

Well fellow Lions, we are into the last half of our year and I have thoroughly enjoyed talking with each and everyone of you regarding any issues or ideas you have had and just Lionism in general.

As we move forward something that has struck me is the number of members we have dropped this year, some of no fault of our own such as a member moving or a death of a member. But I can't help to think that some of these drops could have been avoided. Retention is a very large concern this day, not just in our district but as an organization world wide. If we add members only to lose a member just the following month or sooner, maybe we lose the new lion, it is effort in vain and the loss of perhaps a great opportunity. I understand LCI has numerous documents and pointers to help us understand things we can do to assist in retention, but I have decided to share with you, some of the things I feel are important and some that maybe quit easy for you to introduce into your everyday activities as a Lion.

Take Sponsorship Seriously

Some members sponsor people into the club and think that's all they have to do, but actually if you listen to the oath you take that's not the end of it. As a sponsor you should encourage the new Lion to take part in any and all projects they are capable of, be careful not to push too much though you may scare them and get them thinking they do not have the time to be a member. Remember, be thankful for any time they can give. Always try to keep in touch with YOUR member; if they are unable to make a meeting, fill them in what happened at the meeting, inform them of events that are coming up and let them know of things that they can help with. Encourage your member to ask any questions they have; the only stupid questions are the ones not asked. Be sure to respect their opinion and support any idea they have, if your member has an idea for a project, it may need some adjustments to fit the operations of your club, help them do that and explain to them the reason but do not turn it down right away and be sure to show them support at the meeting they bring up the idea, if the club sees a new member having the backing for a project from a current member it will go along way.

Encourage and Involve New Lions

You may not be a sponsor of a new Lions, but there is much you can do to help retain new members. Encourage them to take part in any functions of the club, encourage participation in meetings; ask them for any input they may have, some new members may not want to speak up but when asked may have some fantastic ideas and a different way to look at an issue the club is having. Have them participate or chair committees of different events; a new spin on that stale fundraiser may turn it back into the successful it use to be. Most importantly, respect their opinion and and input on the operations of the club, just because they are new doesn't mean they don't have more efficient ways of things to work.

Involve and Respect the Senior Lions

Not only is it important to involve our new Lions, but it is equally important to involve and encourage our senior Lions. Many times a senior Lion becomes stagnant; maybe due to the club moving into the future and they are unsure what they can do or it maybe because they are

a little older and not as physically capable as they once were and feel they are not able to do anything worthwhile anymore. Remember they were probably there through the tough times when there wasn't as many funds to go around or when there was no club house to call your own, they worked and possibly used their assets as collateral to help out the club, these members still deserve to be apart of any and all facets of the club. If a member is up in age and maybe not in the best physical condition there are still things I'm sure they are able to do. Maybe you have a catering coming up and there needs to be 200 + napkins to be folded or perhaps there is a ticket sale going on and you need someone to sit at the ticket table at the local store for an hour, the simplest of tasks I know but it can help make that member feel like a valuable part of the club once again. Lean on those senior Loins for advice and guidance on not just your club operations but as well as the operations of LCI. Yes times have changed, but we are always tied to our past, maybe they have a project that used to be successful but was discontinued for an array of reasons but now could be implemented again and become quite successful. Our senior Lions are a wealth of knowledge and we must remember to use them and include them.

Fun and Fellowship

Incase you haven't already figured it out, I am big on the fun and fellowship of our organization. We are a service based organization and we should take pride in that, but all work and no play makes for a dull and demanding organization. Remember to have fun at your meetings, there are not many people out there that LOVE boring old meetings. Do something to liven up your meetings, it may be as simple as a joke or a funny sound at the most inopportune time, it is quite useful to break the tension when dealing with a serious problem and who knows once everyone has a laugh someone may see a different way to attack the problem. Use the TailTwister position within your clubs. Ensure you have someone in place that enjoys to have fun and can come up with some great fun games, there are resources on the LCI Resource Center to assist any TailTwister with their efforts. Remember to give your TailTwister time to perform their duties, take part when they look for participants for games and enjoy, I'm sure you will have plenty of fun. But we have to remember that we don't only have to make the meetings fun, but our functions as well. Crack a joke while you take up the potato for that catering, turn on some music while you cut out that cold plate, anything to liven up the place and break the tension and take the members mind on the work they are actually doing.

Remember, many hands make light work, thus the more members we can keep the more we can do. Sometimes we lose members through reasons we cannot help, but if we can limit the loss of members that were preventable our numbers will grow that much quicker, thus helping our more people in our community, zone, district and world wide. AND that is why we ultimately become LIONS.

Yours in Lionism
2nd VDG Mike

