

ENGAGING LOCAL MEDIA TO COVER NATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTHS AWARENESS DAY

MBC produces a media package for affiliates and multiple-birth groups to use during National Multiple Births Awareness Day. **This is only half of what is needed to interest the media in your community.** To assist you in reaching your local journalists, please consider the following.

Regardless of past coverage, or lack of coverage, it is important to stay positive. What you may not realize is the media needs your leadership. They receive dozens of requests every day, so to get attention you need to make your request compelling and easy to cover.

- Produce a **LOCAL** media release or advisory – include a local focus or **NEWS** story.
- Make direct connections with the journalists that cover your area (television/print/radio).



Here are a few tips to attract the media to your function:

1. Write a proper media release.

- It is important to include all relevant information in a very concise way. The media release should be no more than a page (two tops). If you have more information on your website – add the link to your press release. Journalists do not have time to read through a lot of information so make it easy to read.
- When writing a press release include “who, what, when, where, why and how”.
- It is also very (VERY) important to include your contact information – and a cell phone number where you can be reached before and during the event. The media usually does not know what stories they will cover until the day of the event – choosing stories with the most local interest. If they cannot reach you before the event, they may not attend. Reporters are on a tight deadline and simply do not have the time to track people down. When they arrive at your event be sure to greet them and provide them with photo ops, sound bytes, or video opportunities.

2. Know what the media is looking for – a “NEWS HOOK”.

- Whenever possible give the media a local news angle. For example: The National Multiple Births Awareness Day 2015 theme ***Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) – Early diagnosis can save lives.*** If you have a local family with TTTS experience, ask them to be available to do media interviews. The local news angle puts a face to the story which is what the media needs. Include quotes from the family in your press release and mention they are available to interview. The easier you make it for the journalist, the better your coverage will be.
- Another example: If there is something that may be unique or interesting to the public, bring it to the media’s attention. If you are going to the zoo and 7 triplet families will be there, say that in the media release.

3. Whenever possible provide the media with pictures or video.

- The reality is news outlets do not have the resources needed to cover every local event. With newspapers, if you can provide them with pictures so they do not have to attend, they can still cover the story. Radio can for the most part be done over the telephone. Television stations need to attend your event, however if you have some pictures or relevant video they can use they will be more inclined to cover the story because half their job is already done.
- Then and now pictures. If your TTTS family has a picture of their babies in the NICU showing their size difference at birth and a current picture showing their growth, include them in the media release. *Note: make sure the family has approved the images being used by the media.* If possible make a picture gallery on your website and provide the media with the link to access the pictures/video.
- You can also take pictures at the event and immediately send them to the media outlet (not the next day, as the media is on a deadline) with an updated media release.

4. Link your local coverage to national resource pieces.

- MBC has been able to obtain an interview with Dr. Ryan from Mount Sinai Hospital and a parent who experienced Twin to Twin Transfusion (TTTS). They have been put on our YouTube channel which is linked from our NMBAD page on our website. You can also include this link in your media release or other publicity that you do. That way the local media who cannot get to Toronto can still use an interview from our expert or a parent for their story.

5. Send out your media release twice.

- Send out your media release about 2 weeks ahead of your event. This allows the media (if they want) to do an advance story and tell the public about your event. It also encourages them to save the date. Ask your local TTTS family to be available for these stories. Be sure to provide the family with communication pieces for National Multiple Birth Awareness Day.
- The day before the event, send out the press release again – that way it is fresh and on everyone's minds.

The reality is the general public is not likely going to attend Multiple Birth events, so the best way to bring it to their attention is through the media. It is also a great tool to connect with other parents of multiples who may not know about your Chapter.

Some external links that may help:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zach-cutler/press-release-tips_b_2120630.html

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Press-Release>

For further assistance or help with your media work contact:

MBC's Media Coordinator at media@multiplebirthscanada.org

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