NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION IS THE KEY TO CLUB GROWTH

The holidays with their hustle and bustle (usually accompanied with an elevated level of Kiwanis service) are now in the memory books. With the start of a new calendar year, this is a great time to invite new members and to MAKE SURE THEY RECEIVE A TOP-QUALITY ORIENTATION. Many will agree that a good new member orientation is the secret to membership retention.

Thank you if your club already conducts a regular orientation for each and every new member that joins your club. Please use the points in this article to evaluate if your club’s orientation program is the best that it can be. If your club does not provide an orientation for each new member, please let this year be the one to start (or to re-start in some cases) this very valuable tool for keeping new members in your club.

Here’s some helpful hints on new member orientation:

60 Minutes (and I don’t mean Andy Rooney) – One hour is the maximum amount of time for a new member orientation – even if a meal is involved. Exceed an hour and you’ll risk losing the new member’s interest or sense of value for their time.

Message in a Bottle – Kiwanis International offers a great “outline” of suggested new member orientation formats and topics. However, the most important part of the orientation is incorporating information about YOUR CLUB’S service, fun and fellow members.

A Few Words from your Sponsor – It’s a great idea to have the new member’s sponsor on hand for the orientation. It’s All in the Presentation – The person conducting the orientation should be someone who is enthusiastic about Kiwanis and can keep the 60 minutes focused on the task at hand. A new member orientation is not a time to talk about personal Kiwanis glory days.

Location, Location, Location – For a slight change of pace, think about having the new member orientation in a location other than the club meeting place. Try not to squeeze in an orientation just before or after a club meeting. There could be too many well-intended distractions.

Food for Thought – A meal during the orientation is great but not necessary if your club is crunched for funds, scheduling or time.

Doggy Bag – When the orientation is over, the new member should have some items to take home (i.e. copies of a recent KIWANIS magazine, district bulletin and club newsletter, a current club roster, club bylaws, Objects of Kiwanis, calendar of events, etc.).

Kiwanis International exists to help clubs in all aspects – including membership. Please don’t hesitate to contact me at my home in Springfield, Illinois or the staff at the International Office in Indiana to assist your new member orientation efforts!!