



SIERRA STUDENT COALITION EARTH DAY -- APRIL 22, 2008

HOW TO USE THE EARTH DAY MEDIA TOOLKIT

Hello campus organizers!

This is a short how-to guide for using all of the media toolkit items from the Sierra Student Coalition. These are meant to serve as a guideline for your media outreach efforts. Remember to include what your campus is doing to participate in Earth Day, as activities vary from campus to campus.

HOW TO FIND MEDIA OUTLET CONTACT INFO

-To get maximum coverage, your goal is to contact lots of media outlets, both on campus and locally, including print, radio, and TV. On campus, you should try to contact the school newspaper, the campus radio station, and your school's public relations or communications office. Locally, you can contact the community paper, local radio stations, and local television stations. To get their contact info, visit their websites! Try to send press materials to the campus news editor (at a school newspaper) or the environment or education desk at other papers. If you can't get that contact info, send it to the Editor or the general email address.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR (LTE)

-Have a campus newspaper (or a couple of them?) Find out how to submit LTEs. Newspaper websites usually have that information. Check a print version if you can't find it online. The purpose of the LTE is to make a point about Earth Day and get it published. If you live in a college town, like Amherst, MA or Berkeley, CA, submit your LTE to the local papers as well. The information will be on the website or in the print edition.

-FOLLOW UP! Don't stop at emailing your LTE. Send a follow up email...or, even better, call them to make sure that the publication in fact received your LTE. Ask them if they intend to publish it. Ask if they need any other information.

PITCHING

-You have at your disposal both phone and email pitch scripts for before and after Earth Day. The idea here is to "pitch" a story idea to a media person, making them interested enough in Focus the Nation to feature the events on your campus.

Before Earth Day:

-Call your campus newspaper and/or your local paper. If you go to a small school and know someone on the newspaper staff, try to speak to them in person. If you're on the phone, it's okay to read directly from the script. Don't feel bad if they aren't interested, but make the information available to them politely. Change all of the blanks so that it applies to your school.

- Don't call the editor-in-chief of the local paper...try the education editor or environmental reporter.
- After your phone call, send them the email pitch. This will remind them of the details of your conversation and will include your contact information.
- If a reporter emails/calls you with a question...answer it ASAP because they're probably on a deadline.

After Earth Day:

- Call the newspapers (campus and local) again. If they didn't cover it before, ask them if they're interested in hearing what students have to say about their experiences. Send them another email (use the email pitch!)

TALKING POINTS

[Note: this is not included, but we recommend you make your own!]

- This is a short bulleted list of that includes all the topics someone should include when talking to a reporter about Earth Day.
- Make sure that any student who is interviewed (or you perhaps) look over the talking points.
- Talking points help people stay on message during interviews. It's easy to forget your main goal when talking to the media.
- Feel free to add relevant local, campus-oriented information (like which offices at the school gave you funding, if it was part of a research institute, etc).

PRESS RELEASE

- This is a lengthier version of the talking points and the pitch scripts. Since we're not sure what you're doing, we kept the press release pretty vague, but fill in as many details as you can. Remember, this is a template, so you can adjust it to make it more relevant to the event/events that you are putting on. Offer to send it to reporters. This is the official document that explains what Earth Day is all about.

BLOGS

- If there's a blog that lots of people on campus read, feel free to email the blogger and ask them to talk about Earth Day. Since blogs are less formal, you don't need to send them a press release. The email pitch would be just fine.

If you have questions about using SSC Earth Day press materials, please contact Emily Meinhardt, emeinhardt@gmail.com.

TEMPLATE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

Contact: [CAMPUS EVENT ORGANIZER, phone number, email address]

[SCHOOL] Students Step it Up for Earth Day

Several Events to Promote Energy Efficiency Projects on Campus

[SCHOOL]'s chapter of the Sierra Student coalition, along with [OTHER ORGANIZING GROUPS] have come together to plan a series of events for Earth Day 2008, including [A FAIR TRADE COFFEE STAND IN THE STUDENT UNION, A "SAVE THE ALES" PARTY, AND A MIDNIGHT BREAKFAST/ "CLIMATE VIGIL"]. The students hope to use these events to gain support for their campaign to promote energy efficiency projects and behavior on campus. "Earth Day now has evolved into a much more complex celebration than simply planting trees" [SAYS LOCAL CHAPTER REP, SOPHOMORE AT COLLEGE]. "Given the daunting global environmental issues our generation is facing, we want to get the attention of a broad range of students, and get them aware of and involved in the push for a clean energy future."

[DATES, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS OF EVENTS. WHERE REPORTERS CAN FIND MORE INFO]

The event is organized by [COLLEGE]'s chapter of the Sierra Student Coalition, a broad network of high school and college students, with over 250 affiliated groups based at schools around the country. Like the Sierra Club, the SSC is run by volunteers who work on national and local campaigns that promote smart energy solutions and protect the environment.

