



eConnect

La Leche League US Western Area Network
Forming Connections Leader-to-Leader
<http://www.lluswd.org>

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UPDATE ON COST-SHARING, MEMBERSHIPS AND *NEW BEGINNINGS* CHANGES

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article contains a great deal of information so you may want to file it for easy reference in the future.

Cost-Sharing

Groups and Areas have always helped support LLLI by sharing a part of the funds they have generated. We will soon be moving from the piece-meal method of sending LLLI Leader dues, Group dues, royalties, event insurance fees, logo fees, and a portion of each membership sold, to an annual assessment which will be collected by LLL USA. Some of this assessment will be forwarded to LLLI to replace all the previous piece-meal payments. The rest will be used for LLL USA operating funds. One important reason for going to this new cost-sharing way of supporting the organization is because it simplifies how payments are made.

The current fiscal year has been a year of transition. Since April 1, 2009, LLL USA via LLLI applied the Group and Leader dues that have been sent to LLLI toward the \$180,000 that LLL USA agreed to pay LLLI during the Paris cost-sharing meeting in February 2009. LLL USA will still need to collect funds from the Area Networks and unconnected Areas in the USA to fulfill its portion of this cost-sharing that has not been covered by Group and Leader dues as well as to provide an initial source of funds for general operating expenses.

Area Networks and currently unconnected Areas will soon receive invoices from LLL USA indicating the

assessment amount needed from them to satisfy the remaining cost-sharing amount for the current fiscal year. After that, assessments will be made on a quarterly basis to help Areas and ANs better budget their money and allow LLL USA to meet its cost-sharing obligations. For the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2010, that obligation is \$127,200. These assessments will also be the primary source of operating funds for LLL USA.

A final bill for USA Group dues was mailed recently by LLLI and is now due. This will be the last Group Dues Payment made to LLL USA, although Areas and Area Networks may choose to collect a Group assessment in order to meet their portion of the cost-sharing to LLL USA.

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All Leaders should pay dues in the current fiscal year which runs from April 1, 2009 until March 31, 2010. If you have not already paid (or requested a dues waiver if you are a Distinguished Leader with more than 25 years of service) and your dues expire before March 31, 2010, you will receive an LLL USA bill via LLLI. After that date neither LLLI nor LLL USA will bill Leader dues, although Areas and Area Networks may choose to collect Leader assessments in order to meet their portion of the cost-sharing to LLL USA.

This new method of cost-sharing is also a way of recognizing that individual Leaders know what works best with the mothers they serve. That might mean selling memberships at a price appropriate for their locale, asking for donations, fundraising through conferences, workshops, garage sales, bake sales, etc., a combination of the above, or something completely unique.

New Beginnings

New Beginnings is no longer a paid subscription. Beginning January 1, 2010, it is a free benefit to members and Leaders and may be shared with anyone. Leaders are encouraged to share the link they receive via email so that mothers can view the magazine online. Members will also receive a link to *New Beginnings* via email. This change makes the entire membership fee deductible on personal income taxes. Non-members will not receive a link, but by sharing *New Beginnings* with them, Leaders can build interest in our organization and build a base of supporters who we can count on to contribute to the financial well-being of the Group or Area when opportunities arise.

Memberships

As of January 1, 2010, LLLI and LLL USA offer separate membership options. Becoming a member of LLLI does not automatically make one a member

of LLL USA and vice versa. Membership monies collected for LLLI memberships (via the LLLI web site) will stay with LLLI.

LLL USA membership monies will still be processed by LLLI until March 31, 2010; these monies will be credited to LLL USA and will help fulfill LLL USA's financial obligations for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. It is anticipated that most women will join LLL USA just as they have always joined LLL: through the Group they attend. Right now, LLL USA membership can be purchased via the LLLI web site. When LLL USA launches its own web site in the future, the feasibility of offering the option to purchase an LLL USA membership on the new site will be explored. Any member of LLL USA may also purchase an LLLI membership. Women who want to become Leader Applicants can be members of either LLLI or LLL USA although they are encouraged to join LLL USA through the Group they attend.

Setting Membership Prices

While adjusting the membership fee to suit local conditions is an option, Groups may prefer to stay with the current \$40 during this time of transition. Once Groups are acclimated to the cost sharing system, they may want to set membership prices appropriate to the women they serve. One Group might want to sell memberships for just a few dollars above what it needs to cover the Group's costs. Another Group might want to charge more and add perks such as regular enrichment meetings with lunch provided by the Group. Some Groups might want to bundle membership with the purchase of a book such as *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* or attendance at an annual Group event. The ability to set the price of membership locally allows Leaders flexibility to meet local conditions. Leaders of geographically close Groups may want to coordinate their prices. It's

also possible for the Area as a whole to set the price of membership. Or Areas may decide to allow the Area Network to set the membership price for all Groups in the Areas that connect to form the AN. The possibilities are endless!

