



first **UNITARIAN**
CONGREGATION OF TORONTO | *Est.* 1845

www.firstunitariantoronto.org



Member of the Canadian Unitarian Council
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PUBLICITY GUIDE

Fifth Edition

November, 2002

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D. APPENDICES

The most recent edition of the Appendices can be obtained from the [Publicity Committee](#). The Appendices include:

CONGREGATIONAL CONTACTS, RESOURCES & SUPPLIERS

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Contact List

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Fax Cover Sheets (for Contacts without E-Mail Addresses)

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First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto

Special Event Planning

PUBLICITY GUIDE

A. INTRODUCTION

All the time and effort that goes into an event will be wasted if you do not attract people to attend it. Event publicity should be considered in the early planning stages.

Use several publicity tools to publicize your event. Consider the appropriateness of each for the kind of audience you wish to attract and the cost. Many types of publicity are free or low-cost. Do not underestimate the power of word-of-mouth advertising. Talk to everyone you can about your event and ask your volunteers to do likewise.

It is a good idea to keep copies of all your publicity tools and any media coverage that you receive for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of your publicity and for the use of the planners in subsequent years. To determine which ones work the best for you, it is helpful to ask people who attend your event where they heard about it.

On the following page is a table of **26 publicity tools & techniques** available to you. Each technique is then discussed in more detail.

Lists of Congregational and media contacts are maintained separately and kept-up-to-date. Request the latest versions from the [Publicity Committee](#).

First Edition, Spring 1999.

Second Edition, Winter 2000/2001.

Third Edition, Summer 2001.

Fourth Edition, April 2002.

Fifth Edition, November 2002.

Drafted by Nancy Krygsman.

Updated by the Publicity Committee.

Updated Appendices.

More generalized, for sharing with other congregations. Appendices now maintained as a separate document, and updated.

Increased use of electronic media. Incorporates procedure for Media Releases. Updated Appendices.

B. SUMMARY OF PUBLICITY TOOLS, TECHNIQUES & TIMELINES

PUBLICITY TOOL	AUDIENCE REACHED	COST
1. CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES		
a. Congregational Newsletter	Congregation members & friends	Free
b. Tables at Coffee Hour	Congregation members & friends	Free
c. Bulletin Board	Congregation members & friends	Free
d. Websites	Website visitors	Free
e. Listservs (E-Mailing Lists)	Congregation members & friends	Free
f. Orders of Service	Congregation members & friends	Free
g. Announcements from the Pulpit	Congregation members & friends	Free
h. Signs Outside the Congregation ("Wayside Pulpit")	Passers-by, neighbourhood	\$80-100
i. Sandwich Boards outside the Congregation	Passers-by, neighbourhood	Low cost
2. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)		
a. Daily Newspapers, Weekly Papers	General public	Free
b. Community Newspapers	General public / neighbourhood	Free
c. Specialized Papers	Public with a special interest in your type of event	Free
d. Radio Stations	General public	Free
e. Television Stations & Cable TV Companies	General public	Free
3. FLYERS (FOR POSTING & DISTRIBUTION)		
a. Congregation Lobby	Congregation members and friends; People attending other events at First	Photocopy cost
b. Other UU Congregations in the GTA	Unitarians	Under \$5
c. Other Religious Institutions in the Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood	Under \$5
d. Public Libraries	Library users	Photocopy cost
e. Posting in the Neighbourhood	Neighbourhood	Photocopy cost
f. Posting in Workplaces	General public	Photocopy cost
g. E-Mail / Fax Friends & Acquaintances	Specialized audience; friends / contacts of volunteers	Free
h. Mailing Lists	Specialized audience	Photocopy & postage
4. PAID ADS IN NEWSPAPERS		
• Newspaper Ads	General public	Varies
5. OTHER MEDIA TECHNIQUES		
a. Media Releases	General public	Free
b. Celebrity Endorsements	General public	Free
c. T-shirts, Caps & other Promo Items	General public	Significant

