
Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge



Help Papers Series
Support Materials for Parent/Child Programs

TOPIC:

Recruiting Ideas

Great Lakes Region – Help Papers Series – Recruiting Ideas

Recruiting Ideas for Parent Child Programs

Recruiting requires a lot of work. You need to have a **public presence** at all community-wide events. You need to prepare flyers and posters to place around the community, which show parent-child fun. Carefully plan your recruiting events. Set up a budget for recruiting events.

The keys are asking permission, and getting sponsorship. Asking permission often allows you to get privileges not always offered to other organizations. Sponsorship is needed to create materials and secure booths at festivals.

Remember the proper use of the Indian theme. Avoid wearing feathers and face paint at public events. These are reserved for use at ceremonies. Headbands and vests are acceptable.

You might want to create a set of simple portable **display cases** to tell the story of your program. Display cases are easy to make. All you need is a sheet of plexiglass, some 1x6 pine boards (as thin or as deep as you like, and a sheet of 1/4" plywood. The 1x6 should be cut and routed along the edge such that the plexiglass fits in the groove. The back is plywood cut to fit. A display case for tribal crafts, tribes displayed on a map, and one for activities are good for starters. These display cases can be used in booths, and fairs. You can make these displays as professional or as rugged and rustic as you like.

Start up a web page. Most Internet Service Providers offer multiple screen names. Have a parent volunteer space for a web page. Each tribe should have a page, and tie into a Nation page.

Maintain a record of the recruiting events, and evaluate whether they are worth repeating. If you pass out flyers, you can mark them in a special way (color code) so you can tell which event drew in the new recruit.

Open House

Your program will normally have a recruiting day for new people. Sometimes this is organized around a free activity (e.g. swim party, ice cream party, etc.). Registration forms are collected and tribe assignments are arranged. It is important to have displays of tribal crafts.

In addition you might consider an appropriate ceremony at the Open House. The new children will be all bug-eyed when a bunch of dads, sons, and daughters come out in regalia beating a drum. Try to have a group representative of all of your tribes (it adds color). Each father child should introduce themselves using their Indian names (if the group is small). Repeating the 6 aims of the programs is good. Note that this is not the initiation ceremony.

A simple craft for the children might be considered, if the parents have to fill out paperwork. These crafts should be small, easy to make, and run by your members staffing the booth. Plan boy and girl crafts.

Maintenance of existing tribes is essential. This requires you maintain some demographic information on your existing tribes. If you start up a new tribe, plan on attending a few of their meetings to get them going (you may want to host the first one). Only start new tribes if:

1. You fill up all of your existing tribes
2. You have a group of parents who want to be together
3. You have a group in a far flung area, and it would be a big deal to drive across town to go to a meeting.

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Reunions

Plan a graduates/elders reunion. You will be surprised to see the variety of people who will attend. Use it to share experiences and ideas. Use it to bring families back into the program. Again, mention it to a reporter from the local newspaper; you may get some free coverage.

Businesses

Parents who are already in the program can be a great recruiting resource.

Hand out posters which can be put up on bulletin boards in the workplace. Visit area businesses, and ask if they would put up a poster. Leave brochures in lunchrooms.

See if the local Chamber of Commerce will allow you to put up a poster in local Community Centers.

Advertise in the local newspaper. You can arrange this for free if you invite the paper to cover a campout or event (e.g. Pinewood Derby). Remember, no pictures of the ceremonies (this is sacred to Native Americans). Allow pictures of swimming, canoeing, horseback riding, climbing walls, skits, and any fun stuff. These make a big impact.

Schools

Recruit through the local schools.

- **Opening Week Flyers**

Arrangements need to be made with the schools ahead of time to ensure your flyers go out in the first weeks mailing.

- **Booths**

Often schools have ice cream socials right before the school year starts. Check with your school board to see if they will allow you to set up a table. You should have a display if allowed, flyers to hand out and a contact sheet to sign.

- **Parent Teacher Organization**

Make arrangements with PTO's to set up a table at parent-child activities. Offer to help with clean-up activities. Working with a PTO, you are typically working with wives. They will see the fun a parent and child can have, and urge their husbands to give it a try. Remember to show off that parent child fun side!

- **Important Ways for the Children to Help in Recruiting**

Encourage your children to talk to their friends to see if they would like to join the program. Some schools allow children to wear their scout uniforms to school. Your program might have tee shirts or sweatshirts. Your child can wear this to school from time to time (days where you have a tribe meeting or program event).

While scouts may wear their vests to school, don't expect the school system to allow your children to wear their Indian theme vests to school. A vest may not be considered politically correct if it includes Native American reference. Check it out with the school first.

When you go to the parks wear tee shirts and sweatshirts. You might consider having a meeting in a park where day care and after school programs meet. Vests and headbands are real eye-catchers.

Wear tee shirts and sweatshirts to community events and church outings. Church outings are good, because they reinforce the religious ethics of the program.

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Community Events

If you participate in an event, and you have a sign-up sheet, remember to contact everyone.

- **Festival Booths**

Practically every community has some sort of festival. These can be excellent recruiting events. You will need to have a display of activities, flyers, and a craft for the children. Sponsorship is important if the festival has a booth fee, and if you need to produce a craft, and flyers. Plan for about 200 crafts to giveaway each day (more if the festival is a large one).

- **Parades**

Prepare a float. A truck pulling a trailer is good. You can prepare panels for the trailer out of chicken wire, duct tape, and crepe paper ribbon. You need to have lots of riders on the trailer, but walkers are important. The walkers need to pass out flyers (check to see if your community allows this). The key is to hand the flyer to the child and say, "Give this to your father." This allows a child to be your marketer. Establish eye contact with the kids if you are riding on the float. Never throw candy to the crowd – most parades frown on this (lawsuits).

- **Events**

Communities have events, where they may need a group to sing the National Anthem. Put together a group in your Longhouse to do this. Make sure to practice. It gets your organization some exposure.

- **Fairs**

Set up a booth at local fairs. The booth can be an unattended one if you have a closed display. Keep the booth well stocked with flyers. You can even arrange for tribal crafts to be judged as a part of the fair. Check with the fair officials well in advance to see how they handle crafts and judging. Fairs normally put out some sort of a booklet. Get your program name mentioned in the booklet.

Additional Ideas

- The Great Lakes Regional Advisory Lodge Library contains many historical papers published over the years that address Recruitment and Promotion. Ask the GLRAL librarian for a listing of what is available. Some of these materials may be available in digital media.
- Talk to other programs and share success stories, the problems you have encountered and how you overcame them.
- Become active in your RAL. They are a valuable resource for information.