Local finance administrators can work with Leaders/ Areas/ANs to help them determine a price for membership that will ensure the Area/AN cost-sharing obligation is covered if Leaders plan to use memberships to help fulfill the AN assessment amount.

Promoting Memberships

When promoting membership, Leaders can emphasize the opportunity to support an organization that has touched the mothers who attend meetings. They can point out that La Leche League supports mothers whether they join or not. Purchasing an annual membership is about the same cost as two weeks' worth of formula. Memberships help cover the cost of training Leaders so they can help mothers by email, phone, or in person, thus ensuring that LLL will be here for the next mother too.

On page 4 (and in the LLL USA CN library and on the llusa.org web site) is a table that shows when these changes go into effect.

We encourage you to share this information with all Leaders in as many places as possible. Please consider including it in ALLs, on the Leader pages of your Area web site, on Leader chat lists, and so on. If you have further questions, please write to us at council@llusa.org.

Reminder: Soon all messages about LLL USA will be posted only through the LLL USA announcement list on the CN. You can subscribe to that list by visiting <http://community.llli.org/group.htm?mode=home&igid=401823>. The Interim Council

respects each individual Leader's right to control her own information flow. That is why Leaders need to subscribe to the announce list rather than have someone place them on it automatically.



Come On In, The Water's Fine!

by Alice Roddy

formerly of NY-West, now in the new Area of Common Wealth



If someone had told me six months ago that I didn't need to concern myself further with Agreements, I doubtless would have said, "Fine." I don't think of myself as a structural person, have difficulty planning ahead and rely heavily on the paths blazed by my predecessors. Writing an agreement for the structure of an LLL Area was not something I thought I wanted to do.

Now, I'm pleased as punch with the Agreements that Common Wealth (CW) has written and eager to meet my "new best friends"—women I didn't know before but now have formed close bonds with because of our efforts together.

Was it hard? I think the hardest part was uncertainty. Trail blazing can be anxious business. Today there are several Areas whose agreements can be used as a starting point. The Area Agreements Team (ACT) is there to help too. One of my new best friends is Nancy March, the ACT contact person for CW.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF COST-SHARING, MEMBERSHIPS AND *NEW BEGINNINGS* CHANGES

Date it happens	What	Who makes it happen	Where to send what	Why	Comments
Now	Final Group dues billing	LLLI on behalf of LLL USA has mailed 2009 bills for Group dues.	\$31 to LLLI on behalf of LLL USA.	In the future, Group dues will be covered by cost sharing	
Now (as of 12-31-09)	<i>New Beginnings</i> is no longer linked to membership.	LLLI produced one last paper issue of <i>New Beginnings</i> ; future issues will be produced by LLL USA electronically	Continue processing memberships as usual until 3-31-10.	An electronic magazine will be available to all at www.llli.org .	Leaders are encouraged to share the link with mothers in their Group.
March 31, 2010	Leader dues	LLLI on behalf of LLL USA will cease billing for Leader dues after this date.	\$30 to LLLI if dues expire on or before 3-31-10.	Future Leader dues will be covered by cost-sharing.	
March 31, 2010	Memberships	LLL USA is working out details for how memberships will be handled after this date.	\$26 of each membership sold will continue to be sent to LLLI on behalf LLL USA until 3-31-10.	This money is being used to cover member processing.	
On-going	<i>Leaven</i>	LLLI will continue to produce <i>Leaven</i> and provide an electronic copy to all Leaders at no cost.		Covered by cost-sharing	
On-going	LAD fees	No change	Leaders continue to send these to their LAD rep as usual		
Now	Discontinued fees to LLLI	No one!	Discontinued fees to LLLI No one! Leaders and Groups no longer have to send payments to LLLI for event insurance, or LLL logo fees.	These fees have been rolled into cost-sharing.	Logo items include merchandise such as pins, nametags, tote bags, mugs and T-shirts. Royalty agreements with LLLI are still needed for intellectual property such as books that carry the LLL logo.

Getting Creative with La Leche League Groups

By Angela Debalek, Hibbing, MN



When presented with a challenge, it can be fun to get creative to find a potential solution.

As mothers, we are gifted with “mothering ingenuity” of thinking creatively while considering the needs of everyone involved. Here is an example of getting creative with our La Leche League Group.

As a lone Leader in northern Minnesota, I felt isolated and overwhelmed by leadership responsibilities in this pro-formula rural culture. How will I balance leadership and family responsibilities? How will I connect with other Leaders? How will I fundraise in this perpetually economically depressed area? How can I stay focused on the primary goal of helping mothers and babies?

