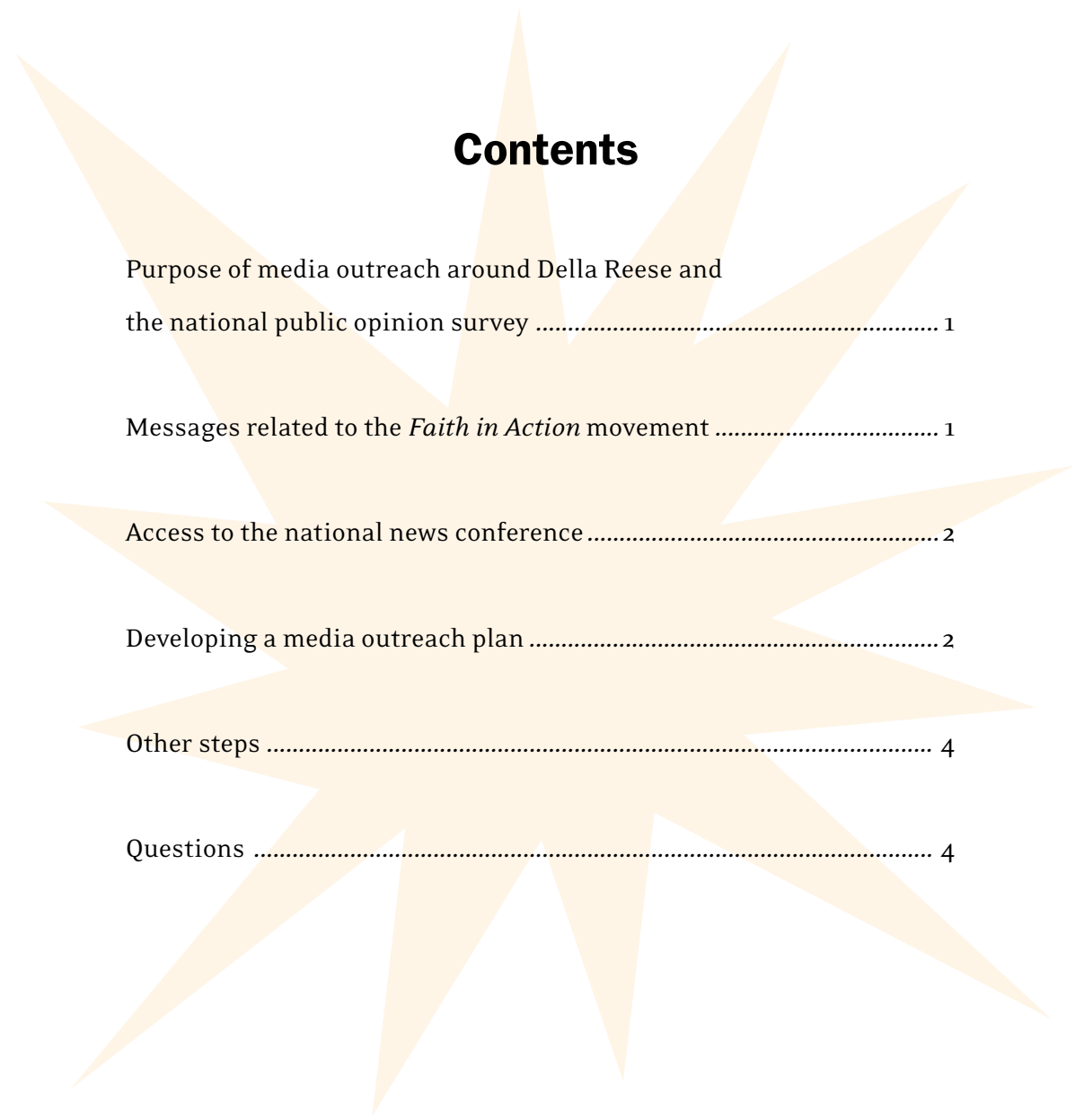




***Faith in Action*<sup>®</sup>**  
**MEDIA OUTREACH GUIDE**

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## Purpose of media outreach around Della Reese and the national public opinion survey

On June 3 at a news conference in Washington, D.C., *Faith in Action* is releasing the results of a national public opinion survey on Americans' attitudes about the challenges of aging and the need for caregiving to remain independent. During the same news conference, the *Faith in Action* National Office will announce to the public that Della Reese, singer and actress, is now the national spokesperson for the *Faith in Action* movement.

