

Public Relations and the ARISS contact Program

Getting people excited about your program is a key element of its success!

While one of the primary goals of the ARISS contact program is to stimulate the students' interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), it also seeks to provide an educational opportunity for teachers, parents and the entire community to learn about space exploration, space technologies and Amateur Radio.

How to get them involved

- **School Administrators**

It is important to garner support from school administrators, principals, and superintendents. They can offer services in obtaining media attention.

- **Parents**

Remember to include parents and parent groups in your plans. Not only do they help encourage students to complete their part of the ARISS educational activities, but they can play a role in having the media see the importance of ARISS to the community.

Parents may be given the assignment of recording the events (audio, video, note-taking, photographs) as these unfold. Parents can get quotes from students and teachers as to what effect the ARISS activities had on their schooling. Enlist the help of parents and their students in distributing programs for the ARISS contact day, and in seating VIPs and the media.

- **Business leaders and Community VIPs**

Business leaders and local VIPs can offer help in a variety of ways. For some it might mean offers of various media exposure, printing of invitations, t-shirts for students, or simply demonstrating support for the students.

Create and distribute special invitations to local VIPs. Remember to create programs to be distributed on the day of the event to all who attend. These become great keepsakes.

Invite neighboring schools to listen in to the radio contact from a remote location. Even better, invite them to attend your educational activities and ARISS contact. Provide a special seating area for them.

- **News Media**

Invite the media to tour your school before the ARISS contact to see what students have been learning.

Send news releases to newspapers, TV stations, radio stations once the date of the contact is known. See a sample media release at www.arrl.org/ariss/Sample_Press_Release.pdf . Customize it for your venue.

Students can be selected to write articles describing the students' learning activities for the school paper, local paper, and other media.

Work with students so that they will be prepared to speak to the media after the radio contact. Prior practice doing this can be helpful for students.

Ensure you have collected the required permission forms from all students who will be participating in the ARISS contact, be interviewed, recorded, or photographed by the media.

Select students for specific responsibilities such as publicity, art work, production of event programs and invitations.

Select students for the responsibility of recording all of the school's activities and lessons, including the day of the contact.

Send newspaper articles and URLs of web stories to your ARISS Mentor.