

THE 3 R'S OF MEMBERSHIP

AAUW Lansdale Branch

Barbara Grula
Membership Vice-President

AAUW-PA Convention - April 12, 2008 - Exton PA



RECRUITMENT

Recruitment means visibility.

Set up display tables with AAUW membership material at community events. Have a sign-up sheet for more information about AAUW and follow up with an e-mail or telephone call.

Recruitment means inviting others.

1. Hold special events for members to invite their friends and co-workers.
 - Chinese dinner in February
 - Craft and Talent Show
 - Holiday Outing in December
2. Hold a membership brunch and offer ½ Association dues and ½ state dues.
3. Invite a friend or co-worker to a branch meeting, have them sign a guest book and introduce them to the membership. Follow up with an e-mail or phone call.

Recruitment means informing others.

1. Set up a website with information about AAUW, its mission statement, branch activities and projects. Include photos of women enjoying branch activities.
2. Send newsletters to potential members.

RETENTION

Retention means inclusion.

1. New members need to feel included. Send e-invitations encouraging new members to attend certain activities.
2. Give names of the new members to board members to contact for committee work.
3. Highlight new members in your newsletter under “Member Profiles.”

Retention means recognizing current members.

1. Give Certificates of Appreciation to members who did something special during the year, such as recruiting new members.
2. Encourage members to stay in the organization. Offer free memberships.

Retention means planning meaningful programs to keep members interested.

1. Monthly programs advancing AAUW’s mission
 - Political candidates’ forum
 - Movie on women suffragettes
 - Program on Pay Equity
2. Community Programs involving education of women and girls
 - Girls’ Leadership Program
 - Girls’ Science and Math Workshop
 - Creative Writing Competition for High School Students
 - Correspondence Program with At-Risk 3rd Grade Students

REINSTATEMENT

Reinstatement means staying in touch.

Send an e-mail or letter to those who did not rejoin and tell them that they are most welcome to attend any monthly meeting. Attach a list of the monthly meetings to the correspondence.

Using The Electronic Age To Build And Maintain Branch Membership

AAUW Lansdale Branch

Janice Arrowsmith
Newsletter Editor and Publicity Chair



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Branches need expedient ways to get information to 1) women outside our organization interested in learning about AAUW and to 2) branch members needing to be up-to-date on what is going on in their branch. The computer, newsletter, and press releases are effective ways to contact both groups.

COMPUTER membership-building includes the following:

Build a website that gives information to those seeking to know what our organization is and what it offers. Include links to all activities within the branch, the mission statement, descriptions of branch projects, and state and national AAUW sites. Especially effective is the inclusion of abundant photographs of women enjoying branch activities: photos *show* that this branch is dynamic. A password-protected part of the website can include the member directory, newsletter archive, treasurer's reports, board minutes, and other content-sensitive information of special interest to branch members. [Our website is responsible for adding nine new members in the last two years. I invite you to visit it at www.aauwLansdale.org; the entry to the password-protected "Members' Area" is user name aauw and password lansdale19446.]

Use e-mails to send messages to inform members about important events coming up, announce the online posting of the current newsletter, and notify subgroups about, for example, board meetings and press releases.

- Use e-mails to contact potential members who expressed an interest in AAUW.
- Use e-mails to contact new members to welcome them and direct them to activities.
- Use e-mails to send the branch newsletter.
- Use "e-blasts" to supplement or highlight events announced in the monthly newsletter.

Use Excel spreadsheets to keep track of membership rolls—who joined, when, directory data (address, phone, graduation and employment information), and dues paid. This information is easily shared with the treasurer, webmaster, and newsletter editor so that membership data is always current.

NEWSLETTER membership-building includes the following:

Include in every issue of the newsletter these elements that go beyond the usual current news and events:

- information that promotes AAUW, lists its benefits, and tells how to join
- information telling how to submit an article and the editor's deadline
- articles from or about other branches or the state or national AAUW
- review/recap of the past meeting
- photos of news and features (convey the essence, avoid posed shots)

Keep in mind the power that the newsletter has to reach out to inactive and prospective members. It should...

- report on events
- advertise upcoming meetings
- proselytize for new members
- provide details (such as maps, full names of persons and groups, descriptions)
- guide and/or entertain readers ("It's really great ... it has things that interest me ... I love to receive it!")

Use the newsletter to recruit:

- **Distribute it in the community**. Place five or more copies in each of several sites in the community where people need to have something to read while they wait. For example, medical/dental offices, car repair shops,

libraries, business/professional waiting rooms. When there are multiple copies, interested persons feel free to take one home. One group reported that half their new members came as a result of reading the newsletters picked up around town.

- Make one page a flyer. A branch flyer can promote the next branch meeting. Ask members to post the flyer at a location they visit, such as the grocery store, hairdresser, business/professional office, medical/dental office, repair shop, hardware store, diner, boutique, and so on.

PRESS-RELEASE membership-building includes the following:

One group reported that the majority of its new members came because of the press releases, principally in print media. Once set up, the timely use of press releases becomes routine.

- Create a list of local newspapers and go online to find out how they like to be contacted. Usually it will be by email.
- Whenever possible, make a personal connection by phone to the editor of the “community events,” “lifestyle,” or “calendar” page (or whichever other title is appropriate). This way, you and your branch become a voice or a person, not just a printed announcement.
- Make a template of the generic press release form that editors want. It will be concise and factual, and it will include a contact person. See sample press release below.
- Observe deadlines. Most newspapers require at least two weeks’ notice, and a good rule of thumb is to send press releases **THREE WEEKS** before the date of the event.
- Send a press release for every event to which the public is invited. Be sure to mention “free and [or] open to the public.”

Summary: Member recruitment and retention benefit from using the power of the computer, newsletter, and press release. The membership vice-president working with the newsletter editor, webmaster, and publicity person can present a modern, comprehensive portrait of the branch that attracts new members, motivates current ones, and promotes the history and depth of both the branch and AAUW.

addendum

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Attn: Weekly Calendars: Non-Profit Community Groups

From: Lansdale AAUW

Publicity: *Janice Arrowsmith 215-692-1022*

email: *[my email address here]*

INTERNATIONAL ROLES OF WOMEN

*Lansdale AAUW will meet on Tuesday, April 15, at 7:30 PM at the Educational Services Center, Hancock St., Lansdale. Former national AAUW president Mary Purcell will speak on AAUW's international connections. Mary will discuss AAUW's involvement in the United Nations, International Federation of University Women, and the United Nations Association. AAUW members are women with associate degrees and higher. **The meeting is free and open to the general public. For information, see www.aauwlansdale.org.***

Notice that the PR is short and focused. The editor will call if he/she wants more information.

- The shorter the announcement, the more likely it will be printed.
- The goal is to get the branch in print as often as possible.