

This is the first in a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. CAP TIPS are also posted on the subgrantee page of the NCVRW CAP web site, <http://cap.navaa.org/subs>.

Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIPS

(To Improve Public awareness)

by Anne Seymour

How to Plan and Implement an Effective Billboard Campaign

Introduction

Billboards offer a great venue for publicizing 2008 National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) and its theme, your agency or organization, and/or the services you provide that help victims and survivors of crime. With effective placement of billboards, literally thousands of people can be exposed to your message on a daily basis. It's important to remember that you usually have only a few brief moments to *impart a message that viewers remember!*

An effective billboard campaign involves four important steps:

- 1.** Determine the message you want to include on your billboards.
- 2.** Determine the artwork and design you want to incorporate into your billboards.
- 3.** Secure billboards at the best locations to meet your objectives, and at the most cost-effective rate possible.
- 4.** Get your billboards up to promote NCVRW.

Determine Your Message

Your message will be based upon the objectives of your billboard campaign:

- Do you want to reach the most number of people possible?
- Do you want to target high-crime, rural-remote, or other specific geographical areas?
- Is your message specific to 2008 NCVRW, or more general in terms of victims' rights and services?

It's important to engage your NCVRW Planning Committee to determine your objectives, and then to make sure that the outdoor advertising company with which you contract completely understands your objectives!

The 2008 NCVRW theme – “Justice for Victims. Justice for All.” – lends itself perfectly to a billboard campaign. It is direct, concise and memorable. You may also want to consider additional messages that promote your organization or coalition; describe services available to victims and survivors of crime; and/or promote specific NCVRW activities that you are sponsoring. Remember, in billboard advertising, “less is more!”.

It's important when deciding upon your message that you *keep it simple*, and *limit the number of words* on the billboard. Professional billboard companies generally advise to limit your message to “ten words or less.” The most effective billboards are those that have a concise message, and offer a telephone number or website URL to contact “for more information.”

Determine Your Artwork and Design

The NCVRW Resource Guide includes a CD with artwork in three formats: PDF; JPG; and Quark.

You should work with the billboard company to determine the most effective pieces of Resource Guide artwork that you can incorporate into your design, and/or to develop your own personalized artwork and design. Many billboard companies have departments that can help you with your artwork and design, or can refer you to a reliable local company that provides this service.

Your artwork and design will depend on the size of the billboards you are renting. Typical billboard sizes are 14-by-48 feet; 12-by-24 feet; and 5 by 11 feet.

Some general tips for design include the following:

- Find a partner and drive around your community and view billboards. Take notes about those whose messages are most powerful and memorable, and that incorporate designs and fonts that you like.
- Your lettering should be at least two-to-three feet in height.
- Listen carefully to the design advice of the “experts” at the billboard company or design firm, but also don't hesitate to speak your mind and offer your opinions! Make sure that you provide the company with a *written copy* of the overall objectives for your billboard campaign.
- Carefully review the artwork, design and lettering *prior* to having it displayed on actual billboards. It's helpful to have at least two people in this important review phase, and be sure

that all *spelling* and *contact information* are correct!

- You should work closely with the outdoor advertising company and be very clear and concise about:
 - Your objectives and message.
 - Your concepts for the overall design.
 - The theme colors you want to incorporate (the 2008 NCVRW colors are **PMS 273C** (a *blue/violet*) and **PMS 575** (a *muted shade of green/yellow*)).

Former CAP recipients who conducted NCVRW billboard campaigns advise that:

- It's important to engage your NCVRW Planning Committee members in a discussion about the billboards' message, theme and design. Get input and creative ideas from *as many people as possible*.
- The sample artwork included in the NCVRW Resource Guide is easily adapted to billboards.
- Consider using local leaders, such as your Mayor or District Attorney, in your artwork or message.
- Many billboard companies will work closely with you on developing your concept and design; meeting your budget limitations; and in some cases, even monitoring the amount of traffic that passes by the billboard.

Secure Billboard Locations

To identify outdoor advertising firms in your area, simply type "billboards, (city)" or "outdoor advertising, (city)" into any internet search engine. It's a good idea to seek and secure bids from more than one company (if more than one is available).

Some considerations for location include sites that are:

- In high-traffic areas to increase the number of people who will view your message.
- In high-crime areas to target populations who can directly benefit from your message.
- In specific locations that can increase outreach to traditionally underserved or unserved victim populations.
- The most cost-effective in relationship to your budget.

Former CAP recipients who conducted NCVRW billboard campaigns advise that:

- Negotiate carefully on both *location* and *price*!
- Ask the outdoor advertising company if it has data on the amount of traffic that goes by a

specific billboard location on a daily or weekly basis. This information will help inform your decision about location.

- Some outdoor advertising companies will work out a deal in which you pay for a certain number of billboards, and then they provide a certain number as a pro bono contribution (which requires documentation of their “donation” from a nonprofit organization affiliated with the NCVRW billboard campaign).
- Many outdoor advertising companies offer a discounted price for non-profit organizations (or a deal such as “buy one, get one free”), so be sure to specifically ask if such a rate is available.
- The more empty billboards an outdoor advertising company has, the more likely they are to negotiate with you on price and location. It’s a good idea to drive around your community and take note of the number and location of vacant billboards.
- Many empty billboards are located in high-crime areas, which offer an excellent venue for your messages.

