



Welcome to the  
CVESD Spring Parent Workshop



# Getting It Done:

## *3 Strategies to Increase Parent Engagement at Your School*

BEATRICE G. FERNÁNDEZ AND JEANA PRESTON  
WEEAC CONSULTANTS

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2022

# Introduction to the work of the Western Educational Equity Assistance Center WEEAC – Region IV

Frances B. Miller, Principal Analyst  
Western Education Equity Assistance Center  
Metropolitan State University of Denver

- We are one of four regional Equity Assistance Centers funded by the United States Department of Education **authorized** under the Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Promote equitable educational opportunities in the area of Race, National Origin, Gender, Religion, and other aspects of K-12 Education
- Services are Free or at low cost



Western Educational **EQUITY** Assistance Center

# The 3 Ms: Motivate • Mobilize • Mentor



*Parenting is our second chance to have a great parent-child relationship.*

# Agenda



Welcome and Introductions



Overview: How to Increase Family Engagement at your School



The 3 Ms: Motivate, Mobilize, Mentor



Motivate—Make it fun!



Mobilize—Get them There!



Mentor—Be a Talent finder!



Wrap-Up

# **PANDEMIC PUSH—HIGH LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT ARE HERE TO STAY!**



**A 2021 national survey of parents indicates 93% of parents will be just as involved or *more* involved compared to a year ago when their children were learning from home.**

**The survey also indicates the top 3 priorities for parents:**

- #1) Safety and security of students and staff**
- #2) Making progress academically in reading, writing and math**
- #3) Addressing students' mental health and emotional well-being**

*Source: Going Beyond the Headlines, released by Learning Heroes, Fall 2021*



## 8 GREAT IDEAS TO INCREASE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

- 1. Celebrate *National Family Involvement Day* – November 16, 2022.**  
A yearly opportunity for schools and parent leaders to honor the powerful contributions of parents/family members/caregivers at school and home. As simple as morning coffee, appreciation banners, or grandparents joining students for lunch. <https://www.projectappleseed.org/national-parent-day>
- 2. Organize a *Study Skills Workshop*** for parents/children (grades K-1 and upper grades). Identify presenters who can share strategies for helping children get/stay organized to learn, and ways parents can support them.
- 3. Plan a *Family Book-Making Activity*.** Work with school staff and parent leaders/PTA, other groups to provide materials (paper, pens, art materials) so families can construct their books together. Find fun ideas online.
- 4. Organize a tradition of having some fun morning activities** several times each school year, i.e. *Doughnuts with Dads, Muffins with Mom, Grandparents Day*. These activities can be simple and brief, and provides a friendly opportunity for families and school staff to communicate. Provide refreshments and giveaway a free book to each family.



## 8 GREAT IDEAS TO INCREASE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

5. **Organize a *Resource Force*** of parents and staff members to work together to identify resources for all the school-wide activities that need support. Many businesses and resource organizations in the school community are happy to provide support but are waiting to be asked.

6. If your school does not have an organized system for ***Room Parents*** (virtual and in-person) consider asking the principal to create a task group of parent leaders and school staff to work on setting one up. This can be very effective for increasing family engagement.

7. **Work with the principal and school staff to schedule, “*Watch-Us-Work-Wednesdays*”** several times during the year. These are specific 2-hour blocks of time when parents are invited to visit their children’s classrooms anytime during the 2 hours to watch an activity or read a book with their children.

8. **Virtual Family Movie Night:** Many schools are taking advantage of outdoor movie events as a way to bring people together and as a safe option. An outside setting means it's less distracting if kids are loud. [Movie Licensing USA](#) is the exclusive provider of one-time and annual Public Performance Site Licenses to K-12 Schools and Public Libraries for movies from major Studios.

## Family Engagement in a Virtual World



5/1/25/1

“Get into bed and I’ll text  
you a story.”

