

Changing a Neighborhood's Image

ToolTip #16
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Location! Location! Location! Santa Cruz has it -- but some people don't know it. And we do want others to know **how good it can be here!** So how can that happen if we don't tell them? Each Neighborhood Association has an opportunity to take a proactive stance in helping to improve the image of Santa Cruz. **HOW?**--- Well, here are some tips.

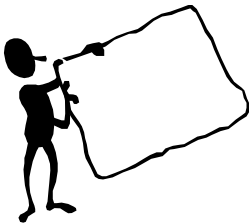
1. **Treat Santa Cruz like a family.** In our Neighborhood Association meetings (i.e. family) we might talk negatively about some aspect of our community in our attempt to continually improve our neighborhood. But just like the expression says, "families don't show their dirty laundry in public". There is enough positive about Santa Cruz that we can share with friends, relatives, or even strangers on the street. Take pride in your community when talking with others. And leave the complaints at home.



2. **Become a believer in Santa Cruz yourself.** If you are not already there, this is your first step. Remember that it is hard to tell someone how wonderful Santa Cruz is unless you truly, deep down, believe it yourself. Make a decision to look around **each day**, and find **one new "great thing"** about your community. (If you want, keep a running list or diary.) Once you start looking for good things then pretty soon, that will be what you will see. The "good" is there. We just need to open our eyes to appreciate it and then share it with others.



3. **Select a spokesperson from your Association.** We all want to put our best foot forward, so why not our best "association foot" forward. In other words, hand pick a spokesperson that will deal with the media. This person should be politically sensitive with media savvy (we may help with some training in that regard) plus be articulate and present him or herself well.



4. **Look for opportunities to promote your community!** Be proactive in your quest to improve Santa Cruz's image. If you know of a good, positive newsworthy or public interest story then don't be shy about letting the media know. Neighborhood Associations can do press releases and individuals can call the newspapers. (On the reverse side we've provided information on how to get the word out.)



WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

CONTACTING THE MEDIA

- First, get to know your media contacts. For one thing, you need to know exactly where to send information that you want printed, broadcast, or displayed. For Neighborhood Associations, the first contact would typically be the community calendar staff person.
- Keep an up-to-date media contact file in your Association "ToolBook", listing media contacts for various subjects along with each organization's name, address, fax, and e-mail address. Since responsibility for media within a Neighborhood Association may shift over time, keep useful notes about your contact's interests as well as any other tips you might want to pass on.

TYPES OF MEDIA CONTACT

- **Media advisories:** Notices of upcoming events that highlight why media should be interested.
- **Press release:** Tells the "who, what when, where, how, and why" of an event or activity that has taken place or will take place. When possible, interesting quotes or illustrations are helpful.
- **Pitch letters:** Brief letters to media contacts that propose ideas for a story, especially one that is more in depth than a regular news item.

DEVELOP ALLIES

- In addition to relaying information about your program, the media may actively participate in or become strong advocates for an event or program. Developing allies in the media is a long-term process.
- Keep your allies informed. Write to media contacts whenever an important event is going to occur or you think that something has been done that is newsworthy (remember - only in a positive way.)
- Consider asking your contact to do a presentation at one of your meetings. Think about including media representatives on guest lists for special events
- Remember, when dealing with the media, persistence pays off!

CHALLENGES

- **Misrepresentation:** It happens all of the time! Before talking to the media, be prepared and be clear. Remember you can ask them to keep something "off the record" but don't absolutely count on it.
- **Getting positive messages reported:** Reporters will look for angles. Make sure you give them only positive information - even if it means your item won't be reported.
- **Changing contacts:** Personnel in the media change, as does association membership. Because of this new relationships must continually be established.