

Building Guiding

A Tool for Membership Development & Community Building Section 2 of 6

Women

Material in this kit may be copied by Members of Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada for use within Guiding.

Guiding requires a strong foundation.

As Members of Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, our volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of girls across Canada by helping them to realize their potential, personal belonging and worth. Believing in the Mission of Girl Guides provides a woman or girl with a solid foundation to positively influence those around her. Guiding can only exist with the support and tireless contributions received from Guiders.

What do we need to do to retain our Members?

A very important element of retention and happy Guiders in general is FLEXIBILITY. If someone can't commit to a weekly meeting, there are other ways to stay involved. They can give an hour, a weekend or whatever works for them. There are so many different options: Lone Member, Trefoil or Link. The important thing is that they remain a Member of the sisterhood of Girl Guides. Without adults playing many pivotal roles, Guides Canada couldn't exist. Whether you're a leader/advisor, parent/guardian, volunteer or mentor, you play an important part in enabling girls to reach their full potential and to become the women who will one day run our country!

Recognition of Guiders is the key to retention. Often we forget to acknowledge contributions or say thanks. The important work of Girl Guide volunteers inspires others every day whether they are Guiders, parents or girls.

Always be prepared to tell and/or remind Guiders what Guiding can offer them.

This includes the following skills: self-reliance, self-competence, social skills (ability to make friends), respect for others, a feeling of belonging, values, decision-making skills, community awareness, teamwork and leadership (just to name a few).

Remember that Guiders are all looking for different things. Some Guiders enjoy interacting with girls, others want to learn a skill for career development — the list of possible goals and motivations is extensive. You can share how you've grown personally

from your own work as a Guider. Talk it up to fellow Guiders, and don't forget to point out that they'll have fun!

Find the right person for the right job. If a Guider is not happy working at a certain level and sees no way around it, she will often quit rather than ask for a different position. Be observant so that this can be avoided.

Feed Guiders with positive words of encouragement. Always communicate that they wouldn't want to give-up a marvelous opportunity to participate in Guiding and benefit from all that it offers both the Guider and the girls.

Always encourage good communication with new Guiders. Make sure the lines of communication are always open. Provide enough information on everything.

Remember that GGC is also always seeking career professionals who are committed to making a difference. As a forward-thinking and well-managed organization, we ensure that every girl in Canada has the opportunity to learn the importance of personal responsibility, the value of goal setting, the spirit of teamwork and the thrill of accomplishment.

Offer new positions or arrangements for Guiders when their situations change. If a volunteer finds at some point in their Guiding career that their time commitments have changed and they can no longer be a Unit Guider, there are other options and ways for them to stay involved. The important thing is that they stay involved. A volunteer's participation can always be tailored so that it fits into their life schedule.

Recognize that alumnae are treasures that should be safe guarded. Alumnae are alumnae for a reason. They enjoyed their past Guiding experiences so much that they want to remain involved in Guiding. These women are the soul of who we are and are the foundation to our survival. Search out these women and touch base with them. Find out how they can become more involved. See if they can help with recruitment. They're ideal spokespeople because of their experience and passion. Often, alumnae are an underused resource. Re-connect with them.

Reward...reward...reward! Same old song but it's still the most important. People like to know that their efforts are appreciated. Remember your volunteers. Keep track of birthdays, anniversaries, etc. and acknowledge them (e.g., send them a card or an e-mail). Always be receptive to new ideas. Just because 'we've always done it that way' doesn't mean that there isn't another way to do it. Be positive in your comments to Guiders. Avoid criticizing anyone, especially in the presence of others. Make your Guiders feel important. We would not exist without them.

A mentor has to be one of the single most important assets for a new Guider. If a new Guider is welcome and assisted during her first few years, her experience will be enjoyable and she will stay. We often hear from Guiders who were put in Units or commissioner posts and who had to learn the ropes as they went along. This allows for mistakes and puts a huge burden on Guiders/Commissioners. Mentoring is one of the keys to the success of retaining Guiders.

- <http://www.casenet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/>
- <http://www.volunteerpower.com/articles/fourwords.htm>
- <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/avolh.html>

Remember: District meetings should be for sharing information and ideas or for training. Discourage gossip and make sure meetings are fun. As a DC, you must be consistent. If you tell one Guider one thing, make sure you tell the rest the same thing. If you promise to attend a Unit's celebration, try to make sure you are there on time and in uniform.