Get Your Billboards Up!

One of the most important decisions you’ll have to make is the *timing* of your billboard displays. Most billboard companies offer monthly rates. The timing of your billboard displays should be based upon the following considerations:

- If you are publicizing a *specific NCVRW event*, plan on placement that begins one month or two months prior to the event, depending upon your budget.
- If you have a *more general message* about crime victims’ rights and services, contracting for the entire months of March and April is a good idea.

Make sure you carefully review your billboards once they are up to ensure that they meet both *your contract and your expectations!* Also, ask in advance if your outdoor advertising company can provide you with data that document the level of traffic that goes by your billboard (and be sure to include any such data in your final CAP report to NAVAA and OVC!).

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims’ Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annese@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

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CAP TIPS #2

To Improve Public Awareness

How to Engage and Involve Teens in your NCVRW Activities

Introduction

Many people look back on their teen years with a mixture of fondness and embarrassment. The teen years bring newfound independence, a sense of invincibility and purpose in the world, and expanded learning opportunities and communication abilities. The teen years also bring a developmental need to fit in with peers, an increased focus on body image, and the development of a personal identity.

Unfortunately, the teen years also often bring struggles to identify and cope with victimization. Teenagers are two times more likely than other age groups to become victims of violent crime and are more likely than adults to be victims of property crime.¹ Victimization can wreck havoc on adolescent development and may lead to developmental regression, risky behaviors, isolation, depression, hopelessness, delinquency, substance abuse, eating disorders, aggression, poor school performance, suicide attempts, and homelessness, among others. These responses can have a lasting impact on the victim's life and the community if they are not identified and addressed. Yet teen victims often encounter obstacles to disclosing crime, such as thinking no one will believe them, not knowing where to turn for help, fearing retaliation, feeling responsible for the crime, and wanting to just forget the crime ever happened. Many teen victims aren't even aware that what happened to them was a crime.

Engaging and involving teens in your NCVRW activities provide a unique opportunity to educate teens about what constitutes a crime and how crime can affect them, their family and their peers. Engaging and involving teens are key steps in establishing relationships so teens know they have a place to turn if they need help. Teens talk to other teens before even considering talking to an adult. A teen who has a relationship with a victim service organization or who has a friend who is aware of services for crime victims and survivors will be more willing and able to provide a referral for a friend in need.

The benefits of engaging and involving teens in your NCVRW activities aren't just for teens; they're for you! Engaged teens bring a can-do spirit of idealism to their work. To the adolescent mind, anything is possible. This energy can boost NCVRW activities to new levels of creativity, outreach, and fun.

Tips for Identifying "Gatekeepers" to Teen Participants

¹ Wordes, M. and Nunez, M. May 2002. *Our Vulnerable Teenagers: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention*. Oakland, CA and Washington, DC: National Council on Crime and Delinquency and National Center for Victims of Crime.

Teens are a unique age group to reach because they have increasingly more independence the older they get, but they are still bound by responsibilities and restrictions outside of their control (school, parents or guardians, etc.). The following gatekeepers can help you engage teens:

- *School administrators and teachers.* School administrators may be receptive to holding an assembly during NCVRW. Government or civic teachers may want to discuss the genesis of the victims' rights movement or a comparison of victims' and defendants' rights (the theme "Justice for Victims. Justice for All." neatly fits with this comparison). English teachers may want to host an essay contest on what "Justice for Victims. Justice for All." Means to students, their families and community. Art teachers may want their students to translate the theme into a visual representation. Drama teachers may want their students to perform a play that examines issues related to crime and victimization. Government, English, art, and drama teachers may want their students to work together to understand victims' rights, write a short play that addresses victims' rights, create the set design, and produce the play for the rest of the school or the community.
- *Guidance counselors and school health professionals.* These professionals are likely to encounter victimized teens on a daily basis. The better they can identify and understand victimization issues, the more teens they can refer to victim assistance organizations. They can also identify students who care about social justice and may be interested in working on NCVRW activities.
- *Youth-development professionals.* Youth-development professionals can include people who work at after-school programs, job development programs, tutoring centers, or community centers. They may want to sponsor activities or look for other avenues for teens to get involved with existing NCVRW activities. Most of all, they know how teens talk and how best to get teens engaged and involved.
- *School Resource Officers.* Some schools are staffed by School Resource Officers (SROs), law enforcement officers who have received additional training to work with teens and keep schools safe. SROs can provide referrals and encourage teens to become involved in NCVRW activities.
- *Coaches.* Many coaches take on a mentoring role and want their athletes to grow into healthy, mature men and women. Some coaches have become involved in programs to help prevent violence against women (please visit the "Coaching Boys into Men" resources available free from the Family Violence Prevention Center at <http://endabuse.org/>).
- *Fitness professionals.* Also talk with fitness professionals who coach teens outside of school programs, whether trainers at the local gym, martial arts professionals, self-defense trainers, Pilates and yoga instructors, or dance instructors. These professionals care about their clients' health and well-being and may want to advertise, sponsor, or partner with NCVRW events.
- *Go where the teens are.* Talk to local businesses that have a high volume of teen traffic: clothing stores, cosmetic stores, beauty salons, pizza restaurants, coffee shops, etc. Ask them to sponsor or partner with your NCVRW events. Even having NCVRW announcements, posters, or general information in heavily trafficked areas can be a draw for teen support.
- *Juvenile justice agencies.* During past commemorations of NCVRW, many victim assistance organizations have collaborated with juvenile probation and parole agencies to provide excellent opportunities for youthful offenders to fulfill their community service obligations. For

