

Building Media Relationships

Are you friends with a public relations professional? Ask that person to donate time to help you build relationships with the local media, write letters to the media or write a news release.

Invite your local media to a breakfast (or lunch) meeting. The agenda: Educate them about the local LEAVE A LEGACY effort. If you're in a small town, contact the editor of the local paper and perhaps the news director of the local radio station. In larger cities, contact the metro editor, city editor or the managing editor. Managing editors are the editors who decide what gets covered. In larger cities, a particular reporter might be assigned to cover nonprofits or the philanthropy beat. Invite that reporter. How do you find out who covers what? Look for a staff directory on the newspaper's web site or call the paper and ask directly. The end result of the breakfast meeting might not lead to any coverage, but that's okay. You're starting to build a relationship with the media, and you're educating them about LEAVE A LEGACY. Ideally, they'll think of LEAVE A LEGACY down the road because of your efforts.

On a related note, develop regular meetings with the media. You might ask to visit in their office or the local coffee shop for a few minutes. Do it every two months or so. Build that relationship. You may even ask members of the media to serve as volunteers on the committee.