

Letter to the Editor Instructions:

Below is a letter to the editor we have created for you to use as a tool to reach out to the media in your local community. Should the media run a story on your participation in the Bar Challenge, it could help with your fundraising efforts as well as the recruitment of more participants. Also, by sharing your story you will help encourage others to JOIN THE MOVEMENT toward a world free of MS.



Before you begin your media outreach, we have developed some steps and guidelines to help you get the best results:

Step 1: Fill In the Letter to the Editor

Review the hometown letter to the editor below. There are bracketed spaces for you to fill in with your personal information. Fill in the information, unbold the text, and delete the brackets. In the **"I am raising funds because..."** paragraph, write a two to three sentence explanation of your participation. Keep your letter short.

Step 2: Make a Press List

Next, make a list of where you would like to send your hometown letter to the editor. We recommend that you send the press release to your weekly and daily community newspapers, as well as corporate, community and sorority or fraternity newsletters. If you are a college, don't forget your campus newspapers, magazines, radio stations etc. Graduates can send the press release to their Alumni publications.

The Hometown Letter to the Editor is designed to contact your community media.

When building your press list it is important to know who to send it to at each media company. You should send to only one person at a specific outlet. (Never send to two editors at the same outlet at the same time.) Here is a quick breakdown of suggested contacts to target:

Newspapers:

Metro/City Editor: Metro Editors assign reporters to cover local stories and events. The metro editor will be your first choice. Send the press release via fax or email.

Feature Editor: Feature editors cover everything from entertainment and fashion to health and technology. The best strategy is to contact the specific "beat" reporters directly. Look or ask for a *Health Reporter*, *Women's Interest Reporter*, and

Parenting & Family Reporter (if applicable). Send the press release to these contacts via fax or email.

Community/Local News Editor: Some newspapers, especially larger ones will have a community news or local news editor and/or reporters. These reporters may cover just certain areas/neighborhoods for the paper. Contact the newspaper to learn if there are certain reporters that cover your neighborhood.

Here are some additional tips to help you build your press release:

Use the Internet: Online websites for many media outlets often list contact information for their staff.

Call the Media Outlets: Another option is to simply call each media outlet directly. Use a phone book or the Internet to look up the main number for each media outlet. When you call, simply ask for the name and fax number and/or email address of the media contacts described above.

Utilize Personal Contacts: If you have friends or family, or even friends of friends at a newspaper, radio or TV station, it is always a good idea to reach out to them for help and advice. If they are not the right person, they may be able to recommend someone.

Step 4: Get the Word Out

You are now ready to get the word out to your friends, family, neighbors and co-workers about this extraordinary event through the media. We appreciate your help getting the word out and wish you luck over the next few months, as you train, fundraise, and gear up to walk. Your efforts are a bold expression of your commitment to raise awareness for multiple sclerosis.

Please contact your local branch office if you learn that a media outlet is planning a story or if you have any questions. We are here to help you.

RAISING MONEY EVERYWHERE

AND IN EVERY WAY!

Contact Information:

{Your Name:}

{Your Phone Number:}

{Your e-mail Address:}

To the editor:

I will be joining my fellow <area residents' name> in a special journey – the Bar Challenge. This event is very important to me because it raises awareness and money to create a world free of multiple sclerosis, a chronic disease of the central nervous system. There is no cure for this disease, which is why I am participating in the Bar Challenge and asking my neighbors and community members to help me raise awareness for MS and funds to battle this disease.

The Bar Challenge is organized by the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Money raised will fund programs and services for 7,500 people with MS and their families in Western Pennsylvania (this includes support groups, newly diagnosed programs, crisis counseling, equipment loans and hundreds more), as well as fund vital research. There are many ways we can all help out this worthwhile cause:

Volunteer. Call 800.FIGHT.MS and ask for the Bar Challenge coordinator

Donate. You can go to nationalMSsociety.org/PAX and donate online – you can sponsor a specific establishment, or make a general donation.

I am raising funds because <personal connection to MS – ex. I have MS; My mother has MS..., and the Western PA Chapter has provided programs and emotional support when we have needed it most>. Participating in the Bar Challenge is how I can make a difference and give back. This is why I am raising funds. This letter is a call to action for everyone in <area/town> to do what they can to help work toward a world free of MS.

<Name>

<neighborhood or town>