

Media Materials and Miscellaneous Forms

...to assist in planning for media involvement in your Hearts N' Parks program. Includes a prototype plan for launching the program to the media, timelines and checklists, tips on how to encourage the media to participate in the event, pitch letter to the media, story ideas, sample news advisory and press release, and consent waiver forms.

Appendix



Prototype plan

for launching your program

Situation: *Healthy County Department of Parks and Recreation* is taking steps to become a Hearts N' Parks community. Staff members are developing a plan to launch this initiative.

GOALS

1. To announce the launch of Hearts N' Parks in Healthy County.
2. To inform community members about upcoming Hearts N' Parks activities.
3. To inform local policymakers about participation in Hearts N' Parks.
4. To encourage partnerships with other community organizations and potential sponsors.
5. To increase the number of children participating in recreational programs.

TARGET AUDIENCES

1. Local newspapers, radio and TV stations, corporations, and organizations that have approved private communication vehicles.
2. Local media, clubs and other organized groups, community calendar editors.
3. Local policymakers.
4. Community organizations and businesses.
5. Schools, day care centers, parenting groups, and businesses that are geared toward children in the community. Media that reach these groups.

KEY MESSAGES

1. Healthy County is becoming a Hearts N' Parks community.
2. Planned activities as part of Healthy County's Hearts N' Parks initiative will include [LIST].
3. Hearts N' Parks is an innovative, nationwide initiative that aims to reduce the growing trend of obesity and the risk of coronary heart disease in the United States.
4. By becoming a Hearts N' Parks partner, local organizations and businesses can demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of citizens of Healthy County, share resources for implementing worthwhile programs, and gain exposure for their own programs and services.
5. The sooner we can teach our children how to prevent heart disease, the faster we can reduce their risk.

SPECIAL EVENT

1. Hold special event to launch Hearts N' Parks. Agenda to include a news conference featuring prominent community leaders and policymakers including a representative of the community, activities for children, exhibits or screenings by local organizations and businesses, sponsorship opportunities (such as paying for T-shirts).
2. To maximize coverage by the media, request official proclamation by policymakers, and hold event during National Recreation and Park Month or relevant "health holiday."
3. Invite local hospitals, day care centers, pharmacies, and radio or TV stations to join your task force and/or participate in the event.

Timeline and Checklist

6 to 8 weeks prior to the event

- Request permit and reserve park area by town square. Weather contingency plan to include ordering canopy for space. Work with adjacent city offices to identify available space for individual interviews with the media if needed.
- Invite speakers.
- Request proclamation from local government officials.
- Order brochures on heart disease, information on risk factors, banners, and T-shirts.

4 to 6 weeks prior to the event

- Prepare and send calendar announcement.
- Assign responsibilities to staff and volunteers. Hire photographer, contractor to provide staging area, sound system, etc.
- Invite guests, including policymakers, county agencies, wellness directors at area health-care facilities, prominent business people, leaders in the community.

2 to 4 weeks prior to the event

- Prepare the following media tools: media advisory, news release, backgrounders on the Healthy County Hearts N' Parks program, speakers list for news conference. Copy backgrounders included in Resource Guide on Eat Right and Get Moving.
- Discuss media list with county communications office, and review and update for special event. Target local media that reach community-at-large, policymakers (newsletters, etc.), parents and caregivers of children, local businesses.

1 to 2 weeks prior to the event

- Send media advisory.
- Update Web site.
- Send event schedule, list of responsibilities, and directions to the site to staff and volunteers. Also provide copies of all materials to county communications staff, administrative staff, and others who might receive inquiries about the event.
- Gather biographic information from speakers for media and for the moderator's introductions. Provide information to help speakers with their remarks.
- Supplies you will need on-site: pens, sign in sheets (for media), business cards, brochures on Healthy County Park and Recreation programs.

1 week prior to the event

- Confirm space, volunteers, and equipment.
- Distribute letter and consent form to parents of children who will be participating through their regular programs.
- Call key media to encourage them to attend.
- Collate media kits.

1 to 2 days prior to the event

- Resend media advisory to entire media list.
- Keep calling media targets.
- Gather and pack supplies.
- Arrange for designated staff person to field calls on the day of the event; update outgoing voice mail message.

At the event

- Greet media when they arrive. Ask them to sign in, so you can track who attended.
- Give every media person who attends a press kit to take back to their office. It will help them round out the story.
- Introduce media representatives to your spokespersons for interviews.

