

PUBLICITY: Tips and Ideas

Partner with Other Organizations

- Collaborate with other organizations in your area. Contact the heads of organizations and publications that would have an interest in the topic of your program.
- Contact libraries, local colleges or universities, service and civic clubs, historical societies, senior citizen groups, business/professional organizations, and educational institutions that would make good partners.
- Obtain the mailing lists of these organizations and publications, if possible. Or, ask them to let their members and people on their mailing list know about the program and send out notices at least four weeks in advance.
- Send announcements for inclusion in partner organizations' newsletters and calendars. Check their lead times and deadlines to make sure your entry appears at the right time.
- Ask if partner organizations will forward an electronic announcement that you prepare for them to their members.

Involve Local Businesses

- Make a personal connection with local bookstores. Do they want to sell books at the event?
- Some businesses, such as the electric company, send out calendars or newsletters with their bills. Find out how to get your event listed.
- Don't forget the local Chamber of Commerce or business association mailing list.
- Are there similar events that happen regularly at other places in the community? Be sure to attend and hand out flyers for your event.

Work the Media with Press Releases and More

- Use the sample press release or prepare your own stating concisely, but enthusiastically, the "who, what, when, where, and why" of your project. Be sure to include your contact name and number.
- Send press releases to area newspapers, radio and television stations, and relevant publications at least six weeks in advance. Remember smaller publications, i.e. community, business, and ethnic newspapers and newsletters.
 - Follow up by creating a Media Alert and sending it out to the same newspapers, radio and television stations one week in advance of your event. A Media Alert is a short, one-page document that quickly covers the "what, when, why and where" of your event and serves as a reminder to the media to cover the event.
- It is quickest and easiest to send your press releases electronically. Check local media websites for appropriate personal contact info.
- If your library doesn't have an existing list of media contacts, call a local non-profit and see if they are willing to share theirs.
- Develop a personal relationship with the media. Follow-up on press releases. Contact a feature writer at your local paper, preferably someone who has written

about similar subject matter; try to interest him or her in doing a feature article on your program.

- Prepare short public service announcements, 30 or 60 seconds, for radio and/or television and distribute them to the local stations.
- Find out if a local talk show or public affairs program would be interested in interviewing someone involved in the program.
- Connect your program to current events that are receiving widespread national attention in the media, such as international conflict, environmental issues, and elections.
- Give credit in all printed material, interviews, and at the event itself to the Maryland Humanities Council and any other funding organizations or sponsors. Check with the program or grant coordinator for proper text.

Use Your Mailing Lists

- Begin your own mailing list and send out publicity for the event to all on the list.
- Collect names and addresses and, most importantly, email addresses of people who have attended past programs, and mailing lists from partner organizations.
- Do an email blast – it's quick and free!
- Make sure your direct mail list is notified in time to attend, at least three weeks in advance.
- Send direct mailings about events to all partner organizations.

Get Creative with Flyers

- Publicize your event with a colorful, eye-catching, and professional looking flyer. Use photos. Have all identifying information on flyers up front and easily visible, but don't get too wordy. Did you include time, date, location, website or phone number for more information, and the fact that this is a free program?
- Distribute flyers at least four weeks beforehand.
- Post flyers everywhere—not just in your library, but throughout the neighborhood. Post in laundromats, cafés, grocery stores, banks, post offices, bookstores, shop windows, YMCA, health clubs, ice-cream parlors, community centers, senior centers, church bulletin boards, commuter rail stations or bus stops. Be creative – think about your target audience and where people congregate. (Travel with a roll of tape in your pocket!)

Find the Younger Generation

- Contact principals, teachers, and librarians at local high schools and colleges and ask them to make an announcement or distribute your flyers.
- Post this event on your website.
- Personally invite teens who are involved with your organization.
- Make connections with your local Parks and Recreation Office, YMCA directors, Urban League, after school programs, Boy Scouts, Girls Scout and other youth organizations, local home-schoolers, religious youth groups, etc.
- Connect through Facebook and MySpace. Put together a YouTube video.