



Handbook for Membership Recruitment, Retention, and Renewal 2022-2024

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INTRODUCTION

Each year clubs experience the recruitment of new members but also a loss of current and seasoned members, as well as some of the newer members. Members are our lifeblood, supporting our service, advocacy, fundraising, and scholarships. Therefore, the lifeline of all Zonta clubs is to continuously add new members and retain current members. Bringing new members into your club involves developing a well-thought-out plan that goes beyond just getting people to come to a meeting or event. It also means identifying good candidates to start, fully integrating them into the club and keeping them involved in and truly committed to our mission.

This handbook is designed to give clubs guidance, ideas, and timelines on how to successfully recruit new members, whether through specific membership drive events or at ongoing meetings and—just as important—to retain current members. Find the right mix of ideas that work for your club and community.

The Club Board

Club officers are responsible for 1) establishing a Membership Chair and Membership Committee to focus on membership, 2) developing a membership development plan that fits the needs of the club, and 3) ensuring the club has the communication tools for membership development and outreach. The Membership Chair takes the lead while involving other members in recruitment and retention activities.

Membership Chair and Membership Committee

The Membership Chair is selected by the Club President at the start of the new biennium. The Chair selects individuals to the Membership Committee to work together on a membership development plan and execute membership development activities. Even in a small club, just having a second person to work with the Chair can be valuable to provide different perspectives and ideas and to assist with tasks. The plan should be developed at the start of the new biennium and submitted it to the Club Board and shared with all members. Some basic steps include:

- Evaluate the club's current membership, anticipate resignations, and **develop a goal for the number of new members** the club wants to recruit.
- **Budget funds** to cover incidental costs, such as meeting locations, meals, snacks, prizes, promotions, postage, Zonta International and club information materials, etc.
- The Committee may also wish to develop and a **New Member Handbook** (see more under Retention).

ZI's website has many tools for membership, from building better clubs and conducting better meetings to planning and recruitment, mentoring, member recognition, forms and certificates, and information on membership in e-clubs, Z and Golden Z clubs, and as a Supporting Member. Explore what is available at to https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/Membership_Tools_Home.

Planning

- Membership is a year-round priority but also needs to be planned. Have a clear, **written membership goal and plan**, including both recruitment and retention. Review membership plan and goals annually.
- **Set SMART goals**: Smart, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
- Recognize that long-range planning is important: it may take 5 or more years to achieve your goals, but always keep them in sight, approach them enthusiastically and positively, and adjust the plans as needed.
- Maintain a list of **prospective members**, their contact information, some background information (profession, age group, interests, etc.), who the sponsor/source was that recommended them.

When were they contacted for an invite and by whom? For what event? Did they attend a meeting or event? Express interest?

- Maintain a **membership recruitment budget** for printed material, event costs, web updates, etc.
- The Club President can apply for a **District grant for membership development**, available to each club annually, to reimburse expenses for membership related activities such as updating a website, printing, room rental or AV expenses, etc. An Area Director or the District Board may also apply for a grant in support of a small or struggling club. See the District Membership Development Plan for current information (Under Resources on the District 7 website).
- The Area Director, **Lieutenant Governor**, or another district representative can provide advice and ideas on membership or event planning. Invite them to attend a club, board meeting, or event to talk about Zonta and membership.

Tracking and assessing membership

- As part of planning, assess the club's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (**SWOT**). What are the factors contributing to poor retention, to older members leaving, challenges of recruiting newer, younger members?
- Consider having periodic satisfaction surveys to identify 1) what members like and use in recruitment material, 2) things members want to change, and 3) new ideas. Follow up with board action.
- Ask club members for recruitment ideas and gain involvement; individuals may have a social network or approaches you did not think of.
- Ask new members how they learned about Zonta and what convinced them to join; allocate resources to successful tactics.
- Solicit names of prospective members from current members; remind them at meetings to invite guests (and follow up).

Communications and outreach

A variety of approaches can be used to enhance connections to prospective members. Some of the ideas below may be done as part of the Membership Committee while others may be more appropriate for a Public Relations individual or committee.

- A **club web page** is key to link all outreach methods, providing resources and information to members and prospective members, and the broader community. Keep it up to date and looking fresh. Include who we are and what we do (locally and globally), the *Zonta Why*, contact information, and donate button. Check out other club websites for ideas of content and layout.
- Have a page specifically for those interested in membership and include a link to a **Prospective Member form** for individuals to contact the club directly about their interest (Prospective Member Questionnaire Mail-in Form, available at ZI website under Forms).
- Create a **club-specific brochure** including the mission, vision, activities, and contact information; add a space for sponsor contact. Request an updated logo for your club from Zonta headquarters as needed.
- Create a **club business card** for members to have in hand to more readily pass out. Or provide members a digital template to create and print their own Zonta business cards where they can add their own contact information.
- ZI provides many resources for public relations, such as ZI and club logos, brand identity guidelines, images, tips for press releases and powerpoints, and more (updated in Sep 2022). Be sure to follow the branding guidelines for colors, fonts, and setup. Find these resources at https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/PR_Tools_and_Logos.
- Consider developing a **digital action plan** focusing on brand awareness and recruitment that helps to bring the materials together consistently—e.g., club website and Facebook pages, QR code, Add Your Voice, video presentation about the club, etc. Have strategies and people to keep

the resources updated. One example (from *The Zontian*, June 2021): the Zonta Club of Vevey Montreux, Switzerland, developed a video presentation about the club with paid online ad placement targeting women aged 25-60 in their geographical region; for a modest sum the video reached nearly 5,000 people, additional organic and unpaid views resulted in a total of almost 11,000 views. The digital strategy was followed up by an outdoor recruitment event. Some principles the club learned:

- Publish simple and clear messages.
 - Demonstrate regularity of publication of content with two to three posts per week.
 - Monitor posts so members can interact and respond to messages.
 - Recognize that people do not care about the detailed organization of Zonta International and Zonta-specific vocabulary when they are first learning about Zonta.
 - Understand that people want to share their experience, to be part of something, to be active for a cause, but without feeling that this will make their daily life cumbersome.
- Create a **QR code** that can be used on different media (business cards, brochures, posters) so individuals can view a digital brochure on their phones and provide a link to the club web page.
 - Create an attractive **invitation template** that club members can email and/or share on social media.
 - Develop a **New Member Handbook** to ensure new members understand the mission and the club (more details under Recruitment) and be more likely to stay.
 - Post member stories, testimonials, and “**Member Spotlights**” on your website or social media: club Facebook page, Instagram, Twitter, etc., to highlight the diversity and personas of your members.
 - Use Zonta promotional material: brochures, videos, banners, road signs (available at the online Zonta Store).
 - Use the “**Add Your Voice to Zonta**” campaign to highlight new members.
 - Find out how new members learned about Zonta and reallocate resources to successful tactics.
 - Post your club meetings and activities on **local community calendars**.
 - Promote club activities in **local media**. Club publicity through newspapers, radios, TV, and website informs the public about your club and is therefore a great awareness avenue. Also consider other local communications such as neighborhood and special interest newsletters.
 - Use **press releases** to highlight service and fundraising events, awards, new members inducted, and key days such as International Women’s Day. Learn how to write and submit press releases effectively. Always include a statement of Zonta’s mission and contact information.
 - Develop a strong relationship with the **media** in your community so that they cover your events, activities, publish your press releases, and help you to be more visible.

Zontians Stand Out

Encourage all members to be more visible as a Zontian in your community and profession helps to attract prospective members.

- Include Zonta membership in your professional bios.
- Informally share your club experience with others.
- Network and discuss Zonta with members of other civic organizations such as Soroptimist, Rotary, Lions, and veterans’ groups. Members often join more than one organization.
- Sign up to speak about Zonta with other groups: share our mission, service and advocacy activities, and bring brochures and business cards.
- When asked about professional leadership skills and career success, tell about your club involvement as well.
- When you travel, attend Zonta club meetings or arrange to meet other Zontians, and include your travel mates.
- Wear a Zonta pin, clothing with logo, or use a Zonta bag to create awareness and start a dialogue.

- Participate in the local Chamber of commerce or community events; often members are looking for other clubs that share their interests, or they will be a great network in connecting you with prospects. Wear your club logo gear (shirt, hat, name tag) to the event.

RECRUIT

The Zonta Why: Get your club membership thinking and get feedback by having members answer these questions: What interested you initially in this club? Why did you join? Why have you remained engaged in the club? What do you get out of being a part of this club? The answers can help figure how to recruit new members.

Assess the community you live in: What are its strengths? Its diversity? What are its needs? What are the opportunities for Zontians to make a difference in the community? Where are the professional women? Identify who is likely to join your club and who is missing that you would like to attract. Does your club include young and seasoned/experienced members? Do you need members savvy in finance, social networking, or other skills? Who are potential partners or collaborators?

Keep in mind the **reduced International dues for Young Professionals (Under 35)**, and have the Club Board consider reducing club dues for them as well, which can reduce financial concerns for prospective members. While all individuals over 18 are welcomed, individuals who around 35–45 years of age are more likely to have achieved some financial, professional, and personal life stability. These individuals tend to be more likely to stay in Zonta than younger individuals, who are more likely to move away or find time constraints as they start their careers or families. Seek to build a cohort of members in their 30s and 40s that can in turn help with connections, retention, and ideas and build future leadership.

Businesses may sponsor or subsidize membership for their employee to help them engage in the community. Make personal contact with local businesses and ask employers to sponsor or subsidize membership. Engage in conversations with local government officials, identify the club mission, and share informational materials. They may have similar interests as Zontians (e.g., reducing domestic violence, improving community safety, addressing trafficking, improving education, addressing local impacts of climate change).

Practice and share “**elevator speeches**.” Check out the examples of great brief speeches at https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/PR_Tools_Logos/Elevator_Speech_Pitch.aspx?WebsiteKey=f59e7e8-9db0-4736-b8df-7a6476fb9063.

