

JOIN HANDS DAY

Public Relations Kit



A step-by-step guide on how to promote and gain visibility for your JOIN HANDS DAY activities.



Sponsored by
**America's Fraternal
Benefit Societies**

JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

Everything in this kit is designed to assist your fraternal benefit society or organization in promoting and gaining visibility for your JOIN HANDS DAY activities. For assistance with planning and conducting projects, please refer to the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Guide, or go to www.joinhandsday.org.

	<u>Page</u>
■ Key Messages	3
■ Contacting the Media	4
■ Letter to Elected Public Officials	5
■ Sample Proclamation	6
■ Media Contacts Worksheet	7
■ Public Service Announcements	8
■ Media Advisory	9
■ E-mail Announcement or Short News Release	10-11
■ News Releases	12-15
■ Photography Tips	16

This JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit, or portions of it, may be copied for use by any fraternal benefit societies, organizations, clubs, groups, schools, volunteer centers, government agencies, corporations, local chapters or branch offices for use in promotion of JOIN HANDS DAY.

JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

Key Messages

- JOIN HANDS DAY is a national day of volunteering sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies. This is fraternalism's day, a day when fraternal benefit societies and volunteer organizations reach out to people or communities in need, connect generations and develop relationships.
- Fraternalists "JOIN HANDS" year-round, because fraternalism is not a one-day-a-year event. However, JOIN HANDS DAY provides all fraternalists and non-fraternalists alike with the opportunity to make a difference in their communities through helpful projects that connect youths and adults.
- Fraternal benefit societies began nearly 150 years ago, and today have 10 million members in 37,000 local chapters. These not-for-profit organizations improve their communities through volunteer service and charitable outreach, while helping their members achieve financial security through insurance and retirement products.
- JOIN HANDS DAY is about volunteering with people of a different generation to serve or meet a need in your neighborhood. Leadership and involvement are divided equally between youths and adults in planning and carrying out projects.
- JOIN HANDS DAY is the only national volunteer day that specifically targets and develops relationships between young people and adults through neighborhood volunteering.
- JOIN HANDS DAY is a program of the National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA). The 123-year-old NFCA unites 73 not-for-profit fraternal benefit societies operating in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. The association represents almost 10 million people in 37,000 local chapters, making it one of America's largest member networks.
- Fraternal benefit societies provide their members with leadership, social, educational, spiritual, patriotic, scholarship, financial and volunteer-service opportunities. Combined, the NFCA's member-societies maintain more than \$343 billion of life insurance-in-force and, in 2007 alone, contributed almost \$418 million to charitable and fraternal programs. In addition, fraternalists volunteered over 95 million hours toward community-service projects during that same period.
- Local fraternal benefit society chapters and volunteer centers can help connect organizations. For a list of participating fraternal benefit societies/organizations and additional information, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at www.joinhandsday.org, e-mail actioncenter@joinhandsday.org or call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at (630) 522-6322, ext. 116.

JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

Contacting the Media

Getting publicity requires some time and effort. These suggestions may help.

1. Develop a media contact list, with phone numbers and email addresses, of newspaper reporters and editors, local and regional magazines, local TV and radio stations and wire services. Most media outlets have Web sites where you can search and obtain contact names. Use real names, not just titles.
2. Distribute a pre-event press release that explains the *who, what, when, where, why* and *how* of your activity (see sample on page 12).
3. If any of your volunteers have media connections, ask them to make personal contacts.
4. Invite a journalist to participate in your project.
5. Invite a newspaper or other media outlet to co-sponsor your event. Ask a local media personality to do a show from the work project site.
6. Make follow-up phone calls during the week prior to your event. Reinforce your announcement, answer questions, invite the media and provide best photo opportunities.
7. Develop radio public service announcements (see samples on page 8).
8. Get a local celebrity involved. Try to find someone with an affinity for your cause.
9. Submit your project to the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at **www.joinhandsday.org**. By registering your event, it can be seen by volunteers looking to participate and by members of the media looking for good stories. If you don't have Internet access, call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at 630-522-6322, ext. 116, and have a Pre-Event Form faxed or mailed to you.
10. Involve your mayor, elected public official or other local celebrity to appear at your event to rally volunteers and attract media coverage (see sample letter on page 5).
11. Emphasize human-interest stories.
12. Use non-media outlets, such as flyers for bulletins, school newsletters, supermarket grocery bags, etc.

JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

Sample Letter to Mayor or Other Elected Public Official

[Date]

Mayor/Title [First and Last Name]
City of [Name of City or Town]
[Address]
[City, State, Zip]

Dear Mayor/Title [Last Name]:

JOIN HANDS DAY is a national day of volunteer service, connecting youths and adults in implementing projects to improve their neighborhoods.

Sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies, JOIN HANDS DAY encourages people of different generations to volunteer together to build greater mutual understanding, respect and trust while improving things in their communities.

