

PUBLIC RELATIONS CHAT #5 – APRIL 24, 2024 ON ZOOM

TOPIC – LOCAL MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS

Reasons to discuss local media and how a Unit can build relationships

- Local media interest in your Unit is affected by the reputation of the Unit/Post in the community
- Reputation problems for non-profits generally mean less interest and cooperation from the media
- Types of media differ depending on location
 - Newspapers – Daily, bi-weekly, weekly, news/advertising. There may be several media representatives to cover your stories, or perhaps only one in a small community
 - Radio access – local stations of varying sizes and reach
 - Local TV affiliates

First steps to building or improving your relationship with local media

- Get to know the appropriate people
- Pitch relevant stories – local papers like stories that the community can relate to
- Make your stories newsworthy. Relate them to issues that are currently in the news, especially locally. Be The One is especially relevant considering suicide awareness regarding younger and older people.
- Ask them what they know about your unit, its purposes, and its activities

What we can do to get to know local media and help them get to know us

- Invite them to your events as guests
 - Use personal invitations, not just an event flier or a general email
 - Let them see your unit in action and interact personally with your members.

- Invite them to a meeting or social event to speak about their profession and experiences in the media
 - Show an interest on them as professionals. Learn about their work and interests
- Having media attend as guests will enhance the visibility of your unit, provide networking opportunities with other groups, and create a positive perception of the Unit's reputation with members and other attendees

Make your events media friendly

- Avoid scheduling conflicts with other community events. Don't force the media rep to decide between attending your event or another conflicting event in the community
- Ensure you have a number of knowledgeable and personable members on hand to answer questions and provide information. Encourage your members to talk about their personal experiences and their reasons for volunteering their time and energy to the Unit
- Have a small, separate area ready in case the media rep wants to do 1-on-1 interviews

Make the local media rep's job easier to cover your Unit's activities

- Give them plenty of time to prepare for a visit or an upcoming story
 - Get on their "radar" early
- Explain unique or potentially confusing ALA or Legion Family terms in clear language
 - Sometimes our terminology can be confusing (for example, Department vs. state)
- Get graphic - photos and videos make you newsworthy
 - A good Unit social media program can be a great help, allowing the media to follow your activities and get to better know and understand your Unit and its purposes

Use online resources to enhance media understanding of the Unit

- Media reps find online resources make their job easier in gaining background info
- Unit/Post website and social media should include some organizational history, mission and goals, photos and profiles of key people
- When the media publishes a story for you, post it on your website and social media, giving clear credit and appreciation to the publisher
- Include downloadable photos of your members in action
- Your annual Unit Narrative Report can be an important media tool if you diligently and thoroughly complete the form
 - Use that info to show the media rep the time, money, resources, and energy your unit expends on supporting not only veterans and their families, but the community as well
- At the end of this summary is an example of an event form from Unit 391 showing how they track volunteer hours and expenses for events (**Thank you Kay Grosskopf**)

Wrap-Up

- We have two more PR Chats scheduled. The next Chat will be Wednesday May 29 from 6:30-8:30. The general topic for the session will be USING SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PR TOOL. Members may attend the entire session or drop in anytime during the session to listen and/or participate. Members of the PR Committee will be available in the chat room the entire 2-hour period each month. If members wish to continue talking past 8:30, we welcome that enthusiasm and will remain engaged. The Zoom link for all PR Chat sessions is <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84804629555?pwd=OEZoRnFCMjVsenQxc1VYMVRWZW9Vdz09>