example, juvenile offenders can affix commemorative ribbons to pin cards; stuff envelopes; and set up and break down NCVRW events. It's always a good idea to combine community service projects with a touch of "victim awareness programming" for youth so they understand how their community service hours are benefiting victims and survivors of crime.

Tips for Engaging and Involving Teens in NCVRW Activities and Throughout the Year

Teens, like adults, are more likely to get involved in issues and activities that are personally relevant. If dating violence is a growing concern, it might be wise to focus activities around identifying healthy and unhealthy relationships, and how to help a friend who is in an unhealthy relationship. Whatever topics your NCVRW activities may focus on, here are some general tips for engaging teens:

- Involve a teen representative in your NCVRW Planning Committee. Seek his or her suggestions for how to engage teens during NCVRW and throughout the year.
- Don't act like their parents or talk down to them. Because of chemical changes in the brain and body, teens begin to view themselves as autonomous people and don't want to be bossed around by anyone. They want to be treated like adults and often view themselves as comparable to adults (think of teens who sneak into clubs or drink with friends). It is, of course, true that adults have far more experience and fuller life perspectives than teens. But if teens are spoken to in a respectful manner, like two colleagues would speak to each other, they will be more receptive to what you have to say, respectful of who you are, and involved in the activity.
- Listen to their suggestions and consider them carefully. Not everything a teen suggests will be feasible, but teens are the best resource to figure out how to approach and engage other teens.
- Talk the talk. Every generation has its own terminology and lingo ("Gag me with a spoon" wouldn't make much sense to a teen today). Feel free to use some slang during activities, but don't go overboard. Your goal is to connect with teens, not try to be seen as one (they'll lose respect for you if you try too hard to identify with them).
- Walk the walk. If you say you're going to do something, do it. If you can't, tell the teens why you can't do it. It is understandable that things may come up and you won't be able to do everything you set out to do, but neglecting to explain what happened to the teens involved can severely damage their trust in you. They may be more invested in the activities and wary of adults than they let on.
- "Bribery" works. It shouldn't be anything expensive or big, but giving teen participants a token of your appreciation will let them feel valued and respected. If you present teens with a certificate or award for involvement, they can include that acknowledgement on their college applications.

Some organizations that can help you develop activities for teens include:

- National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC): www.ncpc.org. NCPC sells toolkits and workbooks to help teens and adults work together to implement safety and service-learning projects.

- Teen Victim Project (National Center for Victims of Crime): http://www.ncvc.org/tvp/main.aspx?dbID=dash_Home. The Teen Victim Project provides free publications that can help you implement strategies for engaging teens and developing long-term teen outreach and peer advocacy programs. The Web site also provides links to products developed by demonstration sites that have implemented teen programs.
- National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: <http://www.loveisrespect.org/>. This Web site provides a toolkit for raising awareness among teens about dating violence, information about identifying dating violence, and an Internet portal and toll-free hotline to connect teens to peer advocates.
- The Texas Governor's Office has developed a teacher's guide of activities to raise awareness about teen dating violence: http://www.governor.state.tx.us/divisions/women/work/violence/files/teacher_guide.pdf. The teacher's guide includes suggestions for teachers of everything from math to physical education.
- Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR): www.pcar.org. PCAR sells resources for engaging teens in discussions about healthy relationships, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and statutory rape. "Building Healthy Relationships," "Date Rape: Rave Party Club Drugs Curriculum," and "Truth and Consequences: Statutory Rape" may be of particular interest for engaging teens.
- Love is Not Abuse offers a free curriculum to increase teens' understanding of dating violence, help teens dispel myths that "support" dating violence, and increase help-seeking behavior among teens who are in abusive relationships: http://www.loveisnotabuse.com/teen_curriculum_request.htm.

For More Information

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CAP TIPS #3

To Improve Public Awareness

Engaging Criminal and Juvenile Justice Officials and Agencies

Introduction

The 2008 NCVRW theme, "Justice for Victims. Justice for All." eloquently relates the importance of having *all* representatives and agencies within the criminal and juvenile justice systems involved in ensuring that *both* parties in each case seek and receive justice. Criminal and juvenile justice officials have a stake in implementing victims' rights and creating a seamless delivery of services. NCVRW is a time when you can state your appreciation of criminal and juvenile justice officials and, at the same time, remind them of the value of victims as witnesses to the justice systems; the importance of crime victims' rights in ensuring true "justice for all;" and the overall benefits of victim satisfaction with the criminal and juvenile justice processes.