TIMELINE / CHECKLIST FOR EVENT PUBLICITY

- 8 Weeks Prior to Event**
- Arrange Outside Sign ("Wayside Pulpit") and Sandwich Board Sign, if necessary
 - Prepare Posters, Flyers and Mailings
 - Order T-shirts, caps and other promotional items
 - Send Announcement to Congregational Newsletter
- 6 Weeks Prior to Event**
- Post on Congregational Bulletin Boards
 - Post on Websites
 - Send PSAs to Community Newspapers
 - Send Mailing to other UU Congregations in the Area
 - Send Mailing to Public Libraries
- 4 Weeks Prior to Event**
- Arrange for Table in Coffee Hour, and run until Event
 - Mount Outside Sign
 - Post-up Flyers/Posters at the Congregation
 - Mail to Mailing Lists
 - Post to Listservs
- 2 Weeks Prior to Event**
- Send PSAs to Free Weekly Newspapers
 - Post-up Flyers/Posters in the Neighbourhood
 - Give Flyers/Posters to Members of the Congregation to post in Workplaces
- 1 Week Prior to Event**
- List in Order of Service
 - Arrange for Announcement from Pulpit (if warranted)
 - Send PSAs to Daily Newspapers
 - Send 2nd E-Mail to Mailing List, if warranted
 - Send PSAs to Radio Stations
 - 2nd Post to Listservs
- Day of Event**
- Put Sandwich Board outside
 - Retrieve Sandwich Board after Event!
 - Take down flyers/posters at the Congregation and in the Neighbourhood.

C. PUBLICITY TOOLS & TECHNIQUES

1. CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCES

The use of Congregation publicity resources should be your first line of action. Most of our events are attended primarily by Congregation members and their friends, so this is your primary audience.

a. Congregational Newsletter

The congregational newsletter can be used to recruit volunteers, solicit member participation (e.g. donation of articles for sale/auction) and publicize your event.

Begin publicizing your event 3 to 4 months in advance. You can put in a notice or a full page ad.

Content for the newsletter should be e-mailed to the [Editor](#) or delivered to the Newsletter box in the Office. The deadline is the beginning of the second service (11:30 am) two weeks before the last Sunday of the month.

b. Tables at Coffee Hour

If you have volunteers who will staff it, you can request a table in Workman Hall after the Sunday services to sell tickets or distribute a flyer. You should plan to staff it after both services.

Tables must be requested by Friday noon through the [Office Administrator](#).

c. Bulletin Boards

Notices should be posted four-to-six weeks in advance of your event. You can use your event flyer for this purpose (see below).

Flyers or posters for posting on the bulletin board should be delivered to the Congregation Office and placed in the Bulletin Board box. There is a committee that looks after the posting and removal of all notices. Do not post materials on the bulletin board yourself.

d. Websites

The Congregation has a website that anyone can log onto for information on our congregation (www.firstunitariantoronto.org). Contact our [Webweaver](#) about adding content to the website.

Many events may be of interest to members and friends of other congregations in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Content may also be posted on the "Unitarians in the GTA" website (www.cuc.ca/gta) maintained by the UCGT (Unitarian Congregations of Greater Toronto). Contact the [Webweaver](#) about adding content to the website.

e. Listservs (E-mailing Lists)

The Congregation has an internet-based e-mail group ("[uutoronto](#)" in [Yahoo!Groups](#)) set up for announcements and general discussion. For further information and how to subscribe to this group, please visit www.firstunitariantoronto.org/other_info.htm.

An e-mail group has also been established for all the Publicity-related folks in the congregations across the GTA (growth.ugta@ca.inter.net).

Post an initial announcement about 4 weeks before the event, with a "reminder" the week before the event.

f. Orders of Service

Announcements can be placed in the Order of Service, as you get closer to your event.

The wording should be delivered, phoned, faxed or e-mailed to the [Office Administrator](#) by Wednesday noon prior to the service.

g. Announcements from the Pulpit

You may ask to address the congregation briefly or request that the Service Leader make an announcement for you. Use this method to encourage congregational attendance at your event, but keep it brief: the Worship Committee wishes to keep announcements to a minimum. Contact the Service Leader by the Wednesday prior to the service. The [Office Administrator](#) can advise you who the service leader will be for the relevant services.

h. Signs Outside the Congregation ("Wayside Pulpit")

Large signs (8 ft x 2 ft) can be mounted above the Congregation sign outside the building so that it is visible to passers by on St.Clair Avenue.

The sign should clearly state your event and the date and time. Once the sign is made, it can be updated by the signmaker with new dates at a reasonable cost without redoing the whole sign.

The sign should be mounted outside 4 weeks ahead of your event. The Building Custodians and/or the [Property Committee](#) can help you mount it. After the event, it should be removed promptly and stored in the Boiler Room for future use.

i. Sandwich Board outside the Congregation

We have a 2-sided sandwich board (in the boiler room) to which you can attach your own poster or hand-lettered sign. This is useful to attract attention on the street the day of your event. It can be placed on the south east or south west corner of St. Clair and Avenue Road. You can attach balloons to make it more eye-catching.

