

Keeping New Members

Getting new members is only half the battle. The other half is keeping them involved. For every member who is active in the organization, there are probably two who would be involved if they were properly motivated. The following ideas can be useful.

1. *Help members find a place in the organization.* Not everyone is a self-starter. Many will offer to help but have no idea where to begin. Develop a list of volunteer activities that includes a job description and approximate time commitment for each task.
2. *Welcome new people.* Officers and board members should watch out for new faces and welcome them assertively. Each new member or guest should be introduced to someone who lives near them or who shares a similar interest. Have an official “greeter” at each meeting.
3. *Avoid the appearance of cliques.* New members who see the same people running every project will feel excluded and may not return. Appoint people who are not part of the core group or steering committee to leadership roles.
4. *Welcome new ideas and input.* This is often difficult for people who long have been involved in the organization and are more knowledgeable than newcomers are. However, people coming into a situation for the first time are able to see things in a new light and can offer new solutions to old problems. They just might have the answer that you have been seeking!
5. *Organize meetings.* Busy people will not attend meetings or involve themselves in organizations they consider to be a waste of time. Have a written agenda before each meeting and stick to it.
6. *Maintain membership records.* Keep a file that lists members’ names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, family member names, occupation, special talents, concerns and areas of interest.
7. *Have fun.* The work of the neighborhood organization doesn’t need to be boring and drudgery. Sponsor parties and celebrations to get to know your neighbors better. Have events that appeal to all, including children.