Tips for Identifying Criminal and Juvenile Justice Leaders in Your Jurisdiction

You probably have already established relationships with many criminal and juvenile justice professionals in your jurisdiction. NCVRW provides an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships *and* establish new ones.

Criminal and juvenile justice leaders who should be with you at the NCVRW table include: law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, court administrators, probation and parole officers, corrections officials, Attorneys General, and system-based victim/witness advocates. It's important to also remember that most facets of the criminal justice system have local, state and federal jurisdiction – and it's helpful to include *all three facets* in your NCVRW activities.

The best way to find criminal and juvenile justice leaders in your jurisdiction is by brainstorming with respected colleagues. Chances are that you know who understands the importance of victims' rights...and who doesn't! While you certainly want to have justice officials who are dedicated to victims' rights involved in NCVRW activities, this is a time when you can also include people who may not understand the importance of victims' rights. Consider it a wonderful opportunity to educate and increase victim sensitivity!

Justice for victims requires the attention of *all* segments of justice processes. Your NCVRW activities can help justice officials realize the important role they have in incorporating justice for victims into justice for all.

You can use the following online directories to find justice officials in your jurisdiction and state:

- *Law enforcement officers.* You can search an online directory of city, county, and state law enforcement organizations throughout the United States at: http://officer.com/links/Agency_Search/United_States/index.html. The online directory also provides links to federal and military law enforcement organizations at: http://officer.com/links/Agency_Search/Federal/index.html. If you are unable to find your local law enforcement organization through the online directory, you can look in the blue pages of your local phone book.
- *Prosecutors.* You can search for local and state prosecutors through an online directory at: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/prosecutor/proslist.htm>. You can search online for federal prosecutors and prosecutor associations at: <http://www.eatoncounty.org/prosecutor/PA-Misc.htm#Associations>.
- *Judges.* The American Judges Association provides links to state courts at: <http://aja.ncsc.dni.us/htdocs/affiliates&links.htm>. Choose the link to your state's judicial Web site. From there, you should find a directory listing of your state's local and state courts. In some cases, judges, substitute judges, and chief magistrates are all listed.
- *Defense attorneys.* The National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers offers an online directory of defense lawyers and is searchable by the attorney's name, city, or state: <http://www.nacdl.org/publicdirectory.nsf/Directory>. The results listing describes if the attorney is a public defender, member of the military, or new lawyer.
- *Court administrators.* The National Association for Court Management provides a directory of each state's court association at: http://www.nacmnet.org/StateAssocPresi_web.pdf. It also provides links to states that have court association information online: <http://www.nacmnet.org/stateassoc.html>.
- *Probation and parole officers.* The American Probation and Parole Association provides links to state probation and parole agencies at: http://www.appa-net.org/resources/links/category_03.html. Affiliate organizations (including some local probation and parole associations) can be found at: http://www.appa-net.org/resources/links/category_01.html.
- *Corrections officials.* The American Correctional Association (ACA) provides an online directory of state adult correctional institutions at: <http://www.aca.org/research/stateadult/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. ACA's list of federal institutions can be found at: <http://www.aca.org/research/federal/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. ACA's list of state juvenile facilities can be found at: <http://www.aca.org/research/statejuv/results.asp?union=AND&viewby=50&startrec=1>. From these directories, you can click on your state's site and, from there, find a listing of local institutions.
- *Attorneys General.* Attorneys General in 48 states have designated offices for victim services. You can obtain contact information for your state Attorney General through

the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) at www.naag.org, and seek to identify victim assistance staff.

- *System-based victim/witness advocates or counselors.* The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) provides an online directory of victim service providers throughout the country at: <http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/findvictimservices/>. You can search by geographic area, type of services provided, and whether the services are provided through a system-based agency or community-based organization. Statewide coalitions, tribal organizations, and military service providers are also included in the directory.

Tips for Engaging Criminal and Juvenile Justice Officials and Agencies in NCVRW Activities and Throughout the Year

Crime victims, more than anyone, want to ensure that justice is served by holding the perpetrator of the crime accountable for his or her actions. Crime victims do not want innocent people held accountable for something they did not do or be treated disrespectfully throughout justice processes. The theme “Justice for Victims. Justice for All.” provides a platform for justice officials to discuss defendants’ and victims’ rights and how to successfully implement these rights throughout the justice system.

Every justice official has a stake in how victims are treated during justice processes. As a victim advocate, it is important for you to relate how providing victims with their rights will help cases move through justice processes. NCVRW provides a great opportunity for justice officials to publicly come together to show support for the rights of victims—the people at the very heart and soul of the justice system itself.

