



Tips for Attracting Local Media Attention

Thank you for initiating FTD awareness in your community by offering to share your journey with the media! We've compiled suggestions for attracting media attention below:

1. Identify Local Media

Start your media plan by compiling a list of local and regional media -- newspapers, TV stations, magazines, community monthlies/weeklies -- paying particular attention to reporters with a health focus. If there are local health bloggers, support groups or students looking for civic projects, consider them as well. To find city and state local media contacts, consult the U.S. Newspapers List (www.usnpl.com) to search by state. Collect:

- Name of news/assignment editor, health reporter, general assignment reporter, club organizer
- Email address for contact or general news account (ex: news@watv.com)
- Phone number for newsroom or reporter
- Requirements for writing a Letter to the Editor or an Op/Ed piece for your local newspaper (word count, publication dates, etc.)
- Look for morning show segments or special publications which might cover your event in advance. If these exist, contact casually by phone.

2. Pitch Your Story

After identifying media outlets, create a pitch. Keep in mind the most important aspect of your pitch is to emphasize how the story is relevant to a news outlet and why they should cover it (i.e. local community member affected). You can email, but you can also fax or send by postal mail. Send to as many journalists as you like. It's okay to send it to more than one reporter at the same outlet.

Your pitch should include the following:

- Reasons that your story is relevant to a particular news outlet; lead with a powerful statement telling reporters why they should care about FTD and your story. Ex: "Imagine you're a 50-year-old who can no longer recognize your own children."
- The main points of your story. These should be brief and to the point -- don't give long and detailed information; include powerful statements where possible. Think of it as storytelling.
- Local news media want stories with local relevance. These can tell the struggles of a local person living with FTD or an event in memory of someone who lost their life to FTD and how many people it will affect in the future.
- Previous news coverage on FTD (links!)
- Include AFTD contact information:
www.theaftd.org
Matt Ozga, AFTD Communications Manager
mozga@theaftd.org/267-758-8656
- Your contact information; you need to be prepared to be interviewed in case they respond quickly.

3. Prepare for the Interview

You should prepare ahead of time for the interview with the bullets below and prepare others to be interviewed as well. Reporters frequently require more than one source. Someone must be willing to speak on record. Reporters are looking for an everyday “Joe” to share their story.

- Emphasize the impact of FTD on your life, your loved one with FTD, your family, friends, etc.
- Consider your answer to this question: why this is important? Reporters can convey the concrete, nuts-and-bolts facts of this story to their audiences; they need you to share the emotional impact of why it’s important. Share feeling words.
- Be sure to have a casual, easy way to explain FTD as a disease (refer to AFTD Volunteer Handbook for elevator speech).
- News interviews are supposed to feel like conversations. You’re not giving the State of the Union address. Remember, you know this material, talk as if you are sharing your thoughts with your best friend.
- Consider a call to action in your interview: what can the public do to help out? Is there an upcoming event or a way they can get involved? Journalists are usually looking for a way to advance their stories beyond today.
- Have photos available to share.
- Have the contact information of AFTD’s Communications Manager ready. AFTD is available to provide additional information on FTD and AFTD.

4. The Interview

- Be friendly, casual and accommodating.
- Don’t worry about running the interview; reporters will ask you questions.
- Look at the reporter during an interview, not directly at the camera.
- The reporter may ask a lot of questions that do not make it into the story. They are gathering background information. They may ask you to repeat an answer; this is just so they can capture the best version of your answer.
- Don’t be surprised if reporters cannot tell you when the piece will publish or air -- it might get bumped to another show/day if breaking news occurs. Always be appreciative of their time.
- Be sure to promote any upcoming events to the attending reporter. If you can make a personal connection and obtain a business card, that will help ease future coverage.
- Bring or send along photographs and possibly a couple video interviews. Sometimes print and blog media will accept content submissions.

5. Follow Up

If you feel the interview was covered concisely, be sure to send a thank you email or hand-written note to the reporter or editor or photographer, thanking them for their excellent coverage.

- In a thank you note, remind them of another opportunity to cover your cause.
- If there was an error in their report, politely thank them for coming to the event, but inform them of the error and ask if they can correct it in the online version. Only for very egregious errors would there ever be a formal correction.
- Share the online story on your social media and encourage your friends to do so, also. Again, promote an upcoming event or call to action.
- Never burn a bridge if media doesn’t follow through. They might consider it next time.
- Be sure to notify your Volunteer Coordinator and AFTD’s Communications Manager and share the piece with them.