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**CHAPTER 7**

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# CHAPTER 7:

## Public Relations

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# CHAPTER 7

## Public Relations

*Every advisor and member associated with FHA-HERO contributes to the overall impression the public forms about the organization. The image that is presented to the public is directly influenced by the actions and efforts of individual members. How participants look, the first impression they make, and the manner in which they behave when representing FHA-HERO reflects directly on themselves, their chapter, their region and the entire State Association.*

*Public relations can be defined as any planned activity, project or informational item that communicates the goals, purposes and worth of the organization. The responsibility for a successful public relations program or campaign falls jointly upon the chapter officers, members, and the committees that plan and conduct FHA-HERO events and activities.*

*This chapter provides many suggestions for developing a public relations program that will create a lasting and favorable impression upon the public about the FHA-HERO program and activities.*

*You can sell FHA-HERO to others if you know your facts. As members, you should be able to answer these questions.*

### Do You Know Your Facts?

- ◆ **What is FHA-HERO?**
- ◆ **How does your chapter relate to the Home Economics Careers and Technology Education program?**
- ◆ **What does the organization do?**
- ◆ **What is the value of FHA-HERO?**

*The real measure of a successful chapter is evidenced by the membership roster, by what others say about the chapter, and by the support given to the chapter by parents, administrators and community members.*

## ***Putting Your Chapter in the Spotlight***

Public relations should be integral to all FHA-HERO activities. A good public relations program informs, creates awareness and understanding, and promotes a favorable image of the entire organization. It is essential to your chapter's growth that you formulate a public relations program because every chapter needs the help of people outside the organization to accomplish special projects. You and your chapter will need to promote FHA-HERO in order to create community involvement and support. Public relations is the tool to do this.

Newspaper, radio, television, personal interviews and displays are all excellent means by which you can introduce the community to the importance of the organization and keep FHA-HERO in the spotlight. Read through this section carefully. Review the ideas with your chapter reporter as well so that you can plan an effective campaign that will be fun and exciting for the members involved.

### **Keep FHA-HERO in the Spotlight!**

- 1. Newspaper stories and photographs***
- 2. Radio spot announcements***
- 3. Television spot announcements***
- 4. Personal interviews***
- 5. Displays and exhibits***

## Telling the *FHA-HERO* Story

Your chapter image will be greatly enhanced within your school once students and the faculty understand how FHA-HERO is an integral part of the Home Economics Careers and Technology instructional program.

During membership campaigns or California FHA-HERO Week, stress and publicize the goal and purposes of the organization so that people are aware that FHA-HERO has an important function in preparing students for their roles as family members, leaders, citizens and employees in today's society and workplace. A continuous effort to publicize this information should be the foundation of your public relations campaign.

All members of FHA-HERO should consider good public relations a part of the program. One way to do this is by incorporating public relations into the chapter through these steps:

1. Appoint a public relations committee at the beginning of the school year to publicize the chapter's activities. The Chapter Reporter should serve as chairperson of the committee.
2. Give the chapter reporter the specific responsibility of seeing that news stories, photos, radio and television announcements are sent to the local media. If possible, arrange to meet personally with the local news editor to explain your program and deliver the promotional and/or news-related material. It's important that personal contacts be made, rather than sending materials through the mail.
3. Make every effort to publicize the goal, purposes, and activities by involving as many people as possible through newspaper stories, radio and television programs.
4. Get to know the people in your community who can help you and provide support for the organization. (See the section on chapter resources for suggested community resources.)
5. At special events, take the opportunity to publicly recognize outstanding students and community members who support FHA-HERO by awarding them with Honorary Memberships or Certificates of Appreciation.
6. Be sure that FHA-HERO is included on the agenda of the Home Economics Careers and Technology Department Advisory Committee Meeting. Have the chapter and member officers prepare and present a report of FHA-HERO Chapter and member activities and accomplishments.
7. Think of fund raising campaigns as an opportunity to gain support and promote the organization as well. While raising money in these activities, you're also developing community awareness.
8. Use the phrase "FHA-HERO Chapter" and not "FHA-HERO Club" in oral presentations and written communications. The word "club" projects a social purpose, rather than on education and leadership.
9. Encourage officers, members and advisors to wear official uniform for all FHA-HERO activities when serving as representatives of the organization. The official uniform can create an identity for and awareness of FHA-HERO in the community.