Following are some tips for engaging criminal and juvenile justice officials, including some examples of previous Community Awareness Project activities:

- Hold a roundtable meeting of criminal and juvenile justice officials, community-based victim advocates, and victims/survivors. Have participants discuss what “justice for victims” means to each person. Identify any gaps in procedure or services and brainstorm ways to close those gaps. Highlight procedures and services that are working well. Participants’ responses can then be used in speeches, opinion/editorial columns, or other NCVRW materials. If you aren’t able to convene a roundtable, you can create a form that is sent via mail, fax, or email to ask criminal and juvenile justice officials how they believe justice for victims leads to justice for all.
- Host events that involve multiple or all parts of the justice system to illustrate how justice for victims inspires justice for all. You can coordinate a “moment of silence” in honor of crime victims throughout the criminal or juvenile justice system (in Ohio, the entire prison system and parole offices have observed a moment of silence during previous NCVRWs).
- Have fun. Even though victimization issues are serious, it’s okay to make some of your NCVRW activities fun. Candlelight vigils and memorial services should remain solemn events, of course. But other activities can incorporate light-hearted aspects. A goal of NCVRW activities is community outreach and education. The criminal and juvenile justice systems are intimidating, full of language, jargon, and procedures that are confusing to the average citizen. And the idea of being a victim of crime is downright frightening to most people. Let’s face it: probably everyone in the victim assistance field has met someone who sheepishly and quickly changed the

conversation when you discussed what you do for a living. NCVRW can honor the difficult struggles crime victims face, but can also incorporate fun to honor the resilience of the human spirit. In 2004, the Dallas County Community Supervision and Corrections Department set up a Safety Fair at a local mall. Local victim advocacy groups distributed brochures about their services and programs, entertainment was provided on the mall stage, and numerous local law enforcement and fire departments displayed their police cars, motorcycles, DWI mobile units, emergency mobile equipment outside of the mall. Costumed volunteers, including McGruff the Crime-fighting Dog, used donated cameras to take pictures of children standing by any police or fire vehicle they chose.

- Get offenders involved. In 2004, the Arizona Department of Corrections sponsored programs focused on victims' issues before and during NCVRW. Inmates participated in a poster contest and the winning poster was copied and displayed at all state prisons. The focus on victims' rights made such an impact on the inmates that they raised over \$18,000 for the non-profit organization Arizona Coalition of Victim Services. Likewise, juvenile offenders can get involved and fulfill community service hours by posting NCVRW products throughout the community or pinning ribbons to NCVRW ribbon cards.
- Say “thank you” and recognize exemplary achievements that benefit victims and survivors of crime. In Mariposa, California, 100 certificates of appreciation were given to many of the local criminal justice agency professionals, including those in the sheriff's department, the victim witness program, the district attorney's office, the domestic violence response team, and the probation department. You can use the sample “certificate of appreciation” included in OVC’s 2008 NCVRW Resource Guide.
- Invite the media and ensure criminal and juvenile justice partners are praised in front of the press. In Chelan and Douglas Counties, Washington, collaborating agencies held a "Pig Out in the Park" event in a large park adjacent to the courthouse. Law enforcement and fire officials cooked hamburgers and hot dogs for the approximately 3,000 attendees. Thirty-five nonprofit victim service programs staffed booths, and first responder vehicles gave tours to attendees. Local victim survivors spoke about their experiences from a central stage, where the local high school jazz band and other talents also provided entertainment. Local English and Spanish media covered the event, including live coverage, pre- and post-event newspaper articles, and an article 30 days after the event to reemphasize the local services and resources available for crime victims.
- Don't count criminal and juvenile justice officials out even if they aren't involved this year. You can still conduct outreach and education to justice officials who aren't interested in supporting NCVRW. You can ask survivors to write about “what justice means to me” (either anonymous or signed), print the responses on brightly colored paper, and distribute the papers to justice officials. In 2003, members of the Survivors of Crime Council in Vermont wrote their experiences as victims of crime and placed the responses on legislators' seats on the opening day of the legislative session. The Survivors of Crime Council stressed the simplicity, cost-effectiveness, and high impact of this project.

For More Information

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CAP TIPS #4

To Improve Public Awareness

How to Engage the News Media

Introduction

While National Crime Victims' Rights Week is a time-honored tradition for crime victims and survivors and those who serve them, it is just one of *many* important events that the news media are asked to cover in their communities. It's important to sponsor events that are *truly newsworthy* and *relevant* to the news media's varied audiences, from newspaper and web readers, to listeners and viewers of broadcast media.

One of the most important components of engaging the news media is to have a good, current media roster. The information in this CAP TIP can be augmented by the archival CAP TIP on "Building a Comprehensive Media List," which can be found at <http://cap.navaa.org/subs/CAP%20TIPS%201%20Media%20List.pdf>.