This year, JOIN HANDS DAY is on Saturday, May 2. We ask you to join us in this effort by *[explain how you would like the official to participate]*.

America's fraternal benefit societies began nearly 150 years ago as part of a volunteer movement to provide social, educational and financial help to people with various ethnic, religious and vocational backgrounds. Today, with almost 10 million members in 37,000 chapters across America, these societies help their members achieve financial security through insurance coverage and retirement products. They also have a rich tradition of volunteering, and that tradition continues through programs such as JOIN HANDS DAY.

In a few days, I will call you to determine your availability and interest in joining us as we launch our project this year. In the meantime, if you would like more information about JOIN HANDS DAY, visit the Web site at www.joinhandsday.org. To learn more about events taking place locally, please contact me.

Our group would be pleased to have you join us on this wonderful day.

Sincerely,

[Name, Title]
[Organization]
[Phone, E-mail]

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Sample Proclamation

Proclamation

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY is a national day of neighborhood volunteering that has mobilized thousands of fraternalists and volunteers across America since its inception in 2000; and

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY is sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies as a gift to their neighborhoods and their country, in which they organize and mobilize volunteers for American communities; and

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY calls upon all Americans to reach across generations and work with new friends in identifying and fixing problems right where they live; and

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY is the only day on America's Seasons of Service calendar that specifically targets developing youth and adult relationships through neighborhood volunteering; and

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY provides an opportunity for youths and adults to take part in volunteer service together, while making an investment in our future; and

WHEREAS, JOIN HANDS DAY strengthens America's communities by meeting neighborhood needs, developing youth and adult leadership, and connecting diverse groups of people;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [*Name, Title*] do hereby proclaim

**May 2, 2009, as
JOIN HANDS DAY**

in the [*City, State*] and urge my fellow citizens, young people and adults, to observe this day by connecting across generations, with friends and family, through fraternal benefit societies, clubs, groups, chapters, schools, churches and civic groups to engage in projects benefiting their communities while enhancing youth/adult relationships.

Signed this [*Date*] day of [*Month*], 2009.

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Media Contacts Worksheet

Daily and Weekly Newspapers

Name of Paper _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Managing Editor _____ E-mail _____

City Editor/Reporter _____ E-mail _____

Feature Editor _____ E-mail _____

Photo Editor _____ E-mail _____

Daily, Weekly, Sunday, Other? _____

Deadlines? _____

Radio and Television Stations

Name of Station _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Assignment Editor _____ E-mail _____

News Director _____ E-mail _____

Reporter _____ E-mail _____

Public Service Director _____ E-mail _____

News Programs

Morning _____

Afternoon _____

Evening _____

Talk Shows

Show _____

Producer _____ E-mail _____

Host/Reporter _____ E-mail _____

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Sample Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

(Retype on your organization's letterhead.)

General 30-Second PSA

ANNOUNCER #1: Saturday, May 2, is JOIN HANDS DAY, a unique national volunteer day that encourages youths and adults to connect across generations. Thousands of projects are will take place nationwide as young people and adults work side-by-side to improve their neighborhoods. Discover the joy of volunteerism with people of different ages. To learn how you can participate in projects in your neighborhood, call, the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center, at (630) 522-6322 or visit www.joinhandsday.org.

ANNOUNCER #2: This message has been brought to you as a public service by *(Society/Organization Name)* and *(Call Letters)* radio.

Community-Specific 60-Second PSA

(Retype with information specific to your community.)

ANNOUNCER #1: On JOIN HANDS DAY — Saturday, May 2 — the Sample Benefit Society Branch 22, Anytown High School Key Club and the Anytown Kiwanis Club are working together to plant shrubs and improve the landscaping at Clemens Park. And they need more volunteers. Call Mary Smith at (630) 744-6666, to help volunteer on JOIN HANDS DAY. Then show up at the park shelter at 8:30 a.m. Kick-off activities will begin at 9:00 a.m. with a presentation by Mayor Sylvia Jones. Then Senator Levi Brown will help plant the first tree, near the park entrance. JOIN HANDS DAY is a national volunteer day, when young people and adults plan and work together to do something good in their neighborhood. Again, to help, call Mary Smith at (630) 744-6666.

ANNOUNCER #2: This message has been brought to you as a public service by Sample Benefit Society Branch 222, Anytown High School Key Club, Anytown Kiwanis Club and WXRT Radio.

