

MERL

TEAM NEWS



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Lions Clubs International

Special Points of Interest:

- Dealing with Invitation Anxiety
- Lions Learning Center
- Membership Grant Program

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Embracing Change

Change is all around us, and it is a fact of life for all of us. The world of 2008 is far different than it was 20, 10, or even 5 years ago...and it will be much different 10 years from now. The things we did in the past may not be what we need to do now...or in the future.

Change impacts countries, towns, families, and individuals. It also profoundly affects Lions Clubs International, because the ability to serve others is dependent on how quickly and effectively we can respond to their changing needs.

Change can be a frightening experience, and that is why we often resist it. We may be asked to discard familiar ways of thinking or of doing things and embrace new, unknown territories. By looking at things from a new point of view, we have an exciting opportunity to grow, both in numbers and in service.

As MERL team members, it is your responsibility to not just accept “what is,” but to seek out “what could be.” The first thing you must do as effective Lions leaders is develop a mindset that welcomes and embraces change, and then pass that mindset on to other Lions.



A New Kind of Meeting Place

As use of the Internet and club Web sites have become more and more prevalent among Lions, LCI is responding and has taken preliminary steps towards making online communication, business and public relations easier for your club.

It’s called the e-Clubhouse. It’s a place for members to meet and access club information. It’s a place to plan service activities and promote them to the community. It’s a place for the average Internet user to communicate over chat, update impending events, post photos, access LCI tools and information and so much more.

Each e-Clubhouse site will have a predesigned Web site template with the basic tools and applications needed to organize and manage e-Clubhouses and its members. It’s then up to the club to key in information and determine how it will be used.

The e-Clubhouse is scheduled to debut at the 2009 International Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. Are there features you would like to see be part of the e-Clubhouse? Do you know of similar sites that you can share? We want to hear from you! Send your ideas to the [New Clubs and Marketing Department](#).

A New Way to Look at the Sponsorship Role

A sponsor can be much more than someone who invites a new member into a club. A great sponsor can create a new Lion with outstanding longevity of service, one who tells others about their positive Lion experience. Every sponsor should:

- Provide a positive first impression about his or her club to a new member.
- Be a host; ensure a new member feels welcome at club meetings and during service projects.
- Be a mentor; guide the new Lion and answer questions he/she may have.

For more information on the benefits of sponsor involvement, consult the publication [Sponsorship is an Important Responsibility](#).

Do Your Clubs Have These Characteristics?

Clubs who invite members successfully often have common characteristics. Which of the following statements are true of clubs in your area?

- My clubs reflect the diversity of their community. There are [student members](#), [family members](#), and [graduated Leo Lion](#).
- My clubs are inviting new members. Each year there are plenty of members with [membership keys](#), sponsorship certificates and [club level invitation awards](#).
- My clubs have creative invitation ideas. Some clubs brainstorm about which people to invite using a [recruiting wheel](#), while others use [best practices for invitation](#).

If the clubs in your area do not have these characteristics, you as a membership chair can provide them with the tools needed to successfully invite new members.

Dealing with Invitation Anxiety

Many clubs have trouble inviting new members because they don't know what to say or how to approach someone. That is where you, as a membership growth chairperson, can help!

Suggest that every Lions club in your area create a sell sheet or a list of reasons people might want to join their club. Each selling point should contain information on what their Lions club does and how many people the club serves with a specific project. Each point should also talk about how a prospective member can become a Lion or get involved. Try a sell statement like this: "All club members attended the Lions Health Day where we screened 150 community members for glaucoma. In the coming months, we plan to..."

For more information on a sell sheet, see pages 11 and 12 of the [Club Membership Chairperson's Guide](#).



Start Planning Now for Lions Worldwide Induction Day

It's that time of year to start planning for Lions Worldwide Induction Day taking place April 25, 2009, and LCI has an [updated guide](#) to get you started.

Start by determining which clubs in your district will be participating in Worldwide Induction Day and inform your district governor. Next, contact membership and public relations chairpersons to develop recruitment ideas and to get started on a public relations campaign. Will the event take place during your district convention? If not, form a [Worldwide Induction Day](#) committee.