# Projecting a Professional Image

First impressions are often lasting impressions. An easy, effective way to have positive public relations is for members to exhibit appropriate social and business etiquette and wear the professional State Uniform. Members of FHA-HERO can ensure a positive image by following the guidelines developed by the State Executive Council. These guidelines are followed at all FHA-HERO activities and events:

## Conduct

1. Members should conduct themselves in a manner which is of credit to themselves, their families and schools, as well as FHA-HERO. This includes respecting the rights and comfort of others in respect to manners, noise, language, and general conduct.
2. Members will follow the directions of adult supervisors and chaperones. They will be respectful and courteous in their speech and behavior.
3. No alcoholic beverages, unprescribed drugs, cigarettes or spit/smokeless tobacco in any form shall be in the possession of, or consumed by members at any time while representing FHA-HERO or attending FHA-HERO activities.
4. Members, their parents, and their chapters will be responsible for damages they incur while attending FHA-HERO activities or representing the FHA-HERO organization.
5. Advisors shall be informed by members of their activities and whereabouts at all times.
6. When traveling as a representative to the State Leadership Meeting and other FHA-HERO activities, members must be registered at the designated hotel.
7. Members will abide by the established curfew for each FHA-HERO activity. This includes being in the assigned hotel room by 11:00 p.m.
8. Male and female socializing will be allowed in the designated areas as decided by delegates and advisors. Doors shall remain ajar and curtains open while socializing in individual guest rooms where both males and females are present.
9. If a student knowingly breaks the established rules which results in bodily harm to self or others or damage to facilities, the supervising advisors shall not be liable.
10. Instances of misconduct will be reported to advisors, parents/guardians, and proper school authorities.
11. In the event that a member does not follow these guidelines, the participation of that member in an FHA-HERO activity may be terminated. The expenses of telephone calls and return travel will be assumed by the member and his/her parents/guardians.

## Official Dress

Because FHA-HERO representatives are expected to project a professional image, it is expected that all members will be neatly attired and well groomed at all times. Official dress is worn by members at all local, region and state activities.

Official dress consists of the red FHA-HERO blazer worn with the clothing designated below:

1. Girls: Official FHA-HERO blazer worn with tailored navy skirt or slacks, white blouse with a collar. Fleshtone hosiery, navy or black pumps or flats that have closed toes and heels.  
Boys: Official FHA-HERO blazer worn with navy dress slacks, white shirt with a collar and a solid navy tie. Navy or black socks and navy or black dress shoes.

Note: Refer to the current *CRE Guide*, for specific dress-check information during Competitive Recognition Event activities.

## ***Sharing FHA-HERO with Parents, Administrators and the Community***

The most logical starting point for a good public relations program is in the home. Goals and current activities should be shared with parents. Parents who are invited to attend chapter meetings are more likely to become involved in and supportive of FHA-HERO activities. Many chapters encourage parents to attend meetings by awarding points to members who include their parents in these activities.

Because FHA-HERO functions as an integral part of the Home Economics Careers and Technology Department, the program and activities should be planned with the total school calendar in mind. All events should be approved by the appropriate school personnel before they are scheduled. Administrators and other school personnel should be appraised of the results of all activities and projects.

Principals and other administrators should also be invited to as many chapter events as possible, especially events that can demonstrate the purposes and goal of FHA-HERO. If administrators are invited to attend functions that are poorly planned or little more than social gatherings, they may not be supportive of FHA-HERO activities operating within the classroom. Good public relations means both frequent and open communication with administrators so that the chapter and school personnel can work together to reach the objectives of FHA-HERO.

Community members and business and industry representatives are important assets to chapter. Consider inviting community leaders to special chapter activities. Their attendance can be an excellent means of gaining exposure and developing good public relations. Remember to invite school board members and city council members. Their presence can also provide the chapter with the added bonus of increased media coverage.

Another way in which chapters can encourage greater community involvement is through presentations held several times a year for civic groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce. Community service projects can also be an effective means by which the chapter will be publicized by local media, so choose your projects carefully.

## Tips for Public Relations

A side benefit of a good public relations program is that your efforts will build enthusiasm among chapter members. Members like to read in the local newspaper about a project they worked on or hear their names over the radio or see themselves on television. This kind of publicity invariably builds interest among members and creates public awareness in the community.

### Using the State FHA-HERO Web site

The state FHA-HERO Web site is also a good resource to help members, their parents, school officials, and community members become more familiar with the organization.

Chapters can further publicize their activities and members' accomplishments by submitting information and articles for posting on the State FHA-HERO Web site. Articles and other information can be sent to the State FHA-HERO Office in Sacramento. For a list of the state staff and their contact information refer to the FHA-HERO Web site.



### Newspaper Articles

The first rule in writing an article for a newspaper is to capture the attention of the reader in the first sentence of the story. The lead paragraph should summarize five points: who, what, when, where and how. Details are added in succeeding paragraphs, in descending order of importance; therefore, be sure to follow the golden rule of writing the most important items first! Quite often, the editor will simply delete the last one or two paragraphs of the story if space doesn't permit printing the article in its entirety.

Press releases should be typed on white paper (8-1/2" x 11") with double spaces between the lines of text. Be sure to leave at least two inches of blank paper at the top of the article and allow for wide margins at the bottom and sides of the paper. This allows the editor ample room for remarks or corrections.

