

Getting the Media to Cover Your Event

When attempting to get coverage by the media begin by asking yourself these questions:

1. Would most people find the story interesting?
2. Is there local significance?
3. Has the story been done before?
4. Is it truly an event?

If you are able to answer “yes” to these questions, and you can explain why to others, then begin to make a media plan for your event. The answers and explanations to these questions will provide you with the information you need to pitch your story to the media.

To enhance your ability to attract media attention, think about the following:

- Consider the audience you want to reach. Is the message you are sending relevant to them? Reporters are hungry for local stories that would be of interest to their readers or viewers. Give the reporter a compelling reason to cover the event or offer a unique story angle. Try to tailor the story to the audience.
- Know your options for pitching the story. Different tactics include news releases, pitch letters, media kits and personal phone calls.
- Put yourself in the reporter’s shoes. Members of the press are extremely busy and work under tight deadlines. They’re overwhelmed with people who want their stories told. The stories reporters will pursue are the ones that their editors believe will appeal to the audience they serve.
- Get to know your local media representatives. Each media rep has his or her preference for receiving information about potential stories. Some reporters prefer to receive information by fax, others by mail or e-mail. Some prefer personal phone calls, while others may see phone calls as unwelcome interruptions. Ask your media contacts what works best for them.
- Work with your local Habitat affiliate. Many Habitat affiliates have established contacts with the local media and will be able to point you toward the right reporter who will be most receptive to your story.

If a reporter doesn’t seem interested, don’t take it personally. Simply move onto the next media outlet and try with them. When the media outlets see what great events you have, they will be interested in your next one as well. Find out what kind of story they are looking for, and then be sure to call reporters back when your event fits their needs.