



## Community Fundraising Press Coverage and Outreach Kit

Thank you for your efforts to create awareness and raise money for Mercy Corps! Mercy Corps inspires lasting change through global engagement and innovative community-led, market-driven programs in some of the world's toughest places. The funds raised during your event will help Mercy Corps continue its humanitarian aid work throughout the world.

Media coverage can be an important tool in making your event a success. It can help you reach members of your community who otherwise may not know about your event or about Mercy Corps. Press coverage is a free, effective, and far-reaching tool. Generating press coverage requires only a small amount of work compared to the number of people it can reach.

There are several ways in which effective press work can contribute to the success of your event:

- **Education** through the press coverage you generate will inform members of your community about your event, as well as about humanitarian crises throughout the world and Mercy Corps' work.
- **Visibility** of your event will increase with press coverage, resulting in a higher level of community involvement in your event.
- **Inspiration** through press coverage can motivate and compel people to join you and Mercy Corps in the fight to relieve suffering, poverty, and oppression around the world.

This kit will walk you through easy ways you can generate useful press coverage of your event. It includes:

- Press Coverage Checklist and Timeline
- Creating an Effective Media Contact List
- Interview Tips and Mercy Corps Background Information
- Sample Press Release

Again, thank you for your time and effort. Your work in generating support for Mercy Corps and our programs is truly appreciated. Feel free to contact Minda Seibert at [mseibert@mercy Corps.org](mailto:mseibert@mercy Corps.org) or (800) 292-3355, ext. 5741 or (503) 896-5741 with any questions you may have regarding press coverage.



## Suggested Press Coverage and Outreach Checklist and Timeline

### Beginning Stages of Event Planning

1. **Designate a Press Person.** Choose one or more members of your group to take responsibility for generating press coverage.

Choose press person  
Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Create two media lists**

**Advance media list:** Generally, these media contacts need 3-6 weeks notice to post an event.

**News media list:** These contacts do not need as much advance notice.

For ideas of who to put on each list, go to the next document “Creating an Effective Media Contact List.”

### Six Weeks Before Event

3. **Mail, fax, or email a press release** and public service announcement (PSA) to your advance media list. In addition, call your local cable television stations and ask them to list your event on their community “bulletin board.”

Send out press release

### Four Weeks Before Event

4. **Place follow-up calls to your advance media list** to confirm that they received your press release or PSA script. If they misplaced the first copy, offer to send them another. You may also wish to re-post your event on online calendars.

Follow-up calls to Advance media list

5. **Write a letter to the editor** of newspapers in your area. In 150 words or less, highlight your concern over the need for humanitarian aid in areas around the world. Inform the readers of Mercy Corps involvement. Encourage people to join your event and provide contact information and the date, time and location of your event.

Write and send your letter to the editor

## Two-Three Weeks Before Event

6. **Advertise in your community.** Create fliers to be distributed to community centers. Good places to put flyers are schools, community recreation centers, youth clubs such as YMCA, churches, synagogues or other places of worship, coffee shops, local movie theaters, grocery stores, and department stores. Think of any place or event that would attract a significant number of people from your community.

Distribute fliers

7. **Mail, fax, email or deliver your press release to the news media contacts** that may write an article on your event.

Send press release to news list

## One Week Before Event

8. **Make follow-up calls to your news list** reminding them about your event and convince them it deserves press coverage.

Follow-up calls to news list

9. **Assign someone to take photos during your event.** Submit the photos, including captions, and an updated press release to interested media sources after your event.

Assign event photographer  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Repeat follow-up calls to news list as a last-minute reminder of your event.** Inquire as to whether they are sending someone to cover your event. If so, ask if they will need any special arrangements.

Place last-minute follow-up calls

## After Event

11. **Collect press and video clips.** Collecting and reviewing all media coverage of your event is a perfect way of recording the success of your event and can aid in your next one. Please send a copy to Minda Seibert as well.

Collect all media coverage of event



## Creating an Effective Media Contact List

Creating press lists for print, television, and radio contacts can be accomplished with a little research. Research local newspapers, television, and radio stations and write down the names and contact information of journalists who may be interested in your event. As mentioned in point two of the press coverage checklist, create two separate media contact lists, because the two groups you will want to contact have significantly different deadlines.

