

Tips for Working with the Media

Working with the media is easier than you might think! With these quick tips, you will raise awareness of your event and about Freedom from Hunger's lasting impacts. The media can inspire people in your community to join you in the fight to reach hungry families living on less than \$1/day across the globe.

If you have questions about working with the media, contact Amber K. Stott at (530) 758-6200 ext. 20 or astott@freefromhunger.org.

Compose Your Story

You don't have to be a published writer to develop a story that will interest the media. But before you contact the media, you should compose your thoughts about why your pitch is important—why it will make news.

- Is your effort the first of its kind in your community?
- Do readers want to know that there is someone in their town acting as part of a larger movement to end global chronic hunger?—and can others join you?
- Is there a special volunteer (perhaps a local student or club member) who is working with you, whose story would inspire others?

Find your story, and the rest is easy.

Create a Media List

Comb your local media's websites, or call them directly to find out who you should talk to about your story. You can usually find contact information for the exact person you need to reach. For instance, if you want to have your story appear in the local newspaper, find out which reporter or editor covers "metro," "news" or "lifestyle" and contact them directly. You might want to talk live on a local radio's public affairs show—visit their website and find out exactly who is in charge of that show. Make sure you include community newsletters and school papers on your list. Once you have your media list, you're half-way there!

Draft Press Release or Letter to the Editor

This document tells your story. Use the story you've composed, and put it on paper.

- Keep the release to no more than two pages—use the Freedom from Hunger template to help you. If you write a letter to the editor, make sure you respect word count guidelines.
- Use quotes from people involved with your event.
- Give exact dates, times, locations and contact information.
- Make sure you provide your own contact information so the media can call you for interviews or clarification.
- Ask a friend to proofread your document.



- Send your release to astott@freefromhunger.org for approval.

Contact the Press

At least one week prior to your event, and once your press release is approved by Freedom from Hunger, send it to your media list by fax and e-mail. *When e-mailing a press release, copy the text and paste it into the body of your e-mail. Most reporters will not open e-mails that have files attached.*

Follow Up

Follow up with each contact by phone to confirm receipt, and while you have their ear, ask them if they have the time for you to pitch your story idea. Ask them if they think your story will be of interest to them, or if they have other suggestions. Most reporters are happy to talk to you if you are professional and *respect their deadlines*. If they are on deadline, ask them if you can call them back at a more convenient time.

Interviews

Be prepared! Make sure you bring to an interview: statistics, important dates and times, and any other information you want to share with the public. *Always respect reporters' deadlines*. Also, be prepared to answer:

- Why are you involved with this effort?
- What does Freedom from Hunger do? (See our Background Sheet.)
- Dates, times, locations, specifics for your event.
- How can people get involved?
- What do you want the public to know about Freedom from Hunger and about ending chronic hunger across the globe?
- Why was it important to you to become part of a global effort from your corner of the planet?

Provide copies of invitations, press release and any other materials with further details about your event. The reporter may refer to these after you leave.

Thanking Reporters

After your story runs, contact the reporter and thank them for their time and for sharing your message with the public. A simple handwritten note card or an e-mail is a very nice gesture.

Share Your Success

Freedom from Hunger would love to post your media coverage on our website, or share it with other interested volunteers. Please send copies or links. You can also send copies to special vendors or guests who attended your event to let them know they were part of something newsworthy.