Over the next several years in her role as *Faith in Action* national spokesperson, Ms. Reese will help to publicly celebrate the everyday good works that volunteers of many faiths perform selflessly for their neighbors in need. Ms. Reese's presence will help to raise the level of awareness of the national movement, and she will help spread the word about *Faith in Action* so that together we can do the greatest good for the greatest number of people in need.

*Faith in Action* commissioned the survey to increase awareness about the challenges older Americans face in maintaining independence. In turn, these results may be used to alert the public about the free caregiving services available through *Faith in Action* programs. Although the media outreach process can be a detailed one for local programs, the benefits received due to increased media coverage can be exceptional.

How can programs take advantage of this media opportunity?

- Programs may use the announcement of Della Reese as national spokesperson to raise the level of awareness and interest in their services on the local level.
- In addition, *Faith in Action* programs are welcome to use the survey results in their media outreach to highlight successes and call for community action through financial and volunteer support.

*Faith in Action* programs are receiving this media outreach guide beforehand of time in order to begin preparing materials for use with local media outlets, such as newspapers, television and radio stations, during the week of June 3.

*Faith in Action* will not release the results of the survey to the programs before the actual news conference in order to avoid any unintentional "leaks," which would jeopardize media interest both nationally and locally.

## Messages related to the *Faith in Action* movement

As a local *Faith in Action* program, you are in an excellent position to use the national survey and the announcement of Della Reese's support to explain your work to the media, local legislators, policymakers and the public. The *Faith in Action* national office has created a media relations plan to promote the results at the national level. As a local program, you are encouraged to tailor this information to communicate your activities to your specific community and target population.

Below is a series of messages that you can use as-is or modify to match the specific needs of your program. Some of the overall messages include:

- **Independence is an important theme.** Americans who are aging or ill want to remain independent, in their homes or at least in their communities, and prefer to remain out of nursing homes and institutional care of any kind. *Faith in Action* programs provide non-medical caregiving through volunteers to help make this independence possible.
- **Family caregivers are under significant stress while trying to balance multiple responsibilities—children, parents, jobs.** These caregivers are seeking assistance especially with transportation to and from doctor's visits, which may be provided through their local *Faith in Action* program.
- **There is a demand for the services *Faith in Action* programs provide.** Studies show that the specific services, such as transportation, meals, and companionship offered through *Faith in Action*, are all services that individuals who are aging or ill want and need.
- ***Faith in Action* addresses many of the specific concerns that Americans have for the future.** Many Americans are concerned about the nursing shortage, gaps in Medicaid and Medicare coverage, financial concerns about aging ►

and affording long-term care services, and nursing home care and institutionalization.

- **There is a preference for more community and in-home supports—and less emphasis on nursing home and institutional care.** Americans prefer that more resources be spent on community services and in-home supports instead of nursing home and institutional care. Individuals perceive that Medicaid and Medicare have an institutional bias—that most funding goes to nursing home and institutional care rather than community and in-home supports.
- **Americans hold a high degree of trust for faith-based efforts.** Religion is important to most Americans, who believe America’s strength as a nation is due in part to its strong religious faith. Americans also approve of faith-based organizations providing community services just as *Faith in Action* programs do across the country.
- ***Faith in Action* is separate from the president’s faith-based initiative.** Many have read about President George W. Bush’s faith-based initiative in the news. Programs and volunteers should note that: *Faith in Action* is a program supported by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a private philanthropy, and is completely separate from any federal government activities. The Foundation has been supporting interfaith volunteer caregiving programs since 1984. Though President George W. Bush’s faith-based initiative has brought welcome attention to the potential role for faith congregations in helping to address social problems, *Faith in Action* is not a part of this initiative.