Ensuring That What Interests *You*, Also Interests the *Media!*

The media are always looking for a unique aspect of events they are asked to cover. Here are some helpful tips to create a special "angle" for your NCVRW events:

- Remember that most media are *visually-oriented*. It helps to plan ahead for compelling broadcast footage or photographs from your events. You can also use the artwork from the NCVRW Resource Guide to create visual templates that can be provided in advance to print, television and web-based media.
- The "power of the personal story" in our field is always important for media coverage. This year's theme – "Justice for Victims. Justice for All" – lends itself to powerful human impact stories about how crime affects ordinary people that the media's audiences can relate to. Plan ahead for victim speakers, or making crime victims and survivors available for media interviews, either prior to, on-site or following your NCVRW events.
- Consider the myriad options for media outreach, and not just those that require reporters to "show up" at events. These include:
 - Letters-to-the-editor (most newspapers have guidelines for how to submit letters that are posted on their websites).
 - Opinion/editorial columns (also used as radio and television "actualities") that express one's views about victim-related initiatives and issues, and/or publicize NCVRW events (again, most media feature guidelines for submission on their websites).

- Press releases (please visit <http://cap.navaa.org/subs/CAP%20TIPS%207%20Writing%20an%20Effective%20Press%20Release.pdf> for an archival CAP TIP on “Writing an Effective Press Release”).
- Public service announcements (please visit <http://cap.navaa.org/subs/CAP%20TIPS%206%20Creating%20Public%20Service%20Announcements.pdf> for an archival CAP TIP on “Creating Public Service Announcements”).

Guidelines for these “tried and true” media outreach strategies are included in the 2008 NCVRW Resource Guide.

Finally, when in doubt, pick up the phone and call a media professional (either a journalist, public relations professional, or other potential advisor). Describe your events, the message(s) you’d like to impact, and the activities you have planned. Ask for brief input and advice about how to make your NCVRW activities memorable *and* newsworthy.

Seeking Pro Bono Support for Public Awareness Activities

The range of strong media relations experience among victim advocates varies significantly. It’s helpful to consider sources within the community that can provide pro bono support for NCVRW activities and public relations throughout the year:

- Crime victims/survivors served by an organization who have media relations expertise and want to volunteer.
- Public relations and advertising firms (especially newer and small firms that are looking to make a name for themselves).
- Colleges and universities—including students from communications, journalism, public relations, and graphic arts programs—that can provide volunteers for specific projects or interns for entire semesters.
- Commercial art schools whose students can contribute to creative graphic design for public awareness activities.

In identifying pro bono sources, it is important to remember that public recognition of their contributions is essential. Pro bono contributors can be thanked through letters-to-the-editor, public recognition during NCVRW, and awards that honor volunteer support of an organization (using the “sample certificate of appreciation” included in OVC’s 2008 NCVRW Resource Guide).

Ten Practical Tips on Approaching the Media

Detroit Free Press columnist Desiree Cooper offers these suggestions for how to approach the media:¹

1. Know the difference between a news story, a column, and an ad.
2. Don’t call reporters on their deadlines. After 3 p.m. is the worst time for most reporters who work on morning papers or for evening news broadcasts.
3. Start with a reporter and work your way up, unless you already have a good relationship with an editor.

4. Speak in sound bites, not speeches.
5. Use e-mail and voicemail—don't insist on personal interactions at first.
6. Humor is your friend.
7. Be prepared to follow up conversations with more information: fact sheets, names and phone numbers, Web sites, and faxes.
8. If you are rejected because your pitch is not in the reporter's beat, ask if there is someone else at the media establishment who may be interested.
9. Make as many calls as you can yourself. Public relations professionals rarely have the same depth of knowledge or interest in the topic as an advocate.
10. Be upbeat and enthusiastic. If you're not interested, why should anyone else be interested?

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annesey@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.

ⁱ Desiree Cooper, "10 Practical Tips on Approaching the News Media," *Detroit Free Press*, 2001.

This is the fifth in a series of periodic messages to assist in the planning and implementation of NCVRW Community Awareness Projects. CAP TIPS are also posted on the subgrantee page of the NCVRW CAP web site, <http://cap.navaa.org/subs>. Please feel free to send your individual questions or requests for assistance to Anne Seymour at annesey@atlantech.net.

CAP TIPS #5

To Improve Public Awareness

“Be Prepared!”

A “One-month Out” Checklist for Success

Introduction

It's hard to believe that 2008 National Crime Victims' Rights Week is only one month away!

By now, all CAP recipients are in the throes of planning and preparation. It may be helpful to consider a “countdown check list” that identifies key issues and tasks that need to be accomplished *prior to Sunday, April 13*.

This CAP TIP is designed to offer guidance to you *for two categories* of CAP activities:

- Media relations.
- Special events.

Each checklist can be easily adapted to meet your individualized needs in your state or community, and can become your “ongoing reminder” of activities that have been accomplished, and those that require further attention.

Media Relations Checklist

Relevant CAP TIPS to Review:

- How to Engage the News Media
- Building a Comprehensive Media List
- Writing an Effective Press Release
- Creating Public Service Announcements
- Sample media sign-in sheet (see attached; also available under “Other Materials” on the NCVRW CAP Web site at cap.navaa.org/subs).

Week of March 16

- A volunteer has been assigned to document all media relations activities, i.e., press clippings, tapes of radio and television interviews, printouts of web media publicity, etc.
- Your media directory should be complete and documented in an easy-to-use format.