Where to look in your community

- Academic institutions (all levels)
- Medical and health-care institutions and staff (doctors, PAs, nurses, chiropractors, dentists, administrators, and more)
- Women-owned businesses and organizations
- Real estate
- Business associates and clients
- Chamber of Commerce businesses
- Research institutions
- Crisis/safe shelters
- Women lawyers
- Local government employees
- Past scholarship winners
- Past Golden Z members
- Coworkers, friends, family, neighbors

How and where do we connect with prospective members?

- Community-wide events: show up, engage with others, have an active presence
- Our own service or fund-raising events that attract women professionals
- Networking and direct connections
- Presentations to other organizations
- Personal contacts with local businesses and organizations
- Brochures or posters about Zonta posted at places around the community
- Ads and articles in area women's magazines
- Guest speakers to events and meetings that attract prospects interested in Zonta's mission.
- New residents: real estate companies may provide welcome baskets or community information; ask to include your club information
- New businesses: visit newly opened businesses (especially women-run)
- Advertise events or high-profile meetings in local newspapers, cable TV

Take advantage of other community events and meetings

- Identify events or venues that provide opportunities for talking about Zonta to individual prospective members, such as Chamber of Commerce open house events, new business openings, or community fairs.
- Have informational material like club brochures or business cards to leave behind.
- If an event has vendor booths, have a Zonta booth to display banners, posters, and information about Zonta; hand out informational materials; highlight local activities and upcoming events; give out freebies or have a raffle to attract attention. Be sure to reach out and actively engage those passing by the booth.
- Collaborate with or host a community non-profit event or service event, sharing Zonta service with like-minded individuals, such as domestic violence shelters, Habitat for Humanity, advocacy centers, Young Professionals, or cancer survivor groups. Local organizations can then learn about Zonta and also get to know one another on a personal level. Events such as a charitable run/walk or golf event can attract like-minded prospects while raising money for an on-mission need. Engaging the club in a wide variety of events can broaden the awareness, appeal to potential (and current) members, and help diversity.
- Advertise meet and greets at community parks or local businesses; a more casual atmosphere may entice more prospects.

Add Your Voice Campaign: Working together to attract new voices and advocates

Zontians should not be shy about asking individuals to join our community and speak out for our causes. This campaign is designed for social media to highlight individual members, why they joined and their passions in Zonta, and inviting others to join with us. The campaign runs annually from January through May. For more information and tools, go

https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/Membership_Tools/Add_Your_Voice.

Membership Drive events

Clubs add new members continuously throughout the year through individual invitations, but a **special structured membership event** also can be effective. In such events, the club can “roll out the red carpet” and give people the opportunity to learn more deeply about Zonta and the club's activities and get to know members.

The key to a successful Membership Drive is **planning**—establish goals, timeline, necessary membership tools (e.g., brochures, Powerpoint presentations, displays, prospective member form), and a program.

- Plan the event at least three months in advance to ensure it all comes together.
- Publicize the event through appropriate outreach, which may vary depending on your target audience. Invitations may be broad (to part of the community) and/or to specific individuals. With invitations to individuals, follow up to remind them and get an RSVP.
- Hold the event (and meetings) in a place that reflects well on Zonta (not a nursing home, even if they have a nice meeting room).
- **Two alternative approaches:**
 - Secure a keynote speaker who can present an interesting **program related to Zonta’s mission**. Have the keynote speaker invite guests at the end of their presentation. If the keynote speaker is not a Zontian, they are in a neutral position and can ASK the prospects to join in a professional manner.
 - Design a **fun, themed event** that would attract individuals who would also be likely to be interested in women’s issues. As part of the event highlight Zonta’s mission and projects and provide invitations to learn more.
- Have one Zontian to present information about your club and Zonta International, such as the current president or an experienced, well-spoken member. Have other members prepared to give their *Zonta Why*. Remember to **include the ASK** at the end of presentations. Consider inviting one of the District Board (Area Director, Lieutenant Governor, or Governor), who can speak to regional and international aspects of Zonta.
- Challenge members to “bring three” guests.
- Make sure members wear their name tags.
- Regardless of which approach your club uses, **every prospect should receive a membership application and club brochure**. Having the application typed as completely as possible including the prospect’s name, address, phone, etc., gives the prospect a strong feeling of being wanted. Provide the sponsor with the application before the start of the meeting or prior to adjournment. Applications and checks should be given to the Membership Chairperson, President, or Secretary/Treasurer. All new members should be congratulated and welcomed personally before leaving.
- **Follow up** with attendees within a few days of the event, either by the Membership Chair or sponsors of individual guests. If a guest did not indicate interest in joining, still send a letter or message from the president thanking them for attending and inviting them back to future meetings. If a guest did show interest or offer to join – follow up immediately with the steps noted above.

