



How to Promote Your Fundraising Event

Large or small, your fundraising event is important to The Michael J. Fox Foundation, and we urge you to publicize. Doing this not only raises the profile of your event, but also increases awareness of Parkinson's disease, Team Fox, the work of MJFF, and the need for support from the local community.

Here are some basic strategies for promoting your event:

- Contact the city editor or health editor at your local daily and weekly newspapers to alert them that you are holding an event. Encourage them to assign a reporter to write a story about Parkinson's disease and to include details about your event.
- Contact the calendar editor at your local daily and weekly newspapers and provide them with details about your event, including the name of the event, the date, time and location, a short description of the event and how people can get more information.
- Contact the public service director or community director at your local radio station(s) and provide them with details about your event, including the name of the event, the date, time and location, a short description of the event and how people can get more information.
- Contact the news director at your local ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX television affiliates and invite them to send a video crew to cover your event.
- Timely events are often appealing to the media. For example, if you are doing a Valentine's Day CandyGram fundraiser, call reporters the first or second week in February. The holiday is on their readers' minds, so reporters are looking for a "different" angle on stories about it.
- Visit local community centers, churches and hospitals and ask them to distribute/display flyers about your event.
- If you have any sponsors for your event ask them to distribute/display flyers about your event.

Read on for more specific details about the best ways to prepare for and execute outreach to get your event covered in the local media.

Preparation

It's important to focus your media efforts where they are most likely to pay off. The best way to do this is simply to pay attention to the media in your community. Read your local papers, events guides, church or neighborhood association newsletters; listen to and watch local TV and radio programs. This is the best (and easiest!) way to research which

media to contact. Which papers or newsletters have events calendars or slots to write articles about local happenings? Which reporters focus on community events or fundraisers?

Many community Web sites also feature events and calendar listings that allow you to upload information yourself to a database of events.

How to contact the media

When you have decided which papers and programs to target, find out whom to contact. Call a paper or radio or TV station and either ask to speak with the reporter whose name you have researched or simply say that you want to talk to someone about a forthcoming local charity event. The person who answers the phone will put you in touch with the right person.

Reporters are usually quite busy, and when you reach one, your goal should be to interest them in your news quickly by sharing a few key details. Once they are interested, ask if you can provide them a press release with more information.

Writing an effective press release

(You can also personalize the sample Team Fox press release in our Playbook.)

In general, your release should not exceed one page. Include as much local information as you can. Mention any high-profile local figures who may be attending. Try to include a quote from a suitable person.

- **Title:** Keep it short and to the point, eye-catching and interesting. Include a local angle. Type in block capitals.
- **Contact information:** Include your name, phone number (and cell phone if applicable) and e-mail address at the top of the release.
- **First paragraph:** This is the most important, so make sure you list all the vital information here: who, what, where, when, why.
- **Key messages:** Make sure you include clear details about the event and the Fox Foundation.
- **Presentation:** The release must be typed with no errors with your contact details clearly typed at the top. Always proofread the release before you send it out or, preferably, have someone else do this for you. At the end of the text, type three number signs: # # #.

General guidelines for dealing with journalists

- **Be responsive.** If a journalist calls you, asks for supplemental information, or otherwise expresses interest in your news, get them what they need as fast as possible. Journalists are usually working on tight deadlines and you likely have a lot of competition for their attention.
- **Use e-mail.** Many journalists prefer to receive press releases via e-mail. Call the reporter first and if you get them interested in your news, get their e-mail address before hanging up.
- **Don't bother to fax.** Newsrooms often receive hundreds of faxes a day and journalists and decision makers rarely have the time or inclination to sort through the slush pile.
- **Be pleasantly persistent.** After e-mailing a news release, check that it has arrived and then follow up to see whether it will be used. But don't pester; calling several times in one day is likely to irritate.
- **If you get a journalist's voicemail, hang up.** If you leave a message, the journalist may not have time to return it, and you'll be stuck waiting a while before calling again.

Letters to the Editor

A letter to the editor can be a great way to get attention. Keep it short and concise. Rather than just writing about the event, draft a letter for someone else to send (i.e. a well known local person attending the event, or someone living with Parkinson's who could explain how the funds raised will help them).

Photographs

You can send a photo call to the photo editor of your local paper (include relevant details — what, where, when). If the paper isn't able to send a photographer, take your own pictures. Try to think of imaginative ways to photograph your event — use high profile figures if they are attending.

Share Your Success

The Michael J. Fox Foundation loves to hear about our Team Fox members and the efforts they make in their community. If you or your fundraising event receives media coverage, please let us know. Send clippings or alerts to teamfox@michaeljfox.org or to the address on our web site.