



eConnect

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

Issue Number 15

Summer 2010



USW Council Presents: Summer School!

USW knows that this has been a difficult financial year and we still hope to find ways to provide enrichment in the absence of a face-to-face meeting! Please consider attending one or more of these interactive conference call discussions! Remember, like all LLL meetings, it's the attendees — that's YOU! — who make the meeting happen!

*Calls are 8:30-9:30 p.m. CDT,
7:30-8:30 p.m. MDT, 6:30-7:30 p.m. PDT
Tues. July 27*

*Bridging the Information Gap: Fact or
Fiction? Knowing what to share when.*

Thurs. August 5

*Bridging Council Vacancies: Finding Creative
Ways to Lead Your Area.*

These will be interactive discussions, so please bring your questions, comments, and wisdom to share. All calls are limited to **ten** people, so please, *reserve your spot right away!!*

Contact JoLyn at jgeuy@lluswd.org to sign up for any/all of the calls that you wish to participate in — you will be given the phone number to call as your confirmation of reservation.

USW Council is seeking to place a team of two or more Leaders on the Council to support the USW



Area Coordinator of Leaders (ACL) Network. USW would like to explore options for providing support in creative ways to meet the needs of today's ACL. Leaders who are interested in considering doing this kind of LLL work are encouraged to think about what's currently working in this support network, and then to think beyond the traditional administrative roles of the past. This is an opportunity for Leaders with different perspectives and energy levels to help meet the needs of Areas as Areas' needs change. This is an exciting time to be part of the USW Area Network Council!

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Leaders who are members of the USW Council wear two hats – as a Council member and as one of the coordinators of a specific department/network (in this case, the Leader Department/ACL network). Council members meet weekly for conference calls of about one hour in length. The calls take place on a day and time that meets the needs of the members. Council members rotate the responsibility of preparing the agenda and facilitating the discussion during the calls. In the past, one Council member has taken meeting notes, which are distributed to the entire Council.

Frequent and regular communication with the Council is an expectation, usually via email to individual members, or the Council discussion list on the Community Network (CN). Face-to-face meetings happen at least annually each March, and before or after any face-to-face continuing education workshops offered to Leaders by USW Area Network. Each Council member creates a personal agreement with the Council, outlining the work she commits to do for the coming year. While each member of the Council is accountable to the ADCs she supports, she is also part of the larger Council and is thus also accountable to the larger Council. Decisions about how one department will work often affects the functionality of other departments; therefore, Council members make major decisions about their individual departments in consultation with the full Council.

Position description:

ACL network support Leaders establish and maintain a connection to each ACL in the USW Area Network for the purpose of supporting and encouraging her in her role as ACL. The support Leaders are available to answer questions, to offer ideas and suggestions, and to brainstorm with ACLs as they support the Leaders in their Areas. ACL network support Leaders work cohesively with the

USW Council by representing the larger USW Area Network to ACLs and assure that ACLs are kept informed of news from the larger LLL organization entities. They also represent the perspective of ACLs to the USW Council; they speak for the ACL network and do not let their personal biases interfere when advocating for the needs of ACLs and their Areas.

Responsibilities as a member of the USW ACL network support team:

- ◆ Connects with and strives to maintain a personal connection with ACLs
- ◆ Supports and encourages ACLs in their jobs
- ◆ Informs ACLs of pertinent information from USW Area Network, LLL USA, and LLLI in a timely manner
- ◆ Acts as a sounding board for ACLs, offering suggestions and feedback
- ◆ Participates in the USW ACL discussion list on the CN; she is also a moderator of the list
- ◆ Maintains a current directory of USW ACLs and makes the directory available to all ACLs
- ◆ Explains and interprets LLLI policies and standing rules when appropriate
- ◆ Facilitates face-to-face meetings with ACLs in conjunction with USW continuing education events
- ◆ Collects semi-annual statistics from Areas and passes them on to the LLLI Executive Director or the Associate Executive Director
- ◆ Participates, if requested, in the search and selection of a new ACL; provides job specific orientation to a new ACL, depending on her needs and requests
- ◆ Represents the perspective of ACLs to the USW Council
- ◆ Represents the USW Council to the USW ACL network

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Responsibilities as a member of USW Council:

- ◆ Participates fully in USW Council activities, including weekly conference calls, email discussions, provision of continuing education opportunities for USW Leaders, reports and other responsibilities that may be identified by the USW Council
- ◆ May join a search committee, as requested by the Area or Area network, for the purpose of identifying new Area Department Coordinators
- ◆ Is fiscally responsible; reviews USW finances (including approving an annual budget); submits personal expenses for reimbursement in a timely manner, as specified by the USW Council finance team
- ◆ Attends LLL events, as she is able, USW funding permitting, and if her participation is working to purpose
- ◆ Brings the perspective of ACLs to USW Council; provides the perspective of the USW Council to the ACL network
- ◆ Works by mutual accountability, agreements and distributed leadership
- ◆ Implements policies established by the LLLI Board of Directors
- ◆ Represents all Leaders in the USW, not just her Area or Department
- ◆ Writes articles for eConnect

Helpful qualifications include:

- ◆ Is responsive to questions and enjoys working with other Leaders
- ◆ Communicates verbally and in writing, using a respectful and effective manner and within a timely response period
- ◆ Can delegate and meet multiple deadlines
- ◆ Has organizational skills and gives attention to detail
- ◆ Is flexible and can work under pressure
- ◆ Has or can develop decision-making ability

- ◆ Has Internet access and is comfortable using e-mail as a main form of communication

The USW Council is looking to add at least two Leaders to support ACLs by September 1, 2010. Send your recommendations for candidates to Nancy March, nmarch@llused.org by August 1, 2010.

Recommended candidates will be contacted by a member of the search committee and will be asked to respond to initial questions via email and will participate in a telephone interview so that all parties can decide if working on USW Council is a good fit for the recommended Leader.

If this position is one that interests you, please contact Nancy March and tell her what you can bring to the ACL support network and the USW Council. We look forward to hearing from you!

When submitting recommendations, please:

- ◆ Give us the recommended Leader's name and contact information
- ◆ Share a brief statement about why you think she would be a good candidate for this position
- ◆ Let us know if the recommended Leader is aware of your recommendation and if she is interested in pursuing this work
- ◆ Give us your name and contact information

Thank you, for participating in the selection of new members to USW Council, for the purpose of supporting USW ACLs. We look forward to hearing from you!

Search Committee Members:

Peggy Wiedmeyer
Pam Mills
Nancy March
ACL (to be determined)



SPOTLIGHT ON AREAS

Meeting of the Minds in

Northern California, Hawaii and Northern Nevada
by Gail Gesley, LLL NCAHI Board Member

Wouldn't you love to participate in a Leader gathering called the MOM? Leaders in our Area, LLL of Northern California and Hawaii (NCA/Hi), have had this annual opportunity for twenty years. It began in the 1980s as a meeting for the Leader Department. Leader Janaki Costello says, "I made up the name MOM to stand for Meeting of the Minds when I was Area Coordinator of Leaders (ACL) a zillion years ago!" When Leader Laura Maxson was ACL in the early '90s, the MOM was changed to include the whole Area Council (which meant any Leader with a job beyond Group work). Half-a-dozen years ago, the MOM was further opened to include all Area Leaders.

MOM Traditions

While education, enrichment and networking are part of any LLL event, the MOM focuses on the "big picture" at the Area and larger organizational levels. Does that sound like a very serious meeting? Not in LLL NCA/Hi! We incorporate fun, festivities and fabulous food. Interactive games and "getting to know you" icebreakers are often featured. Some years, our infamous rubber breasts made a surprise appearance as a gag gift. Leader Debbie Townsend recalls, "I'm sure we got some business done in there somewhere when we met in our groups, but what I remember most was playing the icebreaker penny* game. It was good camaraderie and valuable to get to know more colleagues." Leader Lori Bryan remembers, "The room was always full and the Department meetings fun. Half of the day was just for the Departments and the other half of the day was for the Area (goal setting, ideas to enhance the Area, team building, various

types of exercises). Of course, lunch was the highlight!" Leader Patty Jacobs adds, "A MOM without chocolate would be like an LLL meeting without babies." Leader Heidi Sloss attended her first MOM in 1994 when "turnout was large, the food good and the chocolate plentiful. Always a worthwhile time!" At most MOMs, retiring Area Department Coordinators are honored with a basket of notes and little gifts and new Leaders are recognized.

The 2010 MOM had the potential to be more controversial. Leaders had been discussing LLLI issues, expressing their worries and concerns about the future on the Area chat list and privately to the NCA/Hi Executive Council. The Executive Council (the Area Department Coordinator team) decided to address "the elephant in the room" head on with a morning meeting devoted to transitions in La Leche League.