What do we need to do to recruit members?

First, we want to find FUN, EXCITING, and ENTHUSIASTIC women. Then we want to keep them. As an organization for girls and women, GGC is the place for women and girls to be themselves, to be challenged in their personal development and to become empowered to be responsible citizens as per our Vision: "Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, the organization of choice for girls and women, makes a positive difference in the life of every girl and woman who experiences Guiding, so she can contribute responsibly to her communities."

Being a Member of Girl Guides is the experience of a lifetime - one that will provide skills that will help any girl or woman through life's challenges. The Guiding experience offers new adventures through friendships and challenging activities and provides priceless experiences.

Recruit women as members first, volunteers second.

We can't simply recruit volunteers. We need to recruit women to be Members first and volunteers second. That way we have volunteers who have a love for the organization. That's how we retain adult Members.

Remember: Guiding is still considered one of the most valued groups in many communities across the country. Parents/community leaders and teachers all recognize the value of Guiding and are all usually willing to support Guiding. It is important that we let people know that we are a values-based organization.

The Facts about Volunteers and Volunteering

Who volunteers in Canada?

- 6.5 million people (27% of the population)
- 67% of volunteers are employed
- Nearly one half are 35-54
- The average volunteer contributed 162 hours in 2000
- More women (28%) than men (25%) volunteer.

How do volunteers get involved?

- Asked by the organization (30%)
- Approached the organization themselves (16%)
- Member of the organization (15%)
- Child or spouse involved (12%)
- Asked by friend or relative (9%).

Links:

- Why People Volunteer
<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/WhyPpIE1.htm>
- Institute for Volunteering Research <http://www.ivr.org.uk/voluntaryaction.htm>
- Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.ca/>
- Volunteer Canada <http://www.volunteer.ca/>
- Giving and Volunteering <http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/>

(Source: 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Statistics Canada)

Relating Facts to Guiding - lets consider:

- Exploring volunteer possibilities from a wider age range
- Focusing on attracting women without children
- Having a recruitment presence in technical and business schools, colleges and universities
- Tapping into the 'senior' resource - approaching seniors to organize and/or supervise one-time events and relieve our already time-stressed Guiders and Commissioners
- Working with Trefoil members (opening new Trefoil Guilds) - seeking assistance from the value of seniors' life experience.
- Holding Unit meetings at seniors' resource centres, seniors' homes, seniors' apartment complexes - We have so many groups visiting seniors at Christmas time and on other occasions, so why not capitalize on this and take it a step further?
- Advertising for administrative volunteers and resource people, as well as for leaders
- Offering a variety of interesting and fun opportunities to suit the volunteers' needs
- Always be in the recruitment mode! - Take the direct approach and ask women to volunteer in Guiding. Keep this in mind wherever you are.
www.girlscouts.org/for_adults/leader_magazine/2003_fall/getting_to_yes.asp

The next step is planning your recruitment campaign with a purpose.

- With your energized membership team, agree on the goals/aims of your retention and recruitment campaigns.
- Focus on retention issues. We must ensure that we retain the Members we are recruiting. Why do they leave us and how can we ensure that they stay? If this isn't obvious, ask them.
- Find and keep volunteers.
<http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/builder/volunteering/volunteer.html>

- Within your team, discuss and decide how you will bring in more women and how you will retain the current Members.
- Set targets for the work. This would be a given since you have already decided how the work will be done.
- Designate duties. Agree on who will do the work in specific parts of your community.
- Set deadlines and make sure they are realistic.
- Your District Commissioner/Council should be spearheading all recruitment and retention initiatives with the assistance of others. It's important to ask for assistance. Not only does it make the work less and thus easier for you, but it brings in fresh new ideas and encourages working together as a team.
- If you've gotten this far, you are obviously ready and geared up to do the work.
- Measure your progress. Revise where necessary. Evaluate successes and failures.

(Portions taken from The Guide Association Recruitment Tool Kit, Part 1)

Remember: Make sure everyone in the district is on board. The person recruiting needs to know what the district has done — and does presently — before new Guiders are recruited. For example, if they have part-time Guiders, if they have half-year Units...

http://www.kab.org/uploadedFiles/KAB_Affiliates.org/Conducting%20Volunteer%20Recruitment%20Campaign.doc

<http://www.volunteerpower.com/articles/7sins.htm>

<http://www.gosv.state.md.us/volunteerism/bestprac/sec03.htm>

Lets find the women in our communities.