Download the updated Lions [Worldwide Induction Day Club and District Planning Guide](#).

The Extension Workshop Program Gets a New Layout and a New Look

Multiple districts and districts in North America, Australia, and New Zealand who host an Extension Workshop will see a new layout to the program. A pre-workshop day has now been added. Consultants will arrive one day earlier to meet with key Lions to discuss the workshop checklist, view areas for new club development, and meet with community leaders to generate leads. The certified guiding Lion training has been moved to the end of the pre-workshop day to open up the last day of the workshop for recruiting and follow-up efforts.

Upon approval of a workshop, the district governor will receive a Pre-Workshop Kit to help prepare for the upcoming workshop. The kit contains: Extension Workshop Checklist, Participant Availability Sheet, Prospect List of Key Leaders, Workshop Promotion Sheet, as well as flyers to post to promote the workshop. LCI will also supply all participants with a folder of the materials including PowerPoint summary sheets. In addition to the new layout of the program, the workshop materials have been redesigned to reflect the organization's new branding image.

If you are interested in hosting an Extension Workshop in North America, Latin America, Australia or New Zealand please contact [Tamara Wisneski](#), New Clubs and Marketing Department.

Campus and Family Dues Reminders

- Students of newly chartered Campus Lions clubs, or new clubs with a majority of student members, are required to prepay one year international dues at the student member rate of US\$19.50. Please submit student payments and certification forms with the charter application.
- New family clubs are required to have a minimum of ten (10) full paying members at the time of charter.

Net Savvy: A Guide for Lions in the Digital Age

Learn more about how you can use the Internet to conduct club business and communicate with members online. Download [Net Savvy: A Guide for Lions in the Digital Age](#).

Certified Guiding Lion Training PowerPoint

The revised certified guiding Lion PowerPoint and instructors manual will be available beginning early December.

Extension Workshop Results for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year

North America

35 completed

26 scheduled

* Since the program's inception in 2006, 171 clubs and 32 branches were opened.

Latin America

23 completed, 2 scheduled

* Since the program's inception in 2007, 57 clubs and 3 branches were opened.

Australia/New Zealand

1 completed, 2 scheduled

** All Results as of Friday, October 17, 2008





*“Not every-
thing that is
faced can be
changed, but
nothing can
be changed
until it is
faced.”*

James Arthur Baldwin

Induction: The First Opportunity to Retain

Induction is the first opportunity—either formal or informal— that a Lions club has to retain a new member. This important activity is often overlooked in terms of retention.

Every club should hold an induction to:

- Honor the choice a prospective member has made to become a Lion.
- Provide the Lions club an opportunity to say “thank you” to the prospective member for committing to serve the community as a Lion.
- Begin service in a great way.

A [new member induction ceremony](#) can be held in many forms. It can be held as a one-time formal ceremony or it can be a longer more informal welcome, such as a series of new member profiles in the club newsletter, a listing of new members on the club Web site, or a dinner meeting between new members, sponsors and officers.

Speaking to Clubs About Retention

Part of the district and multiple district retention chairpersons’ responsibilities is to speak to clubs about retention. Before speaking about retention, consider the following:

- A person chooses to remain a Lion for largely the same reasons they join—to work in their communities on projects, to participate, to be hands-on, to be recognized, to be social, etc.
- Often, member retention is seen as an activity designed to fix a club’s larger problems. Instead of fixing problems, retention within a club can be viewed as a positive activity about renewing ones membership.
- Clubs should be retaining a new member throughout his or her time as a Lion. Lions should feel welcome at their first meeting, their first service project, etc. Clubs should develop members through [orientation and mentoring](#) and survey members through the [How Are Your Ratings Questionnaire](#).
- Retention does not have to be a complicated process. Instead, retention can be about the best of human nature: listening to and observing members and responding to their concerns.

A Great Place to Look for Retention Ideas

The [Club Retention Chairperson’s Guide](#) is a great tool that every club can use when looking for retention ideas. Specifically, look to pages 9-13 for tips on recognizing members, improving involvement, communication, meeting structure and attendance.