On [COLLEGE]'s campus, the Sierra Student Coalition has also been working to [OTHER PROJECTS – such as "implement a recycling program in all residence halls and academic buildings, begin a student led garden to raise awareness for the benefits of local and organic food and is working within the administration to incorporate more energy efficient building practices."]

[ANOTHER QUOTE BY STUDENT OR ADMINISTRATION REGARDING EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS, THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT ON CAMPUS].

Earth Day was initiated in the 1970s as grassroots demonstrations on environmental issues, and is celebrated every year on April 22.

END

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

This April 22, 2008 marks the 38th celebration of Earth Day. This year, it is clear that Earth Day remains true to its original founding and spirit. Earth Day began as a student movement to bring issues of environmental devastation to the forefront of public opinion. Today, the Sierra Student Coalition and students at [YOUR COLLEGE] are using this Earth day to continue the youth-driven support for clean energy policies and global warming solutions. With our Earth Day event [YOUR EVENT HERE], we will be challenging our school's administration, educating other students, and making the case to our local officials that we need bold solutions to global warming now. As a student at [YOUR COLLEGE], I'm proud to say that I'm helping to take Earth Day back to its roots!

EARTH DAY PITCH SCRIPTS (Pre/Post, Phone and Email)

For campus organizers to pitch campus newspapers, local papers, radio stations, and TV stations

Fill in your college's name, etc. Remember to modify the script for the events happening at YOUR SCHOOL because every school has different events taking place.

Pre Earth Day Phone Pitch Script

- "Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME], and I'm with the Sierra Student Coalition at [YOUR COLLEGE]. Do you have a few moments to speak with me?"

- "Sure, what's on your mind?" "What are you calling about?"

- "I wanted to let you know about the events happening at my college for Earth Day. Does that sound like something you might be interested in covering?"

- "Yeah...definitely...can you tell me more?"

OR

- "No thanks, I'm not interested."

If yes...

- "On Earth Day, which is Tuesday, April 22, we're holding this really exciting event/project on our campus to push for our platform of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, no coal, and new investments in green collar jobs. [CUSTOMIZE TO FIT YOUR EVENT].

Students at [YOUR COLLEGE] have worked really hard to coordinate these campus

events, working with the administration, faculty members, and even local politicians. Global warming is clearly an issue that students on our campus care about...our participation in Earth Day events will raise awareness about this issue and help us to start talking about and finding real solutions to global warming.

I think this year's Earth Day is especially true to the origins of Earth Day-- the day was founded in the 70s as a student movement and continues to be one today."

If no...

-"Would it be OK to send you an email with information about the event? The attached press release has all the relevant details in case you change your mind. We will have even more to talk about after Earth Day is over! Thanks for your time." (Send them the email below and give them your contact information if they'll take it!!!!)

Pre Earth Day Email Pitch

Hi [EDITOR OF STUDENT NEWSPAPER, EDUCATION REPORTER, ETC],

My name is [YOUR NAME] and I'm with the Sierra Student Coalition at [YOUR COLLEGE]. I wanted to let you know that next week, [YOUR COLLEGE] is participating in Earth Day with events that address our platform of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, no coal, and new investments in green collar jobs. [CUSTOMIZE TO FIT YOUR EVENT].

Students at [YOUR COLLEGE] have worked really hard to coordinate these campus events, working with the administration, faculty members, and even local politicians. Global warming is clearly an issue that students on our campus care about; our Earth Day events will raise awareness about this issue and help us to start talking about and finding real solutions to global warming.

I think this year's Earth Day is especially true to the origins of Earth Day-- the day was founded in the 70s as a student movement and continues to be one today.

If you would like more information about our Earth Day events, please do not hesitate to contact me. Attached, you will find a press release for the event.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME AND DETAILED CONTACT INFORMATION]

Post Earth Day Phone Pitch Script

-"Hi, my name is [YOUR NAME], and I'm with the Sierra Student Coalition at [YOUR COLLEGE]. Do you have a few moments to speak with me?"

-"Sure, what's on your mind?" "What are you calling about?"

- "I wanted to let you know about an events that happened last week on my campus for Earth Day. Does that sound like something you might be interested in covering?"

- "Yeah...definitely...can you tell me more?"

OR

- "No thanks, I'm not interested."

If yes...

- "On Earth Day, which was Tuesday, April 22, we held this really exciting event/project on our campus to push for our platform of an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, no coal, and new investments in green collar jobs. [CUSTOMIZE TO FIT YOUR EVENT].

Students at [YOUR COLLEGE] worked really hard to coordinate these campus events, working with the administration, faculty members, and even local politicians. Global warming is clearly an issue that students on our campus care about...our Earth Day events raised awareness about this issue and helped us to start talking about and finding real solutions to global warming.

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