

The 2nd Century – Invite to Impact Centennial Year “Homecoming” for Lions Everywhere

Experience suggests that it is easier to reach out to former Lions and get them to rejoin than it is to convince someone to join for the very first time. After all, former Lions already understand what Lionism is all about. You don't have to explain to them who Lions are and what they do – you just have to remind them how important the Lions are to the community, and how fulfilling they once found it to be a Lion.

As we approach 2017 and the Centennial Celebration, we have a great opportunity to use that 100-year excitement to reach out to “lapsed” Lions. It is a chance to let them know what their involvement in Lionism meant in the past, and what it could mean for their future. This packet contains materials to help you do just that – to plan a “Homecoming” celebration for former Lions that is unique to them, and to your club, and see if you can bring them back to service. **First, and foremost, your club must buy-in to the Homecoming Event concept for it to be successful.**

Identifying Your Guests

What Former Members Are Out There?

Go back AT LEAST five years (perhaps longer!), and identify people who have been members of your club in the last five years who are no longer members. In sifting through your prospects, think about these possibilities along the way.

- (a) Spouses – The spouses of your long time *current* members, who came to Lions activities for many years WITH their family Lion, are great potential prospects for your outreach efforts. Here is a chance to make a personal outreach to those folks, saying “you have always been a valued supporter of what we do. Isn't it time that you were one of us?” And, as you reach out to former Lions who are no longer affiliated, don't forget to consider offering an invitation to their spouses to attend, as well. Invite them to come along and help celebrate the 100th anniversary of Lions.
- (b) Have you lost any Lions Clubs in your area in the recent past? Where are the Lions who were part of the club that disbanded? Can you entice them back for a Homecoming celebration and encourage them to consider joining YOUR club now?

Who, Among Your Current Active Members, Is Still In Touch?

Often, when we recruit new members, we are approaching folks we don't know. For this activity, you don't have to worry about establishing rapport with someone new – these folks aren't new to you (or you to them!). They are friends and colleagues. They are people you worked with for some time in the past.

That gives you the unique opportunity to create a one-of-a-kind outreach for each of those folks, based on what you know about their past experiences with Lions, their personal situations, and more. Find out who in your club is still in touch with these former Lions or who was very comfortable with your prospect in the past and let them be the contact. You want to personalize this outreach effort as much as possible – friends talking to friends.

Why Did They Leave?

For each of the former Lions (or potential Lions) that you identified, determine why they decided to drop out (or, for spouses, why they may not have joined before). Was it because of health reasons? Age and energy levels? Work schedules? Family commitments? You **NEED** a clear understanding of the reason, if you are going to convince them that the reason they left shouldn't keep them from coming back now. How you deliver your outreach “pitch” may be very different depending on their reasons for leaving, or not stepping forward, in the past.