“Older people want to remain independent and live in their own homes—in other words, age in place.” - The Boston Globe, 11/02

### Access to the national news conference

The survey presents a national perspective on the need for interfaith volunteer caregiving in America. It gives Faith in Action programs the opportunity to point out that neigh-

bors in their community are in need and that Faith in Action is working to meet those needs.

At the news conference on June 3, *Faith in Action* is planning to provide teleconferencing services. This service allows reporters who are unable to attend the event in person to listen in via telephone. Reporters who are interested in participating are able to call a toll-free phone number and listen to the speakers at the event. This service may encourage reporters in your local market to write stories about the national survey while incorporating information about your local *Faith in Action* program.

Because there is a cost associated with this service, the national office needs to gauge ahead of time the number of reporters who are likely to use it. As you do outreach to your local media outlets, inform them of this option and refer them to the national office (877-324-8411) for the call-in telephone number. At the same time, provide the national office with the reporter’s name and contact information. A few days prior to the event, the staff will proactively send the toll-free number to those reporters who indicate interest. **The deadline to call in with the request is May 29.**

### Developing a media outreach plan

#### What is your story?

Each established *Faith in Action* program across the country is unique and has special stories to share with their community. Think about the stories in your *Faith in Action* program. What are some of the relationships that have developed between your care recipients and volunteers? How have these relationships positively impacted the life of the care recipient as well as the volunteer?

Reporters are drawn to stories that are filled with emotion. To paint a picture of your *Faith in Action* program for the reporter, use stories that tug at the heart strings and back these stories up with the statistics from the national survey.

Keep your stories clear and concise. The more focused the story, such as one specific service provided by a volunteer for a care recipient, the more likely it will receive media coverage. Be sure you have permission from the volunteer and care recipient before releasing their names to the reporter.

After you have come up with one or two “feel good” stories, start to follow the steps outlined below in the media outreach process. Choose what steps work for you and think them through in relation to your specific story. Will the reporter be able to visit the care recipient’s house along with the volunteer to see how *Faith in Action* really works? Decide what process is best for you, the reporter, the volunteer and most especially the care recipient.

**NOTE:** If your program is just getting organized and doesn’t have a special care recipient/volunteer story to share, use the survey as an opportunity to tell the community about your planned efforts and to encourage them to get involved either through volunteerism or financial support.

### What are the steps for media outreach?

1. Do you have a **media list** with contacts from your local newspapers, radio and television stations? If not, it’s time to do some research:
  - a. Find out which media outlets cover stories about health, nonprofit or faith-based activities by reviewing their content.
  - b. Make calls to those outlets that seem most in line with these topics. You may find information in the phone book, and you also may find a list of newspaper outlets by visiting [www.usnpl.com](http://www.usnpl.com) (U.S. newspapers listing) on the Web.
  - c. Get on the phone.
    - When calling the media outlet, ask which reporters cover health, nonprofit or faith-based stories.
    - Take note of their name (and make sure you have the correct spelling), title, phone, fax and e-mail.
    - Ask if they prefer receiving news releases via e-mail or fax. Most newspapers are not as electronically savvy as other media outlets and are usually more fax reliant. But, do ask about a reporter’s preference for receiving information.
2. After your media list is created:
  - a. Tailor the messages printed on pages 1 and 2 of this guide for your program and list them on a one-page handout for your media contacts.
  - b. It also may be helpful to have a one-page bulleted description of your program and the services you provide. You may want to include some statistics, such as how many care recipients and volunteers are active in your program or how many trips to the doctor you provided in the last year. Keep your written materials brief and to the point.
3. Rehearse your key messages including your “feel good” story, and think through possible questions the reporter may ask. Be as prepared as possible.
4. On June 3, **download the media kit from the *Faith in Action* Extranet**, an online resource for *Faith in Action* programs, by logging onto <http://extranet.fiavolunteers.org>. If you haven’t used the Extranet before, call (877) 324-8411 for more information. The kit will include:
  - a. a summary of the survey’s key findings
  - b. a biography sheet for Della Reese
  - c. a sample story to use as a guide for creating your own program story
  - d. a news release template for you to personalize to your program, which includes information about Della Reese as national spokesperson
  - e. a flier template for use with coalition members
  - f. a bulletin template for use with faith congregations
5. Fill in the blanks of the news release template with your information and personalize it to your program as you see fit.
6. Fax or e-mail this to your contacts from your media list.
7. Follow up the fax with a phone call.
  - a. When you call a reporter, don’t ask “did you receive my news release.” Instead, call and introduce yourself. Ask the reporter if he or she has time to talk or if they are on “deadline.”
    - If the reporter is on deadline, just offer to call back later. If the reporter has time to talk, in two minutes or less tell the reporter about your story. (Remember: rehearse what you want to say before making the ►