Do not forget to retrieve the board after your event!

2. PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Public Service Announcements ("PSAs") are a very effective way to get publicity in the mainstream media at no cost. However, there is no guarantee that your PSA will be used. The media likes PSAs that are complete, concise, and of interest to their readers. They will typically give preference to PSAs that are received well in advance of the event.

PSAs should be brief and attention-getting, and give all the essentials of your event: what, where, when, why and how much. Be sure to include the name of the event, the place, the date and time, and the price of admission (if any). Also, give a phone number for people to call for more information (e.g. the Congregation's office).

If the event is a fundraiser, it is also a good idea to explain briefly where the proceeds will go and to provide a statement about the work of the Congregation.

You also need to give a contact name and number for the person sending the PSA.

Send the PSA on the Congregation's letterhead to the appropriate contacts 6-8 weeks in advance of your event. Many media organizations have a PSA director who co-ordinates the use of PSAs. Others may just have a general community bulletin board number that receives faxes. Refer to the list of contacts for PSAs included in the Appendix.

E-mail is the most efficient way to send PSAs. An E-mail template with the most current e-mail addresses is included in the Appendix. This list is updated periodically by the Publicity Committee.

Alternatively, PSAs may be sent by fax. A package of completed fax cover sheets with the latest contact information (for those that don't have e-mail addresses) is included in the Appendix. This package is updated periodically by the Publicity Committee.

The Congregation's Office volunteers can assist with faxing if you supply the PSA and the fax list.

It is a good idea to keep track of media sources that are using your PSAs. You may wish to telephone 2 weeks ahead of the event to find out if they are using your copy.

a. Daily Newspapers, Weekly Papers

The *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun* will often print PSAs about local events in their community calendar. *Now*, *Eye Weekly* and *Xtra* are also good sources for PSAs. *The Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* are more interested in events of national interest. Free dailies published by the major papers, (e.g., *Metro*, *Geo* and *FYI*) also have event listings.

b. Community Newspapers

Community papers in the vicinity of the Congregation are usually happy to print notices of coming events. Often the same organization operates several papers in the City; they will usually be selective in which ones they print your notice. The *North Toronto Herald* generally gives good coverage of Congregation events and will sometimes send a photographer. Consider the *Town Crier*, especially the Forest Hill edition.

Please note that many community papers only publish once or twice a month and so they have a very long lead-time. Be sure to send your PSA at least 8 weeks ahead.

c. Specialized Papers

For certain events (e.g. music concerts) there are specialized papers/magazines that will print notices. For example, *Wholenote* lists music events in the City at no cost. These magazines tend to have very long lead times; send in your PSA 3 months in advance.

d. Radio Stations

Concentrate on stations that will reach the type of audience you expect to attend your event. PSAs for radio should be written as you want them read. Keep it brief! A PSA should be 15 or 30 seconds long.

e. Television Stations & Cable TV Companies

PSAs for television should also be written as you want them read. Cable TV is a good media source because they will run your message again and again (if they use it).

EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (Print Media)

To: Public Information / Community Director

Re: Annual Book Bash, October 17, 2002

We would appreciate it if you could list the following event in your community calendar prior to October 17.

ANNUAL BOOK BASH. Thousands of books at bargain prices. Saturday, October 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto, 175 St. Clair Ave. West (at Avenue Road). For information, call 416-466-3188.

Contacts:

Anne Murdock 416-466-3188

Nancy Krygsman 905-513-1087

EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (Radio / TV)

EVENT: Annual Book Bash

DATE: Saturday, October 17, 2002

Thousands of books – at bargain prices – are on sale at the Annual Book Bash of the First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto on Saturday, October 17 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Congregation is located at 175 St. Clair Ave. West (at Avenue Road). For more information, call 416-466-3188.

Contacts:

Anne Murdock 416-466-3188

Nancy Krygsman 905-513-1087

3. FLYERS FOR POSTING & DISTRIBUTION

An attractive flyer can give you a lot of mileage. The design should be attractive, uncluttered and eye-catching. Use interesting graphics or pictures if you are able. It does not need to be fancy. A flyer in black ink on white paper photocopied onto coloured paper is quite effective.

Be sure your flyer clearly describes your event, the place, the date and the time. Mention the admission price or whether admission is free.

Determine in advance how many copies you are going to need for the distribution you have planned. Photocopying can be done in the Congregation's Office for 10¢ per copy but, if you are doing many copies, it may be cheaper to use an outside copy shop at 3-5¢ per copy (depending on quantity). Consult the [Office Administrator](#) if you have questions.

