Media Outreach/Press Coverage

Reaching out to local media is a great way to increase community awareness of and involvement in your LEA. Inviting the media to events featuring the great work of your students and teachers will allow the community to learn more about your school and the USU STARS! GEAR UP program.

Steps for reaching out to the media:

1. **Write a press release or media advisory:** Choose the format for announcing your event that best suits your needs. Press releases are usually a more general announcement while a media advisory invites the reporters to attend a specific event. In either format, make sure you cover the basic questions (when applicable) of: **Who? What? Why? How? Where? When?** (highlighting the date, time, and location of the event).

   Designate a spokesperson, someone closely involved with your LEA, such as the site coordinator, to be a media contact, and include a **name, telephone number, and email address**.

2. **Distribute the press release:** Send the press release or media advisory out two weeks prior to an event to area reporters from newspaper, television, and radio. Be sure send the email to a specific person, when available, and to include the press release or media advisory in the body of the email rather than as an attachment. This will help your email avoid spam filters and reach a person.

   **Tip:** If you or someone involved with your LEA has a relationship with the media or a specific reporter, have that person reach out and/or follow up. Also try reaching out to reporters who have covered your school(s) previously.

3. **Follow up a few days before the event:** Plan to email or call to remind a reporter of what your event is and where it is happening, and how to reach you. This will make it much more likely that your story will be covered. Before you talk to a reporter, prepare a brief recap of the event and why you think that they should interested in it.

4. **On the day of the event:** Prepare for an interview by choosing a few students and advisors that love to talk and are generally outgoing. Get their permission and make sure that you have a signed photo release form on file. Have them wear their school, USU, or GEAR UP shirts. Review talking points and rehearse with them, covering the Who? What? When? Where? and How? of the event.

   **Tip:** Make sure you have contact information for any journalists that you speak to and be available to answer questions or refer the reporter other contacts in the program, as well as future events/announcements.

5. **Send a thank you:** Writing thank you notes to members of the media that cover your story and/or attend your event helps you to build and maintain good relationships.

Questions about this process or for help, contact Jeannine Huenemann, USU STARS! GEAR UP Marketing Manager, jeannine.huenemann@usu.edu or call 435-797-0234.