

Writing a Press Release to Promote your Event

A way to help draw attention to the causes that are important to your group is to get earned media.

Earned media is free publicity, usually received by informing your local journalists about what it is your group is doing. Go to the websites for your local television affiliates, your smaller newspapers and even the larger publications in your area. There you should be able to find contact information including email addresses and fax numbers.

I always send a fax promoting an event the week of the event as well as the day before the event and I also send the same press release as plain text to that outlet's email address.

If you have never written a press release before, it is pretty simple to do so do not be intimidated by the idea of sending one out to local media outlets.

Below is a sample press release to give you an idea of what you should compile. It needs to contain the pertinent information regarding your event (*location, time, purpose*) as well as a contact individual for that event (*include a telephone number and email address*). I like to include one or two quotes about the event from volunteers to help drive home the importance of the cause.

TIP – You will not always (*or ever*) get a response from your local media regarding your event. But one thing that I have found works relatively well in getting news crews to show up, is the timing of the event. For example, we held a Military Care Package drive where we put together packages of goods and letters to be sent overseas to our fighting men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan, and we did this drive near Memorial Day. We had several news crews show up to cover our volunteers packing the boxes and we had 2 appearances on the weekend news. So timing, as well as luck and a slow news day, can result in earned media.

Sample press release follows:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 15, 2009

Contact: David Smith

(123) 555-1234

davidsmith@change-corps.org

www.change-corps.org

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS FOOD DRIVE

Local Volunteer Group Organizes Neighborhood Relief

Houston, Texas – On Saturday, October 16th from 9:30am until 3pm, grassroots volunteers will be hosting the *Neighbors Helping Neighbors Food Drive* at Dana's Fresh Food Market, located at 201 Broadstreet Street, Houston, TX 77002.

With middle-class families suffering in the troubled economy and with our area's continued efforts to recover from the effects of Hurricane Ike, Change Corps is reaching out to our neighbors to help those in need.

Change Corps has reached out to other grassroots organizations and encouraged them to deliver donations during the food drive, encouraging a 'politics of service' rooted in the idea that change starts one neighborhood at a time.

"With our damaged economy reaching out to our neighbors has become more important than ever," said Angela Lewis, a Change Corps member, "We see people suffering everyday and making the choices between buying gasoline and putting food on the table. Anything we can do to harness the energy of our grassroots movement to help our neighbors through this difficult time is not only our responsibility, but our privilege."

Change Corps will continue to participate in community enrichment activities in Houston and surrounding areas. As Change Corps grows, the group will continue to develop and organize a variety of public service projects and offer tools to help motivated individuals work to build bridges of understanding and transform our country.