## Mobilize

Make contacts with families easier using a combination of technology and welcoming-school strategies

## Family Engagement in a Virtual World . . . will parent meetings *ever be the same?*

### Virtual Parent meetings:

- Virtual meetings throughout the state generated a lot more participation, from 20% to 80%
- Meetings were filled with many new faces
- Working parents with scheduling challenges were able to sign in and participate
- Interpreters were able to provide services easily through different audio channels



### In-person / Hybrid Parent meetings:

- Many families are ready to meet in person
- Some parents prefer a hybrid meeting where they can sign in and participate and meet other parents
- Posting meetings and materials online will benefit parents not able to attend due to work responsibilities or other issues



## Recruitment Strategies that Work

1. **Establish a Welcome Committee.** It can be as simple as a phone call or text to new parents to welcome them to the school or a parent group.
2. **Create a Welcome Packet.** *PTO Today* has welcome packet ideas, which include great resources to help answer questions and relieve back-to-school jitters for both new and returning parents.
3. **Take advantage of technology or apps that facilitate communication** such as Facebook, texts, group chats, Instagram, etc.



4. **Meet with or survey the principal and teachers at your school to find out how they are reaching out to parents at each grade level.** Consider adding an agenda item for discussion to an upcoming DAC/DELAC meeting (*Reaching Out to Parents: What Works?*). Give parents time to discuss in small groups what is working at their schools and to share the best ideas with the whole group.
5. **Survey parents to find out what type of meeting works best for them and why, and which method or methods of district/school communication they use more often.**

# Mentor—Be a Talent Finder!



*“Those who constantly point out reasons why it can’t be done should not interrupt the persons doing it.”*

# Mentor—Be a Talent Finder!



## *ARE YOU A LEADER?? YES!*

- Give yourself some credit—you have already stepped up!
- If your actions inspire others to do more, learn more, and become more—then you are a leader.
- Good leaders give their team credit for successes and take more than their share of the blame for setbacks.

# Mentor—Be a Talent Finder!

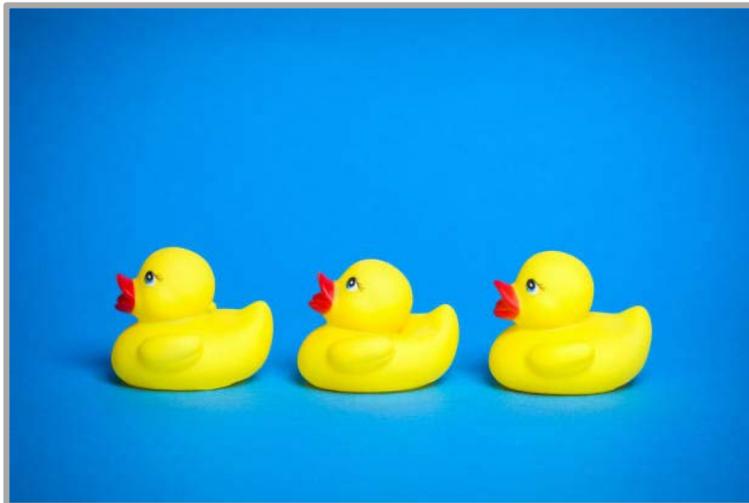


## WHY SHOULD YOU BE A LEADER AND A MENTOR?

- Other parents are waiting to be asked. Go ahead and ask them! *“Would it be possible . . . ?”*
- Identifying potential parent leaders builds your own leadership skills.
- You can develop a “deep bench” for your elementary school as you transition to middle school.

# Mentor—Be a Talent Finder!

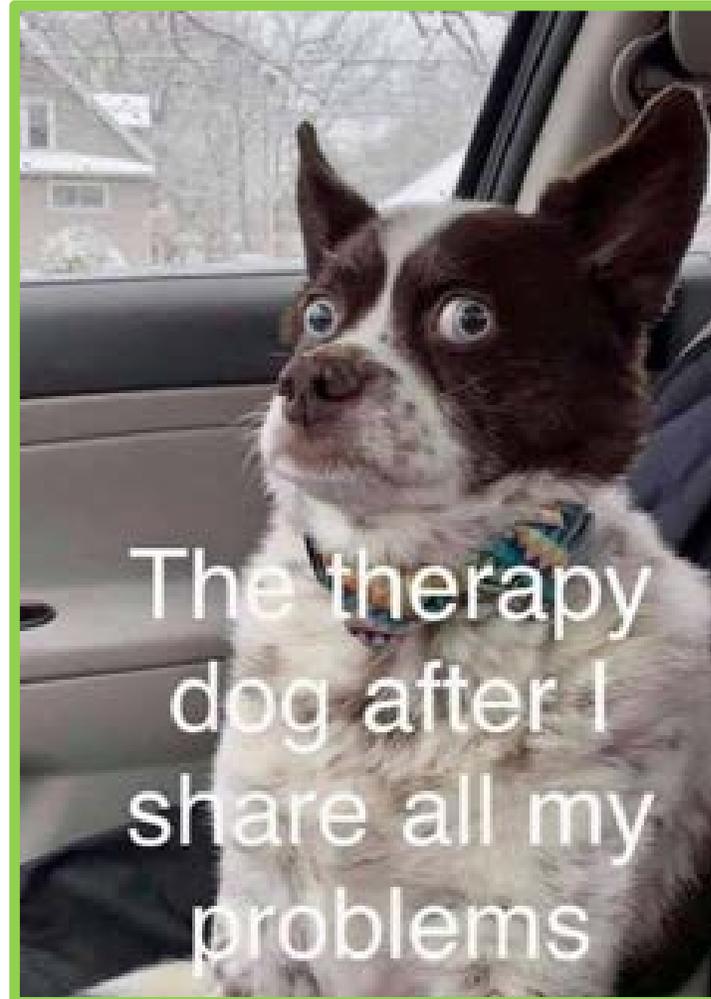
The universe distributes talents among all, but opportunities are not necessarily distributed equally.