The release date indicates to the editor when the information is valid and should be typed in the upper left hand corner of the page. The name of the person who can answer any questions the editor might have is called the contact person and is indicated at the top of the page with his or her title, email, address and telephone number. If the press release runs more than one page, write "more" at the bottom of the page and write the word "end" at the bottom of the last page.

In general, write in a brief, factual and interesting style to increase the chances of being published. Always check spelling and grammar – editors begin to doubt the accuracy of the information if it isn't spelled correctly and neatly prepared. You can get a better idea of what kinds of stories make it to print by picking up a copy of the publication you intend to submit your story to and studying it for other articles that are similar to yours. Announcements and news releases all follow the same format, so you can create a professional product by following the format that made it to print.

When you're ready to submit a story, make every effort to personally contact your local newspaper in advance to determine the appropriate procedure for submitting articles. Make an appointment with the editor if it is a weekly or small town paper; see the city editor if you're aiming for publication in a large daily newspaper. If the newspaper is understaffed or extremely busy, you may be referred to the copy chief or copy editor. "Copy" is the term used for all written materials. You can make an appointment to see either the copy chief or copy editor about getting a story published.

A sample news release is on pages 7AP-3 and 7AP-4.

## Photographs



Photographs that you intend to submit to local or national newspapers and magazines should be clear, sharp, and of good quality. Newspaper and magazine reproduction processes can't correct blurred or darkened images.

1. Each photograph should carry a caption that identifies the people in the picture and what they are doing. This is necessary even if your photograph is accompanied by a news release or feature article.
2. Type the caption on a piece of white paper, leaving a one inch margin at the top of the paper.
3. Attach the caption to the bottom of the photo on the back, with the typed side up. Then fold the caption up over the face of the picture. Identify the people in the picture from left to right. Example: (l to r) Brianne Jones, Justin Smith, etc. Follow with a brief description of the action. NEVER use a paper clip to fasten a caption to the picture and DO NOT write on the back of the photo or you will ruin its finish.

Successful photographs tell a story. Subjects should be doing something – avoid lining everybody up because they will look frozen and unnatural. Try to take your picture with two or three individuals as the subject and be careful not to cut off their feet or heads by poor framing. Also watch out for the background! Think about what you are photographing as editors are not likely to print pictures that show a tree coming out of someone's head or litter in the foreground!

## Spot Announcements



There's a good chance that the local radio or television station will accept your message as a public service broadcast if you follow a few basic rules:

1. Study the stations you are going to approach to have your message aired. Note the times that public service announcements are made and their average length. Analyze what type of audience you will be reaching and target your message for broadcast when you think your intended audience will be listening or watching the station.

2. Make an appointment to see the program director or news director at the station you have selected. Trying to obtain air time through a phone call or letter won't produce the results you desire. Above all, DON'T barge in unannounced.
3. The same rules apply for radio and television as for newspaper copy – be brief, neat and accurate. The only difference in writing broadcast copy is that you're writing for aural impact, so avoid awkward sentences or words that are stilted. Keep your sentences short and in the present tense.
4. Type the announcement on standard size paper and give the station two copies of your announcement. Always double space and leave wide margins.
5. If your chapter is sending a video, be sure to include a typed text and identification.
6. When sending a video to a television station, be sure to identify each frame, e.g., "FHA-HERO official emblem," "Jan Wong, FHA-HERO State President greets Congressman Harper," etc.
7. Keep in mind that a video and narration about your chapter's in-depth project make a good television spot. Check with the program director to see if videos can be used, amount of time, etc.
8. Getting your message broadcast isn't difficult if you follow these suggestions. Remember, the more professional your presentation and the easier you make their job, the more likely they are to broadcast your message. A sample announcement on page 7AP-5 of this chapter's appendix gives you a better idea of how to set up and write your message.

## Personal Interviews



When you arrange for a personal appearance on radio or television, be sure you are prompt! Air time is expensive. Few stations will keep a crew of sound, camera and lighting engineers waiting for someone who is late.

Be sure that the people to be presented are neat and wearing the official FHA-HERO uniform. It's also a good idea to bring along a sample of your chapter's projects whether you select your activities manual, slides or an actual creation to add interest to your interview.

A thorough knowledge about the organization, its goal and the subjects you will be discussing is important for credibility. A good speaking voice is also essential for effectively communicating your message.

If you have the opportunity, ask a friend to video you. Ahead of your actual air date, study the video for ways to improve the interview. The practice interview will help you anticipate the interviewer's questions and give you more confidence before the big day. Good luck!

## Displays and Exhibits



Visual presentations are effective in conveying messages quickly and with impact. Follow these guidelines to produce a desired visual:

1. Keep your display attractive and uncluttered. Use as little copy as possible and avoid detailed explanations. Your visuals should tell the story.