- Your public service announcements should be written, reviewed and edited, and finalized in the recommended PSA format.
- Any quotations or comments to be included in media relations (such as press releases, opinion/editorial columns, etc.) should be obtained from contributors, with proper attribution noted.
- Guidelines for submitting opinion/editorial columns or radio or television actualities, press releases and public service announcements have been reviewed and followed.

Week of March 23

- If any special media recognition award is being given out during NCVRW, the recipient and his/her superior are notified about the award, and when it is being presented (see *Sample Certificate of Recognition* in the OVC NCVRW Resource Guide).
- Your public service announcements are mailed to television and radio stations (and if you are providing “on air” talent to read the PSA, arrangements for taping should be finalized with the station).

Week of March 30

- Press releases are snail-mailed by Friday, April 4 (or emailed by Monday, April 7).
- Opinion/editorial columns (for newspapers and web media) and actualities (for radio/television) are submitted by mail or electronically (to be received by April 4) with a request to publish during NCVRW (Sunday or Monday is best), and include the author’s credentials and contact information.
- Conduct follow-up telephone calls and/or emails to news media representatives to see if they need any additional information, or have any special needs when covering your event.
- All key media interviews have been scheduled and confirmed (day/date/time/location and who is being interviewed/who is conducting the interview). Arrangements are made to publicize and audiotape/videotape key media interviews.

Week of April 6

- Letters-to-the-editor inviting people to any special events are emailed or snail mailed to local newspapers.

Week of April 13

- A media schedule for NCVRW has been developed and disseminated to all key players involved.

For any special events:

- A volunteer has been designated to meet and greet the media; answer any questions they may have; and ensure that key representatives are available for interviews.

- A designated (quiet) area or room has been planned for media interviews, and is equipped with ample electrical outlets and/or a power strip.
- The “Media Sign-in Sheet” has been copied and is available on a clipboard at the welcome/registration desk.
- Any special needs of the media have been identified and addressed.
- If a “media recognition award” is being presented, it is ready at the podium, along with information about the recipient.

Week of April 20

- Follow-on notes or emails are sent to media representatives who attended and/or covered NCVRW activities.
- Where relevant, letters-to-the-editor is sent that thank the news media and community members for supporting NCVRW and crime victims/survivors.

Special Events Checklist

Relevant CAP TIPS to Review:

- How to Turn Out a Crowd
- NCVRW Activities for Children
- Engaging Criminal and Juvenile Justice Officials and Agencies
- How to Engage and Involve Teens in Your NCVRW Activities
- Sample sign-in sheets (see attached; also available under “Other Materials” on the NCVRW CAP Web site at cap.navaa.org/subs).

Week of March 16

- All co-sponsoring agencies and organizations have been provided with NCVRW artwork and a highlight of your special event to publicize to their constituents and communities, such as:
 - Posters.
 - Letter of invitation.
 - Reminder post cards.
 - Language/artwork for “Save the Date” email or snail mail, and list serv dissemination.
 - Artwork and copy for website publicity.
- **T**he location of special events has been confirmed, and you have a copy of the contract or agreement (*which should be carried on-site to the actual event*). A walk-through has been conducted to:
 - Determine the physical logistics (such as stage, podium or table, seating, resource arena, etc.) and make sure that you have an adequate number of chairs and tables.
 - Finalize any requirements related to hanging things on the walls and/or decorating the stage or venue.

- Assess and address physical access for persons with disabilities, from transportation and parking to entry into the site.
 - Identify a space or “quiet room” where attendees who may be deeply affected by the proceedings can go to.
 - Determine where bathrooms and adjunct facilities (i.e., storage, kitchen, etc.) are located.
 - Ensure that **there is a secure place to hang coats.**
- Arrangements are made with event site staff to arrive *at least two hours* (and maybe more) *in advance of the event* to prepare and set up.
 - A map to the specific location (with a physical address, directions, and information about public transportation, parking and disability access) is secured in both paper and electronic formats.
 - If your location is outdoors, an alternative location has been planned for in case of inclement weather.
 - Volunteers to provide security are obtained and confirmed with email and cell phone contact information (local police departments may be a good source for this!).
 - Any food or beverage orders have been confirmed.
 - Any entertainment has been confirmed (choirs, singers, color guards, etc.).
 - Your budget is reviewed to ensure that you are in line with all expenditures.
 - An e-mail roster of potential attendees has been developed.
 - If you are sponsoring a Resource Arena, potential participants are:
 - Notified and provided with logistical information.
 - Provided with information about the availability of tables, wall space, etc.
 - Asked to bring a specified number of brochures, posters, and other victim awareness and public education resources.
 - Provided with information about where to go at the actual event (i.e., to the Resource Arena coordinator/sign-in table).
 - For all key activities, volunteers have been secured to plan, implement, and clean-up after the event. A list with names, landline and cell phone numbers, and email addresses has been developed.
 - If any special event giveaways are planned (such as tee-shirts, caps, pens, squeeze balls, etc.), the order has been confirmed, and a volunteer has been assigned to track its arrival.

Week of March 23

- A “Save the Date” reminder has been emailed to all potential attendees.
- Interpreters have been secured to facilitate active participation by any Deaf attendees.
- All decorations have been planned and ordered.

