

## CREATING NEWS

News does not just happen, it is created. Here are five tips that may increase the PTA's chances for getting news coverage.

1. Make the story visually compelling. A picture is worth a thousand words. When planning an event for the media, identify visuals that illustrate the topic. Is the unit trying to increase funding for school facilities? Why not take reporters on a tour of rundown classrooms? Point out the problems. Demonstrate the need for funding.
2. Piggyback on breaking news. Are schools a major issue in an upcoming election? Be prepared to be one of the experts and demonstrate that the PTA is a voice on the issues being debated. Take advantage of opportunities that can increase the profile of PTA.
3. The events to anniversaries and annual events. The fall is back-to-school time for most schools. PTA membership enrollment campaigns are successful during this time period, in part because everyone is in the back-to-school mindset. Think about other events or dates related to schools and children that traditionally receive coverage. Find a way to tie the unit programs to those dates.
4. Special events. Announce speakers' forums, cultural events or other activities that may be of interest to a large audience. Invite local VIPs and let the media know who will be coming.
5. To attract an editor to a story, one needs a hook or angle. Tell the story in a new way. It is not news to just say that California schools need more arts teachers. However, one can make it news if the only art teacher in the school just retired. A hook takes a story that has been told a hundred times and provides a new angle for telling it.

How the story is presented will determine whether the editor will assign the article to a reporter or throw it away.