A creative option: Join with other nearby isolated and lone Leaders to create a single “Cooperative Group.” Each Leader leads and markets her Group meeting in her own community and maintains her own library (preferably with help from a Group Worker). Leaders share Group management responsibilities and Group fees. For the past few years, LLLL of the Iron Range & Northwoods has operated as a “Cooperative Group.” The Group includes five Leaders and one Leader Applicant. Angela is centrally located in Hibbing. Forty minutes west are

Carrie and Jenni in Grand Rapids. Seventy-five minutes northeast is Brianna in Ely. Ninety minutes south is Beth in Moose Lake. And there is a Leader Applicant 50 minutes to the north in Orr. If not for the Cooperative Group, we would all be isolated Leaders and with the exception of Grand Rapids, we would all be lone Leaders.

Benefits we've experienced:

1. *Encouragement:* It can be very encouraging to be part of a group of Leaders instead of a lone Leader. You feel more concretely connected with co-Leaders as a place for advice, encouragement, or assistance.
2. *Sharing Group Management:* We rotate the treasurer role for the Group so there is one checking account to manage, one financial report to file, and one sales tax process to complete. When funds come in, they are sent to the treasurer to deposit into the shared checking account. The treasurer simply keeps track of what came in from each community.
3. *Sharing Group Fees:* Typically, a lone Leader in an economically depressed area will simply pay Group expenses out of her personal family budget as she focuses her energies on helping mothers rather than fundraising. As part of a Cooperative Group, we share our treasuries when needed and our Group costs per community are less because they are shared.
4. *Helping Mothers:* When a lone Leader is on vacation, mothers are left without personalized help. As a Leader in a Cooperative Group, there are several other Leaders listed on the LLL web site and when one Leader isn't available, the mother has several other Leaders to contact. There have been some mothers who

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A Most Amazing Example of Distributed Leadership Stacey Bentz

Garden State Area Network, LLL of Central Jersey Area Rep



As you may be aware, LLL of the Garden State Area Network (GSAN) is formed of five new small Areas of 20+ Leaders each. Each Area has identified at least two representatives who have come together - along with the department coordinators who support all the GSAN Leaders - to

form the governing body of GSAN. This configuration was a conscious decision to take the governing responsibilities out of the hands of the department coordinators and give it to Leaders at the most local level possible. It was also an attempt to help department coordinators reduce the size of their responsibilities - with fewer governing tasks they now have more time to do departmental work.

The very first GSAN Council meeting was held on October 24, 2009 and it was a privilege to watch distributed leadership in action. A little history... during the transition phase when LLL New Jersey was becoming LLL of the Garden State, all the department administrators resigned their positions and a small group of interim department coordinators were put in place to ensure work got done until the GSAN Council had its first meeting. Each interim department coordinator knew her term would be coming to an end at the meeting when a new slate of coordinators would be identified via applications and recommendations, and approved by the Area representatives.

Here's where it gets interesting. When we got to that part of the meeting, the applicants for the various positions were asked to leave the room. The only

people allowed to comment on the candidates and their applications were the Area reps even though there were other Leader-observers in the room.

Each candidate was someone who had been in the position as an interim and was hoping to be named to the new, official GSAN position. And each candidate's application was weighed against her contributions, abilities and skills, and quality of her performance up to that point.

One by one, each candidate's strengths were acknowledged and praised, and the areas for suggested improvement were identified. In other words, based on things we had heard from our local Leaders, the Area reps were doing a performance evaluation of each candidate so that, should that person be named for her new position, she would know what she had done in the past that was successful and where the Leaders felt she needed help for the future.

When the process was finished, the candidates were called back into the room where they were congratulated on being named the new department coordinators for the Area Network. The coordinators were also told that they each would receive, by private email, the comments of the Area reps explaining the highlights and qualities seen during the last few months as well as suggestions for how to make their work more successful going forward.

The amazing thing about this whole process was that it hadn't been talked about or planned ahead of time. It just happened - the candidates being asked to leave the room, their applications being given serious consideration and weighed against

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*The Most Amazing Evidence of Distributed Leadership
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prior performance, the decision to take notes that would be emailed to each successful candidate, and the little pep-talk at the end.

Yes, there was a little speech by the Area rep who had collected all the applications. She made it clear that all the Area reps were like-minded in our value of and appreciation for the new department coordinators; that department coordinators would receive comments as to how improvements could be made; and that the process would be repeated again in a year's time. In other words, if a department coordinator was doing a good job it would make sense to ask her to continue since we don't have term limits. If she is given suggestions for improvement and she is able to incorporate those suggestions into her work, she would likely be asked to continue. If, during the course of the year, the Area reps hear from our local Leaders comments or complaints about a department coordinator, that will factor into the reassessment as to whether or not the department coordinator would continue in her position.