Following are some suggestions of where to distribute or post your flyers:

a. Congregation Lobby

Place a pile of your flyers on the table in the lobby and on the counter in front of the office so that people attending concerts, meetings, classes, weddings, etc. can pick them up.

b. Other UU Congregations in the GTA

Unitarians in other localities may be interested in your event; many have friends in common. There are five other congregations in the GTA. A list is attached. Send at least one copy for posting on their bulletin board; more if you wish to provide copies for people to pick up there.

The Congregation office volunteers will do the mailing if you make your request through the office administrator. The postage will be charged to your event account. Mail at least a month in advance.

c. Other Religious Institutions in the Neighbourhood

Other denominations will often post a notice on their bulletin board if asked. You may deliver by hand or put them in the mail. (Check with the [Publicity Committee](#) to see if they have a list)

d. Public Libraries

There are 96 branches of the Toronto Public Library and they will post your flyer on their bulletin board if it is of interest in their neighbourhood. It is better to send a flyer rather than a poster because they have space limitations. Phone ahead of time to arrange for this (416-393-7000).

The library has a central distribution service. Deliver 100 flyers to the Marketing and Communications Dept., Toronto Public Library, 789 Yonge Street (near Bloor) eight weeks ahead of your event. The Library usually keeps a copy in their file.

You can also request that the flyer be distributed only to the 33 branch libraries in the old City of Toronto; in that case, deliver 35 flyers.

e. Posting in the Neighbourhood

The people who live or work in the immediate neighbourhood of the Congregation are prime potential customers for your event. Consider posting flyers in neighbourhood stores, schools, businesses, etc. Make sure you do this about it two or three weeks in advance. You may need volunteers to take your flyers around and request that they are posted.

f. Posting in Workplaces

Ask your volunteers if they can post a flyer on the bulletin board at their workplace.

g. E-mail / Fax Friends & Acquaintances

Ask your volunteers to send an E-mail reminder or fax a copy of the flyer to their friends and acquaintances. You can also reach a specialized audience this way instead of mailing a flyer.

h. Mailing Lists

If your event has a specialized audience, you may have a mailing list of people you especially want to notify. You can send them a copy of your flyer. Be sure to keep your list up-to-date. The Congregation office can do your mailing but the postage cost will be charged to your event account.

4. PAID ADS IN NEWSPAPERS

The advantage of a paid ad is that you know it will appear, whereas there are no guarantees that your Public Service Announcement will be used. The disadvantage, of course, is that you have to pay for it.

Some ads can be had at a reasonable cost. Some inexpensive ones are ads in the Social notices column of the *Toronto Star* under “announcements”. This section lists events such as Congregation bazaars and rummage sales; it generally appears on the same page as the birth and death announcements, not in the classified ads.

Classified ads in *Now*, *Eye Weekly* and *Xtra* can also be reasonable.

These ads require only a few days notice. Place the ad for the weekend before or the day before your event.

A current list of newspaper advertising contacts and rates is included in the Appendix.

5. MEDIA RELEASES

Uses of Media Releases

Media releases are an effective way to bring congregational events, policies or programs to the attention of the media and to enlist their assistance in publicizing our news outside our walls.

The topic needs to be newsworthy, not just to us, but *in the eyes of the media*. It must be significant or unusual, timely, and of interest to the readers, listeners, or viewers of the media concerned. Media releases can be sent to a general editor, a producer, or to a columnist who you know or who may be interested in your subject matter.

For upcoming events, the primary goal is to get media coverage *before* the event so that it generates interest and attendance. A media release must be timely. Releases to publicize events in advance must be issued with the media deadlines in mind (e.g. neighbourhood newspapers only publish once a month).

If you have had a successful event that is unusual, you could also do a media release to report your results. If your event were annual, it would raise your profile for next year.

It is also legitimate and desirable to do a release after the fact to report a significant happening (e.g. the approval of the policy on same-sex marriage by the Annual Meeting). Media releases about news should be issued within 24 hours if possible.

Any publicity in the media reflects on the image of the Congregation. The Publicity Committee has developed a procedure to ensure a quality product with the necessary approvals. This procedure is set-out below.

Content of Media Releases

There are prescribed techniques for writing media releases. You may choose to consult the Publicity Committee for assistance.

The opening paragraph should include “the 5 W’s: What, Who, Where, When and Why”. Then each subsequent paragraph is a little less “essential” - the recipient may stop reading at any moment, the editor may cut at any point.

