

# USWD eCONNECT

La Leche League US Western Division  
Forming Connections Leader to Leader

Issue 3



## Late-Breaking News!

### New USWD Leader Toolbox!

The old Area Council Team Notebook is being updated with resources for all Leaders--Find the latest version at

<http://www.lllusa.org/USWD/RESOURCES/LeaderToolbox.htm>!

### Piece by Piece: LLLI Policies for USWD Agreements

By Kathryn Major

In the last issue of eCONNECT, we shared the *LLLI Policies for USWD Agreements*. Some Leaders have asked how they are affected by the new policies. (Full text of the Agreements document can be found at:

<http://www.lllusa.org/USWD/DOCUMENTS/LLLIUSWDPol1005.pdf> )

Let's look at one piece of the Agreements:

Leaders will have the options listed below as to where they might connect, and while the responsibilities and parameters differ with each of these choices, all Leaders will be mutually accountable to each other, where they connect and to the organization as a whole. Leaders can:

- Remain connected within the geographical USWD Area they live
- Connect with another established USWD Area
- Connect with an Accountability area like Heartland
- Connect with another Division/Affiliate
- Join at least 20 other Leaders to form a new recognized USWD Area
- Join at least 20 other Leaders to form a new Accountability area which links to the Area Accountability Network (AAN)

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In the introduction to the Agreements, we said: *"There is one "change" that should be highlighted. The LLLI Board has been moving toward this "change" for a couple of years and that is the fact that Leaders have the right to choose the Area they report through."*

You certainly don't have to make a change; most Leaders will probably remain exactly where they are now. In the past, you joined the Area that already existed in the state where you lived. For example, Lucy, who leads a thriving Group in Denver, Colorado, likes being a part of a large metro area and has many connections to other Groups and Leaders in her community. She sends her statistics to the ACL of Colorado/Wyoming, and attends Chapter meetings and Area events. She has no reason to connect to a geographical USWD Area other than CO/WY.

Some Areas had unique geographical situations and allowed Leaders to join a neighboring state, such as in the Kansas City area. Since the Kansas City metro area straddles the state line between Missouri and Kansas, an agreement was reached years ago between MO and KS, allowing some Leaders on the Kansas side to join LLL of MO so that they could work closely with other Leaders in the city. They share a warm-line phone number, and participate in many of the same community events. But now Leaders in both Areas have the option to connect to another geographical area.

For instance, Beth is a long-time Leader who recently moved to Missouri from Illinois, where she was accredited and volunteered for many years. Her children are older and she doesn't lead regular meetings any more, although she enjoys answering help forms and taking phone helping calls. She'd like to maintain the connections she had in IL, and continue reporting her personal contacts through her Group in IL. She has explained this to the ACL in Missouri, and likes to attend Area events and Chapter meetings, but her contacts are reported through her old IL Group.

Suzie is a Leader in a remote part of California, and she finds it difficult to get to Area events because of both the distance and mountain travel. She has a small Group, but she doesn't get a lot of members or phone calls. At the last LLLI Conference, she met another Leader from Montana who is a lot like her--their children are the same ages and they really connected as they were attending many of the same conference sessions. They both know a couple of other Leaders from their homeschooling discussion on the Community Network who have the same geographical issues, and they've heard about this new Area called Heartland that sounds really interesting. It's open to Leaders from all over, and all they have to do is form a kitchen table group and be willing to vouch for each other. Since they already communicate via email, they know that will work well for them. They will send their meeting reports and memberships to LLLI via Heartland.

Kathy is a Leader who recently moved to Mexico after living in Indiana for many years. She was a District Advisor in Indiana, and really enjoyed emailing and communicating with Area Leaders. She attended a meeting in Mexico, but she doesn't speak Spanish and she didn't connect with anyone right from the start. She'd like to continue working with IN and reporting to them so she doesn't lose touch with LLL while she's out of the country.

