



Global Youth Service Day

Follow this quick, step-by-step guide to getting media in minutes!

When to begin? Start planning 1-3 months in advance, and set aside time to review the information at GYSD.org.

Establish goals. Think about your project goals. When and how media might help by telling your story? Do you want advanced coverage to help recruit volunteers? Or day-of coverage to raise the visibility of your work? Or a personal profile story to highlight one stellar volunteer?

Fill in the press release templates & social media messages on GYSD.org. Insert your project information in the appropriate templates. Plan to send the project announcement press release 3 to 8 weeks before your project and allow ample time for follow-up.

Research, reach out, and send your release. Identify key reporters, bloggers and news outlets. Gather contact info for reporters in your area who cover community news, youth, education and/or your particular issue area. Send your press release 3-8 weeks in advance, to allow time for follow-up.

- ✓ Reporters can come from daily/weekly papers; monthly magazines; radio; TV; and online.
- ✓ It's OK to send your press release to public officials, influential bloggers, and listservs in your area, to raise awareness.
- ✓ Use the internet to research contact information for individual journalists, or flip through the paper to see which journalists are writing about community news and/or your issue area. If you're having a tough time finding contact information, it's ok to call the news outlet's main number and ask to be directed to an appropriate contact.
- ✓ Send your release pasted into the body of an email (don't send attachments).

Follow up. A few days after you've sent your release, follow up with journalists by phone or email to see if the release was received, offer additional info, and invite him/her to cover your group or project, either in advance of or on GYSD.

Prepare to "pitch" your story. Know what you want to say to a journalist before your phone call or interview. The standard GYSD messaging, plus your own talking points, will be helpful.

Send a post-event release and thank-yous Within 72 hours of your event, send a post-event release (a modified version of your project release, along with any relevant updates or outcomes) with photos to your local newspapers. Collect any resulting media coverage to share with project participants and GYSD organizers. Thank anyone who helped you with media, including the reporters!

When working with a reporter

DO dream big and think creatively! What do you have to offer to your local morning talk show? The local top 40 station? The hard-hitting reporter?

DO keep in mind that your press release is one of dozens or even hundreds that the journalist receives every week. The more you can make your story stand out and tailor it to the journalist's interests, the better your chances of success. Talk less about you and your organization, and talk more about the real actions and real change your young people are creating in the community.

DO keep conversations with journalists short, positive, and persuasive.

DO coordinate with other group members and identify a point person to lead outreach efforts. Journalists may become confused if several different people contact them about your project.

DO offer to provide photos whenever possible (see the toolkit for info on how to take a great picture).

DON'T be aggressive or make the mistake of thinking that media are obligated to cover your story. Journalists' jobs are to educate and inform their readers about topics of interest.

DON'T get discouraged if you have to call a couple of times, or if the reporter declines.