



## MASSACHUSETTS 4-H

### CLUB NEWS REPORTER HANDBOOK

YEAR \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_



UMassAmherst Outreach **UMass**  
**Extension**

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## Media Alert Format

To attract the attention of the media for an upcoming event you may want to submit a Media Alert notice to your local media outlets (newspaper, radio, TV).

- One page maximum
- Brief but compelling
- Arouses interest
- Doesn't give away story

## Pitching a Story

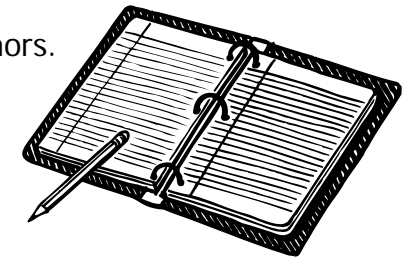
Sometimes, as the News Reporter, you may need to call the media to ask for coverage for an event or story. This is called "pitching a story". When you call, be sure to include the following information. Write it out ahead of time to be sure you have everything you need at your fingertips.

- Identify yourself & the organization.
- Explain why you're making contact.
- Ask the person if he/she is the correct person and if he/she has time to talk.
- Cover who, what, where, when, and why.
- Provide relevance — why should they care?
- Tell what access you can offer, such as other people you can put them in contact with who are involved in the story)
- Ask for what you want. For example: a reporter to attend the event, a photographer, etc.
- Ask how best to follow up.

## News Release Content

- Collect all the information. Get answers to the six questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- Study the facts you've collected. Arrange them in order of importance. Ask: What was most important and interesting about the event? That is the first thing you tell in the story.
- Lead with a short summary of the entire story. It should answer most of the six questions. Make it attention-grabbing. It is the "hook" that leads the reader on.
- As you build the story, write key points first and leave the least important information for last.
- Use simple, everyday language and words. Be brief and clear. Double check spelling.
- In collecting facts, double check names, dates, times, and locations.
- Leave out opinions and rumors.

Always take notes!



## Resources

For 4-H Media Resources, go to: [www.4HUSA.ORG](http://www.4HUSA.ORG)  
To share stories with the National 4-H Council, email: [wow@fourhcouncil.edu](mailto:wow@fourhcouncil.edu)



## News Release Format

- Double space the text.
- Do not indent paragraphs.
- Double the spacing between paragraphs.
- Use wide margins.
- Use Times New Roman font in size 10 or 12.
- Keep sentences under twenty words and paragraphs under sixty.
- Provide contact information.
- Begin with "For immediate release" or date and release time.
- Use a short headline – contents at a glance.
- Paragraph One:
  1. Begin with the dateline.
  2. Must contain the five "W's" and the "how".
  3. Include important facts.
- Paragraph Two – essential background information and the names of key characters or sources.
- Paragraph Three – further description(s).
- Paragraph Four – concise summary.
- Contact Information – name, telephone, cell, email (Be sure you have the person's permission.) Type "-more-" at the bottom if it is more than one page. End with "###" or "-end-" in the center of the page.

## Sample News Release

For Immediate Release

### Flood Victim Helped

On Saturday June 12, the Hilltop 4-H Club gathered at the home of Mary Diaz in Dayton to clean up the damage done to her home by the recent flooding. As part of the club's community service project, ten members and two club leaders gathered water-soaked belongings, raked the yard and bagged trash.

"It was a long day," Aaron Gimple, a 4-H member said, "but it was worth it! She really needed our help"

Ms Diaz was very pleased with the results and said "I never could have done this without their help."

4-H is the youth development program of University of Massachusetts Extension. If you would like more information about 4-H, contact [www.mass4h.org](http://www.mass4h.org) or call 1-800-374-4446.

"end"

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