

with her schedule in mind. You might explain that many of the activities are optional and that although regular attendance at rehearsals is expected, individuals may participate at a level that best fits their schedules.

- Do a lot of listening. It's much more important to stay near the guest, and not to leave her alone, than it is to talk. All you have to do, really, is say, "Hello," and introduce yourself. Ask a question or two about how she happened to learn about the chorus, and listen carefully to the answer. Then just be near to offer support and encouragement.

### OFFER VISITOR INCENTIVES (Action Plan Template 3.6)

Primarily, success in getting guests back will hinge on the impression that the chorus makes at their first rehearsal. However, adding incentives will help motivate repeat visits. Here are a few ideas for starters:

- Construct rehearsals so there's a cliffhanger, something that needs to be carried over into the next rehearsal. For example, introduce an entertaining two-part exercise that wraps up next week, or hold off on teaching the juicy tag of a new song until the next rehearsal.
- Make it easy for guests to keep up and to keep that first rehearsal top of mind. As they leave for the evening, give them an audio recording of the evening's rehearsal as recorded by their Section Leader. (Be prepared to make multiple copies.) Or give guests a learning track of the songs that were being taught. (Be sure to check out copyright laws for producing quantities of learning tracks.)
- Give visitors a "frequent guest" card, much like a frequent buyer card. For every rehearsal attended, the guest earns points that are redeemable for barbershop items—or dollars off dues when she joins. Earn more points for rehearsals that are attended consecutively. Of course, set a limit (e.g. up to seven rehearsals).
- Involve the guests in a light, fun project that will develop over several weeks. For example, assign each guest to a lip-sync or karaoke quartet that will perform for the chorus in a month.
- Ask guests to "Book" a space on the risers. Send a follow-up "Booking Confirmation" e-mail listing relevant information and requesting their reply to lock in the space.

### LEARN FROM GUESTS (Action Plan Template 3.7)

At the end of the guest's first visit, ask her to complete a guest survey. Gathering constructive feedback from prospective members will help the chorus continually improve its recruitment efforts. Also, if the guest doesn't visit again, the survey may identify issues or concerns that she may have. If applicable, leaders may be able to quickly correct the issues and possibly get her back for another rehearsal.

A written survey is likely to derive a more candid response than a conversation. It's best to ask the guest to take a moment to fill the survey out before she leaves the rehearsal—while her impressions are fresh.

### FOLLOW UP (Action Plan Template 3.8)

After the first visit, distribute a note from the director. For added impact, personalize and customize the notes by using the guest's name throughout and by highlighting memorable moments from the event. Following the next visit, follow up with a brief note from the greeter. Include contact information so that the guest can easily contact the greeter with any questions or concerns. Respond to any of her needs in a timely manner. For example, if she is feeling anxious about her upcoming audition, suggest a practice audition and offer to set it up.

Keep in touch with guests that miss visits. If a caller learns that a guest will not be returning, keep the call on a positive note – remember, the chorus has still made a friend. Feeling good about the chorus and its membership may entice her to join at a later time.

## CARE FOR GUESTS

### (Action Plan Template 3.2, 3.3, 3.4)

Most guests will not know what to expect when they arrive at the chorus for the first time. To ease confusion, establish a team of competent and friendly greeters to welcome guests and usher them to the proper places throughout the rehearsal. This will help guests feel comfortable and part of the group.

Greeters should care for guests upon arrival as follows:

- As guests are greeted, ask them to sign in and to fill out a Guest Profile form. It is important to accurately collect contact information for later follow-up.
- Talk with them for a moment to find out how they learned about the chorus, whether or not they have sung in a choral group and if they know anything about the organization.
- Explain that the chorus will help them determine the appropriate voice part.
- Distribute First Visit Guest Packets with Prospective Member Information. Include an assortment of materials about the chorus and the international organization:
  - *Prospective Member* brochure available through international sales or the Marketing Center.
  - A handout with a brief description of the chorus—when it was founded, where it meets, annual events, information about the director, names and contact information of membership committee members.
  - Chapter newsletter or past show program.
  - *Harmonize the World* sheet music.
  - Novelty such as a bookmark, decal or magnet with chorus information imprinted on the product.
  - Nametag.
- Familiarize guests with the rehearsal space, where to hang coats, location of the restrooms, etc.
- Encourage guests to join the chorus on the risers. The director usually finds them a place to sing, but until this happens, have them stand at the end of the risers either with other guests, or if she is the only guest, ask some friendly members to stay with her.

- Introduce guests when the director is ready.
- After rehearsal, remain with the guest and be sure the director, section leaders, and membership chair are available to talk with guests and answer any questions. It's a good idea to publish these leaders' phone numbers and e-mail addresses for guests in case they have follow-up questions.
- End on an upbeat note so that guests leave happy and enthusiastic.

## PREPARE MEMBERS TO TALK TO GUESTS

### (Action Plan Template 3.5)

Trained greeters will be the primary contacts, but guests will inevitably speak with general members and those conversations also become an integral part of the overall chorus experience. Here are a few ideas that will help members spark memorable relationships with guests:

- Use the guest's name throughout the conversation. This tactic will help you remember her face and connect it with her name. Also, try to remember at least one small detail of the initial conversation so that it gives you a place to start a conversation the following week.
- Avoid offering too much information about the chorus, unless it is specifically asked. Even then, be sparse. A little information is helpful but too much at one time is overwhelming. Elaborate a bit if the guest asks you to tell her more, but be careful not to make it sound negative. For instance, guests often express concern about learning all the songs and choreography. Assure them that they'll be given help and that they'll have time to learn everything at a reasonable pace.
- If the subject of competition comes up, discuss it as one of the major events for the year. You might mention that although it's not a mandatory activity for every member, most members choose to participate because it's fun. The work put into competition each year helps the chorus continue to improve. Mention other events and emphasize the chorus' shows, community performances, regional classes and events.
- Some guests may be concerned about the time commitment. If that concern is expressed, acknowledge it. Each individual needs to examine the organization