
WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

ADVANCE PREPARATION:

1. Prepare and maintain a list of all media contacts including newspapers (weekly & daily), TV, and radio. Don't neglect alternative and religious press. Your list should include names of friendly reporters as well as editors of the news desk, religion desk, etc. Make sure you have both phone and fax numbers.
2. Check out the wire services in your area – AP (Associated Press), CP (Canadian Press), Reuters, UPI (United Press International). Wire services send out bulletins continually to most other media.
3. Write a press release. (See guide: "WRITING A PRESS RELEASE").
4. Send or Fax press release to the news desk, city desk, special departments (women, religion, etc.) and specific reporters who have been friendly. The release should arrive several days before the event.
5. Think of ways to write articles for periodicals, letters to the editor, etc.
6. Several days before your event, the phone should be covered continuously.
7. Put together a "press packet" for distribution on the day of the action. Include the press release, your best leaflet, and any helpful background information.

THE DAY BEFORE THE ACTION OR EVENT:

1. Telephone all media. Give a brief run-down of the action (who, what, where, when, why). Be enthusiastic and positive but not unrealistic. Stick to the purpose and underline the issue(s).
2. Be prepared to re-fax the press release immediately.
3. Contact radio "news" stations. Many will tape telephone interviews from people at the action site and send directly to the radio station. Some will also tape 30 second spots in which you can read a prepared statement or sound-byte.
4. Make sure arrangements have been made for someone to take photos of the event. Pictures can be used in follow-up work.

THE DAY OF THE ACTION :

1. Call TV and radio stations early. Most assignments are made by 8:30 am. Ask them to come at least half an hour after the action is scheduled to start so they aren't the first to arrive - - a common problem.
2. Have press packets available.
3. Assign one or more persons to relate to the press and help them get good information and pictures. It is often helpful to have one or two people "hustle" the press - - take initiative to greet them and direct them to the press spokes people.
4. Keep a press log of information on who shows up.

Adapted from Resource Manual for a Living Revolution; New Society Publishers, 1985

Christian Peacemaker Teams
PO Box 6508, Chicago IL 60680
peacemakers@cpt.org; www.cpt.org
training materials - - 8/95