

Writing a Media Advisory

A media advisory lets reporters know about your event and gives them the information they need to cover it. E-mail and fax this document out in advance of your event, and be sure to call reporters to make sure that they got it.

FOR PLANNING PURPOSES
May 23, 2006

Always include
contact information.

Contact: Heather Sturgill
513-681-8666

Use a short,
clear headline
telling what
will happen.

Star of Oscar Nominated Documentary to Speak on Disability Awareness at University of Cincinnati

Keith Cavill, the star of the Oscar nominated documentary *Murderball*, will speak at the Tangeman University Center at the University of Cincinnati this Friday. He will speak about his experiences as a differently-abled athlete following a screening of the film.

The event will also include activities raising awareness of the differently-abled, including display of adaptive technologies and a wheelchair obstacle course open to all guests.

The event is sponsored by the University of Cincinnati Disability Affairs Committee, Participate Productions, and Young People For.

What: Abilities Awareness Night - Screening of *Murderball* and an appearance by Keith Cavill, the film's star, as well as activities and displays

When: Friday, May 26th at 6:30pm

Where: The University of Cincinnati's Tangeman University Center, room 400

Sponsors: Student Government's Disability Affairs Committee, Participate Productions, and YP4

Clearly list
the who,
what, why,
where, when
of the event.

Keep it short.
You can put
more
information in
a release later
on.

Also,
remember to
write in the
future tense:
your event
hasn't
happened yet.

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Three pound signs
mark the end of the
document.

Writing a Press Release

A press release is a document which provides reporters with everything they need to write a positive story about your event or some other topic of interest. Think of this as a newspaper story that gets your message across and presents the facts in the best possible way. Give your release to reporters who come to the event, and send it out to all your media contacts after the event is over. Remember: since this goes out after the event, it should be written in the past tense.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 18, 2006

CONTACT: Drew Courtney or Josh Glasstetter
at 202-467-4999 / media@pfaw.org

Always include contact information.

Use a short, clear headline telling what happened.

Constitution Day Celebrated with Dramatic Reading of US Constitution

A dateline tells where the event took place.

Washington, DC – In honor of Constitution Day, civic, religious, educational and cultural leaders joined together to participate in a reading of the Constitution in the nation’s capital. Sponsored by People For the American Way Foundation (PFAWF) and Georgetown University, the reading was broadcast nationally.

Put the most crucial (and interesting) information near the top.

Include a quote from someone in your organization. Be sure to include the correct name and title.

Speakers included Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Senator and creator of Constitution Day Robert Byrd, President Bush’s former Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, and Representatives Doris Matsui and Eleanor Holmes Norton. Georgetown faculty and students also participated in the reading.

“At a time when there is so much debate about the role of the Constitution, it’s important to return to the text of this powerful document,” said Ralph G. Neas, president of People For the American Way Foundation. “The system of checks and balances embedded in the Constitution protects all of us in our daily lives; taking an evening to share it in its entirety is a fitting tribute.”

Other readers at the event included former Senator Birch Bayh, PFAWF President Ralph Neas, former Senator and Governor Lowell P. Weicker, Jr., Ambassador Elizabeth Bagley, former Congressman John Buchanan, Jr., Georgetown University Professors Nancy Sherman and Maurice Jackson, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service Program Counselor Kendra Baity, Georgetown University Law Professor Neal Katyal, African American Ministers in Action Founder Reverend Timothy McDonald III, and actor Bill Irwin.

Supporting information can come closer to the bottom.

Constitution Day, which commemorates the adoption of Constitution on September 17, 1789, is celebrated in schools and universities nationwide, thanks to federal legislation championed by Senator Byrd and passed in 2004.

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Three pound signs mark the end of the document.

Press Events

Before Your Event – One to two days in advance or before

- Location**
Choose a convenient location. Make sure you have permission to be there and to get there ahead of time to set up.
- Time**
Choose a time that's convenient for the media and fits in well with the news cycle.
- Create a Media Advisory**
The media advisory should give bare-bones information about an event: the who, what, why, where, and when of the press conference. This allows reporters and assignment editors to schedule time to cover the event. Make sure to correctly spell names and titles.
- Pitch the Event**
Make sure relevant reporters are aware of your event. Don't forget to alert assignment editors and daybooks, if appropriate. E-mail first, then call any reporter you actually want to show up.
- Script and Materials**
Have remarks, Q&A, and press release ready as far in advance as possible.
- Guests and Speakers**
Confirm their attendance. Ask them to show up early.
- Visuals**
Think of what you want the cameras to see and what message you want to send.

Before Your Event – Set up

- Sound**
Have a place for TV crews to place microphones or have a mult box for them to plug into.
- Press Kits**
Include a release with usable quotes and correctly spelled names and titles. Statistics and details should also be distributed in writing.
- Sign-In Table**
Get name, phone number, e-mail, and outlet for every reporter or crew.

During Your Event

- Document the Event**
Take (or have a volunteer take) plenty of pictures of the event. If you can, take a video.
- Talk to Reporters**
Chat. This is how contacts are made.

After the Event

- Send Release**
Send out the release widely via e-mail and post to web site.
- Follow Up with Reporters**
Make sure to answer any lingering questions. Contact reporters who didn't come if appropriate.
- Monitor the Coverage**
Don't forget to see what the media reports.

Remember -- Give reporters what they need to cover the story exactly as you want them to: a good quote, a good picture, good sound, and all the details at hand.