



eConnect

La Leche League US Western Division
Forming Connections Leader to Leader
Issue Number 5

La Lige de Leche Madrid

USWD Staff member Patricia DuBray lived in Spain for several months. Before she left, she accepted the unofficial position of "USWD Ambassador" and was charged with bringing good wishes and gifts from Western Division Leaders to any LLL people she happened to meet. We received this email from Patricia on November 4, 2006:



Our "Ambassador" Patricia (right) with Madrid Leaders

Dear USWD Staff,

I am so excited - I found "Our" people today! La Liga de Leche of Madrid participated in a Biocultura 2006, an Earth day type of event. I had previously communicated with them via e-mail and stated that I am temporarily living

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in the area and would love to stop by their booth and meet them. I met several Leaders and saw moms and babies breastfeeding and people who were wearing their babies - I was thrilled!

My husband Dan and my daughter Mackenzie attended with me. Dan helped bridge the language barrier, though they spoke English pretty well (better than my Spanish). During our time together, I stated that I represented LLL USWD as an ambassador and that we recognize and appreciate all the work they do locally for mothers and babies. I gave them \$150.00 cash to help in any way they thought helpful. They quickly noted the need for further information with flyers, handouts etc, as they have been paying for photo copies of flyers at their own personal expense. They were so thankful for the gift and anticipate the money going to do greater good. Thanks so much for allowing me the privilege and opportunity to share our resources with others!



LLLI Strategic Plan

By Anne Hutton, Houston, TX and
Marcia Lutostanski, Houston, TX

At their recent meeting, the LLLI Board of Directors reviewed and supported the LLLI Strategic Plan, which is now posted on the Leader Pages of the LLLI web site at:
<http://www.lalecheleague.org/leaderpages/strategiplan.html>.

The Strategic Plan was developed by a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) comprised of more than 80 members, representing the LLLI Board of Directors, Staff, Leaders, and outside experts from within and outside the United States. This process took over one year.

The Strategic Plan does NOT change LLLI philosophy or the LLLI mission: *To help mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information, and education and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.* In fact, the plan articulates five core strategic objectives for our organization which will help us to better deliver the LLLI mission. Each objective lists a few measurable target outcomes to gauge our improved performance in achieving the strategic objectives.

The strategic objectives are:

- Focus on mother-to-mother support
- Build volunteer network and reach currently underserved populations
- Build LLL credibility to be first referral from health care professionals and health agencies
- Build LLL awareness among mothers, mothers-to-be and the general public
- Transform LLLI into a global organization

The first objective – focus on mother-to-mother support – reinforces our LLLI mission and allows us to capitalize on the unique way in which LLL helps breastfeeding mothers and babies. It also capitalizes on the fact that mothers in contact with LLL are pleased with our services. Our target outcomes for this objective are to increase our direct mother-to-mother contacts by 10% over two

years, while maintaining that high level of customer satisfaction.

Objectives two, three, and four provide ways for LLL to expand our reach so we can increase our contacts – increasing our member and Leader base, building relationships with local health care professionals, and expanding knowledge of LLL among mothers and mothers-to-be. Target outcomes for these objectives include increasing memberships by 25%, Leaders by 20%, and overall awareness of LLL among our target audience by 4%, all over a two year span.

The final objective will ensure that LLL Leaders throughout our worldwide organization have resources to help mothers and babies in their localities. One target outcome for this objective is for the LLLI web site to have a portal for each major language of each country in which we operate.

Achieving the target outcomes will involve a multi-faceted implementation with three major angles:

- Individual Leaders embrace parts of the plan and make changes in their day-to-day LLL work. (For example, a Leader chooses to promote memberships more strongly in her Group, or Leaders in a geographical area send meeting notices to local doctors' offices.)
- LLLI Executive Director and Staff implement operational changes. (For example, increasing funding/staffing for programs in alignment with strategic objectives and limiting funding for other programs.)
- LLLI Board of Directors charters targeted workgroups to address key strategic action items. (Identified workgroup topics include: Membership; Underserved Populations; Spanish-Language Resources; Publications; and Public Awareness.)

The LLLI Strategic Plan provides a common direction for the entire LLLI community to focus our resources on activities which best position LLL for future success in advancing the LLLI mission. Achieving the target outcomes will result in a larger, stronger organization, focused on LLLI Philosophy, and reaching more breastfeeding mothers and babies around the world!

We welcome every Leader to become involved in the Strategic Plan in her LLL work. A presentation is available on the CN with more information about the key findings and recommendations of the SPC:

PowerPoint format:

<http://community.llli.org/library.htm?mode=view&did=185657&lid=6620&wf=146076>;

Adobe PDF version:

<http://community.llli.org/library.htm?mode=view&did=185812&lid=6620&wf=146076>.

More information about Strategic Plan implementation and invitations to participate in SP Workgroups will be communicated in the coming weeks. We thank everyone who has contributed to the LLLI Strategic Plan, and we look forward to implementing the plan to position LLLI for 50+ more years of success.

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Close By, Frequent, and Dirt Cheap: Mini-Conferences in Illinois

By Jamie Mahurin Smith, Normal, IL

”What about 2007?”

The Illinois ADCs began asking this question a couple of years ago, when plans for the 50th anniversary celebration were announced. In the past, in Illinois, we've scheduled Area Conferences roughly every 18 months. But what about 2007? We really wanted to encourage Illinois Leaders to attend the International Conference in 2007. And we also wanted to provide opportunities for them to connect with other Illinois Leaders at smaller events. We kicked around possible ways to meet both of those goals.

