

Dear City to Shore Rider:

Thank you in advance for helping us promote **City to Shore** – one of the best **cycling rides** in the country. Most media outlets have the greatest interest in reporting about local residents and their endeavors. Through this rider media relations program, we are asking you to turn the spotlight onto your own efforts by giving your local media an engaging local story to report – yours

By promoting yourself you are not only raising awareness about **City to Shore** but also raising awareness about multiple sclerosis. Raising awareness is the first step to making a difference. Plus local media coverage could assist you with your fundraising as well, as people in YOUR area will see your story and want to help.

You Role

Your role would be to contact your local media and discuss what makes your story unique, what inspired you to ride and what this event means to you. We provide you with all of the materials you need to “pitch” a story about your fundraising efforts and **City to Shore** to your local media. Consider this document an express course in media relations. In addition, our communications department is available to you as needed to support your effort, brainstorm ideas and offer solutions. Contact Yarissa Reyes, our communications and marketing manager at yarissa.reyes@nmss.org or by calling 215-271-1500.

Your Story

In this packet, you will find some documents to support your efforts: a **press release**, **fact sheet** and a **pitch letter**. The press release and fact sheets are to accompany your **pitch letter** when doing your personal media outreach. The pitch letter needs to be personalized by you. Throughout the letter, you will find sections in *italics* that have been purposefully left blank for you to fill in your own relevant details. Please remember that these documents were written in a general way, so you will need to personalize them. Use these documents as a starting point, and feel free to be as creative as you desire in making them relevant to your efforts and your life. The more you are willing to share about your experience and motivation, the more interesting your story becomes.

Your Materials

The **press release** and **fact sheet** are your basic vehicles for providing information about the event. The **pitch letter** is more personal, it introduces you and your story to the editor or reporter. It is shorter than the press release, because it does not need to provide as much detail about the event, the organization or even your team. Consider the pitch letter your cover letter to be sent out with your press release or fact sheet. The goal of the pitch letter is to quickly tell your story and explain why it would be an engaging article/segment for the editor/reporter’s readers/viewers/listeners.

Your Media List

You know what you and your neighbors are reading, listening to and watching. Most communities have a small, local paper which comes out weekly (called a Weekly). Many also rely upon a regional newspaper that comes out daily (called a Daily) for regional news. For example, Abington Township’s Weekly is The Times Chronicle. Its Daily is The Record. Many communities also enjoy a community access cable television station, and some even have a local radio station. Your community’s Daily, Weekly, TV station and radio station make up your local media.

The Chapter staff will handle major media, such as the dominant market newspapers, radio stations and television affiliates through our office.

Who to Contact

At each newspaper, you will want to focus on telling your story to the health, features or local editor or reporter. Many Weekly newspapers only have one editor. When that is the case, he or she is your contact. For broadcast media such as radio or TV, you should seek the assignment or planning editor. Once in a while, a small station may have a health editor, but that is unusual.

We suggest you compile a “media list” complete with your local publications, the name of your contacts (editors/reporters) and their phone numbers and e-mail addresses. There may be multiple people you want to “pitch” at each media outlet. That is fine, however, you can only pitch one of them at a time. If one says, “no” to you, you might ask him or her if there is someone else at their paper or station whom they think might be more interested in your story. It is also fine at that point to try another person at the paper.

I’ve Got My Documents and My Media List, Now What?

Now comes the fun part – pitching your story to the local media. Making a personal connection is always the best way to sell your story. You can begin by emailing your pitch letter and press release. The most effective way to do this is to paste your pitch letter into the body of your email and attach your press release. If you participated in the event last year, you could also send a photo. A day or two after you’ve sent out your information, you can follow up with a telephone call to try to “sell” your story to the editor/reporter. It is not unusual for a reporter or editor to “forget” about receiving your materials. If this happens, simply offer to re-send your materials.

Timing

Your timing depends entirely upon you and your plans for your fundraising and training efforts. Think about what you are doing to fundraise and plan your media relations around your effort. If you are simply pulling together members to attend on City to Shore weekend, you can pitch your story anytime up to two weeks before the event (the earlier the better). If you are planning additional fundraising activities, it could make your story more interesting and help with your event to time your media relations around those activities.

Examples

Any little extra thing you might be doing that is aiding your fundraising efforts for City to Shore, or the MS Society, would be something to pitch to the people on your new media list.

- Is your reason for riding personal? Riding for a family member or a close friend? If you have goal or a mission, share that with the media.
- Hosting a group riding skills class or a neighborhood bike ride, why not invite the reporter to attend, take some photos, and write about how you’re preparing for City to Shore? Maybe even invite them to join the ride.
- Local company sponsoring you or your team?
- Riding for a specific goal or purpose, like getting back in shape?
- Hosting a fundraising event, like a golf tournament, picnic where your boss will be in a dunk tank or a cycle-a-thon in your building lobby?

Please feel free to contact our chapter staff with any questions or to clarify any of this information.