Engaging one-on-one with a prospective member

- Engage and get to know individuals face-to-face by asking about their interests—family, other organizations, activities—and profession; not just as a brief, in-passing conversation.
- Have your elevator speech in mind, short and long forms. Customize for the interests of the individual you are talking with.
- Treat any invitation as a negotiation: provide information, be able to answer all questions positively. Listen well and reflect messages back to show you are listening. Ask why they are interested in learning more about Zonta. Let their interests lead the conversation. Clarify any unclear information, uncertainties, or wrong assumptions about Zonta. Overcome objections or uncertainties by featuring the benefits of membership; this is where your own personal experiences are helpful.
- **The Zonta Why:** why you belong and primary benefits of membership. Some of the best recruiting is to tell people the heartwarming ways Zonta affects you, what you have gained

through Zonta and how it has influenced your life. People react to positive influences in their lives.

- Explain Zonta's mission and both local and global aspects and programs. Talk about Zonta in your other organizations: how you serve women and children, locally and globally through service, advocacy, scholarships, and partnering with others for our mission. Talk about how Zonta allows you to grow and build leadership skills, helps you to build a personal portfolio.
- Be upfront about expectations (time, skills, dues, and other financial contributions) of being a member—and why these are important.
- If Zonta's work resonates with the individual and they seem interested, provide them with informational materials and contact information. Have a business card or club brochure/flier to give them, with your contact information. Ask for their contact information—then follow up!
- ***Don't forget to ASK!!*** Don't wait for them to take the initiative and volunteer. ASK: Are you interested? Will you come to a meeting (or another meeting)? Will you join? If interested, be specific with an invite (e.g., to an event or meeting); if interested in joining, *follow up immediately!* If this step is lost or late, the prospective or new member will not remain a Zontian for long.
- Simplify joining the club with online registration and payment.
- If the person is not interested or unable to join at this time, remember them for future options: as an event sponsor or supporter, source of Zonta referrals, a project volunteer, or a business network referral for the future.

Invite!

Invite prospective members and guests to regular meetings, fundraising and service events, or special membership events. Friends, co-workers, and family including spouses, siblings, parents, and (grown-up) children are all potential members.

- Make invitations to prospective members as an ongoing initiative for the club; remind members to invite guests to regular meetings or events.
- For events focused on membership recruitment, schedule around seasonal themes such as International Women's Day, spring or fall picnics, holiday baking exchange. Send out a post-event survey, identify if guests would like to learn more about Zonta.
- Every invitation to a fundraising event should include a membership component: if they are interested in your fundraiser, they may be interested enough to consider more about Zonta's mission and membership. During the event include a short speech about how this fundraiser supports Zonta's mission, all the other great things we do, and an invitation to consider joining. Provide brochures and prospective member forms at the event.
- When inviting someone to a club event, provide some background about Zonta, your *Zonta Why*, and explain incentives and benefits of membership.
- Contact them the day before the event to remind them that you are looking forward to them coming, with time and place.
- Offer to pick them up to get to the event, or meet them at the front of the event to welcome them in. Introduce them around so they aren't on their own.
- Don't just ask once. If they are not able to make the first invite, repeat the invite for another time or event, demonstrating they are important. Having a prospective member attend more than one event or meeting helps them get a more complete sense of the club community and activities. The more exposure to the club, its members, atmosphere, and operation, the more likely the individual (and the club) can get a good sense of whether they would fit. Arrange a meeting between the current club membership chairman and the prospective/new members—invite them to lunch, coffee, or a drink to share more information, answer questions, and get to know one another, singly or as a group. And follow up!

- If a prospect can't attend your club meetings due to time, location, or other constraints but shows real interest in Zonta's mission, suggest e-club or supporting membership.
- Send club newsletter or club highlights via email to guests for the full fiscal year to keep Zonta in front of them until they join.

Create an inviting environment for guests and prospective members at meetings and events

- Have an enthusiastic and gracious Zontian(s) greet members and guests as they arrive.
- Have name tags available for guests AND members.
- Introduce people *a lot*. Ensure connections are made among guests, new members, and experienced members.
- Have the sponsoring member or one of the club board make introductions of guests/prospective members and ask guests to briefly talk about themselves and why they are there. Prepare guests ahead of time to talk about themselves.
- Request experienced members to sit with guests and engage with them.
- Be respectful and listen well to each individual.
- Coach members on making guests welcome. Protect guests from inappropriate comments or disrespectful behavior (e.g., side conversations during presentations).
- Explain club jargon and acronyms such as YWPA, JMK, Rose Day, STEM (and just avoid using acronyms!).
- Offer guests a brochure or packet that explains service and advocacy projects, details on becoming a member, and contact information.
- Have guests complete a Prospective Member Form, requesting preferred contact method.
- Follow up with the individual within 2–3 days of the event to thank them for attending, answer any questions, and ask if they are interested in joining or coming to another meeting. Following up demonstrates you paid attention to them and they are important.
- Identify a sponsoring or other member to be a mentor to the prospective member.

Keep in mind why people join

Participating in an organization or club takes time, money, and energy. While it seems people are less inclined to join organizations today, people will get involved in things that are important and enriching to them. You can recruit more effectively by finding out people's interests and tapping into them.

