

# **For The Common Good 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

## **Media Relations Guidebook**

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This information derived from the Registered Apprenticeship Awareness Kit,  
prepared by the U.S. Department of Labor, October 2000.

Jean Sickles, Sylvia Robinson, and David Cofer assisted with the formatting and production of this document.

## How to Write a Success Story

### Overview

Success stories are a great way to highlight a specific job training program because they put a “face” on a program that may otherwise go unnoticed. The stories can be used in program brochures for marketing purposes or be pitched to the media for coverage of the program.

### How to Write a Success Story

Following are guidelines for success stories that cover all the steps from choosing an ideal participant to obtaining waivers. The steps may be conducted in a different sequence, however, you should follow all of the steps.

**Identifying a Successful Program Participant:** Ideally the subject of the story will have had a difficult life prior to participating in the program and has been successfully employed ever since. Quantify the person’s success if possible. (E.g., “In his previous jobs, Joe never earned more than \$6.00 an hour and never held a job for more than three months. Since completing the XXX program, he has been with the same company for seven months, now earns \$12.00 per hour and was recently named employee of the month.

**Interviewing the Participant:** Contact the participant to determine whether or not she/he is interested in being a “success story.” Explain that the potential story (and picture) may be used in various documents published by your office and/or appear in the local press.

In the interview, learn as much as you can by encouraging the person to speak at length about both program and life experiences. Ask questions about the individual’s history, current job, and future aspirations. Ideally your subject will be well-mannered and speak positively. A participant who uses foul language, discusses politics, speaks negatively about others, or is currently involved in criminal behavior should not be considered for a success story.

Contact the case manager who worked with the person in the program. If the case manager does not offer a recommendation without hesitation, find another candidate for the story. Remember, media representatives may interview the participant. Do not take a chance that the person will reflect negatively on the program.

This process is called “vetting” the individual. Vetting means you gather information to write the story and to ensure that no one (the subject, the program or the sponsoring organization) will be embarrassed by the story. (A sample interview form is attached.)

If you feel that the individual and his/her experience is not outstanding, **do not**

**write the story.** If you are not impressed, the media and other readers will not be impressed and the story will do a disservice to the program.

**Formatting the Story:** A success story should be three or four paragraphs:

**Paragraph 1** covers the person's background and what his/her life was like prior to the program. Include information about work and wage history. Do not include anything negative about family members or friends. The story may refer to the participant's history in a somewhat negative light assuming that there is a "happy ending."

**Paragraph 2** introduces the program and what the person gained through program participation. A quote from the participant could be included here along with additional information about the program (e.g., "The XXX program, which made such a difference in Dan's life, serves over 100 people each year, many of whom have had experiences similar to Dan's.")

**Paragraph 3** explains what the participant has done since the program, and includes information about current earnings, improved skill level, and future potential.

**Paragraph 4 (optional)** includes information about how the program has positively influenced other aspects of the participant's life (e.g., the person is pursuing additional education or training, buying a car, starting a business, etc.).

**Taking a Picture (optional):** A picture adds personality to the story. Use a digital camera or a scanner so you can electronically paste the picture into your story.

**Obtaining A Signed Waiver from the Participant:** A sample waiver form is attached. Print the waiver on your organization's letterhead. Have the subject read a draft of the story and recommend any changes. If you intend to use a picture have it approved also. The waiver allows you to use both the story and the picture.

**Updating the waiver:** If the story was written more than six months prior to the date of use, contact the participant to make sure the information is still accurate and get an update on the story. Identify any changes in the person's life that could either help or hurt the story. If something has happened that is **not** a positive reflection on the person or the program, **do not use the story.**

## Sample Interview Form

Interviewer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(Note: Spend 10 to 20 minutes interviewing the participant. Use the following questions along with any other questions necessary to write the story. Be sure to ask follow-up questions when appropriate so that you feel confident recommending the participant as a success story. Retain this document in the file.)

Date of Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Did you enjoy the program?
- 2) What did you like most about the program?
- 3) What did you like least about the program?
- 4) Where are you currently employed? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) How long have you been there? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What is your salary? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Do you like your job?
- 8) What are your hopes for the future regarding your career?
- 9) How has your life changed as a result of the program?

**If the story was written more than six months ago, ask the following Follow-Up Questions:**

- 1) Where are you currently employed? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How long have you been there? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) What is your salary? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Do you like your job?
- 5) What are your goals for the next few months?

