

How Do We Share Lions Messages with the Public?

Have you ever wondered, “How do I share Lions messages with the public?” You can use a combination of the following PR tools and resources to share your message with the media and community members.

Club Fact Sheet

A [club fact sheet](#) will provide background information about your club to reporters. Include a fact sheet with all news releases. You can also use fact sheets as handouts during community events.

Be A Lion Club Brochure

You can use this brochure as a handout at community events – or whenever anyone expresses an interest in becoming a Lion. Visit our [Publications page](#) to download a customizable PDF or Microsoft Word version of this brochure.

News Release

News releases answer six key questions in the first two paragraphs: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? Subsequent paragraphs should provide additional information in descending order of importance. Simply written and fact-filled releases are more likely to be published. To increase the chances that your release will be used:

- Be sure that it is about a newsworthy event.
- Keep paragraphs and sentences short, limiting them to a single idea.
- Use quotes to enhance basic information. When attributing quotes, be sure to identify the person's name and title.
- Include the name of the appropriate contact person at the top of the page along with a daytime telephone number and e-mail address.
- Follow a standard press release format (see the example release at the end of this guide for the format of news releases, and visit the [Sample News Releases](#) page to download pre-formatted fill-in-the-blank press releases).
- At least two weeks before your event, distribute news releases to editors, reporters and news directors on your media list who cover your particular type of story.
- If you have a major story, follow up with each media outlet one week before the event. Offer to answer questions and outline photo opportunities. Be positive and enthusiastic in explaining why their audience would be interested in your story.

Call your local media outlets to suggest a feature story to a reporter or editor in a situation when a news release might not tell the story well. Interest the reporter in covering a story, such as the importance of volunteers in your community rather than covering a specific event or activity.

Interviews and Public Speaking

An appropriate club spokesperson should be prepared to provide accurate information with enthusiasm and confidence. Following are tips for successful interviews:

- **Know Your Facts.** Be ready to expand upon the who, what, when, where, why and how stated in media material.
- **Prepare Key Message Points.** Rather than answer a question with a simple "yes" or "no," use the interviewer's question as a bridge to your key messages. Practice answering likely questions prior to the interview. Review the association's key messages on the LCI website, and adapt them to fit your club's messages.
- **Give Short, Clear Responses.** Mention your main points early in the interview in a few, brief, clear sentences. If you do not know the answer to a question, offer to find out the answer and follow up immediately.
- **Mention Your Club's Name Often.** Avoid saying only "I" or "we."
- **Watch What You Say.** Never give "off the record" comments.
- **Dress Appropriately.** Always wear your Lions pin. For television, avoid pinstripes, white shirts, loud prints and too much jewelry.
- **Smile.** Be conversational. Let the reporter see that you enjoy being a Lion.

Post-Event Publicity

Report the results of your programs and fundraisers to the community through the following:

- **News Release.** Prepare a brief, one page news release highlighting the project's results. Include photos.
- **Letter to the Editor.** Write a thank you note to the community.
- **Display Advertisement.** Consider placing a small advertisement thanking the community for its support. Many publications offer not-for-profit discounts. Some may donate unsold space for free.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

PSAs are brief (10, 15 or 30 second) messages aired at no charge on radio and television stations as a community service. They must benefit the community, not just your club.

[Lions Clubs International has a collection of PSAs](#) covering a variety of topics that are available at no cost to clubs, including broadcast quality PSAs in MPEG format for television stations to download.

When writing a PSA, brevity and clarity are of utmost importance since at most you have 10 to 30 seconds to communicate your message. Messages about preventing blindness, serving youth, fundraising events that benefit the community and public events sponsored by your club are appropriate subjects. PSAs need to:

- Get the listeners' attention.
- Show how listeners will benefit from doing what you suggest.
- Tell listeners where to go, what to do, when to do it and where to call for more information.

As a general guideline, a 10-second spot will have approximately 20 words and a 30-second spot will have approximately 65 words.

Contact the news or public service director at your local television or radio station to learn the station's scheduling and format requirements and if they can assist you with production. Often stations have a reduced production rate for not-for-profit organizations.

Public Access Television

Public access stations air PSAs, run videos of club activities, post club events on community bulletin boards and have club members participate in community talk shows. Contact the public service director at your local cable station regarding program opportunities.

Video Programs

Show a video such as LQ-Lions Quarterly Video Magazine or PSAs at community events and when you meet with other community groups. View and order videos from the [Lions News Network \(LNN\)](#). You can also view videos on [YouTube](#) and download LQ on iTunes.

Websites and Social Networks

Websites and social networking sites are excellent ways to let people know about your club. Use [e-Clubhouse](#) to create a club website with easy-to-use templates and free hosting. Once created it is important to keep your website updated and to include the site in your publicity materials.

Social networking sites such as [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Flickr](#) are excellent for promoting Lions clubs. Ask a club member comfortable with social networking to create and regularly manage the club's pages on these sites. Include contact information, photos from recent projects, a statement of purpose and a list of upcoming events.

