How to spot a good story

If you think you’ve got a great idea for a news item, the District’s Community Relations team can help you spread the word. Though there aren’t concrete rules for finding good stories, here are some general guidelines to use as you gauge whether your item is newsworthy.

In the meantime, you can visit https://www.sanjuan.edu/forms.cfm?myForm=1607 to submit your story idea to Community Relations staff. Note: The deadline to submit story ideas are 5 p.m. Fridays for inclusion in the following week’s SJ Scene e-newsletter.

Be timely

The more current a story is, the more relevant it is to your audience. Note: If you have an interesting event in the works, don’t wait to tell us after it already has happened! Give us a heads up before the big day in case we’re available to cover it.

Identify the impact

When considering whether something is newsworthy, think: Why does this matter? Every story we tell should help answer that question. Is your story unique, interesting or out-of-the-ordinary? Is your school program illustrative of an issue shared by others? Does your news describe results we can clearly communicate? These by far aren’t the only questions to consider, but they should get you started.

Find a human face

If your news is about an issue or trend, pointing to a person whose personal experience helps illustrate the topic can more effectively connect the public with your story.

Forget about the bake sale

Schools, clubs and community groups hold special benefits so frequently, it’s unlikely there’s anything unique about them that can capture an audience. On the other hand, if your crab feed is for an out-of-the-ordinary cause, figure out if there’s a bigger story to be told.

Give us a success story

The public is always eager for inspiring stories of achievement. There are countless instances of students, teachers, schools and families overcoming adversity, for instance, and hard work and success should be highlighted.

Think visually

Always think about whether a story has opportunities for photos or multimedia components, from students in the classroom to a colorful event in the community. Videos and pictures help stories come alive.

Consider your audience

Many stories have the potential to resonate with the public at large, while others might be interesting to only District employees. When considering why your story matters, also think about who you want the message to reach.

Still have questions? You can call us at (916) 979-8281