



Media is Our Friend...Usually

Good press for one program is good for all programs. We need more media attention to afterschool to help build statewide pressure for increased afterschool funding.

What can you do to help?

- Get to know your neighborhood paper(s), including online neighborhood news blogs.
- Identify reporters who cover afterschool/summer stories or related education/human interest stories at the larger newspapers and TV and radio stations.
- Call or email to ask them to cover your program, especially special events.
- See “How to Submit a Press Release or Letter to the Editor,” and the “Media Advisory Template” for more, check out resources on www.nysan.org, and reach out if you need help.

When starting new programs, it is important to be prepared for media attention. As New York invests in new programs and initiatives, there may come increased media scrutiny. Some reporters are always on the prowl for stories of government waste or program mismanagement, and sometimes those stories unfortunately just capture the unprepared.

Are you ready?

Before allowing a reporter to visit your program:

- Talk to your agency leadership (executive director, communications director, etc. as appropriate for your organization’s structure).
- Talk to your principal if your program is run in a school.
- Have signed media releases for any students who might possibly be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed.
- Know what has to be in place in your program in terms of staff, program activities, and students’ attendance and behavior in order for your program to be ready for a visit.
- Have a fact sheet of basic information (program schedule, number of participants, your name, name and contact information for principal and agency leadership, etc.) available.
- Have talking points ready to prepare reporters for what they will see.
 - Afterschool is intended to complement and enrich school, not replace or replicate it – be positive about the importance of both and help reporters see the difference.
- Focus attention on your program’s strengths.
- Plan your activities for the day carefully – think about visual appeal and alignment with the story you want to tell about your program’s strengths (e.g. if STEM is a strength, have STEM activities going).
- Prepare your staff.
- Be prepared for questions about your staff’s qualifications, your program’s attendance, your program’s spending and finances, your curriculum and programming, etc.
- Don’t answer questions you do not know the answer to, are not sure about, or that make you uncomfortable in any way – refer them to your agency leadership.
- Don’t forget the interview starts the moment a reporter sets foot in your program! Watch what you say and do from the moment you greet him/her until they leave.
- Ask the photographer/cameraman/reporter if you can have a copy of all the images/footage they take for your website or newsletter. They will usually say no, but it never hurts to ask.
- Have a list ready to go for everyone you want to share the story with once it comes out. Don’t forget NYSAN, your elected officials, donors, parents, staff, and kids!