***Ducks pick ducks.***

Admiral Michael Mullen,  
Ret. Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

# Mentor—Be a Talent Finder!



The therapy  
dog after I  
share all my  
problems

## STEP 1

### WHAT ARE THE 3 STEPS FOR MENTORING OTHERS?

#### **STEP 1:** Identify some parents with leadership potential

- Find new talent—you may know some already—they are waiting to be asked.
- Think about how to fit parents' time availability/willingness to learn specific tasks that need to be done.
- Check with the school about any requirements for parents- or volunteers on campus.

## STEP 2

### WHAT ARE THE 3 STEPS FOR MENTORING OTHERS?

#### STEP 2: Make a Connection with Parents

- Be friendly and welcoming. Explain how their help with upcoming events and activities helps students.
- Start with small “asks and tasks” so parents aren’t overwhelmed. (Is it a task they can do with you or another experienced parent leader?)
- Be clear about exactly what the task is and the date/time frame.
  - How much time will it take (one-time task or ongoing commitment?)
  - Will you be their contact for questions or any problem-solving issue?
  - Do they need any materials for the task?

## STEP 3

### WHAT ARE THE 3 STEPS FOR MENTORING OTHERS?

#### **STEP 3: Give guidance and stay in touch**

- Check in to ask: “*How’s it going?*” Provide any extra information/assistance as needed.
- **VERY** important: thank them for their efforts—publicly when possible—and ask if they would be willing to volunteer again.



**Page 2 – 8 Great Ideas to Increase Family Engagement**

**Page 4 – Hosting Virtual Events for Families**

**Page 6 – The 3 Ms: Mobilize**

**Page 7 – What Are the 3 Steps to Mentoring others?**

**Page 8 – Room Parent: Volunteer Information**

**Page 9 – Room Parent: Volunteer Guide**

**Page 10 – 25 Ways to Catch and Keep Volunteers**



**There are people who take  
the heart out of you and  
there are people who put  
it back.**

Elizabeth David, Author



## THE WEEAC TEAM THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

### **Lalaine Perez**

Executive Director, Language Development and Instruction  
Services and Support

### **Patricia Pimentel**

Coordinator, Language Development and Instruction  
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District Spanish Interpreters



## CVESD SPRING PARENT WORKSHOP

### **Getting it Done:**

### ***3 Strategies to Increase Parent Engagement at Your School***

**May 17, 2022**

*WEEAC Presenters: Beatrice G. Fernández and Jeana Preston*



Western Educational **EQUITY** Assistance Center

# CVESD Spring Parent Workshop

## Agenda

May 17, 2022

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**Welcome and Introductions**



**Overview: How to Increase Family Engagement at your School**



**The 3 Ms: Motivate, Mobilize, Mentor**



**Motivate: Make it Fun!**

*Motivate*—learn some new, practical ideas and activities for getting more parents to support their children at school and at home



**Mobilize: Get Them There!**

*Mobilize*—how to make positive contacts with families easier using a combination of technology and welcoming-school strategies



**Mentor: Be a Talent Finder!**

*Mentor*—ways you can identify the leadership potential in other parents and help them assume leadership roles



**Wrap-Up**

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Please note: “Parent” refers to any adult responsible for the well being and care of a child.