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Sample Local Media Advisory

Send to advise the media of event date, times and locations for their use to schedule a reporter or photographer to cover your JOIN HANDS DAY event. It will be placed in a media file for this specific date. It is not sent for publication. For background, you may include the national release on page 14.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE _____

CONTACT (1) _____ CONTACT (2) _____

PHONE _____(day) PHONE _____(day)

_____ (eve) _____ (eve)

E-MAIL _____ E-MAIL _____

Who? _____

What? _____

When? _____

Where? _____

How? _____

Why? _____

Celebrities and dignitaries participating (first and last names, titles, times expected)

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E-mail Announcement or Short News Release

This short media release, can be used as an e-mail announcement to send to other organization leaders, or to editors/reporters who request a brief description. This has a national focus, but you can localize it to promote your JOIN HANDS DAY activities.

If mailed, use your society's/organization's letterhead. On a separate page, include details regarding times in the day that would be good for media and photo coverage. Include specific times when celebrities and dignitaries may be there.

Announcement for Fraternal Benefit Societies

For Immediate Release

DATE: *(Mail date, about two weeks prior to event)*

CONTACT: *(Contact Name, Phone Number, E-Mail)*
(Second Contact, if unable to reach first contact)

Tenth Annual JOIN HANDS DAY Scheduled for May 2, 2009

Connecting youths and adults in neighborhood volunteering is the unique focus of JOIN HANDS DAY — a national day of volunteering sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies. This is fraternalism's day, a day when fraternal benefit societies and volunteer organizations reach out to people or communities in need, connect generations and develop relationships. In 2007 alone, fraternal benefit societies contributed almost \$418 million to charitable and fraternal programs and 95 million volunteer hours toward community-service projects.

Fraternalists "JOIN HANDS" year-round, because fraternalism is not a one-day-a-year event. However, JOIN HANDS DAY provides all fraternalists and non-fraternalists alike with the opportunity to make a difference in their communities through helpful projects that connect youths and adults. For more information, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at www.joinhandsday.org, send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org or call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at (630) 522-6322, ext. 116.

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E-mail Announcement or Short News Release

General Announcement

For Immediate Release

DATE: *(Mail date, about two weeks prior to event)*

CONTACT: *(Contact Name, Phone Number, E-Mail)*
(Second Contact, if unable to reach first contact)

Tenth Annual JOIN HANDS DAY Scheduled for May 2, 2009

Connecting youths and adults in neighborhood volunteering is the unique focus of JOIN HANDS DAY. This volunteer day is designed to create friendships across generations that help break down age barriers. Adult groups invite youth organizations, and youth groups invite adult organizations to become project partners for the day. Often, these groups or individuals form long-term relationships.

JOIN HANDS DAY is sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies. In 2007 alone, fraternal benefit societies contributed almost \$418 million to charitable and fraternal programs and 95 million volunteer hours toward community-service projects. For more information, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at www.joinhandsday.org, send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org or call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at (630) 522-6322, ext. 116.

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JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

News Releases

Localize these news releases to promote your JOIN HANDS DAY activities. Use your society's/organization's letterhead. On a separate page, include details regarding times in the day that would be good for media and photo coverage. Include specific times when celebrities and dignitaries will be there. Mailing the release two weeks prior to the event is timely for most media. However, to attract TV, radio and talk-show interest, send releases four to eight weeks in advance. Be sure to make follow-up calls to all recipients of your releases.

For Immediate Release

DATE: *(Date mailing release, about two weeks prior to event)*
CONTACT: *(Contact Name, Phone Number, E-mail)*
(Second Contact, if unable to reach first contact)

Neighborhood Volunteer Day Promotes Partnerships Between Youths and Adults

**Tenth Annual JOIN HANDS DAY is May 2, 2009
Local Group(s) to *(describe activity)***

CITY, STATE – Connecting youths and adults in neighborhood volunteering is the unique focus of JOIN HANDS DAY, a national day of service scheduled for Saturday, May 2. *(Your fraternal benefit society and partnering organizations)* will participate in JOIN HANDS DAY by *(details about activities and where to get information about participating)*.

Sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies, JOIN HANDS DAY encourages people to form partnerships across generations to build greater mutual understanding, respect and trust. JOIN HANDS DAY is an opportunity for youths and adults to work side-by-side as they tackle projects and make life better in *(your community)* and other communities.

"Many young people have little interaction with adults except their teachers and family members. And many adults know few young people outside their own circle of family and friends," said *(your spokesperson)*. "JOIN HANDS DAY is one way to break down the barriers between the generations, while promoting volunteerism and making a difference in the community."

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News Release / Tenth Annual JOIN HANDS DAY – Page Two

To create these partnerships, an important goal of JOIN HANDS DAY is for adult groups to invite youth organizations, and youth groups to invite adult organizations to join them. Youth and adult groups participate together through the entire process, from the planning stages to the actual work; and people of all ages take on important responsibilities for the day.

The *(name of local fraternal benefit society)* and other fraternal benefit societies throughout the country serve as community facilitators to help connect individuals and groups, identify neighborhood needs and assist with community connections to civic leaders and dignitaries.