The other surprise was how happy the new coordinators were with the process as well. They felt it was very appropriate that they would be receiving performance appraisals, and that because they are accountable to the Area Leaders, it was only right for the Area reps to evaluate and assess whether any particular coordinator should continue in her position. One newly appointed coordinator said, "Part of me is psyched to get [the performance review], and part of me wants to be warned if I need a glass of wine before I read it! Either way, I work for you guys and am happy for the input."

This amazing process highlighted for me how quickly GSAN Leaders have internalized what it means to be mutually accountable. The Area reps

continually remind each other how we are accountable to the Leaders in our Areas. And, through the process of naming our new GSAN department coordinators, we demonstrated to the new coordinators how they, too, are accountable to the local Leaders.

This was just the most recent example of innovative ideas and flexibility as new situations come up that have developed in GSAN since it has gone to the distributed model, where the local Leaders determine what will happen. It was a real treat to experience.

*Come On In, The Water's Fine!
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The discussion clarified our expectations of ourselves and each other. Later, when the inevitable problems arise, we will have this foundation to fall back on.

CW Leaders discussed one item at a time from templates we had. Most items did not generate much discussion. A few, such as the one on mixing causes drew a lot of comment and was enlightening. I was almost surprised when I realized we'd covered them all. It only took a few weeks once we got rolling. Some people had a good deal to contribute; some said little but let the others know they appreciated the work being done.

If you think writing Agreements is a big task, remember how you eat an elephant: **one bite at a time.**



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live in one community and work in another, and they like how easy it is to find nearby Leaders and meetings.

- 5. *Leader Applicants:* We have had significantly more Leader Applicants in northern Minnesota as a result of the supportive connection. Newly accredited Leaders feel less intimidated when they can simply join an existing Group instead of starting a new Group, including getting a Tax ID and opening a new checking account. (Note: the same is true if a Leader retires – she doesn't have to close everything.)

Challenges we faced:

- 1. *Group Name:* It can be difficult to decide upon a Group name that is inclusive of all nearby communities with lone Leaders. Also, depending on the Group name chosen, it can be confusing for mothers to find their local Group.
- 2. *Less Overall Fees Paid:* There will always be some understandable

reluctance from the recipients of fees when a cooperative arrangement is proposed that would reduce the amount of fees paid. However, the long-term impact of the Cooperative Group has actually increased the overall fees paid because more Leaders have been accredited - being part of the Cooperative Group is more attractive than being a lone, isolated Leader. Previous to the Cooperative Group, there was one Hibbing Group with two Leaders. Now there is one Cooperative Group with five Leaders and one Leader Applicant. Even though there is only one Group paying dues, there are more Leaders paying dues. It should be noted that one Group is administratively easier for LLLI and the Area – fewer Groups to manage, fewer Group dues statements to send, fewer financial reports to manage.

We hope our experience as a Cooperative Group has encouraged you to think about any challenges you're facing as an LLL Leader. Keep your eye on the goal of helping mothers and babies and think creatively!



Looking for a quick and easy way to keep up with what's happening in the development of LLL USA? Join the LLL USA announce list at:

<http://community.llli.org/group.htm?mode=home&igid=401823>

And be sure to check out the blog at:

<http://community.llli.org/group.htm?mode=gvb&igid=401823> as well!

The LLL Garden

by Anna Burbidge and Sue Cardus
of LLL Great Britain



Anna Burbidge

other people.

Some Leaders in La Leche League Great Britain came up with this picture of how different people might look at a garden to help us to understand each others' different viewpoints.

Person A looks into the garden where she can see the seeds starting to grow, the trees which will bear fruit, and the lovely colors of the flowers. She is keen to get out there to water the plants, mow the lawn and feel the sun. She sees no risks at all.

Person B worries about the slugs, snails and insects which might be hidden in the undergrowth. She worries that if she goes out into the garden she might get stung by a bee, pricked by the nettles or turn round and find a slug has eaten one of her precious plants. She sees everything as a potential risk.

Person C sees the sun, the plants, the slugs and the bees and decides to take precautions before going outside. She puts on sun cream, wears gardening gloves, takes insect repellent and slug pellets. She sees risks and tries to prevent as many of them

Reaching agreement can be difficult when we all have our own way of looking at things. It can be helpful for each of us to understand which type of thinking we bring to discussions, and try and understand the type of thinking of the

happening as possible.

Person D sees the same things as person C, but doesn't perceive them all as problems that need to be overcome or prevented. She decides to leave the nettles as a habitat for butterflies, is prepared to risk sunburn and insect bites because she doesn't want to use chemicals on herself. She looks to use environmentally friendly ways of controlling slugs. She is prepared to accept a certain level of risk for what she believes is a greater good.



Sue Cardus

There's a difference between "gossip" (saying things in a way that creates "us vs. them") and "advocacy" (enlisting others' aid to address a problem). The first just creates ill will; the second can create real beneficial change. The first is easy; the second takes work!

Deirdre Knowles