## 8 GREAT IDEAS TO INCREASE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



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### BUT FIRST. . . . TIPS for Success: *Getting Started*

- **Start with a great idea!** The suggestions below have been successful at other schools. Some are “tried and true” and some may be new ideas for you.
  - **Start by bringing others on board!** Identify other parent leaders/groups and school staff you need to involve or consult.
  - **Start EARLY!** You will need more time than you think.
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#### 1) Celebrate **National Family Involvement Day** – November 16, 2022

This day provides a yearly opportunity for schools and parent leaders to honor the powerful contributions of parents/family members/caregivers at school and home. It can be as simple as morning coffee and appreciation banners. Some schools have students make thank you cards for parents or invite Grandparents to join students for lunch. <https://www.projectappleseed.org/national-parent-day>

- 2) Organize a **Study Skills Workshop** for parents and their children (grades K-1 and upper grades). Work with school staff to identify presenters who can share strategies for helping children get and stay organized to learn, and ways parents can support them.
- 3) Plan a **Family Book-Making Activity**. Work with school staff and parent leaders/PTA, other groups to provide materials (paper, pens, art materials) so families can construct their books together. It can have a theme like illustrating their own family history, be connected with a specific holiday or event, or based on characters from a favorite book. There are many fun ideas online.
- 4) Organize a tradition of having some fun morning activities that can be done several times each school year. Schools often have **Doughnuts with Dads**, **Muffins with Mom**, **Grandparents Day**. (Invitations can also include students' extended family/friends and community volunteers.) These activities can be simple and brief or can also include free children's books to build home libraries or other incentives. These activities provide refreshments and a friendly opportunity for families and school staff to communicate.

- 5) Organize a **Resource Force** of parents and staff members who want to work together to identify and get resources for all the school-wide activities that need support. Many businesses and resource organizations in the school community are happy to provide door prizes, refreshments or other support for activities but are waiting to be asked. (The principal can provide information on letterhead about the district/school's non-profit status and tax identification number.)
- 6) If your school does not have an organized system for **Room Parents** consider asking the principal to create a task group of parent leaders and school staff to work on setting one up. This means each teacher has one or two parent volunteers to help communicate with other parents about upcoming events and classroom activities. This can be very effective for increasing family engagement.
- 7) Work with the principal and school staff to schedule, "**Watch-Us-Work-Wednesdays**" several times during the school year. It is advertised in advance so that parents can plan to come. These are usually a specific 2-hour block of time when parents are invited to visit their children's classrooms anytime during the 2 hours to watch an activity or read a book with their children depending on the classroom schedule. Their children explain the activity and may share some of their current work with their parents. Parents are also invited to stop for coffee/refreshments in a central area before leaving. This is an opportunity to have sign-up sheets for future volunteer opportunities.
- 8) **Virtual Family Movie Night:**  
Many schools across the country are taking advantage of outdoor movie events as a way to bring people together and as a safe option for. An outside setting means it's less distracting if kids are loud. Families can bring a blanket or lawn chair for easy setup! You can raise funds by selling healthy snacks and refreshments. Reminder: Many groups hold movie nights at their schools, not knowing that use of copyrighted materials outside of the privacy of a home setting has been a copyright law violation since 1970. Unless the school itself has a license from an agency, your parent group cannot borrow movies from a public library, bring movies from home, or rent movies from a video store to show at school. [Movie Licensing USA](#) is the exclusive provider of one-time and annual Public Performance Site Licenses to K-12 Schools and Public Libraries for movies from major Hollywood Studios. Prices vary depending on size of school and if the event is inside or outside.



## Strategies for Success

Here are three key strategies to keep in mind as you begin brainstorming and planning a virtual event for your families:

### Do your research

- A key element to success is taking the time to ask your families what they would like to see/learn from the virtual events that you will be hosting and in what format.
- You can send out a survey, call your families and ask them personally, or reach out to some of the parent leaders that serve on your Parent Advisory Council. Ask the families in your program what content most interests them, when they would be available to attend, and what platform they would most prefer to use.
- While you might not be able to meet every family's needs through one event, you will be able to create a plan that you know aligns with the needs, interests, and specific desires of the families you serve.

