



INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRIENDSHIP THROUGH FLOWERS
ENCOURAGE VOLUNTEERING

Getting members to volunteer for committees and board positions is a constant problem. It is not a new problem, nor is it unique to Ikebana. It is an issue faced by many volunteer organizations.

The NCAR Ikebana Advocates asked the chapters for input on how they tackle the issue of getting members to serve. We hope the list below is helpful.

If you utilize any of these ideas successfully or have any to add, please contact your Area [Advocate](#) or our [Communications Chair](#).

- 1. Promote the benefits of volunteering**
 - Members are more engaged when involved
 - Involved members recruit new members; especially their friends
 - Membership involvement leads to membership retention

- 2. Compile a list**
 - Make a list of all the jobs needing volunteers
 - Make the list as detailed as possible; including the little jobs
 - Little jobs can be handled by members who have limitations on their level of involvement (jobs, children, etc.)
 - Share the list in the chapter newsletter giving all your members an idea of what is involved in running your chapter
 - Separately share the list with your board and committee chairs (past and present)
 - Give members a chance to pick a task they might like to do, or one that fits with their talents or experience.

- 3. Write job descriptions**
 - Ask past job holders to write a small paragraph explaining the task; often members don't understand what is involved in certain tasks
 - Include time commitment and skills required in the job description
 - Provide contact information for interested parties to discuss the job and ask questions
 - Encourage the contact people to recruit new volunteers

- 4. Collect written reports**
 - Helps with job descriptions for future jobholders
 - Outlines what was done and how
 - List issues faced and how handled
 - Outline areas for improvement
 - Provide contact information for questions and help

NCAR

5. **Identify member skills**
 - Ask new members for their interests and skills in your membership application form
 - Send email to current members listing skills needed and ask for help
 - Some skills needed (email, newsletter, creating flyers, organizational, social media)

6. **Sow the seeds of “Friendship through Flower” stories**
 - Put stories of how members have enjoyed their “jobs” in your newsletters
 - Have members provide testimonials at a meeting
 - Who did they meet and befriend
 - Obstacles they incurred and conquered
 - Include a funny story – there is always one!

7. **Extend personal invitations**
 - Everyone likes to be asked!
 - It is harder to say no to a friend
 - Personally invite via a phone call or in-person meeting
 - Have lunch together; this is particularly successful when seeking committee/event chairs
 - Bring the past chair to the lunch
 - They can explain how they did it, the time it took and the fun they had doing it

8. **Offer multiple choices**
 - “Would you please be our hospitality chair or perhaps you would like to organize our Holiday Luncheon”.
 - It is easy to say no to one offer, but given a choice, it is harder to say no.
 - Have your list of jobs handy and keep offering alternatives to identify what works best for them

9. **Double the fun**
 - Many like to say yes if they can work with a friend
 - Ask committee chairs to invite a friend to help
 - Encourage at least one of the team to continue next year and to find another friend to join them
 - Provides more opportunities for “Friendship through Flowers” stories

10. **Initiate a replacement recruitment policy**
 - Many are reluctant to offer their services because “someone else” has always done it.
 - Encourage those that have done the same job for years to add a buddy to help them
 - Ask them to train the buddy for when they opt to hand the job over
 - Encourage rotation of job assignments to involve more chapter members
 - Leads to member engagement and greater likelihood of members retaining their membership

11. Consider the consequences

- If no one steps up, then announce the event will not be offered
 - No hospitality chair for meetings means no goodies at meetings
 - No ginza chair means no items for sale and potential for increased dues
 - No holiday luncheon chair – no holiday luncheon
 - No exhibit workers; no exhibit

12. Be willing to rotate, change or cancel events/meetings

- Annual exhibits are not a requirement
- Rotate exhibits with other big events such as demonstrator luncheons
- Hold Anniversary teas on “milestone years” only
- Replace an in-person meeting with a Zoom meeting showing a video

13. Keep calm and wait

- Ask for volunteers for a variety of tasks at a meeting
- Be silent until someone raises their hand
 - We have personal experience this works!

14. Require commitment to participate in exhibits

- To put in an arrangement, you must work on any committee
- This practice has been successfully employed by several chapters
- Regular practice in many volunteer organizations; especially garden clubs
- The events (exhibit, big demonstration luncheon) are important and fun; but the work is vital to its’ success and needs to be shared

15. Recognize special circumstances

- Privately identify those members unable to help but wish to participate
 - Have someone contact them personally and tell them they are still vital to your chapter and invite their participation
 - Possibly offer some easy task such as checking in people at an event
 - Provide transportation and suggest a simple task
- Make them feel involved and able to contribute within their circumstances

16. Reward all volunteers

- Praise them in newsletters and meetings
- Ask them to talk (write) about the “fun” they had
- Give them an incentive such as
 - 10% off one item in your ginza
 - Free glass of wine at holiday lunch
 - Preferred seating at an event