

# BEST PRACTICES for Working with Media

## WHEN PITCHING

- » Be brief and to-the-point. Editors are busy people!
- » Be specific with times, dates and details.
- » Tell the editor why including your submission would benefit their readers.
- » If there is a specific section in the publication that your submission would fit well in, suggest your story be placed in it. You'll earn brownie points by signaling you follow their publication.
- » Include a quality photograph (not fuzzy or grainy) that is interesting to look at and depicts the go-getter, innovator, risk-taker and leader spirit. Girls doing activities, working together as a troop, or experiencing an outdoor adventure are all great photo ops.
- » Do not include attachments because it is common for messages with attachments from unknown sources to be filtered into junk mail. Instead, provide images using a file sharing tool like [dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com) or [ge.tt](https://www.getty.com).
- » Spelling and grammar matter! Some editors might discount the credibility of your submission if it has excessive errors.
- » Don't forget to include your contact info. Editors may want further information about your submission.

## WHEN INTERVIEWING/COLLABORATING ON A STORY

- » Stay focused on the positive ways Girl Scouting helps girls.
- » Be thorough. Anticipate what questions the reporter might have for you before you contact them.
- » Make sure you provide your contact information, and follow up and respond to them quickly since they often have tight deadlines.
- » If a reporter asks you questions that move away from the local angle you are presenting and into areas that involve Council operations, fundraising and other topics that pertain to our overall Council, you can always refer them to Council staff or contact us for guidance at [marcom@girlscoutsaz.org](mailto:marcom@girlscoutsaz.org).
- » If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, it's okay to say you need to check on that and call the reporter back after you confirm the answer, or refer them to [marcom@girlscoutsaz.org](mailto:marcom@girlscoutsaz.org).
- » There's no such thing as "off the record." Be friendly with reporters but always remember that anything you say can be printed.
- » Please keep in mind that, even though you are working with your local media, you are representing the entire Girl Scouts organization and brand. What you say to a newspaper in Ahwatukee could be read in an online edition throughout the state, so it's important to utilize Council materials and present consistent messages.
- » **IMPORTANT NOTE:** When promoting activities like the Cookie Program, do not promote product sales by telling the public to contact individual troops or girls. Instead, promote the overall program and how it benefits your community. Always include the contact information for the council website and Cookie Finder.

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### WHEN INCORPORATING GIRLS

- » Even though most Girl Scouts have approved photo releases, always get parental permission before involving girls in media promotion.
- » Respect girls' privacy by using first names and last initials as standard practice. In general, for girls under the age of 18, we never use last names in social media and try to avoid using last names in traditional media. However, reporters usually need first and last names for sources, so if they request this (or it is needed for a press release), a full name may be used for print, radio or TV (not social media) after parental permission has been granted.
- » Be sure that girls are comfortable talking to and working with the media. **Girls should never be pressured to participate.** Talk with the girls beforehand to make sure they understand what types of questions the reporter might ask and how an interview would be set up.
- » Make sure an adult is always present when girls are interviewed. If she becomes uncomfortable, anxious, or confused, the adult can step in.
- » If multiple girls are interested in a media opportunity, conduct practice interviews to see who best presents for the particular story. Assuming the most outgoing girl would be best for media without checking with her could result in an interview where the girl has stage fright or doesn't provide the pertinent information/ messages for the story.
- » If a reporter invites girls to be interviewed live or featured on TV, please contact [marcom@girlscoutsaz.org](mailto:marcom@girlscoutsaz.org). Council provides support and media training for all spokes-members.
- » Council Media Ambassadors can take part in all local and council-led media opportunities. [Fill out this form](#) if your girls are interested in becoming official Media Ambassadors.