### Leverage your existing resources

- As we have mentioned previously, virtual events should be an extension of what you already do. Consider the resources that you already have available to you as you begin planning any virtual events.
- Think about the curriculum you use, the books you already have, the content that you have already taught the kids in your program, and the supplemental materials that you might already have or have access to. Also, consider the different platforms (i.e. websites, Zoom, social media, etc.) that you already use in your program.

- Remember that it takes longer to create something from scratch than it does to create an extension to resources that already exist.

## Be Flexible

- Hosting virtual events is very new to many programs, children, and families. Remember to be flexible as you are starting off. Things might not go as planned the first couple of times around.
- The children might not be interested in being on camera. The families might get frustrated because their kids won't sit still and "learn." Your internet or device might not be cooperating that day. That is all okay. Those opportunities serve as learning experiences and lessons learned for future virtual events.

## More Resources

[Check out our other family engagement tips!](#)

[Virtual Events in 2020: The Ultimate Guide](#)

[How to Host a Successful Virtual Event: Tips and Best Practices](#)

Source: Quality Start Los Angeles, June 23, 2020, <https://qualitystartla.org/hosting-virtual-events-for-families/>

# The 3 Ms: Mobilize

**Mobilize:** To make contacts with families easier using a combination of technology and welcoming-school strategies.

## 1. Family Engagement in a Virtual World . . . will parent meetings *ever be the same?*

### Virtual Parent meetings:

- Virtual meetings throughout the state generated a lot more participation, from 20% to 80%
- Meetings were filled with many new faces
- Working parents with scheduling challenges were able to sign in and participate
- Interpreters were able to provide services easily through different channels



### In-person / Hybrid Parent meetings:

- Many families are ready to meet in person
- Some parents prefer a hybrid meeting where they can sign in and participate and meet other parents
- Posting meetings/materials online benefits parents not able to attend due to work responsibilities/other issues

## 2. Recruitment Strategies that Work

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a Welcome Committee. It can be as simple as a phone call or text to new parents to welcome them to the school or a parent group.</li> <li>2. Create a Welcome Packet. <i>PTO Today</i> has welcome packet ideas, which includes great resources to help answer questions and relieve back-to-school jitters for both new and returning parents.</li> <li>3. Take advantage of technology or Apps that facilitate communication such as Facebook, texts, group chats, Instagram, etc.).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Meet with or survey the principal and teachers at your school to find out how they are reaching out to parents at each grade level. Consider adding an agenda item for discussion to an upcoming DAC/DELAC meeting (“Reaching Out to Parents: What Works?”). Give parents time to discuss in small groups what is working at their schools and share the best ideas.</li> <li>5. Survey parents to find out what type of meeting works best for them and why, and which method of district/school communication they use more often.</li> </ol>

<https://www.capta.org>, Family Engagement in a virtual world. **Text Messenger Apps for PTO/PTA.**  
<https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/1237-how-to-create-a-welcome-packet>  
<https://www.ptotoday.com/pto-today-articles/article/8497-text-messaging-apps-for-ptos-and-ptas>

## WHAT ARE THE 3 STEPS FOR MENTORING OTHERS?

### STEP 1

#### Identify some parents with leadership potential.

- Find new talent—you may know some already—They are waiting to be asked. (Maybe parents of kindergarteners or new students? Or grandparents? Maybe check with the principal for some ideas.)
- Think about how to fit parents' time availability/willingness to learn specific tasks that need to be done.
- Check with the school about any requirements for parents/any volunteers on campus.

### STEP 2

#### Connect with parents.

- Be friendly and welcoming. Explain how their help with upcoming events/ activities helps students.
- Start with small “asks” and tasks so parents aren't overwhelmed. Is it a task they could work with you or another experienced parent leader to do?
- Be clear about exactly what the task is and the date/time frame.
  - How much time will it take? Is it a one-time task or is it an ongoing commitment?
  - Will you be their contact for questions or any problem-solving?
  - Do they need any materials for the task?

### STEP 3

#### Give guidance and stay in touch.

- Provide any extra information and check in to ask, “*How's it going?*” as needed.
- Afterward, thank them for their efforts—publicly when possible--and ask if they would be willing to volunteer

# VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

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## Who Are Room Parent Volunteers?

Each classroom teacher selects 2 parents who volunteer to be Room Parents for the school year. Their two main duties are:

- to provide help to the Teacher if needed and,
- help build communication and friendly relationships among the parents.



