

## Pitching Feature Stories:

The key to pitching human-interest stories is finding a local angle, interest, or tie-in with national news or events.

Monitor or call your local newspapers to find reporters and columnists, in particular individuals who are sympathetic or have written about nonprofit issues in the past, who might be interested in writing a feature story about your organization, an employee, volunteer, client, etc.

These are examples of feature story ideas generated from *The Face of Nonprofits* campaign:

### **Target: New Haven Register**

**Feature Story:** Local New Haven resident and organization take spotlight in statewide, “Face of Nonprofits,” educational awareness campaign sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CAN).

#### **Margarita Padilla & Jasmine**

#### **Crossroads, Inc., New Haven**

*“Take a good look at my baby. Take a good look at me and see the happy faces. My baby lost one parent. Thanks to Crossroads, she hasn’t lost the other one.”*

-Margarita Padilla with Jasmine, 4 months, New Haven

Margaret is a single mother, recovering substance abuser and diagnosed bipolar. Her husband died two weeks after Jasmine’s birth. Crossroads, a nonprofit organization, gave her the chance to correct past mistakes. She has been clean for six months, has benefited from counseling, therapy, parenting classes, housing assistance, has learned how to manage a budget, follow rules and respect authority. Margarita was an English teacher in Puerto Rico and now plans to get her masters degree and help others by volunteering with ESOL.

**Crossroads, Inc.** provides substance abuse and addiction treatment services, as well as case management, mental health counseling, housing assistance, and life skills assistance, such as parenting classes and budgeting.

### **Target: Glastonbury Life**

**Feature Story:** Local Glastonbury resident and organization take spotlight in statewide, “Face of Nonprofits,” educational awareness campaign sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CAN).

#### **Ross McDonald**

#### **Sunrise Northeast, Glastonbury**

*Q: Of all the things this organization did, what helped you the most?*

*A: “Without Sunrise, Ross might still be in a nursing home. They gave him independence. More space. And he’s around people his age.”*

- Brian Ellis, Teaching Instructor for Ross McDonald, Glastonbury

Ross has cerebral palsy. After high school, he had to enter a nursing home because there were no other programs available that could meet his needs. Now, with the nonprofit organization Sunrise, Ross is around people his own age. He does woodworking and chores at the day program, goes to movies, plays pool with his teaching instructor, and visits his sister at home.

**Sunrise Northeast** is a nonprofit day program for individuals with physical disabilities. State funding and other contributions allow them to plan special activities geared to each resident's needs and interests.

## ***Target: The Hartford Courant***

**Feature Story:** Hartford resident shares story that brings shelter living close to home in statewide, "Face of Nonprofits," educational awareness campaign sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CAN).

### **Aleta Alston**

#### **Center City Churches MANNA Assistance & Advocacy Program, Hartford**

*"I had to surrender my pride and go into a shelter. MANNA helped give my daughter a place to rest her head. Nobody's too far off from being in my situation."*

- Aleta Alston, Hartford

Aleta was a college graduate, a Ford Fellow at MIT, and had helped produce a documentary on slavery that aired on PBS. She was also a single mother, pregnant again. When she fled an unbearable situation with her husband and could not stay with her family, Aleta ended up in a place she had never imagined. She had to live at a homeless shelter with her daughter because she did not have \$900 for a security deposit. The people at the shelter kept Aleta's spirit strong and referred her to the nonprofit organization, **MANNA**, for help. They gave her confidence and helped her with the security deposit that got her back on her feet.

The program name "**MANNA**" comes from a biblical reference of providing nutrition to people on journeys. This nonprofit assistance & advocacy program run by Center City Churches Services helps individuals and families in need find a place to live, food to eat, and get their life back on track. Services include financial assistance, food pantry, transportation, soup kitchen, elderly nutrition program, and appliance assistance. For more than 32 years, MANNA has helped thousands of people. Each year they provide more than \$100,000 in security and utility deposits along with 3,500 free meals per month.

## **Target: Local print publication for Ansonia**

**Feature Story:** Local Ansonia residents and organization take spotlight in statewide, “Face of Nonprofits,” educational awareness campaign sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CAN).