**AUTHORIZATION TO RELEASE INFORMATION**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby authorize \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print your name)

(including any of its officers, employers and agents), within its absolute discretion, to release, disseminate, or use in any manner it sees fit the attached document and any information contained therein, as well as my photograph if provided, as a likeness of me (or my child,) for same use. I hereby waive any claim arising out of such release, dissemination or use.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant (or parent/legal guardian if participant is under 18)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of child if applicable

## MEDIA HANDBOOK

### WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Having a great story to tell doesn't necessarily mean you will get media coverage. In order to get coverage you will have to learn all you can about the media in your community and be prepared to meet their needs. Generally, the four goals of media outlets are to:

- Inform
- Advise
- Entertain
- Make a Profit

#### What is News?

If you want to make news that successfully competes with all the other events and activities bidding for attention, you have to find an angle or "news hook" that makes your story stand out from the crowd. The standards for newsworthiness are

- Proper Timing
- A Local Angle
- Widespread Interest
- Human Interest/Emotional Appeal

Stories about efforts on behalf of your Common Good team and the subsequent economic success of those people or your team are often "hot" news with local media. Our current economy presents a perfect time to highlight successful collaborative efforts. The media always wants to report positive news on the local economic and employment picture.

#### News Hooks

With some creative thinking, you have a better chance of coverage. Think about developing a "hook" - a few words or a few actions that will clarify what's important about your story and/or will convince the media that it is worth covering. Examples of news hooks are:

Hosting an open house at your organization so that reporters and the public are continually made aware of your successes and services.

Arranging for testimonials or guest speakers before appropriate groups and meetings (e.g., a special project of the team)

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#### HOT TIP

**Remember the adage all news is local and proceed accordingly. If you can make a tie-in to a breaking national story, contact your local media outlets to point out the connection, offer interviews and current information to be included in their stories.**

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## News Hooks (continued)

Tying-in to a story previously covered by the media (e.g., if WIB goals for your community were published, let media representatives know about milestones and successes.)

Tying-in to a well-known day, week or month (e.g., celebrate Labor Day with a special activity)

Linking with other events and activities that are sure to be covered.

## News Glossary

It is important for you, as the news source, to be familiar with terms used in journalism that reporters are likely to use in conversation.

**News Story** - Covers new and timely information in a factual manner: also referred to as hard news or a breaking story.

**Feature** - Focuses on the human interest aspect in a story.

**Human Interest** - Emotional appeal in a story.

**News Release** - Factual information (usually one to two pages) you write and give to the media to inform them and stimulate their interest in doing a story. In smaller community papers news releases are often printed exactly as they are submitted or with minor changes.

**Press Kit** - A set of written materials given to the media which provides all or most of the information a reporter needs to write a story. It may include photos, graphics, slides, or video or audio tapes.

## REACHING THE MEDIA

### The Media Plan

The keys to good media relations are planning and preparation. This means developing a media plan that includes clearly defined goals, a strategy to accomplish those goals and tactics for executing the strategy.

Each aspect of the plan will be developed with goals that address three basic questions:

What do we want to accomplish?  
How do we accomplish it?  
When do we want to accomplish it?

Your strategy is to identify:

Who will be interested in the story  
What media reaches these groups  
How you will sell or "pitch" the story

Finally your tactics will include all of the elements described below that will help you get out the story in a timely fashion.

## The Media List

To develop your media plan, list the different types of media to consider taking your news to:

- Newspapers
- Magazines
- Television news and talk shows
- Radio news and talk shows
- Special interest publications
- Community Newspapers
- Community Calendars

Create a list of the names, phone numbers and addresses of every news organization, reporter and editor who is most likely to use your materials. The list need not be long, but keep it up to date.

Then call each media outlet on your list to confirm the contact information and determine which editors and reporters are most likely to use your materials.

## CONTACTING THE MEDIA

### Media Ground Rules

A few basic ground rules apply to all media relations. These rules will help you establish a cooperative working relationship with reporters and will also help ensure accurate coverage. Be prepared to give them:

*Facts:* Accurate information.

*Quotes:* Short, colorful comments which they can attribute to a high profile person in your organization.

*Background:* Basic or historical information that will help the reporter understand the significance of a development.

*Exclusive:* Being the only reporter to get a story.

When working with a reporter be:

*Responsive:* Return calls as soon as possible. Reporters have tight deadlines, and news dies if it is not reported quickly.

*Honest:* Never lie. If you don't know an answer say so and offer to find out. Be factual and refrain from expressing opinions.

