



Press Release Toolkit

Positive media coverage is one of the best ways to promote the non-stop fun, amazing opportunities and tangible benefits today's girls experience in Girl Scouting. When we share our Girl Scout news and activities it:

- Increases our visibility in the community
- Promotes our brand and signals value for the Girl Scout Program
- Boosts our membership
- Increases financial support

At Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council, we do our best to report stories, latest news and important information relating to Girl Scouting council wide. But, with over 10,000 girl and adult members, it's not easy to issue media releases on all the awesome activities every Girl Scout is doing across the state. That's where YOU come in! You can promote your Girl Scout news and activities in local media.

This Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council Press Release Toolkit is designed to support you in your efforts and provides useful information.

What is news?

The most important question to ask before you write a release is: IS IT NEWS? While many of your Girl Scout activities are interesting, not all are going to be newsworthy. Reporters and editors are inundated with press releases and they're going to review your submission for its news value to determine whether or not it gets into their publication. On the other hand, don't sell yourself short... you might think a news outlet isn't interested in your event or story but you really never know. It never hurts to reach out and suggest coverage.

Tips for Writing Your Release

1. Use this press release template to help guide you for formatting. *It's best to cut and paste the template into the body of the email rather than send it as an attachment.*
2. Write a catchy headline! The headline is what attracts attention and makes people want to keep reading. *It should be one line in length and capitalized.*

3. Your lead paragraph should be *no longer than three lines in length and should provide the who, what, when, where and why of your story*. Think of the lead as a way to give quick facts and subsequent paragraphs as a way to fill in the details.
4. Use a quote from your spokesperson in your second or third paragraph. *Quotes should be to the point and used to add support to your story*. Be sure to include quotation marks and list the person's name, title and organization.
 - For example: "All the girls in my troop were looking forward to visiting the Mouse Trap Museum," said Suzie Scout, Leader of Troop 000. "The girls used the proceeds from the Girl Scout Cookie Sale Activity to pay for the trip and everyone had a great time."
5. If it's an **event** (for example a cookie sale, volunteer opportunity, etc.) *be sure to write the **date, time** and **place** of the event very clearly at the top*. It's good to send releases out early and they generally get stored in a folder for the day of the event.
6. Write in the third person and use declarative sentences.
 - For example, instead of: My Girl Scout Troop went to the Oglebay Good Zoo last Saturday, use: Girl Scouts of Black Diamond Council Troop 000 toured the Oglebay Good Zoo on Saturday, October 23.
7. Try to limit your release to around 300 words or less and proof it several times before sending it out! *Check your facts, spelling and punctuation*.
8. *Try to mention specific accomplishments about how girls are making a difference*. The media loves personal touches. They might not cover an event about girls shoveling sidewalks... but if they know the elderly neighbor they're doing it for has cancer... or there's a special bond, or something that pulls at the heart strings. They might be more inclined to do it. Don't get into the weeds with the details but make a compelling, emotional pitch for coverage.
9. Make sure to include in the news release who would be available for comment or an interview. *Remember, having some girls to do interviews is best!* (But make sure to get parents' permission first!)

10. *It never hurts to follow up* the day of the event to remind news agencies of the press opportunity. Generally story ideas are chosen day of and outlets will not make a commitment of coverage until the day the event is happening.
 11. If you have a personal connection to a local reporter, send your news release to them. The media receives hundreds of press releases, and reaching out personally to a specific news reporter can help provide better responses to coverage. *Developing relationships with people in the media (even digital ones through email) is a great way to get started.*
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A picture is worth a thousand words

Including a picture with your release increases the chances that your news will get printed! Here are some helpful tips:

- Include an action shot to go with your release whenever possible. When writing the photo caption, describe what is happening and identify people in the photo from left to right.
- SAFETY FIRST - You may only list girls by their full names IF PARENTS HAVE GIVEN PERMISSION! Otherwise, submit Girl Scouts Jane, Suzie, and Annie, members of Girl Scout Troop 000, or Girl Scouts from Troop 000, etc.
- Make sure that we have on file photo permission for every Girl Scout before distributing a picture to the media. There is a photo release that has been collected during registration, as well as on the Annual Permission Form. Take pictures that support your event and try to take a lot of pictures so you will have many shots to select from.
- Avoid those group shots if you can. The group shot has its place but action shots are more fun and can make your event look more interesting. Get in close to capture faces and girls doing something!
- Only submit bright, focused, good quality photos. Pictures should be saved as JPGS or TIFs and be at least 300 dpi (dots per inch).

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