Top 10 tips for writing effective news releases:¹

1. Make it newsworthy;
2. Keep it short and punchy;
3. Make it timely;
4. Make it accurate;
5. Make it relevant;
6. Re-sell story using catchy headlines;
7. Make it easy to read and understand;
8. Avoid advertising puffery;
9. Include a contact person;
10. Target your efforts.

The media release should be issued on the Congregation's letterhead and should be no more than two pages long. It should include a headline, a release date, and a quotation from a person in the congregation who is knowledgeable about the topic. Always give the names and numbers of one or two people who can be contacted for further information, and when they are available.

The media release should end with the Congregation's standard summary paragraph...

Summary Paragraph to be used at the end of all Media Releases

The First Unitarian Congregation of Toronto was established in 1845. It is a liberal religious community led by co-ministers Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed and Rev. Donna Morrison-Reed. Its 450 members are thinking people who respect the free exercise of private judgment in all matters of belief, and who support social action in our city and beyond. *[If appropriate, substitute one or more of the Principles here.]*

First Unitarian offers Sunday services, religious education for children, and programs throughout the week to nurture a sense of belonging, spiritual growth, and opportunities to serve the larger community.

For more information, please call 416-924-9654, or visit our website at www.firstunitariantoronto.org.

¹ "Writing effective news releases" by Tom Haibeck APR.

A sample media release is included in the Appendix.

Procedure for Issuing Media Releases

1. An individual or group in the congregation (the sponsor) identifies the need for a media release.
2. The sponsor seeks and receives approval to proceed with a media release *in advance* from the Convenor concerned (for events), from a Minister (ministry issues) or from the Board President or Vice-President (policy issues) as appropriate. This should be done by telephone or e-mail.
3. The sponsor designates a writer who is familiar with the story to draft the media release. On request, the Publicity Committee can recommend a writer. The writer prepares a draft media release, using the Publicity Guide guidelines.
4. The sponsor identifies one or two contact people who can answer questions from the media on the topic. They must be knowledgeable, articulate and available. The contact people must be briefed in advance on the details of the event or story and on how to talk to the media, if necessary. They also need to know when the release goes out so they can expect media calls. The Publicity Committee can refer contacts to people in the congregation with media experience for briefing.
5. The sponsor issuing the release identifies the media sources to be contacted. The Publicity Committee can offer advice. There is a list of local media contacts (newspapers, radio, and television) in the Publicity Guide. Additional sources can be added if pertinent to the event or story.
6. The writer e-mails the draft media release and the list of target media to the contact people named in the story and to the Chair of the Publicity Committee (or his designate). They review the draft release and suggest revisions.
7. The writer makes the suggested revisions.
8. The writer e-mails the revised media release to the President of the Congregation, the Chief Convenor, the Convenor of Marketing and Member Services, and the Ministers. Approval must be received from at least two of these sources in advance of release.

The writer also e-mails the revised version to the contact people and the Chair of the Publicity Committee.

9. The sponsor sends the media release by fax or by e-mail to the media. This can be done from the church office (optional). Each release should be addressed to an individual, if possible, with a First Unitarian cover page.
10. The sponsor for the release telephones each media contact (within 24 hours if possible) to inquire if it was received, if it is of interest, and whether we can provide any further assistance to help get the story out.
11. The sponsor also e-mails the media release to our First web weaver and to the CUC to be posted on their respective websites.
12. The sponsor clips any media generated by the news release and sends it to the Chair of the Publicity Committee. The Publicity Chair forwards it to the Archivist.
13. If events have been publicized through a media release (or any other media contact), event organizers should try to gauge the impact of this method on attendance by asking outsiders how they heard about it. Report this information to the Chair of the Publicity Committee.

This procedure was approved by the Publicity Committee and the Convenors, September 2001.

Distributing Media Releases

A list of media contacts, and a package of e-mail addresses and completed fax cover sheets is included in the Appendix. This package is updated periodically by the Publicity Committee.

6. OTHER MEDIA TECHNIQUES

a. Celebrity Endorsements

If you have access to a person in the public eye that would be willing to promote your event, this can be very effective. You could do a news release around this or provide photo opportunities for the media. Again, the objective is to get *advance* publicity for your event.

b. T-shirts, Caps & other Promotional Items

Wearing or giving away (or, better still, selling!) distinctive items such as T-shirts, caps and other promotional items prior to and during the event can enhance the publicity impact of the event. Unfortunately, these items do not come cheaply, and often estimating the quantity to order can be difficult.

Names of suppliers that the Congregation has used successfully in the past are included in the list of Congregational Contacts and Suppliers.