

Telling Scouting's Positive Story

Through the local media

Let the Community know your Scouts are doing
Recruit new Members
Retain Current Members
Recognize Achievement

Earn this Patch!

Inside this booklet:
How to write News Releases
How to send Photos
Sample New Releases
Media Contact List



Telling Scouting's Positive Story

Scouting in the news

Why?

Promote Goodwill

Promoting your unit to the public can help recruit new members, retain current members and promote the positive message of Scouting in your community. As a volunteer organization, the Narragansett Council relies on the goodwill and support of the community. By keeping the name and mission of Scouting out in front of people, they are more likely to lend support for your activities in the community.

Reinforce the Narragansett Council Image

Every favorable news story about Scouting reinforces the council's image as a positive force in the lives of young people. Any negative publicity works against the image we all want.

Promote Specific Events

A fundraising event like a pancake breakfast will likely be better attended with a brief notice in the newspaper.

Recognition

Boys gain recognition for their achievements when they receive awards before their peers. You can spread that recognition throughout the community. There's nothing better for a kid than to hear an adult say "I saw your picture in the paper", or "Congratulations on getting the Webelos badge." Whenever possible, recognize adult leaders and your chartered organization as well.

Start with a Plan

- Identify all obvious publicity opportunities
 - Advancement
 - Events (fundraisers, School Night for Scouting, Popcorn Sales, etc.)
 - Activities (service projects, conservation efforts, Eagle projects)
- Identify a potential media contact at newspapers radio stations, and cable public access station.
- Prepare a Media Kit. Be sure to include the following pieces of information
 - Cover letter
 - Facts and figures about your unit
 - Clips of past activities
 - Leaders biographies and contact information
 - Council/District /National Literature
 - Specific news items

Developing Relationships with the Media

Get to know your media representatives. Call the editors and tell them who you are, that you will send them information about your unit and that you will be in touch with an occasional story idea or news release. Follow up after you have sent something to make sure it got to the right place and to answer any questions.

The ideal situation to develop from this relationship is that you and your unit will become the source that reporters call for information and comments on all youth development stories. Let them know that you are knowledgeable.

Where to send your news

- Daily Newspapers
- Weekly Newspapers
- Church newsletter/Bulletin
- Community Newspaper
- School Newspaper/Newsletter
- Local Magazine
- Company/Business Newsletter
- Community Web Site
- School /Church Web site
- Broadcast Community calendars

Weekly newspapers may provide the most in-depth coverage for events and activities. School newspapers are good vehicles for drawing attention to student achievements. Company newsletters are oftentimes interested in employee/volunteer achievements. Broadcast community calendars are willing to announce upcoming events

Write Your Story

Much of the information you might send to the newspaper or radio station will be in the form of a news release. These general rules and tips all have one goal:

To make it as easy as possible for an editor to use your story. Give them a head start and they are halfway there!

- Keep it simple. Short, concise sentences. Simple words. Avoid the use of clichés, jargon and fancy phrases
- Provide the details that are needed and little more. No preaching or editorializing or excessive praise for a specific person. Don't use flowing tributes, flowery description or overly complicated sentences. Present facts, not opinions
- Opinions should be presented in quotes. Quotes add life to any story and should be used whenever possible. Make sure they are attributed.
- Type your news release double-spaced on one side of an 8.5 x 11 page of white paper. If your story continues on a second page, place the word *-more-* at the bottom to indicate that more follows. Number subsequent pages. Type ### to indicate the end of the release.
- NEVER submit a handwritten news release. The harder it is for the editor or reporter to use your information, the less likely it will get used
- E-mail your news releases *if* the media has a specific person or address. Don't just send news releases to the Editor. Follow up with a phone call to answer any questions
- Include contact information (name, phone number and email address) in case the reporter needs to contact you to ask a question.
- Write NEWS RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE (DATE) at top of the release.
- If fax news releases are accepted, include a cover sheet directing it to a specific person.
- Check for correct spelling of names. Use spell check and read carefully.
- Use first and last name on first reference, then just last name after that. Example: Scoutmaster Tom Jones when he is first mentioned, then Jones after. Always identify who an individual is and their position in the unit.
- If including a photograph with your release, make sure it will capture the interest of the reader. Every photograph should include a complete and a correct caption that identifies each person and the action in the photograph.
- A news release should communicate key information, the WHO, WHAT, WHERE and HOW of an event or issue to reporters and editors in the news media
- Sample news releases are included in the packet for your convenience.

