



## LEADERSHIP

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**QUESTION:** “Our group is excited about PHI’s WE’RE STILL HERE initiative. We have our letter ready to send to the newspaper, but would like to do more. Do you have other ideas for ways we can get this important campaign before the public eye?”

**ANSWER:** Hurrah! Hats off to your group for moving quickly to organize your involvement in the WE’RE STILL HERE campaign. It’s exciting to see groups chomping at the bit to MAKE THIS WORK! Coming this far, this soon, creates the valuable time you’ll need to be most effective.

What’s great about WE’RE STILL HERE is that this is a campaign that means something. In the past here in Nebraska, anyway, we have been satisfied with getting a proclamation from our governor or Unicameral Legislature setting aside a special time to honor polio survivors. Nobody ever noticed. WE’RE STILL HERE is different. NOW we get the chance to point out that we’re not simply has-beens sitting idly by, needing to be honored--we’re here, living an integrated life, actively participating.

You have your initial letter—now the next step is to get the word out to as many people, and through as many avenues, as possible, which is what it appears your group is prepared to do.

WE’RE STILL HERE can be our rallying cry—the voice of polio survivors everywhere rising up as one to remind the world that not only do we still exist, we’re a vital force in our communities: Leaders, workers, volunteers, significant family members. And then as a footnote we add that not only are we still here, so are some of the problems that accompany disability. And so also, in much of the world, is the scourge of polio itself.

Just imagine—suddenly on October 14 the words “WE’RE STILL HERE!” explode into the consciousness of citizens of the world from a million different angles all at once. POW! KAZAAM! HOME RUN!

How can we make this happen? What can EACH OF US do?

First, every group and individual writing a letter to the editor can send it on to many papers—the idea is to get letters into every newspaper in the state—indeed, in the world. Once the letter is written, it’s fairly easy to send duplicates. The National Newspaper Association website ([www.nna.org](http://www.nna.org)) lists state press associations under “Partners,” and some of these give names and addresses of member newspapers. Also, most libraries have Gale’s Directory of Print and Broadcast Media, which lists names, addresses, phone numbers, and even e-mail addresses for newspapers in every state.

Most papers also publish op-ed articles, which offer the opportunity to illuminate the message behind WE’RE STILL HERE. Why not follow your paper’s op-ed guidelines and give it a shot?

Call the media, talk with whoever it is who does feature pieces for local radio and TV stations and try to arrange for an interview in that week of October 14-20. Got a good talker in your group?

Send her on! (OK—or him.) Or how about a panel discussion? Get the media interested, and they'll give you time.

And then there are Internet interviews and blogs—there may be no end to the possibilities.

We can be as innovative as our talents take us. This is the time to put imagination to work. Be creative! For starters, do any of these ideas interest your group? Maybe there's something here you can build on:

- Some ad agencies do freebies in certain non-profit situations. Rather than let a small billboard sit empty, they might light up its side with the words WE'RE STILL HERE! Or maybe your group has an angel who will help you rent the space! Start now--plans need to be initiated TODAY.
- Think of the effect of WE'RE STILL HERE! shouting out at the riders of your city's public transportation. Can your group find a way to finance some of these ad spaces?
- How about a WE'RE STILL HERE! T-shirt?
- Libraries are always happy to give away bookmarks at their check-out counters. It's easy to make bookmarks on a computer and have them laminated at a copy center. Who in your group can make WE'RE STILL HERE! bookmarks?
- Plaster the town! Make up a zillion 8 ½" x 11" WE'RE STILL HERE! signs and place them in every mall, every store window in every shopping center. Hang them on all public bulletin boards (often in grocery stores, laundromats, libraries, banks, senior centers, universities, health clubs). This one's easy: Run them off on your computer or make a dash to Kinko's with one to be copied. If you need help taking them around, call in the family or a scout troop looking for a project. Be sure whoever is taking the signs around asks the proprietor or manager for permission before hanging signs.
- Remember to hit places where people work with those who are disabled, such as clinics, rehab and therapy centers, waiting rooms.
- Take out a small ad in a local or state-wide professional journal meant for architects or realtors—those who see firsthand our need for building access.
- Put a WE'RE STILL HERE notice in members' church bulletins. A simple message of thanks and hope may go farther than one might expect.

PHI is interested in what you and your group come up with. Send your best ideas to [info@post-polio.org](mailto:info@post-polio.org). Check the WE'RE STILL HERE logo on the site often yourself, as well. Much will be added as plans proceed.

Everyone can play a role in the success of this initiative. Are you networking? Why not talk up WE'RE STILL HERE! Help other groups and survivors understand the importance of getting people's attention, arousing curiosity about this campaign. We can give each other a hand and turn this initiative into dynamite!

Together we can wake up the world and make sure they know WE'RE STILL HERE!

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