's long-term goals, so monitoring donor attendance at fundraisers, new donations, and the number of returning donors will help evaluate the campaign. Other partnerships such as schools, churches, and businesses should also be tracked. These partnerships should track who helps distribute materials, repost content, or co-host events. Engagement from partners large and small can amplify messaging and help show if KULC is strengthening its role within the broader community.

Another important indicator is earned media coverage. Any coverage from local outlets like the Buffalo News, WGRZ, or local radio should be noted and evaluated. Positive and informative coverage of KULC programs and outreach activity demonstrates that there is an increased public interest and helps confirm that this campaign is raising awareness.

Overall, these methods provide a range of affordable and impactful ways to evaluate the effectiveness of KULC's campaign. By tracking community awareness, digital engagement, program participation, donor support, and earned media coverage, KULC will be able to clearly

understand the impact the campaign is having and help KULC become a more visible and trusted educational hub on Buffalo's East Side.