

Membership Bulletin from 1st Vice Kathy Keizer

Recently, I was given a copy of an article in the ALA (American Legion Auxiliary) magazine from February 2018, entitled “Making Your Membership Meaningful”. It had some very good points and ideas which are still usable two years later! I am going to give some highlights from the article and then a brief summary of what we should be doing to welcome our new members.

*The article started by stating their members felt the lack of goodwill among members was the biggest obstacle to membership growth. **Goodwill is a kind, helpful and positive attitude toward others.***

The article goes on to say there is a brief opportunity to demonstrate to our new members that they have made the right decision to join the Auxiliary. Many members join us with high hopes and expectations. They need to be welcomed and included so they feel they can make a difference in the world and to be engaged in serving our veterans, the military and their families.

Lastly, the article finished by saying when people work together, effectively, they can become a powerful force and influence the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of others. The lack of engagement and goodwill are key reasons why new members do not renew. Take advantage of the window of opportunity and engage your new members early and for life!

Here are some tips for ALL of us to help assure our new (and rejoin) members they are part of an amazing organization with a worthwhile mission. (I wish I would have had this to share in September but hopefully, we can use it for the future when we get back to “normal”, whatever that is! KK)

- **Listen more than you speak.** Be attentive and try to discover what your new members really want their experience in the Auxiliary to become.
- **Invite, invite, invite.** Take every opportunity to invite and include them in what you are doing. It will help you see what they really enjoy. If they say “no” to one event, it does not mean they won’t be interested in another.
- **Extend grace and forgiveness when others miss the mark.** If they don’t meet your expectation, forgive and move on. We have all needed this at one time or another.
- **Be reliable.** Commit only to what you feel you can truly do and then keep your commitment.
- **Adhere** to the Auxiliary’s Aims and Purposes, as well as the Code of Ethics.
- **Be flexible.** Plans may have to change so extend understanding in each situation.
- **Maintain a good reputation.** Make sure the story you share about others is a positive one.
- **Be on time, always!** If you can’t arrive on schedule, notify those expecting you in advance.
- **Keep confidences.** As you get to know your new members, you may find some will confide in you. Don’t share this information – you were trusted with something important.
- **Put some thought into your communications.** Communications can often be misread and interpreted to have a ‘nasty’ tone and then later discover it was not what the sender intended. Take care to go above and beyond to extend goodwill in all of your exchanges.