

Helpful Hints

Make sure the newspaper read your press releases by using these helpful tips:

- Be Brief & Concise**— Use every-day words—Avoid unnecessary words; Stick to the basics
- Be Positive and Specific.** - Use positive words—do not use “not”! Instead write positive statements. (“Forgot” instead of “did not remember”, etc.) Use specific words. (*Vague*: “Some members won...”; *Specific*: “Three members won...”.)
- (Optional) Be Active** - For all you grammar “nuts”, you can write in the passive voice or the active voice. (*Passive Voice*: “Our report was published in Bits and Pieces”. *Active*: Bits and Pieces published our report. Passive voice is weak and impersonal. Active voice is strong, direct and clear. If tact is required, use passive voice. Otherwise use active.)
- Use your club’s logo and full name (“Fillmore 4-H Homecraft Club”, not “Fillmore Homecraft”) in all club publications. Make your club logo at <https://4-h-canada.ca/brand-app>.

Calendar of Events

Keep a one-year calendar of upcoming 4-H fundraisers, deadlines and important events. Create the calendar at the beginning of the year and add to it throughout. It will ensure you never miss promoting or reporting on an event.

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|-----------|---------|----------|
| SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER |
| DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY |
| MARCH | APRIL | MAY |
| JUNE | JULY | AUGUST |

Congratulations on becoming Club Reporter! Stick to these rules and guidelines and you will do fine. Be sure to talk to your General Leader or your Regional 4-H Specialist if you have any questions or problems. They are there to help!



Reporter Duties

- Provide newspaper and radio with information on club activities in the form of press releases.
- Prepare newspaper and radio with advertisements when Club Executive and the membership request it
- Work on all articles promptly after club events
- Notify General Leader and Vice President well in advance of any meetings or events you will not be attending
- Help fellow club members to follow parliamentary procedure
- Give credit to others for the jobs they do.

What is News?

If a member of your club wins a scholarship or a trip, that’s *news*. If a member of your club wins a public speaking competition, that is *news*. If your club is planning a fundraising event, that also is *news*. Anything your club does can be *NEWS!!!*

These types of news have a place in your local newspaper, on your local television and radio stations, during your school announcements and on your community bulletin boards.

If you have something newsworthy, please send in photos and an article for the Bits & Pieces magazine. Articles can be sent to communications@4-h.sk.ca.

Media Contacts

The first thing you will need to do is to develop contacts at local newspapers, radio and television stations, and community and school newsletters. Introduce yourself as the new Club Reporter for the local 4-H club. Explain that you are looking for the following information:

- List of Contact People in the newsroom and in advertising.
- Complete address, email and phone numbers of contacts.
- Guidelines for Club Reporters.
- Deadlines when the media group needs your information, in order to be printed or aired.

Press Release for the Newspaper

If you have an article in the newspaper, send your Regional 4-H Specialist a copy!

A press release can be used to promote an upcoming event or to report on an event that has already taken place. The first step is to get the facts. You should begin with the "Five Ws and How": WHO will it happen to?

- WHAT will happen?
- WHERE will it happen?
- WHEN will it happen?
- WHY will it happen?
- HOW will it happen?

With these questions answered, you have the basic facts of the story. You can then add the details. Here's a technique that might help you write your release.

BEGINNING: Get the editor's attention. Present the basic details of the event and answer as many of the five W's as you can in this first paragraph.

BODY: Answer the remaining five Ws, the "How" and any other details. The body should be no more than two to three paragraphs long.

END: Should be no more than one paragraph. Final statements.

Review your draft and ask yourself:

1. Is the information accurate and complete?
2. Is the "lead" effective? Will it catch the editor's eye?
3. Have you used too many adjectives and fancy language? If so, try to take out any extra words. They want a quick

read, not a storybook.

4. Have you provided contact information such as individual to contact, address, phone, fax, email, etc?

Once you've answered these questions, you're ready for the final copy. Using the following formatting rules, you will ensure that your press release will be easy for editors to use. (The reason we are being so detailed is because these are the standard "rules" used by media personnel!)

- Should be typed with a standard font (Times New Roman or Arial) or hand-written neatly.
- Use wide margins of one inch at the top, and one and half inches at the sides and bottom of page. This is where the editor can write notes.
- Centre the words PRESS RELEASE near the top of the page. Below that should read "For Immediate Release". This indicates the story can be used as soon as possible.
- Below this is your headline.
- Before your first sentence (in parentheses) write the date that you're sending the release and the location it comes from
- The body of the release should be double-spaced. Centred at the end of your article should be - 30 -. This is a press release necessity that indicates there is no more to follow.
- At the bottom of the page, include contact information, in case anyone has questions. Your should include your name, your club name, your address, your telephone number and your e-mail address.

Promoting 4-H Events!

There are a few questions you should ask yourself before deciding where and how you are going to promote an event. Here are a few examples.

- Do the members of my club live in one or several communities?
- If so, which communities will I promote the event in?
- Is there a newspaper in those communities?
- Is there a community center, a radio and/or television station?
- Where are the sponsors of the event (if any) located?

Armed with this basic knowledge, you can decide *which* events to promote in each community, *where* to promote these events, and *how best* to promote your club and its events.

Radio & TV Promotion Tips

If you have a radio or TV interview, please let your Regional 4-H Specialist know!

RADIO: Begin with the five W's (who, what, where, when, why) and How, and then add more detail to make the story complete. The format is similar to a press release but *your story has to be much shorter for the radio*. The average radio news clip is between 20-40 seconds long.

Also, *your listeners, unlike your readers, can't go back to get any information they missed*. This means your beginning should include the most important facts and still be interesting enough to catch your listeners' attention. (ie. "Don't miss this Saturday's Achievement Day! Yes, the Central 4-H Club will display their 4-H projects at the Memorial Centre at 3:00....")

TELEVISION: Notify your local television station so they can send a reporter and camera person. *Give them at least 48 hours notice*. Be sure they have the correct time, address and all the background information they need.

If your station is willing to do public service announcements about your event, or put the event in the community event calendar, be sure they have the event title, time, place, cost, contact person name and phone number.

If you have the opportunity to be interviewed on TV, be sure your appearance is neat and clean. Prepare by asking the reporter beforehand what type of questions

Tips for Pics!

Your reporting duties may also include you taking photos. Here are some helpful hints when taking photos of your 4-H Club's event:

1. Ensure members and leaders in your club have signed the Photo Release form when registering. If the person is *not* in your club, check if you can take their picture and tell them where you might be sharing it.
2. Use complementary pictures of people, and try to take pictures that are 'close-ups' as opposed to far away (unless it's a group shot!)
3. Obtain a copy of the **Special Roles Club Executive Handout** for Social Media and Club Photographer tips.



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