After the event

- Follow up on any special requests made during the event by the media, speakers, etc.; for example, reporters might ask for a bio or "head shot" photo of a specific speaker, or they might have asked for data or other information that was not readily accessible. (To expedite your response, call your office and have someone else process the request while the event is still happening.)
- Send press kits to reporters who expressed interest but did not attend, because it may still result in coverage, or they may come to your next event.
- Check for coverage in newspapers, on TV and radio, and on the Internet.
- Obtain contact sheets or prints from the photographer and order photos for your internal publications, as well as to send to partners or sponsors, speakers, special guests, etc.
- Write article about the event for your organization, and encourage partners and sponsors to do the same.
- Send thank-you notes to the reporters who attended. Tell them that you enjoyed working with them and that you hope to continue to serve as a resource for their reporting.
- Send a letter to the editor of your daily newspaper to publicly thank your volunteers for making the event a success and ask the editor to consider it for publication.
- And, of course, thank your sponsors, partners, and volunteers directly.

Timeline and Checklist for Special Events

As soon as possible

- Identify your goals, target audience(s), and key messages.
- Develop an agenda for the event, identify potential speakers, and prepare a budget and timeline to include promotion of the event and logistics (e.g. renting space or equipment).
- Identify and contact potential partners and cosponsors.
- Assemble a task force or committee for building your event.

6 to 8 weeks prior to the event

- Reserve space. If your event is likely to draw media, be sure to identify a quiet space for individual interviews.
- Invite speakers.
- Request proclamation from local government officials.
- Order educational materials, signs or banners, awards, and T-shirts or other give-away items you will need.

4 to 6 weeks prior to the event

- Identify community calendar contacts and their deadlines, and distribute your media advisory or calendar announcement.
- Recruit event volunteers, staff, and contractors (such as audiovisual technicians if needed, photographer, caterer, etc.), and assign specific responsibilities.
- Arrange for equipment (if not provided by the site). Equipment might include, for example, tables (with draping) for health screenings or exhibits, easels for signs, a podium, a stage or “riser,” microphone(s), and a sound system. For a news conference or event with a celebrity, you might also need a “mult box” - a device that allows broadcast media to record directly from the sound system.
- Create guest list and invite guests.

2 to 4 weeks prior to the event

- Determine what media tools you will need and prepare them. These include, for example, media advisory, news release, backgrounders or fact sheets, agenda, etc.
- Update or develop your media list (see “Working with the Media”).

1 to 2 weeks prior to the event

- Send media advisory.
- Update your Web site.
- Send event schedule, list of responsibilities, and directions to the site to staff and volunteers. Also provide copies of all materials to anyone who will be responding to inquiries before, during, or after the event.
- Assist speakers with their remarks; be sure to gather brief biographical information for the moderator to use to introduce speakers.
- Check on the status of the materials you've ordered and make checklist of supplies you'll need on-site. Examples: pens, sign-in sheets, business cards, brochures, or other information about your program or department.

1 week prior to the event

- Confirm space, volunteers and equipment.
- If you will be photographing, videotaping, or otherwise recording the event, then distribute consent forms. If children will be participating, signatures from their parents or guardians will be needed. (Note: No consent forms are required for news coverage.)
- Make follow-up calls to key media to confirm their receipt of the advisory and to encourage them to attend.
- Collate media kits.

1 to 2 days prior to the event

- Resend the advisory to your entire list.
- Keep calling your media targets.
- Gather and pack supplies.
- Make any necessary arrangements for responding to calls while you are at the event. Brief office staff, update your outgoing voice mail message, distribute your cell phone number, and/or inform office staff as to whether you will be calling in to check messages.

→ **At the event**

- Greet media when they arrive. Ask them to sign in, so you can track who attended.
- Give every media person who attends a press kit to take back to their office. It will help them round out the story.
- Introduce media representatives to your spokespersons for interviews.

→ **After the event**

- Follow up on any special requests made during the event by the media, speakers, etc.; for example, reporters might ask for a bio or “head shot” photo of a specific speaker, or they might have asked for data or other information that was not readily accessible. (To expedite your response, call your office and have someone else process the request while the event is still happening.)
- Send press kits to reporters who expressed interest but did not attend, because it may still result in coverage, or they may come to your next event.
- Check for coverage in newspapers, on TV and radio, and on the Internet.
- Obtain contact sheets or prints from the photographer and order photos for your internal publications, as well as to send to partners or sponsors, speakers, special guests, etc.
- Write article about the event for your organization, and encourage partners and sponsors to do the same.
- Send thank-you notes to the reporters who attended. Tell them that you enjoyed working with them and that you hope to continue to serve as a resource for their reporting.
- Send a letter to the editor of your daily newspaper to publicly thank your volunteers for making the event a success and ask the editor to consider it for publication.
- And, of course, thank your sponsors, partners, and volunteers directly.