MOM Opening Ceremony

As the 2010 MOM began, Stephanie Freeman, Communication Skills Coordinator, gathered the Leaders together:

"For some women, being here at the MOM will be a brand new experience. How brave you are for being here. For others, this is a gathering to see old friends and reconnect as you have for many years. As the Executive Council began planning this particular Area-wide Leader gathering, it became clear how at *this* time, *this* group of women, *this* particular journey we are on with our organization is so reflective of birth. It is clear we are in the midst of a great journey, not only with La Leche League, but perhaps also with our own personal feelings of involvement with La Leche League. In wanting to honor the emotional place we are at,

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while also acknowledging that we have a lot of work to do, we feel that using a Blessingway ritual to begin and end our day is appropriate.”

A Blessingway ritual originates from the Navajo people. It is a positive ritual, affirming that a woman will have a beautiful birth experience. The ceremony marks a woman's rite of passage. It is a ceremony of empowerment near the time of birthing to honor the mother for the journey she is about to embark upon. It's done within a circle of friends, to celebrate sisterhood, and honor the cycle of life.

So using the analogy of birth, combined with feedback from Area Leaders, we suggest we are past the point of seeing two pink lines on a home pregnancy test, while thinking, “Oh, my goodness!” We've already discovered that we as an organization are pregnant with agreements and birthing LLL USA. Perhaps we're in transition! Just as transition in birth can be a difficult phase where we may feel like we have no idea what to do next and that nothing is comfortable anymore, perhaps that's where we are also as an organization.

This morning we begin by lighting a candle. Candles have long since symbolized many things; often, they are a light in the darkness. For us today, at this MOM, it still symbolizes that light. For countless mothers and babies La Leche League has been a light in the darkness, a shining beacon of hope. La Leche League has helped illuminate each path through the doubts of what to do next. Today, we also light this candle to signify something essential. This candle represents the fire that burns within all of us as La Leche League Leaders. A group of powerful, strong women is gathered here today. We are women who question rules. We are smart and opinionated; deep within all of us burns a passionate fire. Today it's important to remember that truth.”

At this point, many Leaders were looking around the room at each other. Their eyes met with expressions of understanding and acknowledgement. We then had a lively discussion, both in the morning whole group meeting, at the potluck lunch, and in the afternoon breakouts. The day flew by on clouds of conversation and then it was time to come together for the closing.

The MOM Closing Connects Leaders

All the participants, Leaders, many with babies in arms, stood together in a circle. Stephanie had a ball of red yarn that she unrolled in a strand long enough to wrap around her wrist for a bracelet. Then she passed the ball to the Leader to her left. The yarn was unrolled some more as the next Leader wrapped



it around her wrist and then passed it to the next person. We went all around the circle that way. At the end, we were all connected by yarn.

Stephanie concluded:

“From women we were born into this circle, from women we were born unto this earth. This red yarn connects us all as sisters and represents the circle of sisters and the circle of life. Though it appears that we are then separate, the bracelet reminds us that as women, we were all cut from the same ball of yarn. For a Blessingway birth

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ritual, the bracelet is worn till the birth of the baby. For our purposes here today, please wear the bracelet through tonight and then as long as feels right for you. When you look down at your wrist and remember how we are all connected, smile. Know the deep knowing that we as women know. Share this, knowing you share it with *all* of us.”

Then the candle was blown out. After the closing, a pair of scissors was passed around. Each Leader had to ask her neighbor for help cut the yarn and tie the bracelet for her. Stephanie concluded with a reminder that we all are connected in our mission for LLL and needing others' help to do it.

After the MOM, everyone was invited to dinner at a local restaurant for more conversation.

MOM Feedback

Post-event comments from evaluation forms or the Socializer MOM event site include:

“I found the MOM to be extremely informative. I think I have a better understanding about the finances, LLL USA and what the differences are going to be. I can see that there are differing opinions on how to proceed and what we should do. Change is always difficult, but I'm sure that La Leche League will continue to be the entity that it has always been. I don't think it was possible to try to fully explain, in one day, what all the changes will be with the formation of LLL USA. There were so many questions. It is obvious the Executive Council (EC) has been working very hard to try and answer all our questions and do the best for our Area. We appreciate all the work you have done. Thank you.” *Diane Sperling*

“How wonderful the Blessingway and introductions were! I really enjoyed taking the time to hear everyone's surprising stories and Stephanie's intro made me feel so connected with everyone and re-inspired.” *Five-year Leader*

Patty Jacobs chose the free event planning site Socializr for the 2010 MOM, which was used for invitations, RSVPs, post-event comments and sharing photos. All Leaders also received a postcard invitation by mail. For a look at the NCA/HI MOM Socializr site and more info about the MOM, please email ec@llnocal.org

The MOM, like Blessingway rituals, and like LLL Series Meetings, are not just discrete, one-time events. Face-to-face events like these can be powerful opportunities for sharing, for engaging our hopes, for building a community network of support and collaboration.

