

## ***WORKING WITH THE MEDIA 101***

### **1. What's my message?**

In one sentence, what do you want everyone else to know?

### **2. Who's my audience?**

- a. Volunteers?
- b. Potential Donors?
- c. General Public?
- d. A special population?

REMEMBER: Your first audience needs to be the media representative you're trying to interest in giving your group publicity.

### **3. What does everyone need to know?**

#### ***(Five Ws & H)***

1. Why (*... do you think this is important news? ... is this important news now?*)
  2. Who (*... is the primary subject of the story? ... who/what is the secondary subject [ person, place, institution, program?]*)
  3. What? (*... is the event? Was the action?*)
  4. Where (*... is the event, person, organization, place located if someone wants to contact them?*)
  5. When (*... will/did the event/action/program occur/start?*)
  6. How (*... did the subject become interested/get involved/motivated? ... did the idea grow?*)
- Give directions to an event or program location, if necessary to the story (e.g., a fund-raising gala, an open house)
  - **KISS** (*Keep it Simple, Stupid!*)

#### 4. Writing Press Releases, Media or Photo advisories

TOP OF PAGE:

- a. *Name of organization you represent*
- b. *Your name and your contact information.*
- c. *Optional: date to release the story [can be immediate].*

FOR INVITATIONS/EVENTS: *Briefly describe importance & interest to the public.*

FOR A FOLLOW-UP STORY: *Try to give details of what happened and quote a participant.*

**ALWAYS** follow up a press release with a phone call to ensure the correct person received your release and to see if the assigned writer needs more information.

#### 5. Who in the media to call?

1. First try to contact:
  - a. A specific reporter you know.
  - b. OR someone that covers your issue of interest, e.g., education/biz reporter.
2. If you don't know anyone else, ask for:
  - a. Newspapers: the city editor of a large publication or editor of a small one.
  - b. TV/Radio/Online: The assignment editor or news department.

#### 6. Tips for getting news coverage

- a. For a feature story, call at least two weeks in advance.
- b. If the reporter isn't interested in covering an event that is timely, push a feature story.
- c. Ask about the time frame in which to fax a press release. If it's event, two to three days in advance should be enough time. For a feature, it's important to know advance deadlines especially if you want a story in a Sunday newspaper or magazine, which usually has the largest circulation and may have some sections printed several days in advance.
- d. If you want event coverage, consider scheduling the event on slow news days (Saturday or Sunday). Call on the day of the event to find out the name of the person assigned so you may assist them. [And so you can remind the medium.]
- e. Have "real people" lined up in advance to talk about their experiences with your group.
- f. ***FIND OUT ABOUT MEDIA DEADLINES AND DON'T TRY TO CONTACT STAFF DURING DEADLINE PERIODS UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY.***
  1. Radio/internet people may be busy all the time or at any time. You will just have to check.
  2. Morning newspapers 3-7 p.m.
  3. Evening newspapers 8-11 a.m.
  4. TV crews 2 hours before newscast time.