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2. Make sure printed materials are large enough to see and read at a distance.
  3. Use contrasting colors to make printed words or objects stand out from the background. For example, bright red letters on a white background or black letters on a yellow background work well.
  4. Establish a central focus in your display and work your other elements around this focus to avoid creating a hodge-podge effect.
  5. Focus on neatness! Your display should convey the essence of FHA-HERO at a glance; a poorly planned or messy display will not leave the public with a good impression of the organization.



copies you need. It's easiest if you make a "mock-up" that roughly shows the page size, amount of art, color or photographs you've selected and where the folds will be for accurate estimations. Remember that the more elaborate the design, the higher the cost per unit. If your budget is tight but you have your heart set on color, you might try to coordinate a brochure through your school's art department.

Another way to finance your public relations efforts would be to ask a local printer to contribute the cost of the brochures as a donation to the chapter. If you present a convincing need to the merchant, you just may find that your brochures cost you nothing at all! Be sure to have your mock-up brochure when you make your appeal and clearly indicate the message to be printed.

In general, you'll find that once you start investigating the options for participation in community events, festivals, fairs and the distribution of printed materials, you'll see that there are many possibilities. So contact your local Chamber of Commerce for a schedule of events, talk to service and organization club officers and spread the FHA-HERO message loud and clear!

## **Local School Web sites**

Another easy way to publicize FHA-HERO at the local level is to use the school Web site. Information about FHA-HERO projects and accomplishments can be included on the local Home Economics Careers and Technology department Web site. Articles and pictures can be included.

### **Publicizing Your FHA-HERO Chapter**

- 1. Keep in touch with local chamber of commerce***
- 2. Join local charitable causes***
- 3. Show eye-catching displays at various fairs and festivals***
- 4. Contact art teachers, art students, and local printers to help produce brochures and flyers***

## Correspondence

There are many times when a letter is the most appropriate means to make the chapter or members' feelings known, express appreciation or request direct action. It's important that you sharpen your letter writing skills for these occasions. In general, it's best to use the chapter's letterhead stationery when corresponding as an official representative of FHA-HERO. Make sure your letter is not only neat in appearance, but also correct in spelling, punctuation and grammar. If you have your chapter advisor co-sign the letter, your message will have greater impact to the reader.

On pages 7AP-6 through 7AP-11 of this chapter's appendix, you will find several sample letters applicable to a variety of situations to help you get started. Please do not copy the letters verbatim, because you run the risk of repeating the same message that someone else may have already used, which may lessen the impact of the correspondence. These sample letters are merely guidelines for you to follow. Your advisor can help polish your letter before the final draft is prepared.

### Letters of Introduction

Your chapter can significantly increase membership by taking steps to insure each new or transfer student is aware of your FHA-HERO chapter and its benefits. One way to accomplish this is to send a brief letter of introduction to the parents of each prospective member. A sample letter written by a chapter advisor is shown on page 7AP-6 in this chapter's appendix. It's also appropriate to send a letter from the chapter president that's co-signed by the chapter advisor. Don't assume everybody knows about FHA-HERO. Many potential members may be missed simply because they do not have a clear understanding of what FHA-HERO has to offer, or are not invited to join.

Again, don't copy the sample letter word-for-word because students from other schools may have already received an announcement while enrolled in another school. You will be less likely to capture their interest with a form letter.

Your letter might be mailed at the start of the school year and again at the beginning of the new semester to ensure parents of students who may have enrolled in a Home Economics Careers and Technology course mid-year are reached. If you use your ingenuity, you might be able to include your letter in a mailing sponsored by the high school so that your chapter wouldn't have to pay for postage! This requires careful coordination with your chapter advisor and school principal, but it's certainly worth a try.

### Letters of Solicitation

There are times when your chapter will need outside support for projects or funds that might otherwise be unavailable through your chapter or school. For these occasions, a letter of request is most appropriate. By listing the item that you need (whether it is a monetary donation or equipment/supplies), how you will use the item and why you need the item, the reader can more fairly judge the worth of your request.

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It is best to prepare a letter of request and send it to your target donors. After a week or so to ensure they've received the letter, follow up your request with a telephone call. Always address the letter to the individual who is empowered to make donations. Call the company ahead of time and ask for the name of the person in charge of donations (usually the public relations department). If the company is small, write directly to the owner(s). This way, you're improving your chances that the letter won't be routed to the wastebasket by the secretary and never be seen by your target reader.

As with all letters written on behalf of FHA-HERO, your advisor's signature should appear on the bottom, as indicated in the example shown on page 7AP-7 of this chapter's appendix.

