

National Organizer
Suggestions to increase membership

Increasing our membership is the job of every division and every member. You should always be on the lookout for potential new members. There are many things that divisions may do to increase membership, I have listed some below:

- **Print inexpensive business cards**, give them to your members to keep on hand so they can give to potential members. Include info about the LAOH, membership requirements, and most importantly contact info both email and telephone. Include a website or Facebook page if you have one. If you do not have a website, list the National website [www.LadiesAOH.com] so the potential member can get a sense of what we are about.
- **Print inexpensive postcards** to hand out at fairs, festivals, membership drives, local street fairs (they are cheaper than printing membership applications). Make the card colorful to attract attention. Wait for a sale from a printing company.
- **Make sure there is up-to-date contact info** for your division/county/state on our national and/or local websites, Facebook Pages. Remember to make it easy for potential members to find you. Make sure whoever the contact person or email is checks their emails on a regular basis; potential members get discouraged if it takes too long to respond back to them.
- **Have shirts or jackets printed** with our name and logo for your members to wear. This is literally a walking advertisement.
- **Have a division banner designed** and display it at events, fairs, feis, parades. Let the public know who we are.
- **PUBLICITY:** Write a small article for a local newspaper. Again, advertise who we are and what a Hibernian is; people will see it and ask questions. This opens the door for new members. Most local papers are always looking for local stories or groups to write about.
- **Whenever you have a division event or project** ALWAYS take a photo and send to a local newspaper; invite the press, send to local cable TV stations, radio for the community event bulletins. These are usually free or very nominal in fee.
- **Sponsor a speaker** and invite the public for free. A good example is to sponsor a speaker on a women's issue (breast cancer, domestic violence...), this will attract women and while they are attending give out membership info, introduce who we are in the beginning. Many parishes will let you use their hall for free or for a small donation. Provide coffee, tea.
- **Membership Drive:** do a membership drive in a Parish Hall, advertise in their parish bulletin, this will attract Catholic women. Ask local Catholic Clubs (K of C, Rosary Societies, Catholic Daughters) permission to come and speak about being a Hibernian. If they do not allow speakers than ask to handout a flyer.
- **Post Flyers about LAOH**, on community, supermarket, parish bulletin boards, Irish Pubs, Irish gift shops, Irish companies, or restaurants; always ask permission first.
- **Have a display or table** at community, parish festivals or fairs. Include photos of local Hibernian events, activities, charity work, history, or topical Irish news events. Let everyone see what we do while having fun. Do not limit your membership activities to only Irish events; there are many Irish that attend these other events.
- **Local Library** ask local library or bank to let you put up a display on Irish History or Irish Culture, particularly around St. Patrick's Day. ***Always have membership info available for potential members.*** Remember to ask several months in advance, most of these places have a waiting list to put up displays.
- **Contact local Catholic or Cable TV stations**, ask if you can put up an advertisement or do they allow local groups to post a video? Ask to be interviewed about who and what the LAOH is all about. Make sure the member that does the interview is well versed in our history both Irish and Catholic.
- **Have a membership table at Irish or Celtic Festival.** This is an ideal spot to find new members. Do something to attract attention: give out free name tags "have your name written in Irish"; this attracts people over and gives you a chance to promote the LAOH and membership. Always have plenty of membership info to hand out. It gives potential members something to read and think about when they get home. Include website so they may look us up and see what we are about.
- **Plan events for different ages.** Different types of events attract different age groups, ex. 'Theology on Tap', Paint Night (Irish Theme). ***Always have membership info available for potential members.***
- **Sponsor an Irish dance teacher for 4-6 sessions.** Advertise it. It can be a ton of fun for your own members while also inviting potential members; ***always have membership info available.*** You can charge a small fee to pay for the teacher.
- **Target Irish Dance Schools, Pipe Bands, Celtic Clubs etc.** The members or students, parents may want to join; they are interested in Irish Culture offer them a way to be part of the Irish Culture.
- **Create Social Media Accounts.** Face Book, Twitter a website all are either free or inexpensive and attract different age groups as potential members.

- **Ask your own members** to each bring in one new member per year. Our own members have varied interest, various types of employment, family members, they belong to other community groups; don't forget this resource.
- **Go through your list of past members;** invite them back. Sometimes people's lives take them in different directions or they just needed a break; it may be time for them to return home to the LAOH.
- **Work with the local Irish Consulate or Irish Immigration Centers.** Ask to be put on their mailing list, attend events for other Irish groups. Ask consulate to advertise our membership or sponsor a social event to encourage membership in the LAOH. Remember the Consulates and Irish Immigration Centers deal with many new comers from Ireland and they are looking for friends. The LAOH affords them many opportunities for friendship.
- **Target High Schools or Colleges.** LAOH membership starts at 16 years of age. Students will bring friends, it gives us a younger image and also gives the potential members a way to have fun and learn about Irish traditions, march in parades, and is good for extra curriculum activities for their resumes.
- **Honor our member's accomplishments.** Work with local officials to honor our members and/or organization, particularly our charity work. Make sure these honors are advertised in the local and catholic newspapers, TV, radio. It gives us publicity but more importantly people like to be part of an established group that is active in the community.
- **Sponsor an award for a local school.** Give an award for a Catholic Action project or an Irish history project for a local grade school or high school graduate. Present a certificate and if possible a small monetary award. It lets the public know we are an involved community group.
- **Help-out in the community.** Do charity work, have a day of service. Issue a press release, publicity is important. Take photos, they can be sent to the newspapers as well as used in displays about the LAOH.
- **Have members wear sashes.** Especially when attending Mass as a group.
- **Sponsor a Day or Weekend Celtic Retreat.** It's a great thing for your own members while also recruiting others by letting them know who we are and how important our faith is to us.
- **Have a 'paint night'.** Have an event open to the public. This type of event tends to attract younger members. Do an Irish theme painting.
- **Wine and Cheese Night.** Have a small social gathering, advertise the gathering and invite potential new members to an informal gathering to get to know us.
- **Have a Irish Bowling Night.** Again, a fun night for your own members while attracting potentially new members.
- **Sponsor a movie night or a book club.** Show or read an Irish movie or book. Again, you will attract people interested in Irish culture.
- **If you have a Hall or local meeting spot;** sponsor an open house. Invite people in to get to know who we are and what we do.
- **Have a local St. Brigid or St. Patrick event open to the public.** This will attract Irish people who know the importance of these two saints to the Irish.
- **Take an ad in an Irish newspaper.** Irish people read Irish newspapers. Many Irish newspapers have special editions for St. Patrick's Day, take advantage of the larger than normal readership.
- **Church Bulletins.** Don't forget your local parish bulletin; division members usually belong to various parishes so there is a potential of have a little blurb in several bulletins seeking new members.
- **Buttons.** Have big buttons made to wear at fairs, festivals saying something like "Ask me what's a Hibernian?" or 'Are you Irish? Talk to me', 'who says there are no Irish in (town Name)'?

Samples of Membership posters are available on the National website. www.LadiesAOH.com and via the **the National Organizer, Mary Hogan** LAOHBKLYN@AOL.COM or 917 699-9290.

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