

## **THE SECRETS OF WELCOMING WHERE EVERYBODY KNOWS YOUR NAME..... And they're really glad you came.....**

### **WELCOMING – PREPARING THE SOIL**

**So all your outreach efforts are starting to pay off... and now a brand new person walks into one of your meetings. How do you let them know you are really glad they came?**

If you walked into a meeting where the same members had been meeting for a decade and felt so comfortable that they didn't need to go out of their way to include you..... wouldn't you feel a bit like an outsider?

**Who knows how much that new person had to overcome to show up there....**

They may be really timid, or have to take 3 buses to get there, or be very insecure among people they don't know. Or worried about being the only person of color in a room full of white women. You could be their cheerleader, encouraging them on breaking through those reservations and fears. Encourage your members to compete with one another to be the reason this person joins WILPF.

And what about preparing to welcome a new member.... **like planting a new seedling, it's best to prepare the soil.** That means learning and prioritizing WELCOMING SKILLS.

### **TRAIN YOUR MEMBERS TO BE WELCOMERS**

Welcoming takes practice. And intention. It gets easier once you've set a pattern. But most of us are out of the habit.

Whenever a new person shows up, your welcomers walk over and introduce themselves. They ASK the new person what brought them, how they heard of you, if someone referred them, and ask if you can get them a chair, a coffee, a cookie. **Get them to SIGN IN!!**

### **THEY CAN GIVE NEW PEOPLE A 'RELATIONSHIP MAP'**

Like explaining how baseball works, sit next to them and point out what is happening, who the players are, what the backstory is. What this meeting will cover. Where you are in your annual plan. Give them a little window into your branch and what you've been working on. An insider's view.

**Have the WELCOMER formally INTRODUCE the new visitor,** because now they know a little about them. Have the rest of the members welcome the newbie. If your meeting has a break in the middle, encourage other members to greet the new person and start a conversation.

### **DEBRIEF WITH VISITORS AFTER THE MEETING.**

**Meet with them afterwards for coffee or call them** to ask what they thought of the meeting, the members, the plan... and remind them of next meeting dates or tasks they signed up for. Don't just email.

They may not open email from addresses they don't recognize. If they are under 40, text them first to see when they can chat or meet.

## **CELEBRATE WHEN SOMEONE JOINS AS A NEW MEMBER**

**Another face-to-face, one-on-one meeting is called for when someone formally JOINS your branch.**

See why a Membership Committee is so valuable? So you can share some of these meetings!

**Develop your own Welcome Package for new members and present it at a one-on-one meeting.**

- Include a membership directory so she can check in with people between meetings, or at least the members of the Leadership Team and Committee Chairs.
- Include your ANNUAL CALENDAR and information about any projects you are working on. Where does she see herself fitting in?
- Include a list of volunteer opportunities.... job descriptions... or roles you need to fill. Where would she feel most satisfied working?
- Print off the latest ENews and show her how to subscribe to it. Explain how we submit articles to ENews and Peace & Freedom. How to get on your own branch newsletter list.

**During your face-to-face NEW MEMBER WELCOME MEETING...**

**INSPIRE EMERGING LEADERS...**

**with tasks that build their confidence and their organizing skills.**

A frequent mistake we make sends new people running for the hills.

Just because the new young member can do excel or Publisher (because she has to do it at work) is no reason to saddle her with the most boring job of maintaining the membership list or doing the newsletter.

**First give her something to do that makes her feel a part of the action....** find out what she is good at and likes to do.

Ask her to plan the next meeting or think of a speaker for the Hiroshima event, or contact a new potential ally that you haven't had time to touch base with yet. Or plan a fundraiser.

Convince her what she does for WILPF really matters. And ask her where she can jump in.

This is a dialogue. Give and take.

*A minister told me a while ago that we make the mistake of asking for help in a public way, and thanking people privately. He said it should be just the opposite. We should ask people privately one-on-one for a very specific task, and thank them very publicly when they do what we asked. Most times we do just the opposite.*

**SMILE MORE.... PLAN TO ADD SOMETHING FUN & THANK PEOPLE REPEATEDLY**

People stay where they feel appreciated, and they feel they can contribute in a way that satisfies them.

My daughter once asked me why all WILPF women look so angry all the time.

We're so serious. Remember to SMILE. Try to make your meetings and events and actions FUN.

And say THANK YOU.

A lot!

Wear people out with thanks... find places to thank them even if you have to invent them.

People stay where they feel welcome, where they feel appreciated, where they feel they are being useful, and where they feel they are accepted as one of the gang.