

**Steps for Planning A Successful Media Event**

**Two Months Before Your Event…**

1. ***Identify a location (i.e. school) for your event.***

Important considerations when choosing a location:

* Easy accessibility and parking
* Proximity to major media outlets
* A successful Farm to School initiative has taken place here
* A principal or teacher that is willing to give media interviews
* An enthusiastic, motivated staff
* Principal and teachers who can be motivated to participate

1. ***Develop strategies for success***

* Make sure the purpose for the media event is important enough to merit the time and expense needed to properly stage, publicize and evaluate the event.
* Carefully match the type of event that is selected to the purpose that it serves. Do you want to reach out to new audiences or thank your supporters?
* Select a working committee with specific responsibilities for each person. (AmeriCorps representative, Principal, Food Services Director, Teacher, Student, Farmer, etc.)
* Develop ways to evaluate the event's success.

1. ***Make a Day of Event Checklist***

* A day of event checklist provides a step-by-step guide to organizing and executing your special media event.

1. ***Determine Expenses***

* It is important to determine expenses. Expenses may include in-kind donations, volunteer time and supplies/materials.

1. ***Consider logistics***

* With many activities going on simultaneously, there are many details to be checked. Major areas to consider and plan for include: size of event location, utility support needed, setup (tables and chairs, tents, parking, signage) coordination, cleanup, etc.

1. ***Plan publicity***

* Promoting a special event takes creative thinking balanced with practicality. The primary objective is to publicize the event, but secondary objectives should be considered.
  + - * Are you trying to inform, educate or entertain?
      * Increase awareness or attendance of the event?
      * Build a base support from a specific audience?
      * Facilitate good community relations?

Brainstorm all the available media in including school newsletters, church announcements, and cable and commercial stations. Make a detailed list with names of whom to contact and when.

1. ***Invite Office of Child Nutrition rep to your event***

**One Month Before Your Event…**

1. ***Meet with the principal to discuss event plans.***

Important discussion points when meeting with the principal:

* The optimum time for the media availability to begin, i.e. during school lunch
* The best location for photos/videos
* Whether there will be a formal event with an agenda and guest speakers or just a window of time when media can come and informally take photos and do interviews (recommended approach)
* Ways to ensure 100% participation by parents, children and community leaders
* Make arrangements to display Farm to School banners
* Make arrangements to display poster that features local foods provided that day and the farm they came from
* If sound is needed, make arrangements for podium and/or microphone
* Make arrangements for someone to take candid and staged pictures during the event

**One Week Before Your Event…**

1. ***Notify the local media.***

Helpful hints:

* Use the media contact list to identify media in the event location area.
* Send an e-mail advisory to all local media about the event. (Most media now prefer to be notified of events and press releases via e-mail.)
* Make sure your e-mail advisory includes the date**, time, location and description of your event, as well as a contact name, phone number and e-mail address** in case they have questions. Make sure to include your mobile phone for day of event contact.

1. ***Meet with the principal to go over final plans.***

Helpful hints:

* Go over the schedule and individual assignments for the day of the event.
* Think of questions the principal might be asked about the event and rehearse answers based on the message points.
* Utilize customized talking points for the principal, teachers, Food Service Director and AmeriCorps representative

**One Day Before Your Event…**

1. ***Call all media who received your e-mail advisory and remind them about your event.***
2. ***Call the principal to review final event plans and give him/her an advanced copy of the press release.***

**Day of Your Event…**

1. ***Review Event Day Checklist***
2. ***Get to the school early to help with last-minute preparations***
3. ***If applicable, greet guests upon arrival.***
4. ***Greet media as they arrive and give them a copy of the press release. Introduce them to the principal and any teachers who are also available for an interview. Take them to the event location designated for media coverage.***
5. ***Thank media for the coverage and offer to answer any additional questions or take care of any other needs they have. Thank the school representatives for their help.***

**Post Event - One Week…**

1. ***Evaluate the event***

* Take time to evaluate right after the event while the details are fresh. You may want to consider having a questionnaire for participants to fill out. Some general evaluative criteria include:
  + 1. Did the event fulfill its goals and objectives? Why or why not?
    2. Identify what worked and what needs fine-tuning.
    3. What items were missing on the checklist?
    4. Was the event well attended?
    5. Was informal and formal feedback about the event positive?
    6. Given all that went into staging, was it worth doing?
    7. How successful was the media coverage?
* Finally, it is important to remember to celebrate your successes and to thank all those who contributed.
  + Send personalized thank you notes to all key people involved (principal, teacher, Food Service Director, media, etc.)