First Green Media Step by Step

Here are a few options to gain media coverage of your First Green event:

1. Ask for assistance from GCSAA media relations manager. Call 800-472-7878 to get connected and receive assistance.
2. If you work at a golf course that has a communications/marketing director or you are at a municipal course and your city has a communications/marketing director, utilize their expertise and contacts with the local media to gain coverage of your event.
3. School district communications directors know media and how to reach out to them. Send the teacher you are working with the sample press release and ask them to have their district communications director help publicize the event.
4. Handle the media relations portion yourself. One month in advance of the First Green event, you will need to contact your local media via e-mail or a phone call. You can search contact information by visiting each outlet's website and finding a Contact Us, Staff Directory or Meet the Team link. Focus on finding a couple of people who might be good contacts at each outlet to reach out to such as:

    - Newspapers: Editor, Assignment Editor, Education Writer, Sports Editor
    - Television: News Director, Sports Director, Education Reporter, News Tip e-mail address
    - Radio: News Director

Another way to find media is via twitter. Tweet at them about your event and for them to reach out to you to get information about this media opportunity. If you haven't heard back from any media, reach out with the press release again two weeks before your event. Or you can make a phone call to media you think would come to the event.

What Information to Send to Media

Press Release
Send a press release one month before the event and send again two weeks before the event if you have not received a response from the media.

E-mail Subject Line: <Golf Course> Hosting Hands-On Learning Experience For Students

A First Green press release template is available at the end of this document and on the First Green website under superintendent resources and you will just need to fill in the blanks about your event or tailor it to your liking. You may also create your own information.

When you reach out to the media make sure you include your contact information and be responsive to their return calls or e-mails.

Talking Points
If you are having conversations with media prior to the event, you will need to explain why covering the First Green event is a good thing for them and their audience.

The event does a number of things including:

- Provide hands-on learning for students.
- Expose kids to golf courses, which shows them recreation opportunities, importance of green space, potential career path, how superintendents are stewards of the land.
- Shows the industry giving back to the community.
- Great visuals for television and newspaper photographers.

What to Expect

Be prepared to be interviewed by a reporter and to be able to highlight the key messages of the program and how this benefits the students (hands-on learning which supplements their in-class work, some kids may have never been on a golf course and are being introduced to both the game of golf and the potential career of turf management), the golf industry and the benefits of golf courses (importance of green space, wildlife habitat, pollution control, physical activity, stewards of the land, recreational opportunities, etc…).

One thing to do when you are discussing the event with the teachers before they come out to the course is to tell the teachers there will be television or newspapers there and make sure parents have consented for the children to be shown or interviewed.

Sample Press Release below:

<date of press release>

Contacts:
<superintendent name>
<superintendent phone number>
<superintendent e-mail>

Angela Hartmann
Director, Communications
Phone: 800-472-7878, ext. 3647 or 785-393-1361 (cell)
ahartmann@gcsaa.org

<Golf Course> to Host First Green Event, <Date>

<city, state> – <golf course> will host an innovative environmental education outreach program that uses golf courses as environmental learning labs, when golf course superintendent <name> welcomes <number> <grade of students> from <school> for a First Green event, <date>.

First Green focuses on STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) principles where students get hands-on learning opportunities in a real-life setting. First Green curriculum benefits students in middle school to 12th grade by helping them apply their classroom knowledge in an outdoor setting.

Students will participate in stations where they <test water quality, collect soil samples, identify plants, learn about wildlife, water conservation, calculate green speed with a stimpmeter, etc., and then hit or putt golf balls>.

Students are scheduled to arrive at <golf course> at <time>. The schedule includes <xxxxxx>

Media are encouraged to attend the event, but should contact <superintendent> at <e-mail and/or phone> prior to the day of the field trip.

To learn more about First Green visit www.TheFirstGreen.org

First Green is a program of the Environmental Institute of Golf <EIFG>, the philanthropic organization of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America <GCSAA>, which is the top professional association for the men and women who manage golf courses in the United States and worldwide. The association provides education, information and representation to more than 18,000 members in more than 78 countries. Learn more at www.GCSAA.org.