



Running a Successful, Media-Friendly 4-H NYSD Event

As you think through setting a date and finalizing plans for your local 4-H NYSD event, here are some helpful tips to maximize its impact and attract media and supporter attention:

1. Think Visual

One of the key things local broadcast media look for is a compelling visual that would be appealing to their viewers. Here are the types of things that can help make your event more visually engaging for media.

- **A crowd... there's strength in numbers:** The more people engaged in your event, the more visual and appealing it will be to the media.
- **Action and interaction:** Media want to see people doing, not simply talking or being. Your job is to highlight the action to the media.
- **A vivid setting:** Try to create a vivid physical experience that supports the theme of technology and, if possible, the children doing the *Game Changers* experience.
- **Don't forget the branding:** Feature 4-H branding wherever you can – flyers, posters, pop-up banners, etc.

2. Location. Location. Location.

Many appealing events are overlooked because the location is not easily accessible to media. Here are some tips to help you choose the right location.

- **Convenience is key:** It's important to stage your event in a central location that is convenient and can make it easy for reporters to get "in and out" with the story they need.
- **Accessibility is awesome:** Live broadcast shots need to be connected to a nearby van and antenna, and photographers often need to get different lenses from their car. Keep this in mind when choosing your location.

3. Engage the Right Messengers

It's not only the "what" of the event that attracts the media; very often it is also the "who" of the event. Here are some tips for engaging the right messengers to elevate your event to a high priority for media appeal.

- **Youth spokespeople:** Be sure to find ways to put your youth leaders and participants front and center. 4-H NYSD is positioned as a youth-led event, so engaging young people to have speaking roles is key.
- **Experts or leaders:** Do you have a local technology expert or leader who can talk about the importance of 4-H NYSD or explain the technology behind the experiment? If so, invite them to be part of your event to talk about the real-life importance of STEM. You can also offer them to the media to provide context.
- **Local officials or celebrities:** Nothing attracts media like a big name to get the attention of their audience. Invite someone prominent to be a part of your event and ask permission to use their name in local media outreach. Local officials are a great option, since many of them would be eager for a photo/press op with 4-H youth. Many local officials may also have a press office that can help promote the event.

4. Consider Timing

There are certain times of day when media outlets have more reporters, photographers and videographers available to cover events. Here are some times worth considering:

- **Outside news broadcast times:** TV stations have more staff available when they are not on the air, so not during the morning, noon or evening newscasts.
- **During reasonable reporter work hours:** Reporters have a start time and end time to their workdays, just like most of us. You'll have a better chance of getting coverage if you schedule your event during the middle of the day.
- **Weekday vs. weekend:** While the weekends are not off limits, keep in mind that staff is leaner on the weekends. If you schedule an event on a Saturday, make sure you have all the other boxes checked.

5. Invite Media Participation

One other way to boost your media coverage is to invite reporters or anchors to participate in your event. Here's how you can do that:

- **Host or emcee:** Asking reporters or anchors to host or emcee an event greatly increases the chance it will be mentioned on-air. Keep in mind that competing stations will be less likely to cover an event hosted by a rival.
- **Media VIP:** If you are inviting the media to participate and not just report, be sure to roll out the "red carpet" by providing a youth guide to walk with the journalists through the event as they partake in the activity.

Engaging Your Community

To help draw strong attendance and generate positive media coverage, it is important to engage as much of your community as possible:

- Identify the groups and individuals in your community who would be interested in participating in 4-H NYSD, like STEM specialists and afterschool 4-H clubs.
- Invite other groups of youth to join you – afterschool programs, home schoolers etc. – they may be so impressed that they join 4-H!
- Invite individuals who you think could benefit from seeing 4-H in action – prospective volunteers or donors.

Promoting 4-H NYSD

Promotion of your 4-H NYSD event will be important in terms of driving participation, attendance and media coverage.

To do this successfully, please follow these guidelines and use the resources provided for you in this toolkit, which are also available for download at www.4-H.org/NYSD.

- Promote 4-H NYSD on your social media properties once a week (sample messaging provided).
- Send out a media advisory and local press release (templates provided).
- Run the provided 4-H NYSD web banner on your web site to generate awareness and encourage youth and volunteers to join you for the day.
- Promote 4-H NYSD in your newsletter using the provided web banner or print ads.
- Print and hang the provided posters in your community, particularly in schools and community centers.
- Ask your local paper for donated space to run the provided print ads.
- Print and distribute the provided bookmarks to your 4-H clubs as well as local schools and other youth programs.
- Invite a local technology expert to engage with your youth and the crowd to share their experiences and connect STEM to the world around us.
- Leverage your 4-H and local educators to get the word out and share their experiences in STEM.
- Invite local corporate partners to speak and engage their employees for increased visibility.