

## **FUNDRED Team's Tips for Working with the Media**

### **Develop a Time Line**

The timing of your outreach effort depends in large part on the results you want to achieve. Think about the following:

- Inclusion in a community calendar, two to four weeks is necessary.
- TV and radio stations usually need several weeks' lead-time to schedule an appearance on a talk show.
- One week's advance notice typically is sufficient if you're asking a reporter to cover the event itself.

Be sure to check with the media outlets themselves to find out their specific deadlines.

### **Compile a Media Contact List**

You will need complete contact information for local media outlets, including phone number, email address and fax number. You may want to email or fax a media advisory to the main news desk and then make a follow up call to a specific reporter. If you're in a large community or city, you may want to check your library for media directories like the Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media or Bacon's Publicity Checker.

**Large media outlets:** When working with local television stations or large newspapers you should ask for the news or assignment desk.

**Community newspapers:** Local residents may be more likely to read their community newspaper than larger regional papers. Take advantage of community calendars and residential newsletters to recruit volunteers, submit photos and spread the word about Fundred and your efforts.

### **Your list may include:**

- Wire services (Associated Press, United Press International, Reuters)
- Local and regional newspapers (daily and weekly)
- Local television news and talk shows
- Local radio news and talk shows
- Community newspapers
- Special interest media, such as college newspapers and radio stations, church bulletins

### **Pitch:**

Choose a "pitch" – one sentence that describes why your story is interesting, timely, and newsworthy. Your "pitch" is how you sell your story to the media and should be reinforced in your media advisory, press release and any interviews you give. Reporters often find a story newsworthy if it incorporates one of the following aspects:

**Local Interest** –Fundred is of interest to writers in the arts, science, environment and education. Student involvement locally and/or regionally is of interest to the press. You have a better chance of making the news if you can show that your project is of interest to local readers and viewers. You may want to highlight a school-wide event, showcase specific Fundred Dollar Bill Artworks, and quotes from students.

**Widespread Appeal** – Emphasize the fact that your project is part of this larger story.

**Unusual Alliances** – One of the goals of Fundred is to invite participation from everybody and anybody to invest in a solution to childhood lead-poisoning that threatens the health of many children today, compromising the health of our communities. Let the media know how you have embraced this opportunity to contribute. That this is an important national issue shared by major cities across the United States is newsworthy. Most cities and states have Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Programs that will be interested in partnering for press coverage

**Well-known People** – You might get more media attention if you involve well-known people from your community in your kick-off event and ongoing service activities. Possibilities include local athletes, news anchors, local elected officials, and business people. Contact these local celebrities to show up at your school and/or event and contribute their Fundred for your vault!

**Interesting Visuals** – For a TV reporter or newspaper photographer, what your project looks like is very important. Fundred is a visual project worthy of photography and film including: student making Fundreds, finished Fundreds, Safehouse, the armored truck in front of the school, scout patches, etc.

#### **Write a Public Service Announcement (PSA)**

Radio PSAs, which run at no cost to you, are a great way to recruit volunteers and to get the word out about your event. The message should be short but complete, and include a phone number to call for more information. Send the announcement to the radio station's public service director and allow plenty of lead-time.

#### **Send a Media Advisory**

Five to seven days before the event, you should fax/email a media advisory to everyone on your press list. Keep it short and specific, including key information about the event –who, what, where, when, and why – and contact information. Be sure to fax the advisory to wire service "daybooks," which are the daily calendars of events that reporters use to plan their day. Sample Media Advisory available on [fundred.org](http://fundred.org) ("Get a Press Kit")

The Media Advisory is a good vehicle to announce a Fundred drawing event, a local display, etc. You might ask the press to call to confirm their attendance.

#### **Write a Press Release**

A press release gives a reporter a base for writing a story on your event. It's like a news article - except you write it. Press releases can be written before the event to attract advance notice or attention, or they can be written after the event to inform the media about the day's accomplishments. Include quotes from organizers and participants, details of the project's goals and activities, background about your organization and your contact information. Sample Press Release is available on [fundred.org](http://fundred.org) ("Get a Press Kit")

#### **Write an Op-Ed, Letter to the Editor, and/or Blog Post**

The editorial page is always looking for material and is one of the most widely read parts of a newspaper. An opinion column or letter to the editor should explain how Fundred ties in with issues of environmental health, children's health, education, and how the public can get involved.

**Work the Phones**

Follow up on public service announcements, media advisories, and press releases with telephone calls to remind reporters and editors of your event. When you call newspapers, ask for the city desk; when calling radio and TV stations, ask for an assignment editor in the newsroom. Point out "photo opportunities" – times when photographers would be able to find lively scenes to shoot – and suggest interesting volunteers whom reporters could interview. If possible, do a final round of calls the morning of the event.

Be sure to be proactive and persistent in your contact with the press. We encourage you to contact them every few days to remind them of your event. It is not too much to call 7 days, 4 days, 2 days and the morning of the event. Refer to emailed press releases and media alerts.

**Select a Spokesperson**

Identify one or two individuals to articulate your message to the press. Condense your message and get it down cold. Think sound bites: you probably will be on the air for a matter of seconds, so make the most of it. Find a teacher or a student who may be able to reinforce your message. See "Fundred Talking Points" at [fundred.org](http://fundred.org) ("Get a Press Kit")

**Consider hosting an Event.**

Events can bring press. Consider hosting and promoting a Fundred Drive or Fundred Day or Fundred Week.

**Greet the Press**

Have a sign-in table for reporters and other members of the media at your event. Also, make sure that a representative of your group is on hand to greet the press and to introduce reporters to the project's spokesperson or director.

**Say Thanks**

Be sure to thank reporters for good coverage. Like all of us, news people appreciate kudos for a job well done.