



Arthritis Foundation Public Relations Timeline

Conducting media relations surrounding your local Arthritis Foundation events is the perfect opportunity for your chapter to build relationships with local media. As you know, *Let's Move Together* provides the opportunity to continue conversations with local media beyond a one-day event to a year-round conversation about the benefits of movement in preventing and treating arthritis.

The following is a suggested timeline for implementing public relations efforts year-round regarding events taking place throughout the year:

One Month After Event

- Begin developing a presentation that highlights this year's results including number of attendees, money raised, etc. This will serve as an opportunity to follow-up with current sponsors and open the conversation for you to discuss opportunities to deepen your relationship throughout the year
- Work with appropriate volunteers and staff to identify and set up meetings with potential media sponsors and local companies
- Send thank you notes and final results to any media who either attended or showed interest in this year's event. This first contact will help keep the door open for interaction throughout the year

Three Months After Event

- Meet with event chair and Arthritis Foundation staff to plan event awareness efforts.
 - Awareness Efforts to Consider:
 - Offer the Movement Tracker to local companies to track their movement over the next year as a health and wellness initiative. This opens the door for companies to not just be a sponsor or participant but a supporter of the *Let's Move Together* movement year-round
 - Provide tip sheets to sponsors and local companies that can be sent to employees
 - Offer radio and TV stations health and wellness content to add to their Web site on a monthly, quarterly basis
- Send a note to your media contacts from the last event. Continually watch media for their stories so you can comment on an article or piece when you next contact them. Invite them to other events you may be having in your chapter without asking for media coverage or donations

Four Months After Event

- Finalize plan of action for public relations and marketing efforts and review with staff
 - Include the following when outlining your plan:
 1. **Identify a local spokesperson** for your chapter who would be comfortable and available for an interview. Potential spokespeople may include:
 - Local Arthritis Chapter representative (e.g., Chapter President or other staff)
 - Life Improvement Series Instructors or participants
 - Rheumatologists or medical expert
 - People with arthritis, volunteers, local walk honorees, etc.
 2. **Develop media pitch angles** that would be of interest to the media any time of year. Keep in mind, media want to know about the larger story or arthritis and its impact. When speaking with media, use the event as a timely reason to speak with media and a call to action, but also present the bigger picture of why arthritis should be important to the reporter. A few examples are included below:
 - Arthritis is the most common disability in the U.S.
 - Offer information about arthritis and its prevalence
 - Provide local expert who can add insight and local statistics
 - Offer personal story for human interest appeal
 - *Let's Move Together*
 - Offer information about the movement and resources available
 - Publicize the event details
 - Showcase personal stories



- Personal/Volunteer Stories
 - Offer personal stories to print, TV and radio for human interest appeal and a look into a life with arthritis
- Move for Better Health
 - Offer Life Improvement Series Instructors as fitness expert to explain the benefits of walking in preventing arthritis or provide on-air demonstrations of exercises that help prevent arthritis
 - Invite TV anchors to participate in a tai-chi class to raise awareness about movement and its benefits in preventing arthritis

Five Months After Event

- Create or update media lists
 - Include TV, radio, and print publications that you think would be interested in covering the Arthritis Foundation and/or *Let's Move Together*. Include contacts that cover health, fitness, and community events
- Secure media sponsors

Five Months Before Event

- Provide newsletter articles to sponsors and participants/teams for inclusion in their company newsletters
 - Topics may include the importance of physical activity or tips to get people started moving for the first time
- Include newsletter article in your chapter's newsletter
- Send calendar announcement to community calendars
- As sponsors sign on, distribute sponsor sign-on news release
- Order TV and radio PSAs through the National Office

Four Months Before Event

- Distribute radio and TV PSAs (ask stations to run PSAs from two months before the event through event day)
- Touch base with media that covered last year's event and provide information regarding this year's event

Three Months Before Event

- Send out calendar announcements
- Pitch a local human-interest story in conjunction with timely topics in the news. Examples include Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Week and the Children's Advocacy Summit in March. Pitch his/her story to local radio and TV program directors and to feature editors at daily and weekly newspapers.
- Distribute release on event to long-lead publications, specifically local magazines

Two Months Before Event

- Meet with logistics chair to ensure all standard event day components (such as signage, Wall of Heroes, etc.) are ordered and set-up is assigned to a committee member
- Follow up with TV and radio to confirm Arthritis Walk ads/PSAs will run
- Make media follow-up calls with long-lead publications
- Write feature article on your event honoree for chapter newsletter (if applicable)

One Month Before Event

- Follow up with TV and radio to confirm ads/PSAs will run
- Distribute release to local short-lead media including TV, radio, dailies and weeklies
- Make media follow-up calls to determine interest
- Draft message points for emcee/speakers pre- and post event announcements; have approved by staff and coordinate with appropriate individuals
- Make arrangements for volunteers to staff media check-in booth



Three Days Before Event

- E-mail or fax media alert to assignment desks, daybook editors and newspaper photo and feature editors. Specifically target community-focused reporters and photographers at each outlet with a goal of securing on-site attendance at the event
- Plan to send the media advisory to all local TV assignment desks. Follow up to determine interest for on-site attendance the day before the event to see if it has been included on the calendar
- Hire a photographer or appoint a responsible volunteer or staff member to take pictures on the day of the event. Use the pictures during post-event outreach

Event Day

- PR/marketing chair ensures standard event components are in place
- PR/marketing chair briefs volunteer at media sign-in table, coordinates media coverage
- Ensure identified spokespersons are on-site, available for interviews and comfortable with messaging
- Facilitate on-site interviews as necessary
- Ensure that photographer captures media-genic photographs (e.g., action shots, candid, images of walkers, etc.)

Immediately After the Event

- Send post-event news release or professional-quality photo with a photo caption to media (e.g., top fund raisers, team photos to corporate newsletter, etc.) The press release should include information about the event such as number of walkers, total amount raised, a quote from local Arthritis Foundation spokesperson
- Contact media if any unique stories develop from event day and provide post event information as well as photos
- Secure newspaper clippings and tapes of coverage for merchandising to sponsors and other supporters and the share with the National Office
- Develop event recap report to provide to sponsors and local companies involved in this year's event

Creative Ideas for Consideration

- Is there a local celebrity tie-in with the event? Perhaps involvement from a local newscaster or radio personality? If so, consider promoting their participation to the media.
- Are there any volunteers affiliated with the event that would be willing to share his/her story with the media? Such heart-warming stories will help paint a better picture of the importance of the event and the Arthritis Foundation.
- Are there any quirky participants involved in the event? If so, you could offer up these people as potential interviewees when pitching the media advisory. Ideal candidates could include arthritis patients, mother/daughter or father/son teams, or someone who is participating on behalf of a friend or family member that has arthritis.
- Do any of your sponsors have an executive who is passionate about arthritis and plans to participate in the event? If so, you could pitch a profile of him/her to local business outlets following the event. Media outlets often times feature executives with interesting hobbies in their coverage.
- Who raised the most money for the event? Use their story in post-event outreach to local community publications.