## Letters of Appreciation

When parents, other students, community members or local merchants support your chapter's efforts, you should express your appreciation in writing to convey the impact of their donation, whether they've shared their time, money, equipment or the use of facilities.

The most important aspect of your letter of appreciation is to explicitly acknowledge their contribution and its significance to your chapter. Companies will file your letter as a receipt for their tax deductible contributions, so remember to state the value and number of the items donated. A sample letter of appreciation on page 7AP-8 in this chapter's appendix is meant to show an appropriate response for the donation.

You can also express appreciation for large donations by presenting the donor with a framed certificate of appreciation or purchased plaque during a chapter meeting or an end-of-the-year awards banquet.

Be sure you don't forget to thank the members' parents at the end of each school year for their continued support with a short letter that's revised each year.

## Meeting Your Legislators, Business/Industry Representatives and Other Decision Makers

Meeting and talking with key leaders and decision makers is another effective public relations technique. For example lawmakers make many decisions that affect (or have direct impact) on the Home Economics Careers and Technology program and the FHA-HERO chapter at your school.

When visiting with legislators and their aides, or other decision makers, members should be prepared to accurately answer questions about FHA-HERO and Home Economics Careers and Technology. The following information has been compiled to help you inform legislators and other decision makers about the California FHA-HERO program.

**1. Q: What is FHA-HERO?**

**A:** FHA-HERO is a state and national Career Technical Student Organization for secondary students (grades 6-12) who have been or are currently enrolled in Home Economics Careers and Technology Education in middle school, junior and high school and ROCP programs. It functions as a part of the Home Economics Careers and Technology curriculum to prepare members in areas of personal growth, leadership development, citizenship development, and career skills development.

FHA-HERO is a private, non-profit organization composed of 50 state associations and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico and Guam. Membership is approximately one-half million students in middle, junior and senior high schools. FHA-HERO was founded in 1945; California received its charter as the 35th state in 1946.

**2. Q: What types of activities are conducted by FHA-HERO chapters?**

**A:** FHA-HERO chapters conduct activities in the following areas: a) personal growth, b) leadership development, c) career preparation, d) social, recreation and fund raising, and e) community service.

**3. Q: Why is FHA-HERO a Career Technical Student Organization?**

**A:** FHA-HERO is a Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) because the organization functions as an essential part of the HECT instructional program. HECT credentialed teachers serve as FHA-HERO chapter advisors who are career technical teachers. CTSOs provide a unique opportunity for career and leadership development as well as motivation and recognition for students enrolled in HECT programs.

At the national level, CTSOs are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. In California, FHA-HERO is sponsored by the Home Economics Careers and Technology State Staff of the California Department of Education.

**4. Q: What is Home Economics Careers and Technology Education?**

**A:** Home Economics Careers and Technology Education is a program which prepares students with skills for personal and family life management as well as for careers in some of the fastest growing industries in the state and nation. The program is comprised of three interlocking components:

CFS – Consumer and Family Studies provides practical training in managing work, family and personal responsibilities; parenting skills; financial stability; health; and nutrition. This component of the program focuses on the interrelationship between personal and family life and work.

HERO – Home Economics Related Occupations Career Pathway Programs prepare students with the skills, knowledge and attitudes for entry-level, paid employment as well as for postsecondary education to enter and advance in technical and professional careers in industries related to Home Economics Careers and Technology. These industries include: consumer services; child development; education; fashion design; manufacturing and merchandising; food science, dietetics, and nutrition; food service and hospitality; hospitality, tourism and recreation; and interior design, furnishings and maintenance.

FHA-HERO – This Career Technical Student Organization helps Home Economics Careers and Technology students develop career, citizenship, and leadership skills necessary for family, community, and work life. It operates as an integral part of the Home Economics Careers and Technology program.

**5. Q: Why is an FHA-HERO chapter important?**

**A:** FHA-HERO is important for the following reasons. It:

1. is a teaching strategy that expands, enriches, and reinforces Home Economics Careers and Technology classroom learning.
2. helps students develop personal, leadership, citizenship, and career skills.
3. provides students with a way to take the Home Economics Careers and Technology program into the community through community service projects.
4. makes classroom learning more relevant.
5. provides “hands on” learning experience for students.
6. provides students with the opportunity to receive recognition for skills learned in the Home Economics Careers and Technology instructional program.

**6. Q: How are FHA-HERO chapters a part of Home Economics Careers and Technology Education?**

**A:** FHA-HERO is an integral part of Home Economics Careers and Technology (HECT) Education instruction. The goals of HECT and FHA-HERO are the same; FHA-HERO activities are based upon Home Economics Careers and Technology learning. FHA-HERO chapters provide expanded opportunities through Home Economics Careers and Technology Education.

Some chapters place major emphasis on consumer education, child development, and nutrition education combined with exploration of jobs and careers. Other chapters place major emphasis on preparation for jobs and careers with recognition that workers also fill multiple roles as family members and community leaders.