- If any awards are being given out:
 - Award recipients have been notified and provided with all information relevant to the special event.
 - Awards have been prepared with the name of the award and recipient.

Week of March 30

- An event schedule with *every minute* timed and designated is emailed to all presenters; and a master/mistress of ceremonies is confirmed, with introductory and segue way remarks prepared in advance.
- An email confirmation/reminder is sent to all key participants and contributors with day/date/time/location and any other relevant information:
 - All potential attendees.
 - All participants in any Resource Arena.
 - Speakers and presenters.
 - Entertainment.
 - Food/beverages and napkins/plates/cups/utensils.
 - Volunteers.
- (*Optional*) A photographer and/or videographer is confirmed.
- Plan for volunteers who can be available to assist any attendees – especially crime victims and survivors – who may need extra emotional support during the actual event.

Week of April 6

- Event programs are finalized (and edited!) and printed.
- A final reminder about your special event with map/directions has been emailed to all potential attendees.
- Sign-in sheets have been prepared and copied (see attached; also available under “Other Materials” on the NCVRW CAP Web site at cap.navaa.org/subs).
- A “run through” with all key players is hosted, either at your office or at the actual site of the special event, and timed to ensure that you keep with your planned schedule.
- Any audio/visual activities are subjected to a “practice run-through” (such as the NCVRW Theme DVD included in the OVC Resource Guide; PowerPoint presentations; and/or a PowerPoint “welcome slide”).
- You obtain a final confirmation of food and beverage orders; ensure that the vendors/volunteers have the day/date/time/location of the special event; and confirm cell phone information for delivery.
- All volunteers are confirmed with their assignments, and an email reminder is sent (see below, *Week of April 13*, “Prior to and at the Event – Volunteers”).

- Arrange in advance to have any leftover food delivered to a shelter or other program in the community that accepts such donations (such as a co-sponsoring domestic violence shelter).
- (*Optional*) For confirmed attendees, name tags are prepared in advance.

Week of April 13

- Signage has been prepared to post around and at the event:
 - With arrows pointing to the entrance.
 - With information about disability parking and access.
 - With details about specific sign-in locations (for attendees, volunteers, news media, etc.).
 - Welcome signs (using NCVRW Resource Guide artwork).
- Special event giveaways (such as tee-shirts, caps, squeeze balls, etc.) are nicely displayed.
- A first aid kit has been secured for the actual event.
- A list of emergency numbers is developed for the event (police, ambulance, hospitals, etc.)

Prior to and at the event:

- All decorations have been finalized at least two hours prior to the event.
- You have copies of all relevant contracts and “proof of payment,” and emergency contact information for all vendors (i.e., food, sound system, etc.).
- On-site logistics:
 - Tables and chairs are set up for registration; any food or beverages; resource arena; attendees; speakers on the stage, etc.
 - An audio/visual check is conducted one hour prior to the event.
 - You have copies of three sign-in sheets available as people enter (for attendees, the news media, and volunteers).
 - Logistical signage is posted.
 - Enough copies of the special event program have been duplicated.
 - A list of emergency numbers is available at the registration desk.
 - Prepared name tags and/or name tags and Sharpie pens are available at the registration desk.
- Volunteers are available (and receive a short briefing one hour in advance of the event) in advance, during and following the event on-site to:
 - Haul boxes and other resources into the site.
 - Set up the room
 - Decorate the room.
 - Facilitate any Resource Arena.
 - Provide security at and around the event site.

- Meet and greet guests at the front door(s) and provide information and guidance.
- Staff the welcome/registration table and sign-in sheets.
- Assist any attendees who may need to visit a quiet space or room and receive comfort and support (have plenty of Kleenexes available!).
- Coordinate audio/visuals for any presentations.
- Coordinate distribution of giveaways (tee-shirts, caps, pens, etc.)
- Coordinate any refreshments.
- Coordinate media participation.
- Coordinate welcoming speakers and key participants.
- Break down the event, and clean up afterwards (you'll want to leave the room in good shape so you'll be welcome back in the future!).
- Make arrangements to promptly return any borrowed equipment (audio/visual, laptops and LCD projectors, tables, chairs, etc.)
- Deliver any leftover food to a shelter or other designated organization.

Week of April 20

- Remember to thank all the volunteers, featured speakers and others whose contributions made your event a success!
- Snail-mail "thank you's" are preferable to email. You can use the artwork included in the NCVRW Resource Guide to create a lovely 8 ½" by 11" piece of stationary, with standardized artwork and a thoughtful message, and leave room at the bottom of the page for a personalized one-line note-of-thanks and signatures.
- Plan or conduct a post-event debriefing with all key coordinators. Assess what worked, and what needed improvement, and document your findings for future commemorations of NCVRW (a final 2008 CAP TIP will address "Debriefing and Evaluation").

For More Information

Please contact National Crime Victims' Rights Week Community Awareness Project Consultant Anne Seymour via email at annesey@atlantech.net; or by telephone at 202.547.1732.