Congratulations
on a job well done.

Now on to the next event...

Encouraging Media to cover your event

In many cases, sending a news advisory is not enough to get a reporter to attend your event. Following up with key media beforehand may mean the difference between coverage and no publicity.

Here are tips on encouraging the media to participate:

1. Prioritize your calls; review your media list and identify the reporters who are most important to you. Call them first.
2. Try to speak directly to a reporter. Don't be shy. Keep calling, even if you leave a voice mail message.
3. Be prepared to resend the news advisory to individuals several times; they will likely say they didn't receive the information, even if they did.
4. If you are asking staff or volunteers to assist in follow-up calls, prepare a script and a list of possible questions and answers.

If you are asking staff or volunteers to assist in follow-up calls, prepare a script and a list of possible questions and answers.

To reporters who say...

Yes: Work with them to arrange an interview with your spokesperson. Ask if there's anything special they might need from you — for example, a camera crew may need access to an electrical source or to a “mult box” that will provide them with sound directly from any microphones you might be using. Record them on a log of expected media attendance with notes on when they will be there, whom they are sending, and whether they will want interviews or other special assistance.

Maybe: Put them on your callback list and call again in the final days before the event to encourage them to attend. You might want to add a section to your media log for possible attendees.

No: Ask if they can suggest someone else on the staff who might be interested in the story. Tell them you'd like to send them a press kit after the event, in case they become interested in the program or topic.





Sample Pitch Letter for Media

Dear [NAME of Editor],

A growing number of Healthy County residents—from children to seniors—are overweight and physically inactive. As a result, these individuals are at increased risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and other serious conditions.

Healthy County Department of Parks and Recreation (HCDPR) is taking steps to counteract this serious problem by becoming a Hearts N' Parks community. Hearts N' Parks is an innovative program developed jointly by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health, and by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to reduce the growing trend of obesity in the United States and to lower Americans' risk of coronary heart disease. The program encourages Americans of all ages to aim for a healthy weight, follow a heart-healthy eating plan, and engage in regular physical activity. HCDPR is the first Hearts N' Parks community in our State, and one of XX across the United States.

Joining with such prestigious partners as the NHLBI and NRPA enables Healthy County to bring quality, measurable public health programs to our community with minimal resources. For example, Healthy County now offers heart-healthy cooking and snack preparation classes for seniors and singles, and our existing programs have been augmented with special activities on eating well and being active. In addition, we're working with Healthy County Mall to display weight-loss materials and to publicize free consultations with our staff for creating and following a personalized eating and exercise plan.

Heart disease is the leading killer among all Americans; it affects XXXX percent of Healthy County residents. As a Hearts N' Parks community, Healthy County Department of Parks and Recreation hopes to make a significant and long-lasting contribution to Healthy County. For story ideas on the HCDPR Hearts N' Parks programs, please see the attached sheet, or contact [NAME] at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Hearts N' Parks and the Healthy County Parks and Recreation



Story Ideas and Media Tips

Help us spread the word that Healthy County is a Hearts N' Parks community!

Here are a few story ideas to consider:

- With the fast pace of today's society, more and more people are eating away from home – at greater cost to their wallet and their waistline. Through Healthy County Parks and Recreation's Hearts N' Parks program, singles are learning quick and easy ways to prepare heart-healthy meals at home.
- Ask 5-year-olds why they jump rope, and they'll probably say because it's fun. Ask Caroline Jones, and she'll tell you how jumping rope will help her avoid having a heart attack when she's older. Caroline is building lifelong skills to help her prevent heart disease...just one example of how Healthy County Parks and Recreation is bringing important heart-healthy information and activities to the community through the Hearts N' Parks program.
- Forget expensive diet programs. Healthy County Parks and Recreation offers personalized weight-loss programs that put you on the right track to a healthy weight. Participants receive journals to help track their progress, and they consult with local trainers and nutrition specialists. (Let us know if you'd like to profile one of our participants' ongoing success.)
- It's family pizza night, and your seventh-grader requests broccoli on his pizza. What's up? If your child is enrolled in the Healthy County Parks and Recreation after-school program, he's learning how to make good nutritional choices when ordering or making meals. Nutritionists from Healthy County Health Department recently spoke to participants,

who were then asked to design their personal pizza. Future activities include a trip to the grocery store following a learning session on nutrition labels. It's all part of the Parks and Recreation Department's commitment to making Healthy County a Hearts N' Parks community.