FDI In Full Swing – What's Next?

The [Faculty Development Institute \(FDI\)](#) program is positively impacting Lions' leadership training worldwide. Hundreds of Lions have enthusiastically participated in this unique program during the past three years. This means that the pool of skilled leadership trainers has significantly increased. What's the next step?

As a MERL chairperson, you have access to a number of highly-qualified potential faculty members for your next local leadership institute, for your VDG or DGE training, or for any other Lions training programs you are planning for the coming months. You also have the opportunity to support them in conducting a FDI in your own area, and in so doing, you enlarge your own base of skilled trainers even further.

Training needs exist and skilled trainers are available. All you need to do is make the connection. We are on the threshold of an exciting time for Lions leadership development and MERL teams are key to our success. Make use of these new resources - contact your district governor or the [Leadership Division](#) for a list of faculty members in your area!

Leadership Development Support

The 2008-2009 Multiple District Leadership Development Funding Program still has funding available to support two specific training programs at the multiple district level: training of vice district governors and training of sub-district leadership development chairpersons. Contact the [Leadership Administration Department](#) for further details.

Lions Learning Center

2008-2009 marks the fifth year of [Lions Learning Center \(LLC\)](#), LCI's library of online courses accessible through the Leadership Resource Center on the [LCI website](#). So why have thousands of individuals worldwide chosen to take advantage of this new way of learning? The reasons vary, but most often one or all of the following are cited:

- Convenience: Lions can participate in quality training at convenient times and locations with no travel, which saves time and money.
- Customization: Each participant controls the pace, sequence and content of training. Participants choose which courses to take and take their time in completing each, repeating material as necessary.
- Efficiency: The time between learning material and applying it can be shortened. Participants can take a course in the morning and put what they've learned to use that afternoon.
- Effectiveness: LLC courses make excellent pre-work assignments to prepare trainees for upcoming face-to-face training sessions.
- Fun: Participants find the short courses interesting and fun!

[Lions Learning Center](#) offers user-friendly, interactive courses in all LCI official languages and is a valuable tool for MERL teams charged with achieving results. The LLC provides a unique opportunity to enhance leadership skills twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week – and remember, the most effective leaders are always learning!





Membership Grant Program

The Membership Grant Program provides a maximum of US\$5,000 to help districts test new marketing strategies or reach new markets to recruit members. With each application, districts are required to match 25 percent of the program cost. Many districts have utilized the funding for extension activities in new areas, to translate materials to reach new ethnic groups and to develop marketing materials.

For more information or to obtain a copy of the Membership Grant Application, contact the [New Clubs and Marketing Department](#).

Working Towards Your Goals

As part of the MERL Team, you should be familiar with situations in the areas you oversee and have thought about how to solve membership growth, extension, retention or leadership challenges. At nearly halfway through this fiscal year, can you answer the following questions?

1. Have you identified clubs that need assistance? Try a chart like this:

Club Name	Challenge	Action Plan to Address Challenge
_____	_____	_____

2. Have you identified clubs that are doing well in membership growth, extension, retention or leadership? Try a chart like this:

Club Name	What has gone well?	Action the club has been taking
_____	_____	_____

3. What is your district governor’s plan for 2008-2009?

4. What can you do to help the governor reach those goals?

If you are able to answer these questions, you should feel good about that. If you are having trouble answering, that’s OK too. Remember: It’s never to late to start inviting new members, building new clubs, retaining existing members or leading individuals to progress.

Volunteer Leadership

The most important difference between managing business employees and leading volunteers is that club members have many choices; so inclusiveness, consensus building and active involvement are key elements to success as a leader of volunteers. To maximize your success as a MERL team, each MERL leader must maintain Lions’ interest in being members and in being involved in service activities, membership growth initiatives and in leadership. You must develop support among the members for projects, member recruitment and personal development, and committee work.

Volunteer Leadership is a workshop focused on effectively leading volunteers. To learn more, visit the [Training Materials](#) area of the Leadership Resource Center or contact the [Leadership Division](#).

“If everyone is moving forward together, then success will take care of itself.”

Henry Ford