

# TIPS FOR BUILDING VISIBILITY

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## GETTING STARTED

Establish a set of no more than five talking points that promote the mission of AAUW and your individual branch. When publicity materials go out, make sure they touch on one or more of these talking points to keep the messages consistent.

Pinpoint the target audience you want to reach with each event. Is it college women? Young professionals? It's difficult to reach all audiences at the same time because they respond to different messages. Target each audience separately.

When planning programs for the year, keep the word "newsworthy" in mind. Consider a topic that is slightly controversial or a speaker who is high-profile. Remember that celebrities, novelty and conflict generate news.

Find out what people in your area know/don't know about AAUW by conducting a simple survey outside the local supermarket or inside the local mall.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

Every branch needs a publicity chair who is familiar with the format of local news organizations and establishes working relationships with the appropriate editors. (Invite an editor to lunch to discuss an upcoming event; or simply pay a visit to him/her in the newsroom). Check the news organization's Web site for a staff list.

Every event sponsored by a branch deserves a press release. A simple but successful press release includes the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, why), a brief description of the event and the name, phone number and e-mail address of the contact person (the publicity chair). Most newspapers like to be notified of an upcoming event one week in advance. The newspaper uses the press release to write a preview of the event and plan coverage of it.

Pitch story ideas to appropriate editors. For example, the food editor may be interested in covering a pot-luck LAF luncheon. The education reporter might want to profile a scholarship winner.

Learn the name of the photo editor at the local newspaper and submit a request for photographic coverage of an event one week in advance.

Put to use the free vehicles for visibility and awareness in your local newspaper:

- A. Letters to the editor (encourage individual members to write in about an issue, or send one letter on behalf of the branch)
- B. Guest columns/editorials (can be timed with Pay Equity Day, etc.)
- C. Calendar listings (most local newspapers or their Web sites list monthly meetings)
- D. Meeting reports (called into the newspaper after a meeting and published the next day as a report of that meeting)

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Look for opportunities to bring AAUW out of the meeting room and into the community. Set up a membership table at the county fair, in the mall, on the local college campus, even the lobby of a local office building. Brainstorm other opportunities and locations.