Creating News Releases

A news release or press release is a story, written by you, that you would like to see in the news. Consider local weeklies, newspapers, television, and radio. You can usually email the news release as an attachment, though some news sources may prefer regular mail or fax. The "Contact Us" page for each news source's website will usually be helpful in figuring out the right person to contact. You may also want to share web links to your news release on user-generated news sources like Reddit.

Type it double-spaced on a single page. At the end of the release, write "END", "-30-", or "###."

Put "Contact:" and your name, phone number, and email in the upper left-hand corner. This is in case a reporter needs to know more information.

Write the release date in capital letters. For example, "RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 6." This is the date you want the story printed.

Write a headline. It should describe the most important part of your story.

Write the story. Tell your concerns and the action you plan to take. Write it like a news story. Reporters always begin with the most important information, and answer the five W's—who, what, where, when, and why.

Don't refer to yourselves and your organization in the first person. Write in the third person ("Students Against Violence announced today that . . .").

Quote what a reporter might want to use. "Samantha Simms, head of Students Against Violence, said . . . "

Give the story a "hook." A hook grabs the readers' attention. What's special about your story? What makes it newsworthy? One hook you might try is that you are young people doing something for your community.

> Sometimes the media will respond to a call from young people just because they seem surprised that we're actually doing something.
>
> —Michael Brown, founder of a community garden

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 5

Contact: Richard Zonas

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Banner

TEENAGERS JOIN TOGETHER TO

WIPE OUT GRAFFITI AT LOCAL PARK

Headline

Middletown—February 12, 2012—Students at Garvey High School will hold Clean Up the Park Day at Holmes Park next Friday. More than 300 students are expected to attend the paint-out. Mayor Arena Playa and other city officials will speak at the opening festivities, scheduled for 10 a.m. Park Director Olga Young said, "It's wonderful that so many young people want to help out." The paint-out is organized by FIX IT NOW— a group of students at Garvey High. FIX IT NOW's spokesperson Andrew Costly said, "It's time to take back the park. City officials have promised that after we clean the park, the city will maintain it."

Body

Closing

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