Your first list to create will be your **advance publicity list**. These sources often require much more notice in order to get your event posted. This list includes:

- Calendar Editors and Public Service Directors at local television, radio and cable stations.
- Online Calendars allow you to post your event yourself.
- Email distribution groups you belong to (church groups, schools, etc.)
- Email your event information to Minda Seibert at [mseibert@mercycorps.org](mailto:mseibert@mercycorps.org) and she will post it on the Events page of the Mercy Corps website.

Your second list to create will be your **news coverage list**. These will be people with deadlines ranging from two weeks to a few days before an event. These people can provide longer, more detailed stories about your event. This list includes:

- News editors
- Reporters
- Columnists
- Assignment editors
- Bloggers

Here are some ideas to help you compile your media contact information:

- **Check your yellow pages or search the Internet** for the listings of newspapers, television and radio stations in your area and call them to get the names of the people you should contact about your event.
- On the **Internet**, look for local or national websites that attract a lot of traffic and/or visitors who would be interested in learning about your event. Sign up for free accounts on the following websites to post your event:
  - [www.idealists.org](http://www.idealists.org)
  - <http://www.worldpulse.com>
  - [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org)
  - <http://eventful.com>
  - <http://upcoming.yahoo.com/event/add>

- <http://www.zvents.com/listings>
  - <http://thingstodo.msn.com/listings>
  - <http://www.oodle.com/post>
  - [www.ComeSeeMyShow.com](http://www.ComeSeeMyShow.com)
- For **daily newspapers**, get the names of people such as calendar editors, features editor, city editors, educational reporters, and religion reporters...basically anyone who would be interested in a story about your type of event.
  - For smaller **community weekly publications**, get the names of calendar editors, features editors, and news editors.
  - For **radio stations**, get the names of the news director, assignment editor, and public service director (if you chose to produce a public service announcement for your event).
  - For **television stations**, get the names of the assignment editor and public service director.
  - For **email distribution**, consider mailing event details or a copy of a flier (if you have created one) to the email distribution lists that you are currently on. If you send a file, be sure to copy and paste all the event information into the email body so that the reader can easily ascertain the important details.
  - **In the weeks prior to your event**, read your local newspapers, listen to various radio stations, and watch different television news programs. While you do this, pay attention to the names of journalists, radio and television hosts or programs that cover stories related to your event and add them to your list. For example, stories that focus on international, humanitarian, women's issues, and human-interest stories, are good places to start.
  - **College and high school newspapers** are great publications to contact because they are generally in need of good stories to publish. To get in contact with the newspaper staff, call the school's main telephone line and ask for the news office and the names and numbers of the news and contact editors.
  - **Sending your press release to alternate media sources** can be helpful in getting the word out about your event. Church bulletins, company newsletters, community events calendars and special interest publications (such as ethnic, political, small-scale progressive magazines, etc.) are all good sources to contact.



## **Interview Tips and Mercy Corps Background Information**

In case a reporter asks you to do an interview, make sure you familiarize yourself with Mercy Corps and our programs. Be prepared to speak about your event and your goals. Remind yourself that you know more about Mercy Corps and your event than the interviewer does. If you are unsure of the answer to a question, ask for the interviewer's deadline and contact the Mercy Corps press team. If the reporter would like to speak with a Mercy Corps staff member, have them call Minda Seibert at (800) 292-3355, ext. 5741 or (503) 896-5741.

Especially when interviewing for television or radio, try and keep your answers brief and to the point. If you feel the interviewer is not fully understanding what you are saying, refer back to what you feel are the most important points. A good way to phrase this is to say something like "Most importantly..."

Think through answers to the following questions to prepare for the interview:

- What is the goal of your event?
- What exactly will you be doing at your event?
- Where will the proceeds go?
- What is the message you want to send to your community?
- How can people get more involved?
- What motivated you to put on the event?

Ask the reporter to include our phone number and website so readers, listeners, or viewers can find out more about Mercy Corps.

Phone: (800) 292-3355, ext. 5741 or (503) 896-5741

Website: [www.mercycorps.org](http://www.mercycorps.org).