Recognize that we (and prospective members) have different interests or motivations for being part of Zonta. Some are looking to meet people with similar values and interests, make new friends, getting out of the house, find a community away from home, or simply to have fun. To make your club more appealing to them, plan varied activities, operate in an informal atmosphere, and provide opportunities for members to get to know each other. Others want to develop new skills or leadership qualities or have valuable experiences that will help them test out possible career tracks. Make it clear that involvement can provide them with invaluable experience. Still others value being connected with a high-quality international organization. For these individuals, suggest they visit the ZI website, tell them ZI is the only organization with the mission to improve the lives of women and girls and that has a permanent seat on the UN. And always: do not forget to talk about the Service aspect of what we do.

Before they commit to join

When an individual indicates they may be interested in joining, engage more fully with them to assure they will be a good fit to the club. More careful introduction to Zonta and its mission should make for much more realistic expectations on the part of prospective and new members, and in turn the club will be more likely to gain and *keep* them as a good member.

- Have them attend 1–2 meetings and, if feasible, a service or advocacy event before committing.

- Meet them informally over coffee, lunch, or drinks to get to know them personally, learn their key interests that may lend them to particular club activities; explain more about Zonta and expectations, etc. Provide more in-depth information about mission (local and global); organization (club, district, ZI); service, scholarship, and advocacy activities; club meeting and event schedule, etc. Do they fit with the mission and this club?
- Be upfront about expectations for active participation, time, dues, and other financial aspects (e.g., Zonta Foundation for Women).
- Ask them what may be a constraint to them becoming a club member: timing of meetings? Child care? Commute time? Financial aspects? Fitting in with others? Anticipate and have positive answers to overcome objections or concerns such as “it’s too expensive” or “I don’t have enough time to make meetings.” Consider their concerns or reasons that may make them hesitate or say no. Recognize there are alternative ways for individuals to participate in Zonta, seeking the best fit with a prospective member’s skills, interests, and time available. Talk about different ways they can engage as a member. Are there changes the club can make to accommodate them (e.g., child care during meetings)?
- Dues are usually paid annually, but the full price can be off-putting to many. Explaining dues as a monthly basis makes them sound much more reasonable. Explain the parts of dues (club, district, international, meals if included) and why they are important. If dues seem be a financial challenge, offer to arrange for flexible payment schedule (e.g., 2-3 payments over the year, with the first payment enough to cover district and international dues).
- Promote the Young Professional membership classification for individuals under 35 years old.
- Highlight advantage of early membership: by joining in March, they get a 15-month membership for same cost of as a 12-month membership, and it carries into the next fiscal year (July-June).
- Consider offering a first-year discount or sponsorship for local dues, subsidized by the club or by individual members. This can help new members get to know and get involved with the club with less financial commitment, but after the first year they should be able and willing to cover full dues.
- Explain the **benefits** of membership in a Zonta club:
 - **Community service:** Learn more deeply about and connect with your community, and give back, helping others and other organizations.
 - Expand your **personal skills** beyond your job: working with others; computer/web sites, communications, public relations, organizational, advocacy.
 - **Build leadership skills:** business skills, personal support, event planning and implementation, serving on a non-profit board.
 - **Amplify your voice:** work with other Zontians at local, state, national, and international levels on advocacy to support actions that advance the status of women and girls and their human rights.
 - **Networking:** Grow your business or profession, increase your circle of influence – and knowledge.
 - **International service and engagement:** Be part of a larger organization that works collectively to build a better world for women and girls; learn and get involved with the UN; know your donations have a clear purpose.
 - **Camaderie and connections:** Lifelong friends, wide-ranging conversations, emotional support, learning, and have FUN with a purpose.
 - **Travel:** Travel to meet Zontians around the district, U.S., and the world at area and district meetings, North American Interdistrict Conference, and International Convention.

Remember to ASK!!

RETAIN

Members are our lifeblood, key to maintaining our ability at both club and international levels to provide service, advocacy, and funds for scholarships. Members are also important for sustaining the institutional knowledge and identity of the club and enriching its community.

Make it easy to join and to renew club membership with online registration and payment. Consider using payment options such as credit cards, PayPal, or Venmo. If one-time dues payments are challenging for some members, consider allowing members to pay in 2-3 installments.

New Members

New Member Orientation Session: New members need to know about the organization and especially about your club—what is expected of them and how they can participate in areas that interest them. It is important for new members have an opportunity in one-on-one interviews with seasoned members or some of the club board so they understand the broader aspects of Zonta and know exactly what is expected of them, and they in turn can ask questions pertaining to their interest. Arrange a special welcome social for new members to meet with club officers to learn about Zonta and their club. Share with them ZI's New Member Welcome Video, under Membership Tools).

New Member Installation Ceremony: All new members should be installed into your club as soon as possible, preferably at the very next meeting following their acceptance as a member. Induct new members with pizzazz—make them feel appreciated, important, and welcomed. Invite their spouse/partner or adult children; they may be a future prospect. Be sure each new member receives a new member information kit, member lapel pin, and most importantly a warm welcome. A single yellow rose can help symbolize their inclusion in the organization.

Recognize incoming members: Provide a personalized welcome note from the club president to the new member. Including a new-member profile in club newsletters or other outreach avenues helps club members to get to know about each other, their background and interests, and to step towards better inclusion into the club.