- Form an enthusiastic recruitment team from within your district or a composite team representing two or three districts whose Guiding Members want to work together to increase adult membership.
- Hunt down the places in your community where women gather (e.g., gyms, coffee shops, spas, libraries, community centres, workplace lunchrooms, women's organizations/group meetings, etc.) and make a comprehensive list.
- Prioritize your list and ensure that GGC PR material is delivered to, and displayed at, the community's top gathering places (for women or for women and men), the top 10 lunchrooms, and the top 10 women's groups. (If you can do more, that's even better.) See if you can have 5-10 minutes in one of their regular meetings so you can promote Guiding, answer questions and recruit women.

Links:

- Canadian Women's Internet Directory <http://directory.womenspace.ca/>

Always keep in mind the benefits of Guiding for women.

This answers the question, “What’s in it for me?”:

- Rolling membership intake – can join any time of year
- Perfect opportunity for ANY woman (young, middle-aged, senior, mother, single, employed, unemployed, etc.)
- A chance to make a difference in the lives of girls and young women – feel the reward of helping a girl or a young woman develop her potential
- Opportunities for personal and professional growth, peer support and travel
- Access to organized training, activity ideas, program resources, pre-planned events for women and girls and other women who are delighted to help girls develop their skills
- The chance to say you’re a Member of the largest worldwide organization for girls and women from 144 countries with 10 million members! (WAGGGS www.wagggsworld.org)
- Looks good on a resume! Increased self-esteem!
- A place to laugh and have fun with new friends.

Links:

- <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rvol40.html>

Try target recruiting.

- If your area/division/district needs Spark Guiders, focus your efforts on women who might enjoy working with 5- and 6-year-olds.
- If you need a Pathfinder Guider, focus your recruitment campaign in places that attract active, outdoor woman (e.g., fitness centres, hiking/skiing clubs, cycling associations) or depending on what you’re looking for in a Pathfinder Guider, focus on women who might have more in common with Pathfinders (e.g., women in their 20’s or early 30’s or contemporary women who may enjoy things that girls in that age group may typically enjoy.)
- Family Volunteering: The Ties That Bind
<http://www.pch.qc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/pdfdocs/Family.pdf>
- The Valuing the Rural Volunteer Toolkit
<http://www.torc.on.ca/torceng/memact/VRVToolkit.htm>

What about students as volunteers?

Maybe they were in Guiding when they were kids and they might be interested in coming back?

- Many college/university students look for placements where they can share their skills and learning. Although they may not be able to commit to weekly Unit meetings, they can still help out on a smaller scale.
- Those involved in education, social science, community development, business, recreation and other studies can bring knowledge and enthusiasm to Unit meetings.
- Connect with students by setting up displays and/or distributing GGC PR materials and information about volunteering opportunities. You can do this at Orientation Day/Week, through the Careers Office or through campus

newspapers. Emphasize the value of volunteering to students: looks good on a resume, establishes a community network for job searches, provides hands-on experience for those looking into teaching or other related professions.

- A Springboard to Tomorrow: Creating Volunteer Programs for Young People that Encourage the Development of Skills
<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/Springb1.htm>
- Volunteering for Work Experience
<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/pc-cp/pubs/e/ExprncE.htm>

Positions, People, Places & Pitches

An exercise to help you focus your recruitment efforts

What we need volunteers to do = Position

Who has these skills/interests = People

Where can we find them = Places

How will we interest them = Pitches

Positions

- Create realistic, catchy and specific statements about what you need the volunteer to do. Make the statements very brief but eye-catching. Include information about where and when activities will occur and the time commitment involved.
- Develop volunteer positions that allow adults to make long-term, short-term, occasional or one-time commitments.
- Avoid Girl Guide jargon that might be confusing to someone without a background in Guiding.

Example of statement: Beauty professional needed to help Pathfinders (12- to 15-years-old) with health and beauty training and support. Time required: Four weeks – one night/week for two hours/night.

People

- Who has the skills to fill the position?
- Who likes to do this? Who has experience?
- Who might benefit from doing this?
- Who might be available on the days and at the times we need them?