### **Mercy Corps Background Information To Prepare for an Interview**

- Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty and oppression by helping people build secure, productive and just communities.
- Mercy Corps helps people in the world's toughest places turn the crises of natural disaster, poverty and conflict into opportunities for progress. Driven by local needs and market conditions, Mercy Corps' programs provide communities with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives. Mercy Corps' worldwide team of 3,700 professionals is improving the lives of 16.7 million people in more than 40 countries.
- Since 1979, Mercy Corps has provided \$1.95 billion in assistance to people in 107 nations. Mercy Corps consistently ranks as one of America's most effective and efficient charitable organizations. Over the last five years, more than 89 percent

of the agency's resources have been allocated directly to programs that help those in need.

- Mercy Corps pursues its mission through:
  - We enable **community-led** and **market-driven** recovery and development that empowers people to achieve the change they want to see.
  - We **find social innovations** that address the world's toughest problems..
  - We inspire people in the developed world to **engage on global challenges** through education and advocacy.
  
- Mercy Corps has learned that communities recovering from war or social upheaval must be the agents of their own transformation for change to endure. It's only when communities set their own agendas, raise their own resources and implement programs themselves, that their first successes result in the renewed hope, confidence and skills to continue development.
  
- Mercy Corps provides assistance exclusively based on need, without regard to religion or politics.
  
- Mercy Corps supports programs based on:
  - **Humanitarian need** - Mercy Corps prioritizes the needs of children and caregivers, as well as those situations where the opportunity exists to progress from emergency relief to longer-term recovery and development programs.
  - **Countries in transition** - Mercy Corps focuses on countries or regions in transition to democracy or plagued by civil, religious and ethnic conflict where humanitarian assistance not only meets basic needs but can help lay the foundation for peace by building local capacity and a just, inclusive civil society.
  - **Strategic partnerships** - Mercy Corps implements its programs in partnership both with international agencies to enhance resources and impact, and with local organizations to strengthen indigenous leadership and institutional capacity, and ultimately to place programs under the direction of local partner agencies.
  - **Global Citizenry** - Mercy Corps educates and mobilizes constituents around global issues such as poverty and hunger because lasting change depends on a globally-engaged citizenry that advocates for improvements at all levels.

## Creating a Press Release

### Press Release Format:



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
[Today's Date]

**CONTACT: [Your Name]**  
**[Daytime Phone Number]**

### **COMMUNITY {TITLE OR DESCRIPTION OF EVENT} TO BENEFIT MERCY CORPS**

[YOUR CITY, STATE] – <provide a brief description about you/your group, and what you are planning, i.e. a bowl-a-thon event to benefit Mercy Corps>

<Provide a paragraph describing your event>

<Describe why you want to hold an event to benefit Mercy Corps>

<Provide all necessary information about your event here, date, location, time etc.>

<Provide a brief description of Mercy Corps; the following is a good overview>

### **About Mercy Corps**

Mercy Corps helps people in the world's toughest places turn the crises of natural disaster, poverty and conflict into opportunities for progress. Driven by local needs and market conditions, our programs provide communities with the tools and support they need to transform their own lives. Our worldwide team of 3,700 professionals is improving the lives of 16.7 million people in more than 40 countries. For more information, see [www.mercycorps.org](http://www.mercycorps.org).

Sample Press Release:



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**March 10, 2004**

**Contact: John Simmons 503-123-4567**

**JAIN SMITH TOUR TO RAISE SUPPORT FOR  
MERCY CORPS' GLOBAL RELIEF EFFORTS**

*-- Northwest musician to benefit Mercy Corps through sales of independent CD --*

PORTLAND, OR – Jain Smith, originally from Portland, Oregon, will be donating \$1 from each of her independent CDs to the Northwest-based charity Mercy Corps.

Smith first made headlines when she and her band won a band competition in New York's Central Park. Smith and her band beat out over 1,200 other acts for the award. Prizes included a demo deal with Atlantic Records.

Smith is now a solo artist and is planning a nationwide tour this spring. She will be performing at the Rendezvous in Seattle on Wednesday, March 24th and at the Rabbit Hole in Portland on Thursday, April 25th. Her new self-titled CD will be released on the tour. \$1 from each CD sold will benefit Mercy Corps. Her CD can be purchased at her performances or through her website at [www.jaindow.com](http://www.jaindow.com).

<i>Seattle:</i>	<i>The Rendezvous</i>	<i>Wednesday, April 24th</i>
<i>Portland:</i>	<i>The Rabbit Hole</i>	<i>Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup></i>

**About Mercy Corps**

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