**7. Q: How is FHA-HERO different from 4-H and other non-career technical education?**

**A:**

1. FHA-HERO is an integral part of Home Economics Careers and Technology Education programs in the secondary schools.
2. A credentialed Home Economics Careers and Technology teacher is the advisor.
3. At the national level, FHA-HERO is sponsored by Family, Community and Career Leaders of America (FCCLA) and the U.S. Department of Education.

4. In California, FHA-HERO is sponsored by Home Economics Careers and Technology Education State Staff, California Department of Education.
5. Activities are based on and are a part of Home Economics Careers and Technology instruction.

**8. Q: How many FHA-HERO members are there in California?**

**A:** There are approximately 4,000 members in 100 middle, junior, and senior high schools throughout the state.

**9. Q: How many FHA-HERO members are there in the national organization?**

**A:** There are approximately 205,000 members in 6,700 chapters in the 50 states and United States Territories including Puerto Rico, Guam and the District of Columbia.

On page 7AP-9 in this chapter's appendix, is a sample worksheet on how to list facts about your chapter and how FHA-HERO benefits your members.

## Tips for Visiting and Talking with Legislators:

These guidelines can assist in ensuring a successful visit and promoting a positive image for FHA-HERO.

**Be on time for your appointment!**

Legislators are as busy as you, so don't be late for a scheduled appointment.

**Call on your own legislator.**

The assembly person from your district and your state senator, cast your vote. Usually it is not helpful for an individual to contact all 80 members of the Assembly and 40 Senators.

**Be sure to tell your legislator and his or her staff who you are, where you live, and why you are there.**

This quickly and clearly indicates your reasons for a visit to your legislator.

**Be able to clearly identify the legislative issue (or issues) in which you have an interest.**

Remember that many bills are introduced each year; thus it is important to be specific. If you are talking about a bill, give the number of the bill or describe it by popular title (i.e., Home Economics Careers and Technology).

**State your own views – not someone else's.**

Most legislators will know in advance what the major lobby groups are saying; but they often do not know about your own personal experiences and observations, or what proposed bills will do to you or for you.

**Give your reasons for taking a stand.**

If the legislative issue is one that deals with a problem that exists, but you believe that the bill is the wrong approach, tell your legislator what you feel is the right approach. Always seek to be positive.

**If you have expert knowledge, share it with your legislator.**

Legislators have to vote on many complex issues and they cannot possibly be experts on all issues. Advice and council from constituents who are experts will usually be welcome.

**Be reasonably brief.**

Legislators have many duties each day. They must answer thousands of letters, study legislation, attend committee meetings and participate in the debate on the Assembly or Senate floor. Your opinions and arguments will be most effective if you state them as concisely as the subject matter will permit.

**Be understanding.**

Put yourself in the public official's place. Try to understand their problems, outlook and aims. Then you are more likely to persuade them to do the same in understanding your views. Remember that we must have people who are willing to commit themselves to public service positions.

**Be friendly.**

Don't contact public officials only when you want their help. Invite them to be guests at meetings. Take time to keep in touch with them throughout the year.

**Dress in official dress.**

You are much more likely to be taken seriously if you are neat and well groomed. This includes wearing a clean well-pressed uniform and shoes. First impressions are important.

**Remember to say "thank you" for the time and consideration given by your legislator.**

In addition to what you say and how you say it, they will also remember your good manners!

**Follow-up with a thank you letter.**

Again, a thank you letter is both courteous and a good public relations device.

**Have a good time!**

Note: Many of these tips are also applicable to visits with industrial representatives and other decision makers.

## Special Purpose Letters

One of the most effective ways you can make your voice heard is to write to your legislator and express your feelings on the issue under consideration. Your chapter may wish to support or oppose certain legislation or other types of issues that can affect your chapter, so it's to your best interest that you get into the habit of communicating with state and local public officials.

The sample letter on page 7AP-10 of this chapter's appendix shows how you can express support of a proposed bill. You can just as easily express your opposition to a bill that you feel would impede the progress and continued success of FHA-HERO. Also, a sample letter on requesting an appointment with a legislator is located on page 7AP-11 of this chapter's appendix.



# **C H A P T E R 7**

## *Appendix*



## Sample News Release (side 1)

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

(To be adapted for local FHA-HERO chapter releases)

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Contact:  
(Title):  
(Address):  
(Telephone):

### California FHA-HERO Week: February \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date)

The second week in February is a special week for members of the \_\_\_\_\_ (insert chapter name). This week, February \_\_\_\_\_ (insert date), is CALIFORNIA FHA-HERO WEEK in conjunction with CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION WEEK. All across the state FHA-HERO chapters are planning observances focusing on the theme \_\_\_\_\_ (insert theme title).