The Basics

All news releases begin with a lead designed to attract the reader's attention and encourage them to read the entire story. This is the most important part of a news story. It must be clear, concise and answer the following questions

Who did it?
What did they do?
When did they do it?
Where did they do it?
Why did they do it?
How did they do it?

First impressions are key! If a lead is dull and uninteresting, the reader will assume the same of the release.

FLAT: The Cub Scouts from Pack 1 will be selling popcorn at the Wal-Mart on Saturday

INTERESTING: Delicious Trails End popcorn will be on sale at Wal-Mart this Saturday from 9 AM to 5 PM. Boys from Cub Scout Pack 1 will be conducting the annual sale to raise funds for the coming year of Scouting.

The main body of the news release should include significant details that relate to the lead, including quotations and succinct descriptions. Any related but nonessential information should appear toward the end of the release. Generally, the last paragraph provides overall information and statistics. In your stories, you might provide general information about your Pack, Troop or Crew, and the adult's name and phone number for those who would like more information.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

A photograph accompanying your story adds an interesting and eye-catching appeal to the article. Use the following tips to help you take photographs, write captions, and satisfy your news outlet's needs:

- Each photo should have one main subject. Close-ups are better than wide panoramic shots. Look at the photos in newspapers and ask your media contact about the types of photos the newspaper wants.
- People want to see pictures of Scouts in action! Avoid, if at all possible, shots of Scouts just standing around.
- A photo caption should fully explain the complete story. Include the **Who, What, Where, Why** and **How**, identify as many people in the photograph as possible. Check to ensure that names are spelled correctly.
- Be sensitive to Scouts, Leaders and others who do not wish to be photographed.
- If you want your photo returned, include a stamped, self-addressed envelope

SAMPLE - Notice to Media

- Media Notice
 - Photo Opportunity

Boy Scout Troop 1234
Your Anytown, RI

Contact:
Joe Scoutmaster
Daytime Phone: (123) 456-7890
Mobile: (123) 098-7654
E-mail: joescoutmaster@hometown.com

Boy Scouts to help elderly attend Church

Who: Boy Scout Troop 1234 from Anytown

Why: Many shut-ins and elderly want to attend church but are unable to do so because of physical limitations and need for assistance. Four times a year a special service is held for the elderly and shut-ins in the community.

How: St. Mary’s Church in Anytown will provide transportation for those who need assistance to attend church. Boy Scouts from Troop 1234 will assist by helping unload vehicles and walking participants or pushing wheelchairs for those in need. The Scouts will help serve refreshments after the service then help load vehicles for their return home.

When: **Sunday June 1, 2008**
10:00 AM

Where: St. Mary’s Church
987 Main St.
Anytown, RI

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For Immediate Release

Contact:
Joe Scoutmaster
Daytime Phone: (123) 456-7890
Mobile: (123) 098-7654
E-mail: joescoutmaster@hometown.com

**Local Scout Named National Eagle Scout Association
Scholarship Recipient**

(Anytown, RI, February 29, 2008) – Joe Scout, a 2004 Anytown High School graduate and Eagle Scout was recently named a 2004 National Eagle Scout Association Recipient. Joe Scout will receive \$3000 towards his college tuition. Scout 18 will be attending University of Rhode Island, where he is studying actuarial science. Scout enjoys Tennis and Camping and he is actively involved with his churches youth group.

