

Tips on Placing Op-eds

What is an op-ed?: An op-ed is an opinion piece linked to current events usually found opposite the editorial page in the newspaper. Op-eds are often about 750 words in length and are either written by local columnists who work for the newspaper, by syndicated columnists whose work is published in newspapers all around the country, or by outside, often local, experts (that's you).

How will this first Peace Alliance (TPA) op-ed work? TPA has written an op-ed using the Nobel Peace Prize announcement October 11th as its angle. The op-ed is unsigned and you can adapt it slightly and put your name on it.

Which newspapers will we pitch the op-ed to? There are a number of newspapers that ask that op-eds be pitched to them only (NY Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, LA Times, etc.) and, for now, we will not pitch to those papers but will pitch to the others. Start with the largest newspaper in your city.

What are the steps I should take?

1) First of all, embrace the fact that TPA's vision can be shared more widely within your community and that you are just the person to do it.

2) Read the op-ed to get inspired.

3) If you weren't able to join our Activation call, listen to the recorded audio which will be posted on our site -- where we discussed the op-ed and how to place it. Make sure you coordinate with other TPA activists in your area who might be taking this on so you are on the same page. You can do that by contacting Dan Kahn dan@peacealliance.org and asking who else in your area wants to pitch the op-ed

4) We recommend starting with the largest daily newspaper in your community. Go online and find out what is required to submit an-op (do they require an exclusive, that op-eds be sent to them only, how many words should it be, do they want it pasted in and not attached, etc.). The criteria for submitting an op-ed can usually be found on the opinion page online or on the "contact us" page online. If they require that op-eds be sent to them only and to no other newspaper, shift to a smaller newspaper instead.

5) Buy a copy of the local newspaper you will pitch the op-ed to (or view it online) and read some editorials, op-eds, and letters to the editors to get a sense of their coverage. Smaller newspapers might not have editorials or might publish letters only.

6) If your newspaper publishes op-eds, take the template and replace some sections with your own local experience. For example, you might mention a local group doing especially good conflict resolution work in your community. Find out whether your two US Senators and/or any local members of the US House of Representatives are already

co-sponsoring the Youth PROMISE Act so you can mention that in the op-ed by doing the following: a. Go to Thomas.gov, b. Search for “Youth PROMISE Act”, c. View the list of current co-sponsors. After the end of the op-ed describe yourself in one or two short sentences. Include that you are a volunteer with The Peace Alliance www.thepeacealliance.org. (e.g. Sally Smith is a high school teacher and is a member of The Peace Alliance www.thepeacealliance.org.) Then include your contact information.

Your name

Address

Daytime phone

Nighttime phone

7) Using the format and criteria they request, e-mail the finished op-ed to the paper.

8) A few days later call the op-ed editor or editor (unless they request that you don't call) and ask if they will run the op-ed.

9) **This is very important:** If they say no, approach a smaller paper in your area. Send it in, call a few days later and ask for a meeting with the editor. In that meeting bring an extra copy of the op-ed and share your work with TPA and why the Youth Promise Act is so important. Check to see if the smaller paper is part of a chain of smaller papers in your area.

What is our ultimate goal: At some level our ultimate goal is not so much to get this piece or that piece published but to develop a deep relationship with the local editor(s) such that whenever they receive a piece from you they are more likely to read it with an open mind and with a desire to see if they can publish it. Most people see news and opinion as something they consume, not something they generate. This will turn that around.

If you have questions contact: Dan Kahn at: dan@peacealliance.org.