

Tips for Sending PSA's/Media Advisories and Press Releases

*PSA = Public Service Announcement, which is what TV and radio stations call their community calendar announcements. Media Advisory is the same thing, only for print and online media, such as newspapers and magazines. Press releases are longer, article style "stories." See the document entitled, "PR FAQ" for further key info on press releases.

1. Know who to send it to, not just where. Find out who the editor or reporter is for the section in which you want your release or Media Advisory to appear. (i.e., Living/Lifestyle section, Religion, Community Calendar, etc.) Include their name on the release, not just the envelope.
2. Put Media Advisories, PSA's and Press Releases on letterhead. (order from your country's Teacher Support) Many media will not consider it a legitimate document if it is not on letterhead, and thus will not publish your information.
3. Only send to one person per news outlet. (call beforehand to determine who is most appropriate)
4. Don't just send, call. Call the person before sending, and call a couple of days later to make sure they received it.
5. Timing is everything. Don't fax a release out the day before an event and expect it to receive coverage. Give them time to decide how they want to cover the event/story.
6. Know your deadlines and respect them. Magazines, even weekly ones, are often planned months in advance. For community calendar items, know when the deadline is and realize that there is competition, even for the community calendar. So be timely, write well, and make that personal contact.
7. Keep it short and informative. Reporters and editors are notoriously busy. Most press releases are one page. Two is acceptable, if it's very, very good. If they want more information, they'll ask. A PSA/Media Advisory is **never** more than one page.
8. Write it in a news style. That means putting the prime information (who, where, what, and when) into the first paragraph. Don't use exclamation points or overly flowery language. Many papers will directly reprint a press release, as long as it is written in a professional news article style. Use short words and sentences. Be very clear.
9. Call the paper/TV station/Radio station to see whether they prefer mail, fax, or e-mail.
10. Always include, at the top corner of every page, a two or three word description of the story, the name and phone number of key contact people (no more than two), the page number (if there is more than one page) and the release date (usually "For Immediate Release").
11. If you have good photos, better to include the words "Photos available upon request" with your information at the top of the page. Only send high quality photos, and only when requested or when sending out a complete press kit. Otherwise, your photo may be wasted. (A PSA or Media Advisory does not normally get mailed with a photo) If requested, black and white glossies are best. Place photos on top of cardboard when mailing. Don't tape or paper clip. (It can ruin the photo.)
12. End a press release with ##### typed across the center of the last page a couple of lines below the end of your text. If a release is continued on another page, type -more- at the bottom of the page in the center.
13. Use standard 8 1/2"x11" paper typed on one side only. Never break a paragraph across two pages. Leave plenty of margins for editors to write notes in. 1 1/2" all around should be okay.
14. Don't fold your release like a letter, fold it so that the headline and date will be the first thing the editor or reporter sees upon opening the envelope.