

# WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

**KNOW WHO COVERS WHAT.** Learn who's writing about nonprofit organizations in the local community, especially those that do the kind of work yours does. Most print publications still have "beat" reporters who report on specific subject areas. Even bloggers have "beats" in that they tend to focus on a specific type of content in order to build a following in their area of expertise.

**IF POSSIBLE, TALK TO THE PERSON IN CHARGE.** For newspapers, editors often have more control over story assignments than reporters have. Don't be afraid to call the editor and pitch your story to him or her, then let that editor put you in touch with the right reporter. For magazines, talking with the managing editor is a good bet. This person assigns stories to the editorial staff and has a good sense of the publication's story needs.

**CALL AT THE RIGHT TIME.** For newspapers, this often means calling early in the morning. For magazines, there's more flexibility about time frames for calling because magazine writers don't have deadline-packed days every day. When in doubt, ask the person you are working with when they prefer to receive calls.

**DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS.** Once you have made a contact, continue to develop that relationship. In addition to releases, send the occasional note letting the contact know what your organization is up to. If a special event is coming up, query the contact well in advance and ask if the outlet would be interested in covering the event as it draws closer.

**KEEP YOUR CONTACT LIST CURRENT.** People in the media move around all the time. Make sure each contact is still employed at his or her publication before reaching out. When someone new comes on the scene, start the relationship-building process as soon as possible.

**DEEPEN THE CONNECTION.** Invite members of the media to become members of your club, to take part in your activities, or to sit on your board. Make sure the activities you involve media contacts in are engaging, informative, and clearly benefit the community.

**SAY THANK YOU.** Thank the editors and reporters who cover your club's news. This is a small gesture that many overlook.

