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# WRITING A MEDIA RELEASE

## GETTING STARTED:

1. Write "**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**" and indicate the **DATE** for the release at the top left of the page. At top right of page, list name and phone number of **CONTACT PERSON**. Use organizational **LETTERHEAD** if appropriate.
2. A short but attention getting **TITLE** should state the subject of your release.
3. Begin the first paragraph by writing the name of the **PLACE** from which you are reporting in capital letters followed by two dashes. This is relevant when reporting from a specific field location.

## TIPS ON TEXT:

4. The **LEAD SENTENCE** must concisely say only the **MOST ESSENTIAL FACTS** of the release. Save secondary elements and lengthier information about place and organizational names for later sentences.
5. Use **ACTIVE VOICE** rather than passive. Example: "Community residents shut down a crack house in DC" as opposed to "A crack house in DC was shut down by community residents".
6. When announcing an event, include the **TIME, DATE, PLACE, PARTICIPATING GROUPS**, and **REASONS** for the action **EARLY** in the release.
7. Limit the **LENGTH** of the release to **ONE PAGE** double spaced if possible. Define the basic **2-3 POINTS** you want to make and avoid extraneous information. If longer than one page, write **-MORE-** centered at the bottom of the page. Your release should never be longer than two pages. You may include additional pages of background material if helpful, but they should be clearly separate from the press release.
8. **KEEP SENTENCES SHORT**. Eliminate unnecessary words and phrases.
9. Avoid "buzz words" and aim for a **SIMPLE VOCABULARY**.
10. Don't exaggerate information. Make it **INTERESTING**.
11. Try to obtain at least one **QUOTE**. Mention support from well-known people and organizations if appropriate.
12. Write so that your first paragraph could be used directly by a news editor and subsequent information could be cut from the bottom up. **LESS IMPORTANT INFORMATION** belongs in the **LATER PARAGRAPHS** of the release.

## SIGNING OFF:

13. End your release by including the **NAMES** and **HOME TOWNS** of team members and a **DESCRIPTION OF CPT**.
14. Finish by putting **-30-** centered at the bottom of the page.

*Sample Description of CPT: Christian Peacemaker Teams is a faith-based organization that supports violence reduction efforts around the world. CPT has roots in the Mennonite Church, the Church of the Brethren and the Religious Society of Friends, and includes members from Protestant and Catholic traditions.*

# WRITING A MEDIA ALERT

When writing to alert the media to an upcoming event, it is often most effective to send a **MEDIA ALERT** which highlights the **WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY** in big, bold print followed by a one-paragraph description. The paragraph should highlight any particularly interesting visual symbols or actions that will be part of your witness. (See sample on back)

# SAMPLE MEDIA ALERT

## CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS

P.O. Box 6508; Chicago, IL 60680; Tel: 312-455-1199; Fax: 312-432-1213; e-mail: [cpt@igc.org](mailto:cpt@igc.org)

December 19, 2007

Contact: Kryss Chupp  
Gene Stoltzfus  
312-455-1199

# MEDIA ALERT

**WHAT: Ring out Against Violent Toys**

**WHEN: Friday, January 1, 11:00am**

**WHERE: Toys "R" Us, 3330 N. Western Ave.  
(Western & Belmont)**

**WHO: Christian Peacemaker Teams**

**WHY: Violent toys and video games teach children violence.**

On New Year's Day, 1999, members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) will gather at Toys "R" Us to ***Ring in the New Year*** and ***Ring Out Mortal Kombat***. Participants will conduct a ***mock funeral procession and a memorial service*** to highlight the growing evidence that violent toys contribute to real violence in our culture such as the school shootings in Jonesboro, Arkansas and other U.S. communities. Bearing bells, participants will sing out against the toys that teach our children to kill and alert customers to the violent content within the store. In the spirit of New Year's Resolutions, the group will challenge Toys "R" Us to become violence-free in the new millennium and, as a first step, invite the store to remove all video and computer games containing violence from their shelves.

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## **CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAMS**

P.O. Box 6508; Chicago, IL 60680; Tel: 312-455-1199; Fax: 312-432-1213; e-mail: [cpt@igc.org](mailto:cpt@igc.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
August 6, 1995

**Contact:** Joshua Yoder  
312-455-1199

### **ISRAELI MILITARY DETAINS CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKERS** by Wendy Lehman

HEBRON, WEST BANK -- The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) detained two members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) on July 12 as they attempted to accompany water trucks to the home of a Palestinian friend. The home is located near the Jewish settlement of Tel Rumeida in the heart of Hebron.

Settlers had prevented water from reaching the home of Hanni Abu Haikel for more than a week by blocking the road and stoning the vehicles. In response to Haikel's concerns, CPTers Cliff Kindy and Jeff Heie offered to accompany the water shipments.

IDF soldiers permitted Kindy and Heie to enter the area one at a time, but each was turned back at a later checkpoint. Soldiers then began to question Heie until he asked, "Am I arrested or can I leave?" A soldier replied, "You are not arrested but you cannot leave."

As the soldiers detained Kindy and Heie, an elderly woman from the settlement walked past and said, "We are going to kill you." Later another settler drove up to the scene. Upon refusing to shake Kindy's hand outstretched in greeting, the settler threatened, "The only way I will deal with you is with a gun!"

After being detained for nearly two hours in the hot sun, both men were taken to the civil (i.e. military) administration in Hebron. Four investigators questioned Kindy for an hour, although he and Heie refused to answer questions without a lawyer. While not officially arrested, they were charged with entering a closed military zone and held until 9 p.m.

-MORE-

Heie stated, "We did everything the soldiers told us. They gave us permission to enter the area and we did."

CPT is a project of North American Mennonite and Church of the Brethren congregations. Hebron team members currently include Jeff Heie (Washington, DC), Kathleen Kern (Webster, NY), Cliff Kindy (North Manchester, IN), and Wendy Lehman (Kidron, OH).