

December 14th, 2008

Hi Everyone!

Well, I just finished visitations for the year last Thursday – just before the big winter storm! So, here is the recap of topics raised during visitations with Roseburg, Longview-Kelso, Yaquina Bay, Lebanon, Albany, Corvallis, Salem, and Eugene as promised.

The one topic, which came up repeatedly, was “How do we get new members?” This is a question asked on every level – Member, Club, District and International. If I had the answer to this, I would be in Vegas, raising enough money that we wouldn’t have to worry about dues increases for a very long time!!! But seriously, I believe we all have to be willing to talk about the great work we do and the fun we have doing it. Talk about why you are a member and what Altrusa means to you. Make it personal – talk about what you’ve experienced because of your membership! In addition, don’t forget to ask more than one time! Other than that, enjoy **your** membership and keep working on getting new members.

Following are many of the topics and responses recorded during the meetings. Please note, there is no special order in which the topics are listed. If you would like more information on any of these topics, please let me know.

We are a small club and our people are burning out. What should we do?

Cut back on projects and focus on membership. Make it fun events, not complicated.

Plan small projects, which can be completed fast. Example would be plan and serve a meal for the homeless.

Piggyback with another service organization in your area. Also, use the opportunity to invite people you meet during the project to join one of your meetings. And follow-up.

How do you budget for service projects? Do you pick projects and then raise the funds or do you raise the funds and then pick projects?

The majority of the clubs raise funds one year then allocate those funds to chosen projects the following year.

For very large projects (buildings, parks, etc.) spanning several years, one or two fund raising projects are designated for the long-term project and monies are put into interest bearing accounts until needed.

How do you pick service projects? Do you do a community assessment each year?

In the majority of the clubs, the community service committee reviews potential projects, estimating time and financial impact for each of the projects, then presents the projects to the membership. The membership then chooses which projects they want the club involved in.

(One of the clubs presents the potential projects to the membership the very first meeting in June so that work can be started immediately.)

Dues keep going up. What can we do to stop the increase?

As a District officer, I don't believe you can stop the increases for International, District, or Clubs expenses which is what dues covers. We have no control over printing costs, postage, speakers, the cost of gas, etc. These are normal expenses incurred for all businesses and non-profit organizations. What the clubs can do is plan a special fund raising event just for management expenses to keep club dues in line.

(Examples of management expenses could be yearbook printing, stationary, guest speaker expenses, new membership kits etc.)

One of the clubs has an annual auction for members, husbands and friends – being up front that all funds raised are NOT tax deductible. A fun event – and it keeps dues down.

How can we keep conference fees from going up?

District Twelve conference registration is the lowest of all the Districts when you look at the fact that we furnish seven meals plus we meet in nice locations (hotels). Many of the Districts meet at colleges, fair grounds, or locations like this and none serve seven meals! The District Board is constantly looking for ways to keep costs down. Your suggestions are always welcome also.

You, as a District Twelve Altrusan can be involved in the planning and or assisting in putting on the conferences. Think about loaning a microphone for a workshop, or donating time to print materials needed for a meeting, if you special speaker we could use for a conference, let us know. And because you know the speaker, they would be willing to reduce their rates – that would be super! All these things seem like small items – but they all add up!

How do we get members to attend meeting?

Staying on task at the meeting

Making all meetings fun

Use an agenda

Track who is not attending and telephone to make sure the person is OK.

Personal attention might be needed for new members – telephone and offer to pick up for meetings.

Have something they want to be there for

Give them a job – could be a greeter for a meeting, or collect funds for the dinner.

Invite new people to a project meeting.

Give newer members a fun new job

Make the new member feel welcome.

Use greeters

Does each club need to have a Service, Literacy, and International Relations project?

You have to do what is right for **your** members. Survey your members as to what they want to take part in.

Keep in mind, you don't want to burn out your members so as you build membership, more projects can be added.

We are a small club and need a fundraiser. How do we go about choosing one?

Assess members' strengths – and plan fundraisers based on those strengths.

(example – A Eugene Altrusan is a fantastic gardener, so they had a plant sale building the project on “the gardener's expertise!”)

Silent and live auctions. (For a large-scale auction – look for help from the Hermiston Altrusans!)

Hold a special dinner and sell tickets

Have a tea with a special speaker (Find a person from England who can advise how to put on a authentic English Tea with someone acting as a story teller)

What is the State of our District at this time?

Your current Board members are all dedicated to the principals of Altrusa.

We each do the very best job we are capable of... keeping in mind that Altrusa is a part of our lives, but not our lives.

Rhonda Hauter, a new member of the board this biennium, is now working with International to change "our image" or a new way of marketing Altrusa. (There was a presentation at the Olympia conference concerning this.) More to come on this!

Financially, our membership is down a little, and expenses are slightly higher then we wish they were. Nevertheless, we are working on keeping the District financially sound.

Your treasurer, Lois Brudi keeps a very close eye on our expenses so we are always looking for new ways to control our expenses.

How do we get members to attend conferences?

Club helps pay

Incoming President workshops

Talk it up – speakers

Problems:

Too much time

Distance

Community conflicts

May is a bad month

We are a very large District that is why we try to rotate the Areas we have conferences in. As the attendees at the joint visitation meeting discussed, whichever month and/or weekend was chosen for conference, it would not please everyone!

How do I find information concerning International projects?

Member's interest created from personal travels is one of the best ways to choose an International Service project

Magazines

Local newspapers

From other service originations – great way to partner with other groups

We get new members – but – we don't keep them.

Hold Orientation prior to initiating a new member.

Estimate time needed from each member

If a member is going through a difficult time, give him/her the space not to worry about their Altrusa commitment – hold onto the member and the service time will return when things settle down.

Encourage members to only do what they want and can do. (this was on one of the cards picked up after a meeting – but not sure this is the way to go!)

Limit required time for a set length of time say first year

Mentoring from the membership committee not the sponsor.

Have committee chairs personally request help from new people