*Helpful:* Do a little research. Suggest other credible sources on a story, and let the reporter know you will help.

*Factual:* Have basic information on your program available for the reporter, including the proper spelling of names and correct numbers and dates.

## Press Releases

Although reporters and editors rarely admit it, much of the news that is printed or broadcast originates with a news release. The release is a powerful public relations tool that can serve three different functions:

1. Publicize an issue or a story.
2. Provide background information on a news event.
3. Announce an upcoming activity.

A news release follows stringent guidelines or ends up in the trash can along with scores of others received each day.

The first paragraph is the lead. It is usually one sentence long, never more than two, and answers who, what, when, where, why and how questions. This information must be prominently placed to grab the editor's attention.



Editors don't have time to wade through the entire release to get all of the facts.

The second paragraph is called the bridge because it provides a transition from the lead to the more detailed information that follows. It may explain any "whys" or "hows" not included in the lead. It can also be used to give the source of information in the lead or bring out additional information that complements the lead.

The third and fourth paragraphs are the body - it explains information in the lead and includes interesting and significant details pertaining to the story. The facts in the body are presented in diminishing order of importance.

#### Format

Here are some rules to follow:

Type the release on one side of 8-1/2" x 11" plain white paper or your letterhead.

Double space and leave wide margins (for editors' notes).

The top of the release should include:

1. Your organization's name and address
2. the name and telephonenumber (home and office) of someone with your organization whom reporters can call for more information. Also include when that person can be reached.
3. The date and time for the story's release ("For Release, 9:00 a.m., August 1, 1995" or "For Immediate Release")
4. A short headline ("hook") that describes the content at a glance.
5. A "dateline" to begin the first paragraph indicating where and

when the story was released (Sacramento, May 15, 1995).

When there is more than one page type "-more-" at the bottom of each page (except the last page).

"Slug each additional page with a page number and identifying line (Registered Apprentice Program Honored, Page 2).

End release with the marks "###," "-30-," or "-END-".

An interesting photograph-an action shot or portrait of a person quoted-can enhance coverage.

Use black- and- white glossies (at least 5" x 7") for newspapers and color slides for television.

Include a "cutline" (a short, typed caption) with any photo. It should identify the main figures (left to right) and describe the activity.

#### Pitch Letters

Personal contact with editors is the key to getting news items in print. For newspapers with a small, local distribution, you may be successful by sending a pitch letter, particularly if a story is not breaking news. A pitch letter:

Immediately explains why the letter is being written - It doesn't waste words. Summarizes the most important information in one paragraph before going into other details.

Consists of no more than one page. Explains why the audience would be interested in the story.

Includes a few interesting, "eye-catching" details.

Suggest possible approaches to the story.

Call the editor(s) about one week after sending the letter to determine interest. Make certain that it's a good time to talk. If not, ask for a better time to call back.

### **Tips**

Remember, don't ask if they have received the release you sent them (it's an easy way for them to dismiss your story). Instead, talk about the following:

Your story/topic /cause/angle why it's important for readers to know how it affects/benefits the community and how it can be interesting.

Let the editor know that the news release was mailed, but that you would fax a copy.

### **Event News**

Planned news events (such as an open house) offer additional venues for "getting the word out." Following are some methods for alerting the media about a planned activity. Remember, if reporters don't know anything about your organization or program, it is important to send background information.

### **Press (Media) Advisory**

This is a memo to all media, alerting them to an event. The advisory should contain a description of the program, the time, location, participants, a contact name and phone number so the media can get more information if they require it. This advisory should be sent out at least three to five days before the event.

### **Phoning Reporters**

Calling a reporter or news outlet is a good way to remind them of an event or announcement. Speak to a reporter

or assignment editor and immediately tell the person your name, organization, job title and reason for calling. Try to keep the call interesting while maintaining a professional tone. If the event doesn't sound important, the reporter won't think it is.

When holding a news event, contact all the people who might find it of interest. Send advisories to your entire media list, including different reporters and editors at the same news outlet. You are more likely to get coverage when you have the attention of several people at a newspaper or station.



## How to Create a Press Kit

Press Kits are a useful way to share background information with the media, providing all or most of the information a reporter needs to write a story. Press kits contain a variety of documents that reporters can use to develop stories regarding an event. The kit usually presents a collection of relevant documents such as brochures, fact sheets, previous press coverage, and other materials containing information on the subject. Press kits can be distributed to the media either before, during or after an event, typically in a colorful folder. When hosting an event, be sure to have enough copies of the press kit available for all members of the media that attend.

