



# Publicity Ideas

## Suggested Publicity Ideas

- **Proclamations, Testimonies.** To customize Family Day for your community, request proclamations from local officials. In addition, local officials or community leaders can be asked to write a paragraph or two on why families are important, the importance of family traditions, or how families and communities can work together. Local elected officials, school board leaders, policy chiefs, heads of chambers of commerce, chief executive officers of local industries, and non-profit organizations and others may be asked to contribute to Family Day functions. Include this testimony in press releases, newsletters, public service announcements, and other Family Day materials.
- **Newspapers: Letters to the Editor, Editorials, News and Press Releases.** Two basic rules for generating publicity are: first, be sure that you have a newsworthy item, and second, make it as easy as possible for the person responsible for reporting the news. The information should be clear and complete. For larger papers you should connect with the editor or reporter of a specific section (health editor, lifestyle editor or business editor for example). A newspaper offers many places for items to appear - calendars of events, news columns, feature stories, editorials, letters to the editor, advice columns, etc.

One way to help the reporter of a small local paper is to write a column or feature article yourself. A letter to the editor can present facts and information from the agency's perspective and does not require much work from the newspaper. Or submit suggestions and outlines for Family Day editorials to newspaper editors and help them highlight your events.

News releases sent out before a scheduled event should inform interested persons that the event will take place and answer questions as to where, when, why, how and who is involved. Make special note of photo opportunities. (See sample Press Release). A captioned photo, sent after the event, makes the reporter's job easier and may receive additional attention.

Local weekly papers need two to three weeks advance notice in order to include the article in the paper. Daily newspapers need on a few days notice. It helps to call the editor or reporter after sending them your release/letter/editorial to confirm it was received, to get a reaction or to offer additional assistance.

- **Broadcast News and Feature Stories.** News and feature stories for the broadcast media follow the same rules outlined for print media. Releases and letters of suggested story ideas concerning your Family Day celebration and subsequent events should be sent to the news or assignment editor. When approaching television stations, it is important to consider the visual impact of a story. Poster contest displays, dramatic productions, children singing, and official proclamations have good visual impact and make a story more attractive for television editors to consider. Many of the ideas in the Suggested Activities section include a sense of community togetherness that TV stations may be particularly interested in covering (or even participating in); Get in touch with the station several weeks in advance of the event in order to have the best opportunity for getting on the air. Follow-up with a call the day before to remind them to include your event on the next day's assignment schedule.

Radio and television talk show producers may be more open to a family life excerpt during Connecticut's Family Day Celebration. Offer them a speaker related to a news topic or an expert speaking on parenting tips.

- **Billboard Placements.** There are two (2) kinds of billboards. They include 14' x 48' painted boards and 12' x 25' poster boards. In order to receive free space or reduced pricing for billboard space you need to contact your local billboard companies. When calling, ask for the individual that works with non-profit organizations for placement of billboards. Then explain what organization that you are representing and what the message of the billboard will be. You will need to find out what their policy is on placement for non-profit organizations. An example of one company's policy that rents painted boards include free placement for up to six (6) months, based on availability. There could be a charge for the painting of the board, however which could range from \$1500 - \$3000. This cost could be covered by a sponsor. Another example of a company's policy is reduced space charge for the billboard. For example, if you provide the poster, a company who normally charges \$750 a month, might only charge you \$120 per month.
- **Public Service Announcements.** To get a public service announcement (PSA) placed, contact the local cable company or television station, ask for the community affairs or public service director and find out who a PSA should be sent to. Attach a brief cover letter to the PSA and personalize the envelope. Hand-deliver the PSA and letter if possible.
- **Make a follow-up telephone call.** Introduce yourself; identify the PSA by title and the date it was distributed. Clearly explain the purpose of the PSA - what it's about, the audience it's intended for and why it's important for the stations' viewers and your organization. A professionally produced educational or informational PSA with a broad appeal is of more interest to a station than one specifically about your agency.