FHA-HERO is one of six Career Technical Student Organizations in California. Chapter projects interrelate with the Home Economics Careers and Technology Education program and provide meaning and motivation for students, reaching beyond the classroom into the home and community.

During the week, according to \_\_\_\_\_ (insert chapter president name), the \_\_\_\_\_ (insert chapter name) has planned ... (Add activities and observances planned for the week. Include some of the chapter projects you have or are presently working on for added interest.)

-more-

## ***Sample News Release (side 2)***

Your Name, Title  
Telephone Number  
Page 2

FHA-HERO was founded as a national Career Technical Student Organization for Home Economics Careers and Technology students on June 11, 1945. At the national level it is affiliated with Family, Community, and Career Leaders of America (FCCLA). Activities assist students in developing interpersonal, leadership, citizenship and career skills for family and community living and for the world of work.

In California, FHA-HERO is sponsored by Home Economics Careers and Technology Education State Staff, California Department of Education. Home Economics Careers and Technology teachers serve as advisors to chapters. In California, there are approximately 4,000 members in more than 100 middle, junior and senior high schools and ROCP programs.

-end-

## Sample One-Minute Spot Announcement

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

### **CALIFORNIA FHA-HERO WEEK**

60-second spot announcement

Release: February 4, 20XX

Contact: Scott Wright, Reporter  
FHA-HERO Chapter  
Renier High School  
9999 S. Front Street  
Rallings, CA 99999  
(999) 999-9999

FHA-HERO, the state Career Technical Student Organization for Home Economics Careers and Technology Students in middle, junior or senior high school and ROCP programs, will observe CALIFORNIA FHA-HERO WEEK, February \_\_\_\_\_ (insert dates) \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ (insert chapter name) \_\_\_\_\_ joins with more than 100 other chapters across the state in focusing attention on the theme, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert theme title) \_\_\_\_\_.

Chapters are working on projects concerned with nutrition and health, resource conservation, child development, assisting the elderly, helping the underprivileged and disabled, promoting understanding between youth and adults and learning about job and career opportunities.

These young men and women are working to prepare themselves for future responsibilities as adult citizens and at the same time, doing a great public service for their communities.

Congratulations members of FHA-HERO. Keep up the good work!

# Letter to Parents of Prospective Members

## HOME ECONOMICS CAREERS AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT SUNNYSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Today's Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ (insert parent name) \_\_\_\_\_:

We are pleased your (son/daughter) has enrolled in a Home Economics Careers and Technology course at Sunnyside High School. By enrolling in \_\_\_\_\_ (insert class name) \_\_\_\_\_ he/she has done more than enroll in another class. He/she has actually embarked on a new learning experience whereby he/she will be able to participate in activities and learn more about (list topics, units which are included in the course).

As a student in Home Economics Careers and Technology, your son/daughter will have the opportunity to join FHA-HERO, a national Career Technical Student Organization for Home Economics Careers and Technology students.

FHA-HERO offers to the student a unique opportunity to develop personal, leadership, citizenship and career skills as part of their Home Economics Careers and Technology instructional program. The experiences afforded through FHA-HERO develop a positive self concept and will help him/her prepare for personal, family, career, and community living.

FHA-HERO activities focus on personal growth and leadership development, member and advisor recognition, community service, career preparation, and social, recreation and fund raising events. Students can participate in local, region, state and national level activities. For example, the Competitive Recognition Events (CRE) program is designed for members to receive recognition for knowledge and skills learned in our Home Economics Careers and Technology classroom, and vie for over \$65,000 in scholarships, prizes and cash at the state level. In addition, members are encouraged to participate in the Golden State Degree program. The chapter, region, and state degrees each require the member to demonstrate additional knowledge of and commitment to the organization.

Affiliation materials and costs are kept to a minimum. Costs include local, region, state and national membership and activities. In addition, the chapter may assist students with travel to activities beyond the local level or the chapter may participate in fundraisers to assist with additional expenses.

Enclosed you will find information about FHA-HERO at Sunnyside High School as well as a membership form. Please return the membership form and fees by \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

We look forward to working with your son/daughter. You are cordially invited to visit our class and participate in FHA-HERO activities whenever your schedule permits.

Sincerely,

Penny L. Johnson  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Instructor

Enclosures

cc: P. Smith, Superintendent  
H. Harrison, Principal

## Sample Letter of Solicitation

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

Liberty High School  
FHA-HERO Chapter  
999 W. Hedgmont  
New Hiatt, CA 99999

Mr. Don Weldon  
Weldons Inc.  
999 N. Main  
New Hiatt, CA 99999

Dear Mr. Weldon:

The Liberty High School FHA-HERO Chapter is currently organizing a school fair to raise funds for the Special Needs Children's Society in our community. Since FHA-HERO is dedicated to developing leadership, citizenship and career skills to strengthen family and community life, we're hoping that you will join us in this effort by making a small contribution to our chapter.