Lisa and a group of Leaders she knows feel like they are often too far away from the activities planned in their Area. Their state joined with a neighboring state many years ago to form a single LLL Area, but that makes finding locations for events very difficult. It's always hard to pick a

place that everyone can get to easily, and every time there's a conference, at least half the Area doesn't attend. They have at least 20 Leaders who are interested in starting a new USWD Area.

Sophia is excited about the new accountability area she has heard about via the Community Network. Her husband is in the military and they move regularly. Every time she moves she has to find a new Area, Group and Leaders with which to connect. She likes getting to know Leaders in other parts of the world and visits lots of Groups, but it would be easier to be a part of one accountability area that stays in touch with each other regularly, no matter where they are stationed. She has met many other Leaders over the years who also move often due to military service. She knows they could really benefit from supporting each other as one connected accountability area.

All of these Leaders share a common goal of helping mothers breastfeed, and as Leaders they will find ways together to meet the portion of the USWD Agreements under "Leaders Providing Mother-to-Mother Support."

### **Check out "AskUSWD"**

Wondering what's up with the new "USWD Agreements"? Check out the Notepad on the CN discussion AskUSWD and click on Agreements Councils... —You'll find an ongoing discussion staff is having about various aspects.

As described in eCONNECT #2, we've set up two new ways to reach USWD Staff.

1) **Community Network discussion, AskUSWD.** Find it by going to the CN and searching for AskUSWD. (We are not publishing the address of the CN for security reasons. If you need to know how to access the CN, contact your ADCs, or email [community@llli.org](mailto:community@llli.org).)

2) **AOL Instant Messenger.** Add the name AskUSWD to your buddy list, and chat with us online. Times will vary, but to start, look for us on Wednesday mornings.

Also, feel free to contact any of us by phone, or ask for us to call you. You'll find the current USWD staff directory at <http://www.lllusa.org/admin/USWDdirectory.html> (You will need the LLLUSA site password for this; if you don't have it, contact your ADCs.)

### **LLLI Strategic Planning**

By Anne Hutton

Several USWD Leaders are currently participating by serving on the LLLI Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). This group began work in 2005 to establish a written Strategic Plan for LLLI. As part of the planning process, the SPC conducted a survey of LLL Leaders to which over 800 Leaders around the world responded. Their responses were analyzed with other internal and external data to prepare the draft Strategic Planning Report which was delivered to the LLLI Board of Directors in November. (You can view this report on the CN. Go to the USWD discussion, click on Library, and click on the link for Strategic Planning Survey Results. Note: To preserve the privacy and security of our Community Network, links to the network are not posted publicly. CN links and files mentioned in eCONNECT will be posted in the library area of the USWD discussion on the CN. Or go to <http://www.lllusa.org/uswd/resources/cnlinksec3.htm> to find CN links using your LLLUSA password.)

For 2006, the SPC has established four workgroups to address specific strategic goals for LLLI. These include:

- the *Program Audit Workgroup*, which will examine LLL programs and services;
- the *User Survey Workgroup*, which will establish procedures and begin gathering input from LLL “customers” (breastfeeding mothers and mothers-to-be);
- the *Community Discussion Groups Workgroup*, which will define and conduct structured discussions with health care professionals and other agencies to raise awareness of LLL and build relationships; and
- the *Resource GPS Workgroup*, which is responsible for quantifying LLL resources and statistical information worldwide and graphically displaying this data.

Progress of these workgroups will be monitored by the *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Future Strategy Team*, which will have overall responsibility for preparing the LLLI Strategic Plan.

Each workgroup will include representation from the LLLI Board of Directors, staff, administration (Affiliate/Division/Area), LLL Leaders, and outside experts. All teams will include representatives from within and outside the US,

and the committee encourages more USWD Leaders to become involved in the strategic planning process. If you are interested in participating in this effort, the following document includes more information about the SPC Workgroups along with instructions for contacting the SPC with your interest: (You can view this report on the CN. Go to the USWD discussion, click on Library and click on the link for Strategic Planning Committee Update. Or go to <http://www.lllusa.org/uswd/resources/cnlinksec3.htm> to find CN links using your LLLUSA password.)