Scheduled annually on the first Saturday in May, JOIN HANDS DAY can provide the first step in changing communication and cooperation in a neighborhood. This one-day event can introduce volunteering to different audiences of all ages and encourage participation together.

Getting involved in JOIN HANDS DAY is easy. The key is finding youth or adult partners. *(Your fraternal benefit society name and/or local organization name)* can help. Contact *(your society/organization)* by calling *(contact names and phone numbers)*. For more information about JOIN HANDS DAY, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at www.joinhandsday.org, send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org or call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at (630) 522-6322, ext. 116.

About the National Fraternal Congress of America

The 123-year-old National Fraternal Congress of America (NFCA) unites 73 not-for-profit fraternal benefit societies operating in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. The association represents 10 million fraternalists in 37,000 local chapters, making it one of America's largest member-volunteer networks. Fraternal benefit societies provide their members with leadership, social, educational, spiritual, patriotic, scholarship, financial and volunteer-service opportunities. Combined, the NFCA's member-societies maintain more than \$343 billion of life insurance-in-force and, in 2007 alone, contributed almost \$418 million to charitable and fraternal programs, and volunteered over 95 million hours for community-service projects. These statistics demonstrate the commitment that fraternalists make to those in need and exemplify the true meaning of the NFCA signature phrase: *Joining Hands to Touch Lives*. For more information, visit the NFCA's Web site at www.nfcenet.org.

JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

News Release #2

For Immediate Release

DATE: *(Date mailing release, about two weeks prior to event)*

CONTACT: *(Contact Name, Phone Number, E-mail)*
(Second Contact, if unable to reach first contact)

Thousands to Volunteer on JOIN HANDS DAY, May 2

CITY, STATE – Thousands of young people and adults across America are expected to spend Saturday, May 2 — the tenth JOIN HANDS DAY — volunteering to improve their communities and help neighbors in need. Created in 2000, JOIN HANDS DAY is a national day of service where youths and adults work as equal partners to plan and carry out local volunteer projects to benefit their neighborhoods.

On the last JOIN HANDS DAY, more than 1,000 projects were registered in 49 states. Projects have included a variety of activities, from raising funds to assist a family whose house was destroyed by fire, cleaning a bird nature center at a state park, making May Day baskets with seniors in a retirement facility to delivering Meals on Wheels.

JOIN HANDS DAY is sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies and is held annually on the first Saturday in May. This is fraternalism's day, a day when fraternal benefit societies and volunteer organizations reach out to people or communities in need, connect generations and develop relationships.

To recognize outstanding volunteer accomplishments for the May 2nd event, 10 awards of \$1,000 each will be given on behalf of JOIN HANDS DAY. Award recipients will be selected by an independent panel of judges. Awards will be presented in September 2008.

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News release / Thousands to Volunteer – Page Two

Getting involved in JOIN HANDS DAY is easy. The key is finding youth or adult partners. *(Your fraternal benefit society name and/or local organization name)* can help. Contact *(your society/organization)* by calling *(contact names and phone numbers)*. For more information about JOIN HANDS DAY, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at www.joinhandsday.org, send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org or call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center at (630) 522-6322, ext. 116.

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JOIN HANDS DAY Public Relations Kit

Photography Tips

Photo Usage: The reason for getting good photos is for your organization's publications and for submission to JOIN HANDS DAY for use on its Web site and potential inclusion in its printed materials. If a project is selected as an Excellence Award winner, JOIN HANDS DAY will need quality photos for publication and Web posting. Some local newspapers will use submitted photos. Photos also make excellent thank-you mementos for volunteers.

Photo Requirements: High-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are used in JOIN HANDS DAY print materials. Low-resolution (72 dpi) digital photos can be used on our Web site. Quality standard 4x6 or 5x7 glossy prints also are acceptable.

Find the best photographer possible: If possible, hire a professional photographer. Otherwise, photo clubs, college or high-school photo classes are good sources of photographers. Often newspaper photographers will sell prints for a nominal fee. If a volunteer is taking photographs, make sure that he/she has no other responsibilities during the event and can focus on getting interesting pictures.

If you or a volunteers are taking pictures, use these tips to get dynamic photos that grab the viewers' attention:

1. Take intergenerational photos – young people and adults working together.
2. Focus on people wearing JOIN HANDS DAY T-shirts or buttons. Also look for bright colors to work into photos, such as flowers.
3. Take “action” shots of people working on the project. Take close-ups to show exactly what participants are doing. Ask them to glance up and make eye contact. Avoid taking photos of people's backs.
4. For group shots, get as close as possible and fill the frame.
5. Arrange some pictures, but in a way that doesn't appear staged. For example, arrange flowers for planting close together to make a colorful foreground, or have an adult hold boards while a young person pounds a nail.
6. Take both vertical and horizontal photos. It's easy to forget to turn the camera.