**Sail training guide to writing a news release**

**A good news release is one of the most effective ways of getting your fundraising story covered in your local media and online.**

**What is a news release?**

A news release is a way of communicating with journalists. If written well it will tell them what your story is at a glance. Journalists do get hundreds of press releases every day, though, so you need to make sure yours stands out from the crowd.

**What should your news release be about?**

The most important thing about a news release is its content. What you are writing about has to be of interest to the journalist or they won’t cover it.

**News has to be new and relevant**

There is no point publicising an event or activity that happened weeks ago. Talk about what’s happening now or what’s about to happen. You story has to be relevant to the people reading it or hearing about it. Focusing on your personal development is always a great topic for journalists looking for a slightly different kind of story to cover.

**Who to send your news release to?**

In years gone by, contacting you local print newspaper was always the best way to reach the largest audience possible. With the increase of internet usage, there are many more ways to spread the word. There are local news groups across social media and dedicated online blogs to local events. Try doing a little research into any ‘what’s on’ blogs for your local area and contact them as well as print newspapers.

**Know your media**

Results that show up first in search engine queries usually have the biggest audience. Read your local paper, listen to your local radio and watch your local TV so you know how they report stories and what type of stories they like. Ring them up and check which journalists cover your issue and when their deadlines are.

**Send your news release in the body of the email**

Don’t send it as an attachment and don’t include logos. Emails with attachments often bounce back.

**Follow up your news release**

Ring the news desk to check they have your release, if they will be covering the story and if they have all the information they need.

Don’t ring close to deadlines as they won’t have time to chat. You can find out their deadlines by ringing the news desk. For example, journalists on daily papers are usually very busy in the late afternoon – it’s best to ring them mid-morning.

**Don’t be put off**

There will be many reasons why your story isn’t used – a bigger news story might have squeezed it out, they may have just run a similar story or it might not have grabbed the editor of the day. Keep trying.

**NEWS RELEASE TEMPLATE**

**Date**

**Headline:** insert a snappy headline, but not too clever:

***Local student looks to the horizon for adventure and development***

**Paragraph 1:** Summarise the story - who, what, where, when and why. All key information needs to be in this paragraph

*The early mornings, late nights and perilous weather conditions won’t stop local student (your name) from his/her dream of taking part in a sail training adventure.*

*(Add some personal background information here)*

**Paragraph 2:** Put in details outlined in the first paragraph i.e. explain the benefits of sail training

*Sail training takes place all over the world and on different types of vessel, and includes instruction in all aspects of sailing, but its purpose goes far beyond this, it provides challenges that require demanding work in both large and small teams.*

**Paragraph 3**: A quote from you or someone relevant to the story. Don’t cram too many points into one quote – each quote should make one point

*“Sail Training is an activity that inspires self-confidence and personal responsibility. It also promotes an acceptance of others, whatever their social or cultural backgrounds, and develops a willingness to take controlled risks. By taking part in this sail training adventure on a tall ship, I am hoping to develop the skills and character required to make a positive impact on society in my life.”*

**Paragraph 4:** Extra relevant information

*To help with their running costs, vessels charge a fee for taking part in a sail training voyage, and this is why (your name) is fundraising. If you would like to hear more about (your name)’s voyage and fundraising, you can contact them through the email address provided.*

* **ends -**

**Photo opportunity:** adding visual media is key so always add an image to your news release. Caption it: WHAT it is, WHERE it is and WHEN it is.

**Your contact information**