- New rewards for mall walkers. Seniors in the Healthy County Parks and Recreation mall-walking program now have additional incentives for meeting their fitness goals. As part of the Hearts N' Parks initiative, Community Hospital has partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to provide screenings and information on topics such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol—a new topic is highlighted each week. In addition, area stores have donated gift certificates as rewards for those who meet program goals.

For more information on Healthy County Parks and Recreation and the Hearts N' Parks program, please call [NAME] at (XXX) XXX-XXXX.

You can also find general information about Hearts N' Parks at these Web sites:

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

(http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/heart/obesity/hrt_n_pk/index.htm) and

National Recreation and Park Association

(<http://heartsparks.org>).

Sample Media Advisory

for Hearts N' Parks Launch at local site



[Note: Advisory Should Never Be More Than One Page]

NEWS ADVISORY

FOR [IMMEDIATE] RELEASE
[DATE]

CONTACT: [NAME OF ORGANIZATION
OR DEPARTMENT]

[PHONE]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION AND/OR KEY PRESENTER]

To Launch Innovative Heart Disease Prevention Program

WHAT: Special event to launch the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR COMMUNITY] Hearts N' Parks Program, an innovative, community-based initiative that teaches people of all ages how to incorporate heart-healthy eating and physical activity into their lives. Activities will include a news conference and heart-healthy activities, including [SUMMARIZE EVENT ACTIVITIES]. A list of activities is attached [OPTIONAL].

WHO: Hearts N' Parks is a national program cosponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health, and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR COMMUNITY] is the first to offer the program in the [CITY/TOWN/REGION] area.

Speakers: [LIST NAMES AND TITLES]

WHEN: [DATE AND TIME]

WHERE: [NAME, ADDRESS, AND PHONE NUMBER FOR EVENT; DIRECTIONS IF SITE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE EASILY RECOGNIZED BY MEDIA]

OTHER: [ADDITIONAL DETAILS, SUCH AS SPECIAL PHOTO OR INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES, REQUEST FOR MEDIA TO REGISTER, ETC]

Sample News Release



FOR [IMMEDIATE] RELEASE
[DATE]

Contact: [ORGANIZATION NAME]
[PHONE NUMBER]

[NAME OF ORGANIZATION/AGENCY] Launches Hearts N' Parks

[COMMUNITY] Becomes First in Area to Participate in Innovative and Nationwide Obesity and Heart Disease Prevention Effort

[CITY, STATE]-The [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] launched Hearts N' Parks at a special event in [CITY, STATE] on [DATE]. A national, community-based program developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health and by the National Recreation and Park Association, Hearts N' Parks is an innovative initiative that aims to reduce the growing trend of obesity and the risk of coronary heart disease in the United States.

The event began with a news conference featuring [NAME AND TITLES OF SPEAKERS, LISTING MOST PRESTIGIOUS FIRST].

[ADD OTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE EVENT, INCLUDING PARTNERING/CO-SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS, OTHER PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS, etc.]

Heart disease is the leading killer among all Americans. Through Hearts N' Parks, science-based information about lifestyle choices that can reduce one's risk of heart disease and skills for incorporating heart-healthy behaviors into one's life—such as engaging in regular physical activity, following a heart-healthy eating plan, and maintaining a healthy weight—are taught as part of regular activities offered by park and recreation departments and other community-based agencies. Maintaining a healthy weight is stressed because overweight and obese individuals are at increased risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and other serious conditions. Hearts N' Parks provides tools for measuring the impact of these activities, which are intended for people of all ages.

“This is a very important and exciting public health effort and NAME OF PARK/REC CENTER is proud to be a part of it,” said NAME AND TITLE OF CENTER DIRECTOR OR OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY. “Heart disease and obesity are major health problems, and we are pleased to play a role in helping members of our community learn how to prevent and control these and related conditions.”

[IF POSSIBLE, ADD QUOTE OR DATA THAT ADDRESSES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.]

