

PUBLIC RELATIONS 101

Talking to the Media

To get the most support for your event, you will want to get media coverage from your local newspapers, TV and radio stations. Here are some tips in talking to the media:

1. **KNOW YOUR SUBJECT MATTER AND WHY IT MATTERS.**
Get the facts straight. When is it? What is it for? And most importantly, what will this event accomplish and why is it relevant in your community?
2. **BE PREPARED.**
Make sure you have at least **6-8 weeks of lead-time** before the event or story you want covered.
3. **RESEARCH THE NEWSPAPER/RADIO OR TV STATION'S STAFF.**
Identify the editor or reporter who would most likely share interest in your idea. Larger newspapers have individual editors for topics such as arts, as well as regional editions that focus on news in the community. If you don't feel your story falls into one of the specialties offered, consider contacting the managing editor.
4. **THINK OF YOUR STORY FROM THE REPORTER'S POINT OF VIEW.**
What makes your topic appealing to him/her? What about it draws interest, excitement, conflict or resolution? Is there an event or happening you can use as a hook to generate their interest? Answering these questions will make your pitch stronger.
5. **CONTACT THE APPROPRIATE EDITOR OR REPORTER**, through e-mail or by phone if possible, with a concise message that addresses:
 - **What:** What do you want them to write about.
 - **When:** Is there an event that a reporter can attend? When is it?
 - **Where:** Where is your event or program taking place?
 - **How:** How can people attend, support your program or tune in
 - **Why:** Why is this an interesting story for your local media to cover? Provide a clear statement about why this is of interest.

Attach a short press release that provides all the details. *Check out the sample we've included!*

6. **BE SURE TO FOLLOW UP.** If you send an email on a Monday, by Wednesday you should make a quick phone call to make sure they saw your email.



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7. **OTHER WAYS TO GET MEDIA COVERAGE:** Don't be discouraged if you can't get a feature story placed.

- **Write a letter to the editor** about your program, and/or take a great photo and send it to the section editor following the event.
- **Event Listings:** Another great way to get more people aware of your program is through the newspaper, radio station, and online calendars.

Newspapers (online and print versions), local magazines, radio stations, and arts consortiums have event calendars that usually accept event listings free of charge. This just takes a little research.

Find the online submission forms and Event Editor contact information on each of these publication's web sites. If you're having trouble, simply call them and ask for help.

Be sure to **include a dynamic photograph** and a short description. Listings with good photos often get used in a newspaper's daily or weekly event sections (which is often just as powerful as a feature story).

Be sure to **submit your listing at least 6-8 weeks in advance** to ensure placement. Don't forget to include: Who, What, Where, When, How and Why.

Sample Email Pitch

Dear Editor:

My name is Ben and I play cello with the Pioneer Valley Youth Symphony. On June 1, members of my youth orchestra and I have organized a benefit concert to support an instrument lending program for the community center. The concert is at the Oak Grove Community Center at 6pm and tickets can be purchased at pioneervalleysymphony.org or by calling 617-333-3334.

This program is important because instruments are expensive and many children can't afford to study music because of the cost of the instruments. Our benefit program will put 10 instruments into the community center to be used by needy music students who are getting free weekly lessons by members of our orchestra. We think this program would be a great article for your paper, because it shows teenagers taking an active role in our community to help others. We want to spread the word as widely as possible so that people can support our program.

I hope we can speak further about this story. You can reach me at xxx.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben

Remember to follow up with a phone call within 2-3 days!

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Sample Press Release

DATE:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Young Musicians Create Instrument Lending Program at Oak Grove Community Center

Benefit Concert June 1 to Raise Funds

Pioneer Valley Youth Symphony members will perform a benefit concert **on June 1 at 6pm at the Oak Grove Community Center** to raise money to purchase instruments for the center's music programs. Tickets range from \$25-\$50 and can be purchased at **pioneervalleysymphony.org** or by calling **617-333-3334**, all proceeds will benefit the center's music lesson program.

For the past year, four members of the Pioneer Valley Youth Symphony string section have volunteered weekly at the Oak Grove Community Center to teach free beginning music lessons. The program currently serves 12 students, ranging in ages from 7-14. The teen leaders who run the program have organized the June 1 benefit concert to purchase instruments so that the lesson program can expand to serve an additional 8-10 students.

"I've noticed that a lot of kids who were initially interested in taking lessons through our program, couldn't do it because they couldn't afford to rent or buy an instrument, so we decided to raise money to buy instruments that we can lend to students and expand our program," said project co-leader Ben Smith, a 16-year-old violinist who attends Pioneer High School.

"We are very proud to host this music lessons program at the community center, and are very impressed by the initiative the teen leaders have made in spearheading this program," said community center director Jane Austin.

For more information on this program and to support their efforts, please visit pioneervalleysymphony.org.



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How to Include From the Top in your Bio

Hannah Viola has performed on *From the Top* on NPR.

Hannah Viola has performed on NPR's *From the Top*.

Hannah Viola is a recipient of From the Top's Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award and has appeared on *From the Top* on NPR.

Hannah Viola has appeared on *From the Top* on NPR and *From the Top at Carnegie Hall* on PBS.

PERFORMER EXAMPLE

17-year-old cellist Ben Lash is currently a senior at Evanston Township High School in Evanston, IL. He studies music at the DePaul University Community Music Division and is a member of several ensembles including his high school symphony and the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Ben has appeared twice on ***From the Top on NPR***, in 2008 as a soloist and in 2002 with a chamber ensemble.

SCHOLARSHIP EXAMPLE

Originally from Burke, VA, Karen Cueva is currently a senior at the Walnut Hill School in Natick, MA. She began violin at the age of four, and has been a student of James Buswell, Peter Zazofsky, Linda Schroeder, and Leonid Sushansky, among others. Karen has appeared on ***From the Top on NPR*** and is a recipient of **From the Top's Jack Kent Cooke Young Artist Award**. She performs with New England Conservatory's Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and has attended the National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute and participated in the National Symphony Orchestra Youth Fellowship Program. She has won various competitions and awards, including a Certificate of Commendation from the U.S. Marine Corps for her service to veterans at the Navy Hospital and Veterans Medical Center, and for devoting her extra time to the senior citizens of the Fairfax County, Virginia community. This year, Karen is participating in a program spearheaded by From the Top, which brings young musicians into schools to inspire younger school children to get excited about classical music.

