

FRIENDS OF THE POOR® WALK/RUN

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

®

**FOP Walk Publicity Ideas**

The tips and ideas in this document are suggestions only, and can be used as a guide to support you in setting up a successful Walk/Run. You will probably think of many more ideas. Have fun!

* **Arrange for media coverage at the local level through press releases, press conferences and interviews**

1. Make contacts with all local media and develop a communications plan.
2. Call media contacts and ask if they prefer press releases sent via e-mail, fax or first class mail; they almost always have a preference. Ask for digital format specifications (size and resolution) before you send logos or photos.
3. Send a media advisory with a great hook to invite reporters to your event. Capture their attention with a compelling title and first paragraph, but avoid writing it like an ad. Cover the five W’s -who, what, when, where and why. Include your contact information and website. See the **Media Advisory Template** under the “Media” tab found under the FOP® Walk “Resource Toolbox.”
4. Send a press release to your list of media contacts. See **News Release Template** under the “Media” tab found in the online FOP® Walk “Resource Toolbox.”
5. Find out who publishes local community calendars and have the event put on the calendar.
6. Create a press kit for your media contacts with items such as your press release, media advisory, fact sheet about your Council/Conference, national SVdP fact sheet, etc.
7. Contact and visit local TV stations well prior to the Walk/Run, and request a “guest visit” on a weekend talk segment or a morning talk visit. Ask for a visit by the film crew. Ask them to run public service announcements about the event. Rehearse key points about the Walk/Run with a friend or colleague if you're asked to do an interview or appearance.
8. Send a pre-event letter to the editor to local newspapers.
9. Make a direct, personal appeal to on-air media personalities. Contact and visit local radio stations several times leading up to the event. Request some on-air time with the radio personality. Invite the local station(s) to do a “live remote” from the event. Ask them to play public service announcements about the event. Challenge all the radio and TV station personalities to participate themselves. Suggest that each station promote a station challenge among other local broadcast stations.
10. Return phone calls and e-mails promptly and provide requested information. Failing to do so could sabotage your organization's reputation and future publicity efforts.

* **Work with media to develop and/or write feature stories and text for local newspaper or magazine supplements**

1. Ask for an interview with a writer from a local newspaper regarding the event and ask them to write a story for the paper.
2. Ask the local newspaper to run a free ad publicizing the upcoming event.
3. Find a Vincentian or volunteer who has a compelling story about why they are participating in the walk and write a feature article about it.
4. Find a person SVdP has helped who has a compelling story and write a feature article about it.

* **Recruit a Master of Ceremonies to emcee the Walk/Run program**

1. Identify and recruit a publicly well-known person in your community.

* **Recruit federal, state and local officials and celebrities to attend, participate in and promote the Walk/Run**

1. Invite elected officials such as the mayor, city council members, board of aldermen, county representatives, state representatives, etc.
2. Identify someone as an “honorary chair” to promote the Walk/Run in your community.
3. Have local officials or celebrities staff hospitality stations along the Walk/Run route.

* **Fliers/Ads/Announcements**

1. Ask pastor to announce the event and where to contact your organizers for sign-up.
2. Place an announcement in the parish bulletin/newsletter or parish website for several weeks leading up to the event.
3. Get friends, family and anyone interested in your cause to post fliers or leave postcards at cafes, stores and libraries. Ask them to wear a hat or T-shirt or carry a tote bag with your logo on it.
4. Use the internet to spread the word quickly and inexpensively. Send e-mail notices and newsletters that are easily forwarded to others stating specifically what you want recipients to do. Connect with like minds through blogs and discussion groups, or become part of a networking group.
5. Hire your own photographer for the event to make certain you get the shots you want to see in the local paper. Be sure photos are taken of the walk participants at various stages of the event, especially along the route near important local landmarks. Take group photos. Take photos of all the important things, especially sponsor banners, event banner, start line, finish line, etc. After the event, offer the photos to the people who attended or include a couple of great shots with each thank-you note.

* **Coordinate opening and closing ceremonies**

1. Opening ceremony should be festive.

* Stage should be decorated appropriately.
* Opening prayer.
* Have a local celebrity or politician give a short talk to honor the walkers/runners.
* Have a SVdP representative give a brief statement about the Walk/Run.
* Recognize corporate sponsors.
* Entertainment – music, etc.
* Have someone start the race.

1. Closing ceremony should be an appreciation of all that happened to make the Walk/Run a success.

* Have someone give a brief statement thanking everyone for their efforts – volunteers, participants, corporate sponsors.
* Present awards.
* Closing prayer.