

Membership Message - Workshop Wednesdays - March 17, 2021

In our first membership message we discussed how to retain our existing members - especially in this current COVID environment. Last week, we discussed how to conduct our meetings, and treat our guests, so that those people who walk through our doors will HAVE to become members! Today we're going to discuss where and how to find new members. Why do we want new members? They invigorate our clubs! And where do we find them - the #1 way is by word-of-mouth and personal contact.

Do you know who your club's best cheerleaders are? They're your club members - they already know how great you are! Give them business cards so they can share that message with those that they meet. They don't have to be individualized - just one for the club, containing printed contact information, with a space left on the card for that member to print in their own name, email address, and phone.

Pay attention to your branding when you're having anything printed or circulated or on websites and social media. You want members of your community to associate your brand to the wonderful work you do, so be consistent.

EVERYONE wants to be a part of a winning team! And where does your club shine the brightest? In my opinion, it's when you're out in the community accomplishing wonderful things. So, show off! Don't keep your identity a secret! Make sure everyone knows who you are! Some ideas of ways you can do this are with signage: Hang a club banner - these aren't very expensive and are so handy to use anywhere; put up those feather flags with your name on them - you know, the ones that move with the wind - they really get people's attention and are easy to install and remove. These are great while you're working, but also place signs that you can leave in the ground for the duration of the project that show who is doing the work.

And, for your members, provide or have available for purchase brightly colored hats, t-shirts, bandanas, or scarves. If they're personalized, so much the better! These really increase your visibility, bind your members together with a common goal, and make it look as if there are many more of you working than there really are.

Name tags are so important! They can help identify that you're part of the organization, and put a name with the face. They increase your accessibility to those you meet.

Always have a club flyer with you, including membership applications, that tells about your organization that you can give to people that seem interested.

Get creative! Invest in some stickers that you can give out. These are great attention-getters. A real estate firm that specialized in selling raw land had a sticker made that said “Get a Lot While You’re Young”. They went like crazy, you could find that firm’s name everywhere! Alaska Garden Clubs has one that says “Feeding Alaskan Moose since 1968”. People show them off and it’s pretty cheap, and very effective, advertising. Have a contest in your club to come up with a catchy motto.

Man a booth at community events to show off your club! Have pictures of some of your projects. Have your club come up with a little present to give away to those who stop. It can be as simple as a seed packet with a sticker that says “Compliments of Happy Folks Garden Club”. EVERYONE likes to get something for free. Include something for kids!

Invite a local newspaper reporter to see your community project in progress. You may have had a hard time getting coverage in the past, but now people are hungry for community interest stories showing a positive, inspiring message.

Have community beautification awards. Everyone who gardens is proud of what they grow, and to be honored by your peers is about as good as it gets! Locate especially lovely home gardens and businesses, too. Present a certificate and place a sign in their front yard. Take a picture and post it on your social media. You’ll be surprised at the number of people this will reach.

Think about expanding your club’s focus - many garden clubs have been all about flower gardening and flower shows. And, that’s great and part of who we are. However, there’s a great resurgence in growing your own food in backyard gardens which, if you embrace that, may very possibly bring in some younger members with children. Think about putting on some vegetable gardening workshops - put up flyers to advertise, put it out on your social media. Include ways to maximize your harvest in small spaces. Incorporate flowers with vegetables.

Let’s talk about the value of social media. I was a non-believer in its importance until I attended an outdoor function a few years back - when we could gather - and we made a point to ask how people found out about it. We had over 400 people attend, and over 80% heard about it over social media! This is huge! And, either free or fairly cheap! Get your grandchildren to set it up for you, or contact the social media committee at NGC and they’ll be glad to steer you in the right direction!

Remember, they can’t join you if they can’t find you! Next week, we’ll discuss more ideas on ways to find new members and we’ll share lots of resources with you!

If I can help you any further, please let me know.

Becky Hassebroek
(907) 456-3066
beckyhase@aol.com