Press kits may contain:

**Articles** that have been printed regarding the program such as editorial or opinion pieces, stories appearing in magazines or newspapers, or articles appearing on the Internet.

**Brochures** about the program provide extra insight into the program.

**A Press Release** prepared specifically for the event. Press releases often serve as the basis of a reporter's story. A sample is attached.

**A Fact Sheet** which provides basic information about the program. If you already have a Program Fact Sheet that is used for public distribution, then include it in the press kit.

**Success Stories** that highlight successful program participants. Subjects for these stories must be carefully chosen and verified for accuracy in the event that a reporter interviews the participant to validate the Success Story.

**Videos or Graphic Materials** that capture the message and programmatic information from a visual standpoint.

**A List of Other Events** (if appropriate) should include dates and highlights regarding these events. A reporter may choose to cover several events before writing and submitting an article.

**Contact Information** including phone numbers and names of people that a reporter can speak with to gather information or facts for a story.

**Website Addresses** of any organizations, government entities, or informational Internet sites that may be useful to a reporter when researching a story.

## Talking Points

### **Audience: State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**

- 1. For The Common Good (FTCG) was initiated in 1990 in response to the Family Support Act of 1988.**
- 2. FTCG has expanded its focus to all workforce development efforts.**
- 3. FTCG operates under the direction of an inter-agency team composed of state and local level staff.**
- 4. FTCG has adopted the mission of fostering collaboration among state and local workforce investment systems to ensure effective and efficient services for individuals and families.**
- 5. FTCG's major goal is to facilitate the formation of local interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio.**
- 6. FTCG teams throughout the state formed the template for the successful implementation of Ohio's One-Stop systems.**
- 7. Collaborative interagency linkages improve workforce development services.**

- 8. FTCG teams are voluntary in nature, not accountable for meeting specific legislative requirements.**
- 9. FTCG provides a strategy for implementing systemic change.**
- 10. FTCG teams' collaborative foundations were the nucleus for the formation of today's workforce investment boards.**
- 11. FTCG team experience leads to successful future collaborative efforts.**
- 12. FTCG web site:**
- 13. Supported by funds from the Ohio Department of Education, Career-Technical and Adult Education, Section 223 of Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of the Workforce Investment Act.**

**For more information contact:**

**Susan Imel  
Center on Education and Training for Employment  
1900 Kenny Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090  
(614) 292-8606, (800) 848-4815, ext. 28606  
email: <imel.1@ous.edu>**

**###**

# Public Service Announcement sample

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For The Common Good

1900 Kenny Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090  
Contact: Susan Imel  
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For Release:  
Monday, November 13, 2000  
7:00 a.m.

Phone: (614) 292-8606, (800) 848-4815

## FOR THE COMMON GOOD TEAMS CELEBRATE 10 YEARS OF PROMOTING COLLABORATION

The \_\_\_\_\_ County Common Good Team recently participated in the state-wide celebration of 10 years of collaborative efforts among state and local workforce development agencies held at Southern State Community College, Wilmington Campus, Wilmington, Ohio.

The \_\_\_\_\_ County Common Good Team was recognized for outstanding achievements in their efforts to

\_\_\_\_\_.

These efforts have led to \_\_\_\_\_ County's success in workforce development programs. As a result of the team's efforts, \_\_\_\_\_ County now boasts an unemployment rate of \_\_\_\_\_ as compared to \_\_\_\_\_ one year ago. The collaborative efforts of this team have also contributed to the successful implementation of \_\_\_\_\_ County's one-stop efforts. Job seekers and employers now have one place to go for all of their workforce development needs.

For more information on the \_\_\_\_\_ County Common Good Team, please call \_\_\_\_\_.

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Note:

(public service announcements are aired on radio and television, should be short and to the point. Do not make them longer than one verbal minute - most Public Service Announcements are between 30 seconds and one minute and are read at the station's discretion)

Sample Press Release Format

*Your Organization's Name and Address*

**Media Contact: Name of Media Contact Person in the Office**  
**Telephone: Insert phone number of the person who should be contacted**  
**For Immediate Release: Date and time for the story's release**

**HEADLINE FOR YOUR BIG ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD GO HERE**

**Paragraph #1: This is the LEAD PARAGRAPH - It should be written to make the reader continue. This paragraph should state why the program is important and who benefits.**