We are especially in need of materials such as glue, paint and wood to construct children's toys that will be sold at the fair. All proceeds from the fair will be immediately forwarded to the Special Needs Children's Society. Your tax deductible donation will be acknowledged by a receipt from our chapter.

For your convenience, we can arrange to have an FHA-HERO member stop by your hardware store and pick up the materials you donate should you decide to support this effort. A member of the chapter will be calling you next week to answer any questions you may have and to further explain our goal and purposes. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Logan B. Harris  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Student  
FHA-HERO Chapter President  
Liberty High School

Bradley Felton  
FHA-HERO Chapter Advisor  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Teacher  
Liberty High School

cc: R. Donnally, Principal

## Sample Letter of Appreciation

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

Liberty High School  
FHA-HERO Chapter  
999 W. Hedgmont  
New Hiatt, CA 99999

Mr. Don Weldon  
Weldons Inc.  
999 N. Main  
New Hiatt, CA 99999

Dear Mr. Weldon:

On behalf of the Liberty High School FHA-HERO chapter, thank you for your recent donation of materials. Valued at a total of \$55 (per your estimate), the materials will help us to raise much needed funds at our school fair for the Special Needs Children's Society.

We would also like to invite you to visit Liberty High School to tour our Home Economics Careers and Technology department and/or participate in one of our FHA-HERO activities. This would provide you with an opportunity to meet chapter members and become better acquainted with the goal and purposes of our organization. Your visit can be scheduled entirely at your convenience. A visit can be arranged by calling the Home Economics Careers and Technology department at the high school between 7:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., (999) 999-9999, ext. 99.

Thank you again, Mr. Weldon, for your generous donation to our chapter. It is with support such as yours that we will realize our goal of strengthening community and family life. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Logan B. Harris  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Student  
FHA-HERO Chapter President  
Liberty High School

Bradley Felton  
FHA-HERO Chapter Advisor  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Teacher  
Liberty High School

cc: R. Donnally, Principal

# Facts About Your Chapter

**NOTE:** Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.

Be sure to indicate information about your local chapter and how FHA-HERO benefits your members. Using the outline below list specific facts which you can use to provide legislators and other key decision makers with background information about the chapter.

## Membership

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Male:

Female:

## Chapter Activities

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Leadership Development:

Competitive Recognition Events:

Career Preparation and Development:

Community Service/State Project Thrusts:

Other items:

## Sample Letter Requesting Support for Legislation

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

January 1, 20XX

The Honorable Jane Miler  
California State Senate  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**or**

The Honorable Fred Jones  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Miller:

Dear Mr. Jones:

AB 999 (Thomas) is important to the future of all Career Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) in California. This bill would assure continued important services to CTSOs, currently provided by the Career/Technical Education Division, California Department of Education.

CTSOs such as FHA-HERO are an integral part of the Career Technical Education program. In this instance FHA-HERO is an integral part of Home Economics Careers and Technology programs. Student organization activities provide students with the opportunity to develop citizenship, leadership, and career skills to strengthen family and community life.

As a member of FHA-HERO, I have...

(Tell of experiences and benefits you have enjoyed at the chapter, region or state levels of our organization. Examples might include competitive recognition events, leadership training, state leadership meeting, etc.)

I urge your support for this important legislation. With the funds provided in AB 999, more California Career Technical Education students will be able to participate in CTSO activities.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely,

Jason H. Winter  
Home Economics Careers and Technology Student  
FHA-HERO Member  
Liberty High School

cc: Governor Brown

## Sample Letter Requesting an Appointment with Legislators

**NOTE: Please make copies of the following sample as needed and leave the original in this guide for future use by other members.**

January 1, 20XX

The Honorable James Smith  
California State Senate (or Assembly)  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator (or Assemblyman/woman) Smith:

On April 5-7, 20XX the FHA-HERO members and advisors from \_\_\_\_\_ (insert school name) \_\_\_\_\_ High School will be attending the State FHA-HERO Leadership Meeting. As a part of the meeting, time has been scheduled for state meeting participants to visit the Capitol and meet with our respective state legislators to learn more about the legislative process.

The members of our chapter want to schedule an appointment with you on April 6, anytime between 3:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon. We will call your office next week to confirm a time.

In addition, we want to invite you to attend a special Legislators' Appreciation Reception on April 6 at 4:00 p.m. in the Metro Room of the Sacramento Convention Center. It will be a pleasure and honor for us to have you participate in this activity.

We look forward to talking to with you soon.

Sincerely,

Ashleigh Kennoff, President  
FHA-HERO Chapter  
Liberty High School  
(Address)  
(City, State, Zip Code)  
(Telephone Number - include Area Code)

