

## Photos: An Important Part of Your PR Program



**AAFCS National Teacher of the Year**  
*AAFCS National Teacher of the Year Susan M. Turgeson, CFCS, of Menomonie High School, Menomonie, Wis., works with her students on a food science experiment (left to right): Nicole Gotlibson, Lee Vue, and Brianna Passofaro*

A good photo makes the difference between getting media coverage or not. Make sure your event has a “photo opportunity” – an interesting visual that tells the story, not just people talking at the podium. If press photographers do not show up for your event, you can send your own photographs to newspapers, but this must be done on the same day for daily newspapers, and within a day or two for weeklies.

***Make sure everyone who is photographed signs a release form.*** If the person is under 18 years of age, make sure a parent or legal guardian signs the release form. Always keep a supply of your own portraits or those of other important affiliate members handy, but do not limit these to only headshots. Action portraits make more of a statement and add life to any photograph. The typical head-and-shoulder poses that are taken by professional photographers are **ONLY** acceptable as a last resort.

For the print media, photo requirements may vary by publication, so be sure to ask about specific photo requirements ahead of time. Basic print media photo requirements are listed below:

- ***Forget black and white!*** Color photos are used almost exclusively on the front pages of newspapers, always on TV and online, and throughout magazines.
- **Digital photos** should be submitted at 300 dpi in JPEG or TIFF format.

### Pointers When Shooting Your Own Photos

*Before shooting*, look at the subject while walking around the scene to find the best view. Try different camera angles to keep out background clutter. Here are some other valuable tips:

- **Photos should be candid or action shots**, showing people actively engaged. To avoid self-conscious poses, engage subjects in conversation. Wait for them to respond and assume postures that are more natural before squeezing the shutter. Try not to catch subjects eating, drinking, or smoking.
- **Limit the number of people** in a picture to three; four at most.
- **Move in close**, or zoom in, to make sure the image fills the frame, eliminating details that aren't relevant to the story.



## Captions and Cutlines

Write a brief caption (heading above cutline) and cutline (description) for each photo sent out. Include the most important facts in the cutline since the news release may not be printed, or readers may notice the photo and cutline but not the story.

- Write the cutline in newspaper style – include who, what, why, when, where, and how.
- Identify people in the photograph from left to right.
- Include the hometowns of the people pictured to increase interest in your photograph among papers that cover those hometowns.
- Describe to editors what is unique about this topic covered in the picture. Give them some background information on your organization. Of course, you want to include as much information in the cutline as possible, but try to keep it crisp and concise.