

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio

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Date: June 13, 2009
To: Board of Directors
From: Barbara J. Bonifas, CEO
Subject: Membership Projections

We are currently projecting a significant membership loss from the 2008 to the 2009 membership year. Current projections indicate that the loss will be about 7% -- from 53,528 at 2008 end of year to slightly over 50,000 at end of year 2009.

The loss of membership appears to be a result of challenges related to three areas:

1. **Service Delivery Principles** – A move to focusing on troops or other pathway experiences that provide sustainable, progressive program experience that reflect the core principles of the Girl Scout program required staff to develop new recruitment methods and skills. This has included a shift in who and how girls are served in some regions, which have previously included:
 - Serving boys and girls together.
 - Serving girls through single events or a 1-3 session “program.”
 - Activities that did not use Girl Scout program processes (girl-led, experiential learning, cooperative learning).
 - Activities that did not measure outcomes (except when funded by a grant).
 - Program objectives and results that were not focused on program goals or were focused on specific, narrow skills.
 - Staff efforts focusing on outreach rather than volunteer support, with the 2008 year end membership reflecting 23% of girls served directly by paid staff across the council and between 30% and 40% in two of the four regions.

2. **Processes** – A change in the service delivery design, including the implementation of defined, comprehensive volunteer management processes and a coordinated, comprehensive membership plan impacted staff readiness. This has included:
 - Additional time requirement in addressing the rollout of systems with volunteers – some of which were not well anticipated.
 - A learning curve among some staff in their preparedness to implement the processes.
 - No consistent volunteer management policies and procedures, including no consistent implementation of application, screening, placement, and training requirements and processes.
 - No comprehensive membership plan, including goals/minority goals, defined recruitment strategies, benchmarks, and plans.
 - No regular consistent documented population data collection or analysis to support the development of annual market share or demographic goals.
 - No consistent, documented service unit/service team support processes and metrics for success.

3. **People/Staff Performance** – Staff have had to learn to set goals, develop and execute plans to achieve those goals, and to be held individually accountable for performance.

- Challenges in learning new operating system.
- Some staff were used to “doing their job” more than achieving results.
- Have experienced high staff turnover as staff have found that this level of accountability was not a good fit for them.

Next Steps

We have a two-fold strategy to turn around the membership loss.

- 1) **Implement an intensive membership campaign** that includes a well-defined business plan for implementing:
 - a. Intensive in-school recruitment to increase the new girls recruited early in the membership year.
 - b. A plan for re-registration of girls through support for service unit events in 85% of all service units.
 - c. The revitalization of the volunteer membership recruiter position.
- 2) **Focusing narrowly in service delivery on supporting the service unit and volunteer service team**, especially on recruiting and supporting service unit managers, volunteer membership recruiters, and ensuring support to new leaders.

Our Mission

*Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character,
who make the world a better place.*