### **Gerard Hector, Kenyon, Sierra, and Jackie**

#### **Drums Not Drugs/ Tinney Community Center, Ansonia**

*“Drums can take over the focus on drugs. Our programs teach kids to build, tune, and play the drums. The passion and unity we give these kids gets them to listen and respect each other more. Our kids are 99% successful in what they learn and in gaining the ability to lead on their own.”*

- Gerard Hector, Simsbury

*“I learned a new talent that I have. I learned I can actually get into something if I really, really like it. I learned someone can show respect and can give respect back without having to think about it.”*

-Kenyon Beene, 12, Ansonia

*“The songs have to do with spirit and how nature played a part. Without drums, I would just draw, lay around and be in trouble on weekends.”* –Sierra, 11, Ansonia

*“The drumming is here for a reason ... it’s a good distraction to bad things.”*

- Jackie, 14, Ansonia

Gerard, Kenyon, Sierra, and Jackie came together through the **Drums not Drugs** program offered by the Tinney Community Center. Gerard first worked with a similar program in Trinidad that uses drumming to get kids off the streets. Now in Connecticut, Gerard uses drums to take over the focus on drugs. Medical research has also shown that drumming can be good for relieving arthritis, so there is no age bracket to the drumming programs.

**Drums Not Drugs** is a 12-week program offered through many nonprofit organizations at day cares, children’s hospitals, and others like the Tinney Community Center.

## **Target: West Hartford News**

**Feature Story:** Local West Hartford resident and organization take spotlight in statewide “Face of Nonprofits” educational awareness campaign. **National tie-in:** Special Olympics is the subject of the U.S. Postal Service’s latest international airmail stamp. The 80-cent value went on sale Thursday, Feb. 13 in Chicago. Keith is a three-time gold medallist in the International Special Olympics.

### **Keith Lapuk**

#### **Jewish Association for Community Living (JCL), West Hartford**

*“If it wasn’t for JCL, Keith would have to go to a group home far away.”*

- Lee Lapuk, Keith’s mother, West Hartford

Keith was 18-months old when he was diagnosed with mental retardation. Now he is an adult. The nonprofit Jewish Association for Community Living greatly reduced stress on the family and expanded Keith's opportunities by offering a group home situation nearby. Keith now performs kitchen work at Double Tree Hotel. He meets new people and has made close friends. He won three gold medals at the 1989 International Special Olympics. He participates in basketball, skiing, swimming, and bowling.

**Jewish Association for Community Living** provides group home living for people with mental retardation that allows them to stay closer to home. Without this nonprofit organization, people like Keith would have to go to a group home much farther away.

## **Target: Animal Trade Journal in Connecticut (or Southington weekly publication)**

**Feature Story:** CT Save-A-Pup organization and Southington residents Barbara Carlson and dog Luther take the spotlight in statewide, "Face of Nonprofits," educational awareness campaign sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CAN).

### **Barbara Carlson & Luther**

#### **CT Save-A-Pup, Southington**

*"Dogs give unconditional love the whole time we have them. Without this program, Luther would have been destroyed."*

- Barbara Carlson with Luther, Southington

Barbara works for Connecticut Canine and volunteers at Connecticut Save-A-Pup. Luther was found on the streets of Hartford, thin and sick with a bad kennel cough. Without Connecticut Save-A-Pup, a nonprofit program, Luther would have been destroyed. Animal adoption programs are often reluctant to accept a Great Dane/Rottweiler like Luther, but every dog gets a chance with Connecticut Save-A-Pup and according to Barbara, Luther was fabulous. So fabulous, in fact, Barbara adopted him.

**Connecticut Save-A-Pup** was founded in 1991 as a stopgap to prevent dogs from being destroyed immediately after the eight days they are kept at the Connecticut Canine Association if they have not been adopted. The nonprofit program has saved 20-40 dogs each year. Adopting families can take advantage of a 7-week training course to help ease the transition of having a new dog in their home. Save-A-Pup also holds play dates on Saturdays where anyone can bring their dog in to play with other adopted pups.