

## 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 Peace Alliance (PA) "Be The Movement" Op-Ed work?**

TPA has written an op-ed, connecting with some of the recent violence involving police and communities 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 sample op-ed to get inspired.
- 3) We recommend starting with the largest daily newspaper in your community. Go online and find out what is required to submit an op-ed (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.
- 4) 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.
- 5) If your newspaper publishes op-eds, take the template and insert some of your own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. For example, you might mention an incident involving community-level violence or controversy in your own region, some of your own feelings about violence in the world, and any thoughts you have about practical avenues to build more peace. You are also welcome to modify any aspects of the sample that you wish, to make it more accurately reflect your own feelings or experiences.
- 6) Insert the names of your two US Senators and one US House Member, toward the end of the piece, asking them to support peacebuilding policies.
- 7) 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](http://www.thepeacealliance.org). (e.g. Sally Smith is a high school teacher

and is a member of The Peace Alliance [www.thepeacealliance.org](http://www.thepeacealliance.org)). Then include your contact information. Your name Address Daytime phone Nighttime phone

8) Using the format and criteria the paper requests, e-mail the finished op-ed to the paper.

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

10) 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 practical peacebuilding tools are 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. We are turning that around.**