

Youth On Their Own Media Communications Policy

Mission: Youth On Their Own supports the high school graduation and continued success of homeless youth by providing financial assistance, basic human needs and guidance.

Vision: Our vision is to empower young people on their own to become positive and productive members of our community.

Values: Education, Empowerment, Integrity, Respect & Compassion, Responsiveness

Purpose: To effectively manage communications through a formal, clearly defined channel in order to provide a consistent message, promote good public relations, mitigate crisis or serious negative repercussions for Youth On Their Own, and maintain a reputation of leadership and transparency on vital issues and breaking news.

We Promise:

In speaking with the media and public at any time, Youth On Their Own will provide factual information and messages most beneficial to the organization.

Youth On Their Own will help the media by providing information that enables them to do their jobs and positions the organization as a reliable resource on homeless youth, dropout prevention, nonprofit best practice and reinforces Youth On Their Own's role in the community as a trusted nonprofit leader.

In all communications, Youth On Their Own will create a positive opportunity for the public positioning of the sector as a whole. Messages will reinforce branding efforts of Youth On Their Own while being responsive to the community's needs. Youth On Their Own communications will always be based on identifying the problem, offering a solution and next steps – whether we are advancing our mission, promoting a fundraising campaign or addressing an internal crisis.

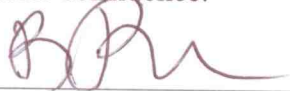

Policy Statements:

1. The chief spokesperson for Youth On Their Own is the Executive Director/CEO.
2. Back-up spokespeople are the Development Director and Board President.
3. Only the chief spokesperson and back-up spokespeople are authorized to release information to the media and to the public.
4. All other staff, board and committee members should be professional and helpful to the media by connecting them with the spokespeople, but will neither speak to the media nor provide any information unless prior approval was given by the Executive Director / CEO.

5. Youth On Their Own does not use its students for marketing, communications or public relations purposes. Only youth who are 18 years and older and have provided Youth On Their Own with written consent to be used in media communications, are provided training and have received authorization from the Executive Director / CEO may speak with the media.
6. Personal matters are to remain confidential.

In the case of a crisis:

1. All crises should be reported to a supervisor and the Executive Director / CEO.
2. The Executive Director / CEO will report any crises to the Board President.
3. The Board President will report the crises to the Executive Committee.
4. There should be a designated crisis management lead person, directing and coordinating all aspects of the organization's response including managing the messages and the media. There should also be one designated spokesperson that actually interacts with the media and other inquirers. In some cases, particularly in the event of a "small Crisis" the two may be the same person, in others; the jobs may be divided to facilitate efficient handling the situation. Most likely, but not necessarily, the two roles will be filled by the Executive Director / CEO.
5. All comments should be guided by professionalism and transparency, and serve to mitigate the crisis while reinforcing the leadership role of Youth On Their Own.
6. "No comment" is never an acceptable response. If an answer is unknown or cannot be immediately answered, make note of the question, tell the inquirer you will get back with him/her, and do so. If the question cannot be answered due to a policy (such as sharing personnel information, etc.) let the inquirer know that.
7. Youth On Their Own recognizes the importance of media relation to public trust. In times of crisis, maintaining effective media relationships will be particularly critical in bolstering public confidence.

	<u>2-19-15</u>
President	Date
	<u>2-19-15</u>
Secretary	Date