Mentors: Each incoming member should have a mentor (often the one who invited them) or “Zonta Sister” as an on-going connect who makes sure the new member is informed and comfortable as a member. A mentor can remind them of meetings, be the go-to person to explain things or introduce them to others, partner with them in activities, offer to pick them up to meetings or events, and just be the familiar, trusted face. If they did not personally know their mentor beforehand, give them a card with contact information so they know who it is months later.

New member handbook: Create a club handbook that provides basic information about club structure, function, dues, meeting times and place, annual schedule of events, etc. Keep updated annually. For an excellent example, see <https://capezonta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/3-September-2021-Zonta-Club-of-Cape-Girardeau-Handbook.pdf>.

Keeping all members engaged and enthusiastic

Our ongoing challenge is to keep members interested, engaged, and appreciated. To do so, consider why people stay involved in clubs and plan activities in a way that keeps them coming back! Members have different needs and motives. If their needs are met, they are more likely to stay. Key reasons **why members stay engaged:**

- They feel appreciated and heard.
- They can see that their presence makes a difference to Zonta's mission.
- There is opportunity for personal growth.
- They receive public and private recognition.
- They feel capable of handling the tasks offered.

- There is a sense of belonging and teamwork.
- They are involved in the process.
- They see they are making a positive contribution to the community.

Gathering: making meetings and events fun and productive: How we run meetings reflects on us as professionals and Zontians. People are more likely to show up and fully participate if they know it will be productive and enjoyable. Conduct efficient meetings, following an agenda, with the president exerting ‘generous authority’ to maintain control of the discussions, time, and respectful dialog. Keep club life and activities positive and enjoyable—“**fun with a purpose.**” Guests and new members will also find the club more attractive with well-run and positive meetings.

Whether a board meeting, monthly club meeting, social event, or other event, make them welcoming and purposeful (from *Gathering*, by Priya Parker).

- What is the purpose of this gathering? Outcome?
- Prime participants ahead of time: help shape the mindset, issues, questions. For guests: frame the event ahead of time, expectations (who will be there, what we are interested in hearing, time to speak if they are part of the program).
- Create a temporary world with basic rules and etiquette so all are respected and heard. Make sure people are mentally present (eg mute and set aside cell phones).
- Introduce people a lot. Be generous and respectful.
- Opening the event: Start with welcome and recognitions, honoring; make them feel important to be there. Then get to logistics
- Mediate and facilitate: For business meetings, keep track of who’s talking, and who’s not. Exhibit zero tolerance for interruptions. Prevent anyone from dominating or derailing the discussion.
- Closing the event: Looking inward (understand, remember, acknowledge, reflect) to bond the group. Turn outward: preparing for next steps, moving out, back to the world

Have engaging meetings with **interesting speakers and relevant topics**, not just club business, at least quarterly. Part of being a Zontian is expanding our horizons, our awareness and knowledge about issues related to women and girls locally and globally.

- Bring in guest speakers and tap knowledgeable members to give talks.
- Take advantage of the many YouTube videos and presentations available on ZI and district websites for meetings.
- Keep learning and broadening our world!

Foster strong Zonta camaraderie: Foster strong community connections and camaraderie through informal opportunities, such as picnics, movie nights, social times just before or after a regular meeting, where members can visit and share more about their lives. Make February 17th a “love your member” day of appreciation, coinciding with “**Random Acts of Kindness Day.**” Another way to build personal connections within the club is a “**treasured member**” program: every 3-6 months you are given a set of questions and a new name of a Zonta member. This is a face-to-face treasure hunt to learn more about members as individuals one-on-one.

As part of the Zonta community, support one another as part of the Zonta community, providing **support** both to members in their time of need and in their accomplishments and celebrations.

It can be more challenging in larger clubs to build and sustain camaraderie. One approach is Membership Circles or pods, which can help build relationships, encourage participation in meetings, service projects, fundraising, retention, and recruitment of members. In a simple form, create small (2-6) groups, randomly assigned, to discuss club activities, to know one another, and provide more personal interchange and support. Change up groups every 1-2 years to prevent forming cliques. In another approach, two members serve as co-leaders for each circle, and each member is randomly assigned to a circle. Each circle determines how they wish to function as a team in meeting the goals of the Membership circles: building

relationships, encouraging participation, retention of our existing members and recruitment of new members.

The concept of small groups like ‘pods’ may also be valuable when discussing some larger club decisions. Have break-out groups of 3-6 to discuss the question, then bring the full club together to review the contributions from each group. Mix up so individuals are not always talking with the same people each time. Smaller groups can have more productive, open discussions where each can speak/be heard than at the level of the whole club, especially with larger clubs.

Helping members fit: What intrigues or motivates different members? How could they fit with existing activities or generate new ones? Develop impactful service and advocacy projects that match their interests, passions, and skills, while also fitting the needs of the community. Not everyone may have the interest or be able to participate in every club project. Involving each member this way helps to keep them engaged, enthusiastic, and not overwhelmed, while also demonstrating their value to the club and as a person. But just because a member may do something for their job (e.g., web design, PR), it doesn’t always mean they also want to do it for Zonta; they may want to do something entirely different from work.