***Penny game directions:** Everyone starts with a bag of pennies. Each person states something she has *never* done (i.e., dyed her hair—but nothing that would embarrass anyone). Everyone who *has* done the action mentioned puts a penny in the pot. The winner is the one with the most pennies left in her bag.

NOTICE FACE2FACE ATTENDEES:

USW council has discovered the Four Corners exercise we presented at F2F is copyrighted. If anyone would like to use the exercise or handouts, please get permission and credit Bonnie Jameson, M.S.

All handouts for this exercise used at F2F should have had this copyright at the bottom:

The 1988 Annual: Developing Human Resources; J.W.Pfeiffer; Copyright 1988. Reprinted with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

2010 USA World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Grants

The World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Grants Team is happy to announce that eleven 2010 USA World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Grants, totaling \$4365, have been awarded to the following La Leche League Groups in the USA:

- LLL of Columbia II, MD: \$150 for the Howard County Outreach Project, including literature for a breastfeeding booth at the county fair and an outreach kit for Leaders to use at other events.
- LLL of Dodge City, KS: \$185 to create laminated LLL information sheets for birthing/postpartum hospital rooms. This project was created by a lone Leader with a big vision to reach out to her community.
- LLL of Dunwoody, GA: \$750 for the continuation of a pilot project to provide breastfeeding gift bags in English and Spanish. Some of the contents have been donated by companies. Bags are assembled at bag parties after which individual mothers deliver bags to providers. The Group is funding 25% of the project themselves.
- LLL of Five Rivers/Morristown, TN: \$125 for Baby Friendly posters and additional printed material about breastfeeding and La Leche League.
- LLL of Hollywood/Silverlake, CA: \$715 for the creation of a full-color brochure in English and Spanish with basic breastfeeding information. Distribution will focus on underserved areas. The brochure will be made available to LLL Groups nationally.
- LLL of KS: \$150 to begin replacing WABs in every library in the state originally purchased with WBWC funds.
- LLL Mountain Plains: \$400 to purchase Professional Liaison (PL) resource books for the new Area.
- LLL Rock County, WI: \$250 for printed materials and supplies. The Group is working to increase awareness of their services and striving to reach minority groups in an area with the third highest infant mortality rate in their state.
- LLL of Scottsbluff, NE: \$165 to put together a travelling educational display to reach mothers and babies in their community.
- LLL of Starkville/Columbus, MS: \$875 to create information bags for prenatal patients. The bags, which will include breastfeeding information and local LLL contact information, will be given to local obstetricians to distribute to their patients.



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2010 Events – USW

(Did you know that USW Area event info is on our website? You'll find ongoing event info and links to registration materials, and a calendar of USW and & EUS events.)

Illinois LLL — <https://llofil.org/>

October 8:	CE Day with Kathleen Kendall-Tackett & Dee Kassing
October 9:	Parenting Conference with Kathleen Kendall-Tackett & Dee Kassing
Asst ACE:	Tricia Elbl

Washington LLL — www.lllwaconf.org

October 15-17:	CE and Parenting Conference with Diane Wiessinger, Julie Menella, Dr. McCarter-Spaulding, Penny Simkin, and Linda Smith
ACE:	Marianne Ames

Kansas LLL — www.kansaslll.org

October 15:	Healthcare Professionals Day with Kathleen Kendall-Tackett
October 16:	Parenting Conference with Kathleen Kendall-Tackett
CE Planners:	Brenda Bandy and Barb Gabbert-Bacon
ACS:	JoLyn Geuy

Wisconsin LLL — www.llofwi.org

November 5:	Healthcare Professionals Day with Kittie Frantz and Liz Brooks
Co-ACEs:	Samantha Metko and Margot Harris

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- LLL of West Seattle, WA: \$600 to distribute WHO growth charts and breastfeeding information to hospitals, pediatricians, and WIC offices.

Money for these projects — five percent of all WBWC money raised — comes solely from World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations proceeds. Reports and financial details will be posted on the LLL in the USA (www.lllusa.org) and EUS and USW websites (www.lleus.org and www.lluswd.org/) as they become available.

In early 2011, USA Leaders, Groups, Areas and Area Networks may apply for the 2011 World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Grants. Leaders may submit requests for grants to fund projects that will spread La Leche League breastfeeding information and awareness on the local, regional or national level. Thank you to all who participated in the World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations — helping to raise the money for the World Breastfeeding Week Celebrations Grants.