Scout first joined Scouts as a Tiger Cub and he worked his way up the ranks to Eagle Scout. The fact that a young man is an Eagle Scout has always carried with it a special significance, not only in Scouting but also as he enters higher education. The award is a performance-based achievement whose standards have been well maintained over the years. Scout Eagle Scout project benefited St Mary’s Church in Anytown, RI where he is a member. Scout repaired chairs and tables and cleaned gutters to help the church prepare for a new ministry center.

Joe’s parents are Patty and Bill Scout of Anytown, RI. Both Patty and Bill are also active in Scouting. Bill serves as Scoutmaster for Troop #1234 and Patty is Cubmaster for Pack #1234. Scout has one younger brother also involved in

Scouting.

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SAMPLE - News Release

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Joe Cubmaster

Daytime Phone: (123) 456-7890

Mobile: (123) 098-7654

E-mail: joecubmaster@hometown.com

Cub Scouts Participate in End of Summer Campout

More than 100 Cub Scouts and their families from Anytown, RI Pack 1234 Gathered last weekend for two days of fun-filled camping at Anytown Camp for their traditional end of summer campout.

Cub Scouts, Leaders and their parents had the opportunity to participate in a series of events that Included team games, Frisbee golf, nature hikes, archery, and birdhouse building. Other campout Activities included an outdoor obstacle course, timed knot-tying competition and a mother /son fishing derby. Awards for the top three Cub Scout and their mothers wee presented at the Sunday breakfast. Winners included Mark and Shirley Webelos (first), Joe and Patty Scout (second) and Ryan and Linda Wolf (third).

“Sitting around the campfire and roasting marshmallows with the other Scouts and my family was great,” said mark Webelos, age 8 “But the best part of the campout was winning the fishing derby with my mom. She’s the best!”

The Boys Scouts of America’s Cub Scouting program is for boys who are in the first through the fifth grade. They participate in family-centered activities, group activities, learning and having fun. If you would like more information on Cub Scout Pack 1234, contact Joe Cubmaster at (123) 654-7890 or visit our web site at www.pack1234.org

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Sample - Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

When you ask a Scout what he likes about Scouting, he probably answers, “it’s fun!” What he doesn’t realize is that along with the fun are training and activities that help him develop desirable qualities like character, citizenship, and fitness. That’s what Scouting is all about.

Scouting founders began a tradition of service by establishing the slogan “Do a Good Turn Daily” A Good Turn is anything a Scout does to help someone in need without expecting anything in return. Rank advancement requires Scouts to complete a number of service projects and recognize their responsibility to their community. Scouts realize that service is not a one-time job. It is an ongoing duty.

For nearly 95 years, Scouting has made a real impact on the lives of young people. No other youth development organization has the support of more than 4.5 million members who understand the value of connecting youth with communities and families.

Scouting is an educational program that teaches youth about building character, faith traditions, mentoring, serving others, healthy living, and lifelong learning. The community organizations that use the Scouting program and the Narragansett Council do their share to see that young people receive the benefits of the program.

Scouting is still needed today; its educational program is essential for our youth-faces of the future.

Sincerely
Your name
Your town



Earn this Scout News Reporter Patch

Youth and Adults can earn this **Scout News Reporter Patch** by having a positive Scouting Story or Photo published in an approved publications. Complete this form and submit a copy of the printed item to the Scout Service Center

Please Print

Name _____ Unit Type (Check One) Pack Troop Crew

Address _____ Unit Number _____

Town _____ Zip _____ District _____

Phone _____

Youth (Rank _____) Adult _____

Below are the approved publications (please check one)

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> School Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church/Synagogue Bulletin | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Company/Business Newsletter | | |

Name of Publication _____ Date of Publication _____

Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Crew Advisor Signature _____ Date _____

Return this form along with the story/photo from the actual printed publication to:

Narragansett Council, BSA
Scout News Reporter Submission
PO Box 14777
East Providence, RI 02914

➤ Submitted publications will not be returned