Places

- Where will we reach the identified people?
- Where do they work, spend free time, do their errands, eat, etc.? Do they attend a worship service in the community? Who do they know that we might know?
- What do they read? To what radio station do they listen?

Pitches

- Once the people who might fill this position have been identified, a specifically targeted message, motivating them to offer their skills to Guiding, needs to be prepared.
- Energize, Inc
<http://www.energizeinc.com/>

Examples of pitch statements: “Have fun while helping girls develop to be their best.” “Share your expertise and build your own clientele.” “Improve your own skills (if you are attending a Beauty School).” “Showcase your beauty products to fashion-conscious teenage girls and have fun, too!”

Best Practices for Recruiting Women

(A best practice is a strategy that has proved successful in the past. We share these to prevent Guiders from having to ‘re-invent the wheel’.)

- Invite 'moms' to help at camp. Often, these 'moms' will volunteer to help out at Unit meetings, on field trips and, if you are very lucky, will become Members.
- First impressions will count, so make them good ones. They are often the determining factor in deciding if a potential volunteer will decide to stay (for example, a long wait to have a call returned will not have as good a result as a quick, friendly return call.)
- Be honest with your potential volunteers concerning the amount of time you expect from them. If the assignment requires a year’s commitment and a minimum of three hours a week, let them know that up front.
- Pick the right people. It’s important to be sure that the volunteers you select will be able to work with your clients. Some of us work in different environments and in unusual settings. Not every volunteer can work in every setting. Put people only in areas where they will be effective, not just because they’re a ‘warm body’.

Best Practices for Retaining Women

(A best practice is a strategy that has proved successful in the past. We share these to prevent Guiders from having to ‘re-invent the wheel’.)

- Have leaders in a district do rotational meetings. This lightens the load for all and, additionally, helps to reduce the burden of babysitting costs.
- It’s good to make the new/existing leaders aware that it is ok to bring a younger child to the meetings as long as the child does not hinder the meeting.
- Send a letter to your Guiders’ place of employment/boss stating that she is a volunteer of Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada, the largest women’s organization in the world. Tell the employer that she has contributed immensely and that her efforts are appreciated.

- **RECOGNITION.** Personal contact with Guiders in the unit/district/division/area/province goes a long way towards letting them know they are appreciated and are doing a wonderful job for Guiding.
- Phone potential and past Members to see why they haven't registered. Ask for testimonials and try and use well-known community members to do this. (For example, Margaret Atwood. Every time they mention her new book on CBC, they quote her statement about how she wouldn't be where she is now if she hadn't been a Brownie.) <http://philanthropy.com/jobs/2003/03/20/20030320-881056.htm>
- **POSITIVE PAMELA.** One area introduced POSTIVE PAMELA to their area council. She is a large poster-board fish. At the beginning of each meeting everyone had to write a positive comment on Pamela – to do with Guiding or with personal life. The rationale behind Positive Pamela is that, once participants think about something positive and write it down, they will probably talk about it. The "negative" needs to be talked about too - but sometimes, negative comments start to outweigh the positive. Why a fish? At the province's annual meeting, the THE FISH PHILOSOPHY – a philosophy that is all about bringing energy and enthusiasm to the workplace – proved to be fabulous. For more information about the Fish Philosophy, go to www.charthouse.com/charthouse/product_film_fp_home.asp
- **YOU GO GIRL BUCKS.** At the beginning of the year, make up a list of activities that would earn you "bucks" - i.e., attending a district meeting, helping on an event committee, being the first one to turn in paperwork if your Unit does a report, recruiting a new Guider, etc. Add one just for sheer fun, too – earn one buck if you walk into a district meeting clucking like a chicken. Type up the list and print them. Paste the lists onto small brown envelopes and hole punch the sides so Guiders can put them in a binder to keep track of them. Every district meeting, update their bucks. Consider enabling the Guiders to turn their bucks in for prize tickets and enter to win a large selection of prizes.

Useful Guiding Resources

Registration Event Kit <http://www.girlguides.ca/default.asp?id=760>

Building Guiding: Ethnocultural Tiplists (Tips for recruiting girls and women from various ethnocultural communities) <http://www.girlguides.ca/default.asp?id=259>

Maamoowi (Diversity Advisor's Newsletter) <http://www.girlguides.ca/default.asp?id=259>

The Membership Cycle: <http://www.girlguides.ca/default.asp?id=785>