The [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] Hearts N' Parks program will include [PROVIDE HIGHLIGHTS OF HEARTS N' PARKS RELATED ACTIVITIES]. "We feel confident that the residents of AREA will learn a lot while having a great time in our facility," added NAME.

Hearts N' Parks was launched nationally in July 2000 at a special event featuring U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D., and hosted by the Arlington County (Virginia) Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Resources.

The initiative was first piloted in 1999 by more than 2,000 participants in 33 North Carolina sites. An evaluation of the North Carolina pilot program showed that participants retained information about heart-healthy behaviors and intended to eat healthier. In addition, children reported learning new physical activities and improving their performance in others; seniors reported feeling healthier and experiencing less pain in their daily lives by the end of the program. To date, nearly 350 recreation and parks agencies in more than 35 States have expressed interest in becoming Hearts N' Parks communities. [UPDATE INFO ACCORDING TO INFORMATION ON THE HEARTS N' PARKS WEBSITE OR FROM NRPA.]

For more information about Hearts N' Parks activities provided by [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY], please contact [PROGRAM INFORMATION STAFF OR REGISTRAR] or visit the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR AGENCY] Web site at [URL].

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has been helping Americans and people worldwide stay healthier since 1948. The Federal institute undertakes a wide range of activities to improve the understanding, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart, lung, and blood disorders.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) supports the delivery of quality park and recreation resources through a nationwide network of recreation and park professionals and citizen advocates. The primary areas for national program focus are on health, youth development, and the environment.

Additional information about Hearts N' Parks is available through NRPA at 1-800-649-3042 or www.heartsnparks.org, or through NHLBI at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

Additional Notes

[IN RELEASE EMPHASIZING EVENT FOR KIDS, INSERT BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CHILDREN-ORIENTED ACTIVITIES AND FOLLOWING QUOTE: Children as well as adults can develop high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol. Research shows that the buildup of plaque in the arteries (atherosclerosis), which causes coronary heart disease, begins in adolescence. Thus, it is important to start heart-healthy behaviors early in childhood.]

[IN RELEASE EMPHASIZING EVENT FOR SENIORS, INSERT BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EVENT AND FOLLOWING AFTER LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE'S QUOTE: Seniors need to stay physically active not only to help prevent heart disease but also to help slow bone loss and prevent fractures from osteoporosis. Activities that build balance and strength are particularly important for senior citizens.]



Consent and Waiver

I hereby grant permission to [OFFICIAL NAME(S) OF ORGANIZATION(S)] to use, reproduce, publish, distribute, and exhibit my picture, portrait, likeness, or voice, or any or all of them (or those of a child under my guardianship), in or in connection with the production of a photograph, videotape, audiotape, CD-ROM, or in any manner and for any purpose as stated below, and...

I hereby waive all rights of privacy or compensation (or those of a child under my guardianship) which I have in connection with the use of my picture, portrait, likeness or voice, or any or all of them, in or in connection with said photograph, videotape, audiotape, CD-ROM, or Web site, and any use to which the same or any material therein may be put, applied, or adapted by the organizations designated above.

It is understood and agreed that the above waiver is limited to the use by the organizations listed above, or by any of their agencies, departments, or distributors for educational purposes only and not for profit or trade.

It is also understood and agreed that this consent and waiver will not be made the basis of a future claim of any kind against the organizations as noted above or their affiliates.

Participant's Name: _____

Address: _____

*Signature: _____ Date: _____

*If above is signature of parent or guardian (required if individual is a minor), please print name here: _____



Sample Cover Letter to Parents of Children for Consent Form

Dear Parent:

On [DATE AND TIME], the [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] will host an event to launch **Hearts N' Parks**, an innovative program that promotes the adoption of heart-healthy behaviors by people of all ages. Hearts N' Parks was developed and is supported by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health and by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

We invite you and your child to join us for this exciting event, which includes a **news conference featuring [LIST PROMINENT SPEAKERS AND TITLES]**.

Heart-healthy activities to be held during the event include [ADD DETAILS].

We will have photographers [ADD "and videographers" IF APPROPRIATE] documenting the event. **We would appreciate your signing the attached consent form to grant permission for your child to participate in this exciting event, including being photographed or videotaped. Please return it to [SPECIFY] by [PROVIDE DEADLINE].**

If you have any questions, please contact [PROVIDE NAME AND PHONE NUMBER].

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

[NAME, TITLE, ETC.]