Thank you in advance for your help with promoting **City to Shore!**

Dear [**Name of Editor/Reporter**]:

On Saturday and Sunday, September 29--30, I will join seven thousand cyclists to participate in the 32nd annual Bike MS: City to Shore Ride. My [**# of miles you will be riding**]-mile ride begins at [**your start location**] and concludes at the boardwalk in Ocean City, N.J. Most importantly, it benefits an amazing organization: The Greater Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

[Try to write an entire paragraph about why this event is meaningful to you and your personal connection to MS and/or City to Shore.]

I would be thrilled to talk to you about why I chose to participate in this event as a rider and share my personal story with you and for the opportunity to personally ask you to help us spread the word about City to Shore. I can call you in several days to provide you with more information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at [**your phone number**] or email me at [**your email address**].

Thank you in advance for your interest.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Yarissa Reyes

National MS Society

215-271-1500 ext. 24110

yarissa.reyes@nmss.org

Thousands of cyclists will ride to create a world free of MS

Bike MS: City to Shore Ride 2012 to be held Sept. 29-30 in South Jersey

PHILADELPHIA -- About 7,000 cyclists are expected to raise more than \$5 million to support research, programs and services for people with multiple sclerosis in the 32nd annual Bike MS: City to Shore Ride, taking place September 29-30 in southern New Jersey.

The ride, organized by the Greater Delaware Chapter of the National MS Society, has become one of the foremost cycling events on the East Coast. The vital funds raised by the ride are more important than ever, as 13,000 local people living with MS are turning to the National MS Society for help in record numbers.

City to Shore attracts corporate teams, families and friends of people with MS and individuals to join the movement to create a world free of MS. Each cyclist must collect at least \$300 in pledges to participate in the ride, with many raising hundreds or thousands of dollars more. In return, cyclists receive amenities such as bike mechanics, emergency transportation, catered rest stops every 15 miles, luggage delivery and much more.

Cyclists can choose from five different routes:

>One-day, 25-mile

>One-day, 45-mile

>One-day, 75-mile

>Two-day, 75 miles each day

>Two-day, plus an extra 25-mile loop on Saturday (scenic Century)

To register for the event or to volunteer, visit MScycling.org or call 1-800-445-BIKE.

About Bike MS: City to Shore Ride

The Bike MS: City to Shore Ride attracts thousands of cyclists and more than 1,000 volunteers, and raises millions of dollars for the National MS Society. Named by Bicycling Magazine as the "Best Cycling Getaway in NJ," riders enjoy flat terrain as they travel through the quaint towns and back roads of Southern New Jersey, pedal through the blueberry fields of Hammonton, experience the serene beauty of the Pine Barrens and listen to the waves as they roll into historic Ocean City.

About the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

MS stops people from moving. The National MS Society exists to make sure it doesn't. We do this through our home office and 50-state network of chapters by funding more MS research, providing more services to people with MS, offering more professional education and furthering more advocacy efforts than any other MS organization in the world. Join the movement at nationalMSSociety.org or by calling 1-800-FIGHT-MS.

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Fact Sheet

WHAT: The 32nd annual Bike MS: City to Shore Ride, presented by the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society

WHO: Over 7,000 cyclists and 1,000 volunteers from the Greater Delaware Valley region and across the U.S. will gather to help create a world free of multiple sclerosis. With routes from 25 to 175 miles, the ride offers something for everyone and all skill levels

WHEN: Saturday and Sunday, September 29 & 30, 2012. 75- and 100-mile route options begin in Cherry Hill, N.J. at 6 a.m.; 45-mile route option begins in Hammonton, N.J. at 10 a.m.; and the 25-mile route option begins in Mays Landing, N.J. at 8 a.m.

WHERE: Main starting location: PATCO's Woodcrest Station in Cherry Hill, N.J. (Exit 31 off Route 295; Tindale Dr Cherry Hill, NJ 08003). Cyclists ride to the Ocean City Civic Center (5th and the Boardwalk, Ocean City, N.J.) on Saturday, where they enjoy a post-ride celebration. Two-day cyclists complete a return trip for the final finish line celebration at PATCO's Woodcrest Station on Sunday. **Other starts:** Hammonton, N.J. (45-mile) and Mays Landing, N.J. (25-mile)

WHY: Our cyclists and volunteers are united in a single goal: creating a world free of MS. Now more than ever, the funds raised through Bike MS are critical to supporting vital services, programs and research for people living with multiple sclerosis. In this difficult economy, the 13,000 local families affected by MS are turning to the Greater Delaware Valley Chapter in record numbers, stretching our resources dangerously thin

DETAILS: Visit MScycling.org or call 1-800-445-BIKE

HOW TO REGISTER: Visit www.MScycling.org or call 1-800-445-BIKE. Registration fees apply and Cyclists must collect a minimum of \$300 in donations to participate

MEDIA CONTACTS: Yarissa Reyes (Yarissa.Reyes@nmss.org) and Kevin Moffitt (Kevin.Moffitt@nmss.org); 215-271-1500