Printed Promotional Materials

Printed materials for promoting your event should:

- Answer: Who, what, when, where and why.
- Use clear concise language and include only necessary information.
- Be eye-catching and printed with a laser printer or professionally printed.
- Use a bold, easy-to-read font or typeface.
- Feature prominently your club's name, contact information and the Lions logo.

You may be able to negotiate with printers or photocopy services to produce your flyers and posters at a reduced not-for-profit rate.

Have club members post flyers and posters throughout your area-at public bulletin boards, libraries, store windows, bus stops, train stations, etc. Ask local businesses and government offices to have them available for customers.

Photographs

Photos can enhance your club bulletins and promotional materials and should be sent to newspapers along with a news release. Display photos of your club's activities and people you've helped at a community event. When taking photos, remember:

- Use a digital camera when possible. Digital photos are easy to send, save and store. Submit digital photos as attached files. Do not cut and paste them into an e-mail.
- Use only clearly focused photographs.
- Shoot candid rather than posed photos. While posed and group shots may be used in club bulletins, candid shots are much more interesting. Many publications will not use posed photos.
- If you must pose people, make the photos look as natural as possible by having them do something. Carefully frame the photos so some people aren't cut off.
- Get as close to the action as possible.
- Limit the number of people and don't include too much background.
- Shoot a lot of photos and select the best shots.
- Call your local newspapers to see if and how they accept electronic photos.
- Submit your photos to International Headquarters using the [Submit a Photo](#) form.

To obtain permission to publish photos taken by your club, download the [Photo/Video Authorization Form](#) or [Child Photo/Video Authorization Form](#).

MDA LION Magazine

Receive national recognition for your club's service activity by submitting articles and photos to the [MDA LION Magazine](#). While not all submissions can be published, here are some guidelines when submitting your story:

- Submit detailed information – who, what, when, where, why and how – of your club's completed service project or fundraising activity.
- Do not send images formatted for use on the Internet. Web images are too small and do not have the high resolution required for use in the MDA LION Magazine.
- Include clear, candid, action photographs of Lions participating in the project. Be sure everyone in the picture is identified.
- Do not send "grip-and-grin" photos (i.e. people shaking hands, check presentation, etc.).
- Include the name, address, daytime phone number and/or e-mail address of a contact person who is familiar with the project.

[E-mail](#) stories and photographs that meet these guidelines to the MDA LION Magazine. It often takes a while for chosen articles to appear in print.

Other Publicity Ideas

There are many ways to tell your community about your Lions club and activities. If your club is sponsoring a community event:

- Ask to have information posted on your community website or message board.
- Pass out flyers or brochures about your club and its activities. If the event is a fundraiser, hand out information telling how the money will be used.
- Display the Lions logo and club name prominently on all materials and at all activities and events.

Even when your club doesn't have a special event planned, you can:

- Wear your Lions pin and apparel.
- List your club in local phone books and community directories, along with a contact person and phone number. Keep this information up-to-date.
- Put information about your club in "Welcome to the Community" packets offered by local agencies or chambers of commerce.
- Invite community organizations to present information about their activities at club meetings and offer to present information at their meetings.
- Display local Peace Posters at a library or community center.
- Ask government and school district newsletters to include information about your club, especially if you are involved in a community or school project such as the [Peace Poster Contest](#), a [vision or diabetes screening](#), building a recreational center, etc.
- Place a highway sign or marker outside your community. Keep it in good condition. You can purchase a highway sign from Club Supplies Sales Department.
- Leave your old LION Magazine to your local library or anywhere there is a significant flow of traffic of people.

These are just a few practical ideas for you to consider and more ideas will be published on a regular basis.

If your club has experienced successful public relations for an event, please let us know. We need to "get the message out" by sharing these successes to **ALL** clubs in the district.

This is the first year for the District A4 Public Relations and Promotions Committee. The committee members include:

Region 13

Lion Judy Grant, 613-256-0126, judyinalmonte@gmail.com

Lion Gus Este, 613-825-1168, jusgus.e@gmail.com

Region 22

Lion James Johnston, 613-589-2092, james.johnston@magma.ca

Region 30

Lion Liz Christie, 613-315-9069, lizmacg@gmail.com

Region 41

Lion Renee Devenny, 613-925-5955, rldevenny@gmail.com

Lion Jim Devenny, 613-925-5955, devennyjim@gmail.com

If you have a question regarding these ideas, promoting your club in your community or if you would like to invite a Public Relations & Promotions Committee member to visit your club, please feel free to contact any one of us. We are here to help you to reshape public opinion and improve your club's visibility so that club activities become a success.

By working together to improve the awareness of our clubs in our communities, we can work towards ensuring effective and successfully promoted club service projects, fundraisers and events.

Together in Lions Service,

Lion James Johnston

District A4 Public Relations and Promotions Coordinator