## How can I volunteer?

Some teachers may have volunteer parents already, but most teachers will use a Room Parent Request Form that will be provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Please ask the Teacher.



## How Can Room Parents Help?

Room Parents meet with the teacher at the beginning of the school year to determine what kinds of help the classroom needs. Some things that Room Parents might do include:

- Provide the teacher with assistance with classroom projects and celebrations as needed.
- Assist with getting parent volunteers for class activities and field trips.
- Help the teacher communicate with other parents about classroom activities and special events at school.



## What Else Does a Room Parent Need to Know?

Here are some tips shared by other successful Room Parents:

- 1) Stay positive—you are helping create a good classroom learning environment for all children. Never share sensitive information about children or families.
- 2) Be friendly—some parents feel unsure about how to be involved, so a smile and a friendly welcome really help.
- 3) Delegate—ask other parents to sign up to help early in the year. Be specific about what jobs need doing and by when.
- 4) Be professional—never release parents' contact information without their permission and only use it to keep them informed about classroom/school activities.
- 5) Be proud—you are a great role model for your children and for other parents.



# ROOM PARENT GUIDE

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**Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Parent!** Below is helpful information for getting started.

## **Room Parent-Teacher Meeting**

Set up a time to meet with the Teacher. At the meeting find out:

- What kind of regular help does the Teacher need?
- Are there special activities, projects, or celebrations the Teacher wants parents to help with?
- What ways work best for the Teacher and Room Parents to communicate (meeting regularly, phoning, or emailing)?
- Are there classroom rules that Room Parents need to know about?
- How can you work together to gather contact information from the other parents to create a Classroom Parent List?

## **Classroom Parent List and Staying in Touch with Parents**

- Circulate the *Parent Sign-Up* form at Back-to-School-Night and/or send home the *Letter from Room Parents* form.
- Gather the parents' contact information and create a Classroom Parent List. Work with the Teacher to follow up with any parents who have not responded.
- Never share or use the parents' contact information for any purposes other than doing your Room Parent duties.
- After discussing the classroom needs with the Teacher, use a calendar to note any classroom activities/events that volunteers are needed for during the coming months.
- Use the Classroom Parent List to contact parents who would like to volunteer to help.
- Consider organizing Teacher appreciation with a thank you card signed by parents around the holidays/Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Stay positive and be friendly with everyone. Welcome the help of other parents who would like to volunteer.

# 25 WAYS TO CATCH AND KEEP VOLUNTEERS

PTO Today Articles | PTOToday.com | by Craig Bystrynski



**Tips to lure volunteers in, keep them happy, and avoid the pitfalls that will keep them from coming back.**

## 5 GOOD WAYS TO FIND NEW VOLUNTEERS

### **"Position available."**

Write help-wanted ads. Create a flyer or section of your newsletter with descriptions of the jobs you need help for. Include the duties of the position, likely time commitment, and other pertinent information. You're more likely to find a good match for your position if you publicize it well.

### **"There's a lot you can do."**

You already know that one of the biggest fears of volunteers is that they'll be sucked into a black hole of never-ending time commitment. One way to address this fear is to create a list of all of the things that volunteers can do in one hour to help your group.

### **"Would you help?"**

The number one reason people say they don't volunteer is because "no one asked." Asking doesn't mean a newsletter ad that says "new officers needed." It requires a personal approach, and it works best if you have a specific task in mind. "Jim, we need ticket-takers for the carnival. Can you spare an hour to help?"

### **"Bring your friends!"**

People are much more likely to participate in a group if they know someone who participates already. You can use this to your advantage by asking existing members to issue personal invitations to people they know.

### **"Thanks for your interest."**

Don't let volunteer surveys sit around for weeks before you respond, even to people who expressed interest in an event that is months away. People are much more likely to follow through later if you make a connection now. Also, this is an opening to ask for more involvement: "I know you said you'd help with the spring carnival, but I wonder if you could spare an hour to help children pick out books at the book fair in October?"

## 5 WAYS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

### **"Let me show you."**

When you have a new volunteer, have an experienced volunteer work with her to show her the ropes. Your new volunteer will get up to speed faster and, if your mentor does her job well, will feel more like a part of the team from the start.

### **"It's all written down."**

Create a binder with information on your most common activities. Include resources, tools, and key steps. Don't forget items like tips for using the copy machine, how to handle cash, etc.