If an individual isn’t engaged and doesn’t speak up to volunteer for any particular task or committee, have a side conversation with them to explore their interests and possible constraints or uncertainties. Recognize there are alternative ways for individuals to participate in Zonta, seeking the best fit with a prospective member’s skills, interests, and time available. Talk about different ways they can be involved. Encourage them to get involved in something that could be a good fit and provide what support needed and perhaps a mentor to get them comfortable in that new role or task.

Don’t burn a member out: don’t always tap the same person for the same tasks each time unless they are enthusiastic about that role. If that individual has long been the go-to person for a task or project but needs a break (or some help), have them teach or counsel another member in it.

Foster our international connections: Build members’ understanding and identity with our role in an international organization, with a global influence on women and girls:

- Ensure **all members are registered in ZI** so they receive ZI emails, newsletters, and other communications. Encourage them to download the Zonta app for their phone or computer as another way to keep in touch with what is happening in Zonta. The app provides a news feed with the latest updates, discussion forums tailored to your Zonta role and special interests, easy access to essential member resources, a member directory with instant private and group chats, and calendar of Zonta events. More information and download at https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/Zonta_Connect_App.aspx
- Use the YouTube videos and Powerpoint presentations on ZI website during a meeting or special event to keep members aware and informed about biennial programs.
- Invite the **district Foundation Ambassador** to a meeting (in person or virtually) to talk about the international programs and the Foundation for Women. Highlight what the donations to ZIF buys (e.g., one tetanus shot in Afghanistan is \$1.20).
- On **UN Day** (October 23rd each year), highlight Zonta’s role in the UN and international programs. Keep our international role in the forefront for members.
- Invite a university undergraduate or graduate student from a country where Zonta has a project to talk about the country and her experience of women’s opportunities and challenges there.
- Use club and district newsletters to highlight international programs.
- Incorporate the **global aspects** of Zonta during fundraisers and when requesting sponsors for a donation.

Celebrate ourselves

Value all members, new and experienced, through large and small recognitions, such as honoring their club and professional achievements at meetings, providing simple verbal kudos to awards and/or yellow roses and social recognition.

Show appreciation to our members, for their contributions to the club and to recognize events in their lives. There are many ways to show our appreciation to members, from simply saying thanks in person to giving your time. See the table at the end for different ways to show appreciation, and add your own ideas!

If the local paper is receptive, write up press releases noting significant achievements of the club or member's professional achievements.

Share interest in member's lives: **Get to know one another!**

- Ask one common question of all members.
- Ask members to share a personal story to share at meetings or in club newsletter or social media (as appropriate).
- Have an informal start to the meeting with brief highlights from individuals talking about something personal of note over the past month or year ('happy bucks' of Minneapolis club; 120-seconds for Jamestown club).

Why do some members leave?

Many different forces can contribute to a member leaving a club: moving away from the area, changes at work or home (children, elder care, spouse) that demand more time or energies; burn-out; time and financial constraints; commuting challenges to get to meetings; personality conflicts; frustration with meetings or projects; feeling excluded or not appreciated. Or simply Zonta doesn't fit their interests and life at this point. Be aware of how individuals are doing and interacting with others, be open for listening to their concerns and take efforts to address them *before* they leave. Talking with a member for an exit interview can help to understand the factors contributing to member departures and can indicate ways the club could change to address problematic aspects. Please also ask the departing member to complete the District exit survey (request from the Lt. Governor), especially if the individual may have had issues within the club.

- *Simply timing out:* Some long-time members find it is time to stop being engaged in the club or wish to move on to other things in life. But they probably still appreciate and are supportive of the work that Zonta does. Encourage them to sustain their support for and connection to Zonta by becoming a **Supporting Member**. Outgoing club members can fill out a form online to transfer to Supporting membership. For more information go to https://www.zonta.org/Web/Get_Involved/Join/Individual_Membership. Reach out to **recent past members** to encourage them to rejoin as a Supporting member—their support and voices are still valuable.
- *Moving away:* If a member is leaving the area, help them to connect with a club in their new destination, or encourage them to join an **e-club or become a Supporting Member**. Celebrate their time with your club and recognize their contributions so they continue to feel valued and thus more likely to stay connected as a e-club or Supporting Member.
- *Time constraints:* We ask all members to be enthusiastic, active members, regularly attending meetings and participating in events. But life—whether related to work or family or health—can limit when and how much an individual can participate. **Be aware, respectful, and flexible** where possible to retain valuable members and keep them engaged but not overwhelmed.
- *Timing and location of meetings:* Attendance at regular meetings can present travel and timing challenges, particularly in larger cities where commuting can be challenging. Canvas the club

periodically to assess what time and place will work best to accommodate club members. Other considerations for meeting location include cost to members (e.g., meal costs) and attractiveness or character of the meeting place (meeting in a nursing home or senior center can send the wrong message even if the space is nice). Take advantage of hybrid and online meetings for those with ; tight schedules, commuting challenges, winter travel issues, snowbirding, etc

