

fact sheet #7

for Friends and Foundations

HOW TO REVITALIZE YOUR FRIENDS GROUP

Over time, it's possible that your Friends group will begin to stagnate. You may find that the same handful of people are doing most or all of the work year after year. Officers tend to rotate among the same folks. Membership might be dropping and you begin to have a difficult time recruiting new “worker bees.” This fact sheet provides some tips for bringing new life to your group.

1. Bring the core group together to identify problem areas for your group. Discuss possibilities for engaging new active members. Consider breaking your activities into discrete tasks to engage more people for shorter periods of time. (For tips, see the Toolkit “Tapping Into the Biggest and Most Active Group of Volunteers in Town - The Baby Boomers.”) Change your executive committee into a “leadership team” and brainstorm new projects and programs that might appeal to a new group of people.
2. Give a party for current and past members. It should be fun and include refreshments and music. Any excuse will do for the party: holiday, author event, recognition, or social evening.
3. Be sure to include those whose membership has lapsed and ask for small amounts of help from many people to ensure attendance. Have various people be responsible for bringing food and party supplies.
4. Send out pre-event and post-event publicity to local newspapers with names and photos. Include information about the party on your website, Facebook pages, and Twitter feed. Show how the Friends are a fun and meaningful group.
5. With the information you should now have, re-evaluate your goals and objectives. Did you have too broad a mission? Were you stressing fundraising to the neglect of other activities?
6. Reorganize the board of directors as a strategic leadership team and break down responsibilities so that individuals do not have too great a burden. Think task forces rather than committees.
7. Review benefits of membership, making sure they are in line with what your community expects.

8. Review communications to members; are they being kept informed? Are you using the materials United for Libraries provides through its newsletter, *The Voice*, and website (www.ala.org/united)?
9. Engage in a new community- or campus- wide membership drive and be sure to include a space in the membership brochure for new Friends to become active members then follow-up right away!
10. Consider the enrolling of new members as a year-round effort not limited to a certain period. Be sure brochures are available at every event and at the library desk and that you use various forms of social media to attract members and volunteers.
11. Appreciate and recognize efforts of every magnitude. Recognition is of primary importance to volunteers.
12. See United for Libraries' Toolkit #1, "Libraries Need Friends: A Toolkit to Create Friends Groups or Revitalize the One You Have" in the Friends and Foundations Zone at www.ala.org/united.
13. Find more ideas for revitalizing groups in *Even More Great Ideas for Libraries and Friends*, available from United for Libraries.

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