**"Let's work together."**

Two heads sometimes are better than one. By sharing one job, two people can often put more energy and creativity into the work. This tends to work best if you have, for example, a chairman and a chairman-elect—one person as the final decisionmaker in case of disagreements and the other preparing to step into that role next year.

**"You can do this at home."**

It's common for people who aren't familiar with parent groups to think every job needs to be done at school during school hours. Make a list of "flex time" and "work at home" jobs to attract people who can't help out during the day.

**"This is what you can expect."**

Set expectations from the start. You don't have to be formal and business-like with volunteers, but let them know that you expect punctuality, a positive attitude, that they abide by school and group rules, and maintain confidentiality, if applicable. Likewise, make sure your committee chairs know what volunteers expect from them: the tools and training to do the job, a positive work atmosphere, respect for their time, and an understanding of how the task relates to overall goals.

**5 THINGS VOLUNTEERS LOVE****"We're so glad you're here."**

A warm welcome can win your volunteer's heart. Introduce her to others. Show her where the restroom is and how to use the copy machine. Include her in conversations. If the work environment is pleasant, your volunteer is much more likely to participate again.

**"We're doing this because..."**

Help your volunteer understand how her role relates to your overall goals or mission. Working on the assembly line is no fun if you can't see the finished product.

**"Thank you so much."**

Let your volunteer know you appreciate her help, whether she donated an hour or a week, whether she did the most difficult task or the easiest. She could have spent time with her family or at the gym or with the Girl Scouts.

**"Whatever works best for you."**

People have different styles and abilities. Whenever possible, let volunteers take ownership of the process. Give them the goals of the project or the desired outcome, and let them choose their own way to get there. Don't say "we do things this way," especially if there's no compelling reason to stick with the status quo.

**"Your hour's up."**

New volunteers are almost universally concerned that the time commitment will be too much. Want to impress a new volunteer? Ask her to spend an hour helping out, then remind her when the hour's up. (And don't forget to say thank you!)

## **5 THINGS VOLUNTEERS HATE TO HEAR**

### **"We don't need you after all."**

Your volunteer shows up on time and ready to help. But when she gets there, she discovers there's no work to do. Maybe you have enough help already. Maybe the task changed and you're going to do it a different way at a different time. The reason doesn't matter. The message to the volunteer is: "Not only don't we need you, we also didn't care enough about you or your time to tell you before you drove over here."

### **"We just need to run to the store."**

When the volunteer shows up to do some work, all of the materials to do the job are not yet in place. While organizers gather everything that's needed, volunteers end up standing around, waiting. The message: Volunteering with your group is a big time-waster.

### **"Good night, and good luck."**

Being given a job to do without proper instruction or the tools to do the job properly can be very frustrating—especially if you leave your volunteer on her own to figure things out for herself. Most people won't submit to that kind of experience twice.

### **"Just another hour—or so."**

You ask the volunteer to donate an hour of her time. But it turns out to be the great elastic hour—it stretches and stretches until the job is done. She might stick around to see things through, but she'll think twice before committing to help out again.

### **"You're doing it all wrong!"**

It's OK to tell a volunteer when she's doing the wrong thing, but presentation matters. Be helpful rather than confrontational. Anything that sounds like "You're dumb" will cost you one volunteer—and maybe more if she tells her friends.

## **5 THINGS THAT KEEP VOLUNTEERS MOTIVATED**

### **"That's a great idea."**

Nothing is more motivating than making your own idea a reality. An atmosphere that encourages new ideas not only energizes volunteers; it keeps your group fresh and injects excitement, too.

### **"We're all in it together."**

If your volunteers feel like part of a team, they'll be more motivated to do their part. A team atmosphere means making sure everybody feels wanted and participates. And it's crucial to break up cliques.

### **"You're really good at that."**

Use people's talents, not just their time. Not many people will get excited about constantly being on the clean-up committee. But if you let the person who loves carpentry build your carnival booths or the one who's interested in graphic design create your newsletter, they're much more likely to do a great job and want to continue.

### **"How did that go for you?"**

Check in with volunteers occasionally. Make sure their needs are being met and they haven't become disgruntled. Personal contact lets them know you care about them individually, and it catches potential problems before they become significant.

### **"We did it!"**

When things go right, share your successes with your volunteers. A shared sense of accomplishment can be a powerful motivator.