call, but don't read the information to the reporter because you will lose the emotion of the story.)

- After sharing your story, you can mention that they might have seen a news release from your program come to their office via fax. If they haven't seen the release, ask them if you can fax it or e-mail it to them again along with your fact sheets about your program.
8. Hopefully, the reporter will be interested in your story and want to do an article. Follow through on any information requests that he or she has while being sensitive to the time constraints of the reporter's deadline.
  9. Don't be discouraged if the reporter doesn't have time to do a *Faith in Action* article immediately. Feel free to ask him or her if there is a better time to contact them in the near future.

*Nearly one in four American households is involved in caregiver to older relatives.*  
- Department of Health and Human Services.

### Other steps

1. Do some Web site research to find out more about the needs of those with long-term health needs in your state. This local information will help to personalize your story for your local media outlets. Some sites to search include:
  - a. **Elder Web** - [www.elderweb.com](http://www.elderweb.com)
    - When visiting the site, click on "Regions," which will bring up the state selections. Each state has other visible advocacy groups.
    - This site will provide statistics on age demographics and percentages of households with members aged 65+.
    - This site also provides a list of organizations grouped by nonprofit, government, education, family resources, and agency services.
    - Information about law, education, finance, housing, care, Medicaid, organizations, statistics and calendar of events

- b. **Kaiser Family State Health Facts** - <http://Statehealthfacts.Kff.org>

- This site has state comparisons for all 50 states along with individual state profiles.
  - Other site topics include: health statistics, covered/uninsured costs and managed care.
- c. **State Department of Health and Human Services** - [www.os.dhhs.gov](http://www.os.dhhs.gov)
  - d. **State Board of Aging and Long Term Care** - [www.nia.nih.gov/health/agepages/longterm.htm](http://www.nia.nih.gov/health/agepages/longterm.htm)
  - e. **State Long Term Care: Recent Developments to Policy Directions** - <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/daltcp/reports/statltcA.htm>
2. Consider whether your program can conduct a community survey in your service area. Is it possible to generate local data on certain questions concerning interfaith volunteer caregiving for those with long-term health conditions who wish to remain in their own homes?
  3. Take the summary of the survey findings along with your one-page summary to local leaders in health care, faith congregations, businesses, politics, social service agencies or other potential coalition members. This information may sway them to become active, involved and supportive of services such as those provided by your Faith in Action program.
  4. Ask your coalition members to use your bulletin insert (created from the template on the Extranet) in an effort to educate their congregation members about the need in the local community.
  5. Work with your local library to create an exhibit focused on the survey results and host a discussion group about the findings.

### Questions

If you have questions or need more information about your efforts related to this Media Outreach Guide, contact the Faith in Action national office at (877) 324-8411 or e-mail Jo Heather C. Layton, communications manager, at [jhlayton@wfubmc.edu](mailto:jhlayton@wfubmc.edu).

*Faith in Action* is a nationwide interfaith volunteer caregiving program of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. *Faith in Action* brings together volunteers of many faiths to provide care for their neighbors who have long-term health needs. Since 1983, the Foundation's support has resulted in establishing more than 1,000 *Faith in Action* programs across the country.

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# ***Faith in Action***<sup>®</sup>

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