

### **QUICK TIPS ON LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:**

Successful letters to the editor are often based on a strong news hook or a timely response to a current issue covered by the targeted outlet. Or, a letter noting the anniversary of some event connected with the issue is also appropriate.

Letters can come from an organization's executive director, board member, key volunteer, sponsoring business, or a long-time service user (parent or youth).

- 1) *It is best to keep the letter short and to the point.*
  - a.) *Newspapers generally don't print anything over 200 words, or about 20 lines*
  - b.) *Stay on message, and stay with one message per letter*
- 2) *Write informally and conversationally in tone, you're writing for your neighbors. Use simple language.*
- 3) *You can appeal to the reader's emotions with imagery, phrasing, and varied sentence structure.*
- 4.) *Like a letter to an official, you can personalize it with something specific that happened to you, or your program, that relates to the issue.*
- 5) *Send it on letterhead appropriate to the author.*
- 6.) *Include your contact information to verify your authorship; some outlets do not publish letters until they verify who wrote the letters sent to them.*
- 7.) *Type it up (newspaper editors will not want to decipher anyone's handwriting), proofread, and spell check your letter before sending it.*
- 8) *Check your local paper for the correct address and editor to send it to. Many papers now have on-line, internet access for sending letters-to-the editor*

### **SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

Dear Editor:

While picking up my child at her after-school program, I wondered how I would be able to work if it were not there to take care of my child while I was at my job. And if the state budget from Governor Blagojevich passes, that might be the case. It cuts over \$2.6 million, or more than 13%, from the Teen REACH line item this year.

The proposed cuts in Teen REACH could very well close our program here in our town because not enough funds are available to support all the programs that were supported last year. Young people would be out in the streets after school lets out, at risk to crime and other dangers. Working families like mine would have no where to turn for their children to go while we parents are trying to work, while we worry what is happening to them.

The Teen REACH program has proven to be effective in helping our youth make the right choices and in helping families, and actually saves the state funds by keeping youth out of trouble. This program should be expanded, not cut.

Sincerely,

John/Jane Doe *[INCLUDE YOUR NAME, PHONE NUMBER]*