## **History Begins Today!**

By Barbara Emanuel

As 2005 becomes history it will be interesting to see what the future holds for 2006.

I believe all the mistakes we made, all the lessons we learned, all the successes we enjoyed, all the family and friends we cherished--every single, individual experience we have from yesterday and all the yesterdays before--are stored somewhere in the memories of our mind. And so they should be saved; they're our story today and yesterday's history. But what about tomorrow's history?

History begins today!

You and I know that we can't change our past--but what we can do is apply what we've learned and purposefully choose the future we want to live.

### **Questions:**

What is your story?

What would you like your "future history" to look like?

What would you want to remember as your successes?

What difference do you want to make?

Whom do you want to write the script?

When do you want to start?

These are exciting times in LLL and, like never before, there are opportunities beyond Group work to connect with others and explore areas you feel passionate about. It might be short term project-based or on-going work that interests you--from technical online support, strategic planning, marketing, advocacy/outreach--to ideas yet to be considered. Since we each get to choose the story

we write that becomes our history, what actions will you take today to create the future you want to live and the story you want to leave as your history?

Here's to making history in this "sparkling" New Year!

"A staff person present at an OST meeting came to me mid-way and excitedly said, 'I get it! All my life I have waited for someone else to fix 'it'. Now I know that, if I care, I can do something!' -- Glory Ressler, <http://www.edgeofavalon.com>, reprinted with permission from her email "Stories that moved you, stories that could change the world"

## **Division Workgroups Looking for Help!**

USWD has current volunteer openings in the Events, Finances, and Professional Liaison (PL) Workgroups. These Workgroups provide information and support for USWD Leaders working in these departments in their Areas. Workgroups may vary in size and operate as a team, dividing the tasks as appropriate and practical – based on the skills, interests, and availability of the Workgroup members.

The Events Workgroup provides resources for Area Events (Area Conferences, Leader Seminars, and Continuing Education Programs) and provides direct support to the Area Coordinators of Events (ACEs). Primary responsibilities for the Events Workgroup include: review of all events facilities contracts and budgets; monitoring planning progress for Area Events; and providing regular communication and support, as well as tools and information, to help ACEs in their work. The Finances Workgroup provides communication and general support to Area Finance Coordinators (AFCs) in all aspects of accounting for the Area; budgeting, taxes, events, etc. The workgroup is also responsible for the general accounting and treasury of the USWD. The PL Workgroup provides communication, general support and continuing education to Area Professional Liaisons and Leaders in situations of a medical or legal nature that go beyond the normal course of breastfeeding. They also assist with outreach. Further information about the responsibilities and skills needed for these

Workgroups are posted on the CN. (Go to the USWD discussion, click on. Or go to <http://www.lllusa.org/uswd/resources/cnlinksec3.htm> to find CN links using your LLLUSA password.)

The USWD staff has embraced the Draft Principles approved by the LLLI Board of Directors, and has recently adopted a set of Agreements as to how we will work with Areas. Those who are interested in staff positions are expected to commit to working within the framework of these agreements and principles.

Also in light of these changes, how we work and what constitutes staff is changing. We are looking for people to connect in possibly short-term ways, not as what was previously considered a traditional “staff member” with a three-year term.

Currently the Events Workgroup includes Patricia DuBray and Anne Hutton. The Finances Workgroup includes Becky Hugh and Bill Dunn. And the PL Workgroup is staffed by Jeanne Brotherton and Becky Hugh. The majority of work is done via phone, email, and online chat. Travel to Area, USWD, and LLLI Events is determined based on need and funding. Time requirements will vary based on support needs and Workgroup staffing.

If you (or someone you know) are interested in participating on one of these Workgroups, please send a brief letter highlighting your interest and qualifications to: [emanuel@cruzio.com](mailto:emanuel@cruzio.com). Please feel free to contact current Workgroup members for more information. We welcome additions to the team to help USWD Leaders best support mothers and babies in their Areas.