**Paragraph #2: *"Begin a quote here," Name of the person said. "Remaining portion of the quote should go here."***

**Paragraph #3: The third paragraph should discuss the impact of this big event. If there is funding, discuss the funding source and explain who benefits. If a person did something, who benefits. Generally, this paragraph states why the general public would be interested in this big event.**

**Paragraph #4: This is another quote by a different person. *"Begin a quote here," Name of a different person said. "Remaining portion of the quote should go here."***

**Paragraph #5: The fifth paragraph should summarize the thoughts of the person quoted in paragraph #4. This paragraph should also state any reasons not already mentioned why the public should be interested in this event. It might start by saying - *According to...***

**Paragraph #6: The final paragraph should add any additional information. If there have been similar events in the past, this information should be provided here.**

**One of three marks should appear at the end of the Press Release:**

**### or -30- or -END-**

# News Release

sample

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For The Common Good  
1900 Kenny Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090

Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hours available: \_\_\_\_\_

For Immediate Release  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date) (Time)

**TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_ CELEBRATES COMMON GOOD  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

On November 28, 2000, the Common Good State Team is sponsoring “Common Good: Celebrating Our Past and Positioning for the Future,” to celebrate 10 years of interagency collaboration in Ohio. The focus of the day will be on addressing current challenges to collaboration at the local level and formulating strategies for future collaborative efforts.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Common Good Team, in existence for \_\_\_\_\_ years will be featured as one of Ohio’s premier examples of collaborative efforts. The \_\_\_\_\_ team has been responsible for numerous project successes in \_\_\_\_\_ County, including: \_\_\_\_\_.

Featured speaker at the November event will be John Schuster, Deputy Director, Workforce Development, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. “For the Common Good Teams focus on workforce development issues by facilitating interagency collaborative efforts at the local level” said Schuster. He added, “Ohio is well positioned for incorporation of the Workforce Investment Act due to the strategies designed by and incorporated into daily work habits by these dynamic



teams.”

Joel Potts of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has been invited to discuss the future context for collaboration. Panels consisting of State Team Members and other state agency staff will address questions related to the Workforce Investment Act and other state initiatives affecting workforce development in local areas.

- more -

The event, which will be held at Southern State Community College, Wilmington Campus, Wilmington, Ohio, will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. A celebration of the Common Good project’s 10 years will be held during lunch. Cost is \$25.00 per person. Registration forms may be obtained by calling David Cofer (614) 292-8204.

###

# News Release

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**For The Common Good**

**1900 Kenny Road**

**Columbus, Ohio 43210-1090**

**Contact: Susan Imel**

**For Immediate Release**

**Phone: (614) 292-8606**

**Monday, November 13,**

**8:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.2000, 7:00 a.m.**

**TITLE: NOVEMBER EVENT TO CELEBRATE COMMON GOOD  
10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

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Featured speaker at the event will be John Schuster, Deputy Director, Workforce Development, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. “For the Common Good Teams focus on workforce development issues by facilitating interagency collaborative efforts at the local level” said Schuster. He added, “Ohio is well positioned for incorporation of the Workforce Investment Act due to the strategies designed by and incorporated into daily work habits by these dynamic teams.”

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**Workforce Investment Act and other state initiatives affecting workforce development in local areas.**

**The event, which will be held at Southern State Community College, Wilmington Campus, Wilmington, Ohio, will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. A celebration of the Common Good project's 10 years will be held during lunch. Cost is \$25.00 per person. Registration forms may be obtained by calling David Cofer (614) 292-8204.**

**###**

## FOR THE COMMON GOOD - FACT SHEET

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**State Team formed in 1990**

**State Agencies represented:**

**Department of Education, Career  
Technical and Adult Education**

**Department of Job and Family Services**

**Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services**

**Department of Aging**

**Department of Development**

**Department of Natural Resources**

**Board of Regents**



**Funded by Ohio Department of Education, Career-  
Technical and Adult Education, Section 223 of Title II,  
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, of the Workforce  
Investment Act.**

**Project Mission: to foster collaboration among state and  
local workforce investment systems to ensure effective  
and efficient services for individuals and families.**

**Project Goals:**

**Facilitate the formation of local linkage teams**

**Develop communication between state agencies**

**Develop communication between state and local  
teams**

**Integrate Common Good with other state initiatives**

**Deliverables**

**Institutes**

**Workshops**

**Newsletters**

**Fact sheets**

**Facilitation**

**Speeches**

**Team building**

**Collaborative initiative development**

**Inter and Intra system Outcome Management**

**Community Asset Building**

**Elimination of duplicate programming**