- *Child care:* Younger members often have children that need either a supportive partner during meetings or events or they must arrange for child care, which may not always be feasible or affordable. Can the club provide child care or child-friendly meeting spaces for those with younger children so the member can still come to the meeting? During a Zonta event, can older children be given a role (e.g., handing out tickets or brochures)?
- *Frustration with meetings:* The president and board, with input from members, need to understand what is/isn't working and how to improve meetings. Not following the agenda and staying on time? Too many side conversations? Decisions not made in a transparent manner? Individuals feel ignored or not heard? Are the frustrations just 1-2 individuals or felt more broadly? ZI has many tools available online for improving meetings, both in-person and electronic meetings – check them out under Club Tools at https://www.zonta.org/Web/My_Zonta/Tools/Membership_Tools/Home.
- *Burn out:* People often leave organizations because they are asked to do too much, or too much of the same tasks. Recognize when an individual is burning out, talk with them about what is contributing to burn-out (overburdened with one project? Zonta projects + their job or life events?), and work with them to take the pressure off. Sometimes a break of just a few months or year or doing something entirely different can help keep them as members.
- *Cool Out:* The opposite of asking people to do too much is not asking them to do anything at all. "No one invited me." "No one told me they needed me." Don't be hesitant about asking people to do things for the club. People want to be useful. Don't lose track of people.
- *Kept Out:* Members that have been together for years or who know each other very well inevitably will gravitate towards one another at meetings. But it is important that newcomers also feel truly included and heard. Incorporate a social component into your meetings to enhance inclusivity and intermixing. And keep in mind all members need to feel *included*:

Inclusion = all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success. *They are not just in the room or at the table, they are actively engaged and heard*—both in club business and the club community.

- *Personality conflicts:* Bringing together active, passionate women can expose differences in personalities, attitudes, opinions, or work styles, any of which can lead to conflicts among members. It can affect just one other member or negatively infect the whole club. Different personalities and styles, if handled correctly, can strengthen a team by contributing different ideas and solutions. It is important to be aware of and deal with personality conflicts before they reach the point where they interfere with the ability to work. The key first step is to understand the nature of the conflict and the perspectives on all sides; never assume and listen to all sides. Once the conflict is better understood, assess your options, and discuss solutions for both sides.
- *No Growth:* Volunteer work should be interesting and should offer variety and a chance for personal growth. Sometimes there is boring work to be done of course, but try to distribute it evenly, and make it fun. Encourage members to take on more challenging tasks and projects.
- *No Appreciation:* Members don't just enjoy being appreciated; they need and deserve it. Without it, they tend to lose faith in the value of what they're doing. There are three primary elements of showing your appreciation. First, show them that you are grateful for the work they have done. Second, don't take it for granted that they will continue doing work for the club. Third, show

general respect for their opinions and their work by returning phone calls, answering notes, passing along information, etc.

- *No Fun*: Have creative and enjoyable meetings and events for members. If people feel like attending meetings or working on projects is a chore, you're not likely to recruit or retain them.
- *No Substance*: Balance between the social and the substance. You won't attract people interested in culture and the arts if your club is solely known for "Kabob night" or jewelry parties. Make sure to take into account the various interests of your members – if someone is interested in literature, have them organize a reading workshop or a panel, if they're interested in games, have them organize a backgammon competition or game day.

RECRUIT / RETAIN / ENERGIZE!

More and more women are realizing that only collective strength and action will allow us to be free to fight for the kind of society that meets basic human needs.

Roxanne Dunbar

Whatever you choose to do, leave tracks. That means don't do it just for yourself. You will want to leave the world a little better for your having lived.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg

SHOWING APPRECIATION TO OUR MEMBERS

There are many ways to show our appreciation to members, from simply saying thanks in person to giving your time. Add your own ideas!

Recognizing	Giving gifts	Giving back
In person thank you	Special name tag or pin	Drive a member to a meeting
Personalized thank-you card	Zonta key chain, pin, or other Zonta item	Take a member to lunch
Pictures – make memories!	Box of chocolates or treats	Wash their car
Recognize birthdays/anniversaries/life events	Special dessert	Help plant their garden or other yard work
Group celebrations	Special cupcakes	Coupon for personal services
Acknowledgement at meeting	Car wash tickets	
Service award	Gift certificates to their favorite coffee shop or restaurant	
Attendance award	Tickets to a museum, play, or music event	
Zonta yard sign “Member of the Month”	Flowers or plant	
Certificate of Accomplishment	Artwork	
A smile and hug	Travel mug	
Brag board	Yellow rose	
Accomplishment collage	Unique trophy	
Valor awards	Gift certificate to their favorite shop	
Rewarding Above and Beyond – recognizing people who do something good, beyond the call to duty	Donation to the area's domestic shelter or other organization in their name	
"Share the spotlight"	Donation to Zonta Foundation in honor of the member	
Volunteer Service Hours Award		
Recognition in club or district newsletter		
Recognition on club social media site		
Blue Ribbon award		
Press release in recognition of their accomplishments (in or outside of Zonta)		