At our last Area Conference in November 2005, a Leader from southern Illinois commented on the preponderance of events in the northern part of the state. Illinois' population is top-heavy, with most of its people, and consequently, most of its Leaders, concentrated in the Chicago area. LLL of IL schedules some events in the central part of the state, but as far as the current ADCs can remember

we've never scheduled an event further south or further west than Springfield .



And thus a plan was hatched: we'd have four mini-conferences, one in each Illinois Section (North, Metro, Central, and South). We announced that they would be close by, frequent, and dirt cheap. Our last Area Conference was profitable and our goal for these events was to provide affordable support and education to Leaders and mothers in their own backyards - or at least in their own area codes.

We've found several advantages to offering four smaller events instead of one large Area conference. Because we were expecting small turnouts, Katie Field, Area Coordinator of Events, was able to secure all but one of the meeting locations free of charge. We encouraged Groups to promote the events by refunding them \$10 for each mother from their Group who registered – we saw this as a painless fundraiser for Groups, and an inexpensive way for mothers to see that La Leche League is more than just Series Meetings.

We expect revenue from advertisers and exhibitors to make up for the low registration fee, so the Area should be able to break even with no difficulty.

Three of the four mini-conferences are provided CERPs, and as CERP Coordinator, I found that the paperwork for three small events was less onerous than the paperwork was for our 2005 Area Conference. The programs offered a blend of mothering encouragement and up-to-date breastfeeding information, with speakers including Marian Tompson and Nancy Mohrbacher, among others.

As you might expect, there were disadvantages as well -- most significantly the need to recruit four sets of volunteers to cover four days' worth of logistics. Because the events are more streamlined than an Area Conference, Katie Field, ACE, reported that the workload for four mini-conferences has been comparable to the work involved in planning a single large conference. She said that initially it was difficult to find

volunteers for the later dates far enough in advance to print a single brochure for all four events. Conversely, she appreciated having the freedom to find advertisers and exhibitors on a more relaxed schedule.

In all honesty, I was a little grumpy about going to the first mini-conference. My toddler hates the car and it felt like a long way to travel with him; I'm back in grad school this semester and I had work to do; I needed to be at the other three mini-conferences to handle CERPs – I had quite the litany of excuses for being cranky. But it was such a lovely day!

At the first mini-conference, about 25 Leaders and Leader Applicants attended, which meant that it was easy to meet everyone. The mix of structured sessions and Open Space time made for a good blend of predictable and unexpected. The venue was great and there was a to-die-for chocolate cake at the end of a delicious lunch. As always, it was refreshing and helpful to talk with other mothers and Leaders about the ups and downs of motherhood and leadership.

I'm looking forward to the remaining events. If you're curious, come check one out <http://www.llofil.org/events.htm> and see if our mini-conference idea might work for your Area. Contact Katie Field for more information: 505 W. High St., Urbana IL 61801 or ace@littleants.com.

Introducing the Leader Department: Wista Waldroop

My name is Wista Waldroop and I live in Tahlequah, Oklahoma on five acres about six miles east of town. I am in the far eastern part of the state, between Tulsa and the Arkansas state line. Tahlequah is the capital of the Cherokee nation. In the 1860's, the government forced the Cherokees on a winter march (the "Trail of Tears") from their homelands in North Carolina to the new Indian territory of



Oklahoma. Thousands died on the march including my great-great-great Grandmother. Three chiefs were supposed to meet in the new territory to choose a new capital; only two showed up. So they said, "Tah Le Quah" meaning "two is enough..."

I am married to Rudy; we celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary Oct. 18. He is a wildlife artist but has been unable to work these last four years due to liver failure. He is listed for a transplant with a hospital in Oklahoma City. We now play the waiting game, waiting for him to get sick enough for the transplant... We have four sons: Shannon (married to Kara), Micah (married to Lisa), Dakota (married to Tanya), and Chisholm (dating a sweet girl also named Kara. I told her if they get any more serious, she will have to change her name to "Betty Lou"! ☺)

In my lifetime, I have held many real jobs: real estate saleswoman (never made a sale), men's clothing store manager (was made manager after only one week in sales), long distance telephone operator (had AT&T stock when I quit that I sold because I thought the company would not last...), undercover vice squad member (carried a gun in my purse for two years while I was working on my Police Science degree), knee-high and panty-hose factory worker, cast member – along with Shannon – in the outdoor drama, *The Passion Play*, in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, gift shop owner in Eureka Springs (where I met Rudy who had a shop across the hall), and now am a church secretary. But my favorite "job" of all time, is everything I have done in La Leche League!

I was not able to nurse Shannon (because I had read nothing and no medical support), so for the next ten years was actively against breastfeeding. Then I met and married Rudy, read about nursing and LLL in a book while I was pregnant with Micah, and discovered a LLL Group when he was six weeks old. I was pretty quickly hooked on everything to do with breastfeeding and LLL. In fact, I became such a fanatical advocate, that I had business cards printed up that said, "**Mrs. Wista Waldroop, La Leche League Consultant**" to hand out at the breastfeeding talks I was giving at Lamaze classes. I used the word 'consultant; 'cause I was consulting with my LLL books I had

on hand. In 1979, when I decided to become a Leader, I wrote to LLLI myself for the packet, since my Leader was too slow for me. The day I got my Personal History request, I sat down that night and typed it up, and mailed it in the next day along with one of my business cards to show her how serious I was. Did not hear from the CLA for a few weeks and when I finally did, she wrote me a rather stern reprimand about not using LLL's name since I was not a Leader and sure wasn't a consultant. Later I found out that she was new and I was her first Applicant. She did not know what to do with me and my enthusiasm and my now infamous business card! It went right 'up the line' to someone in LLLI who told her to tell me to quit using those cards. I was devastated and would have quit right then but Rudy wouldn't let me – so he has nobody to blame but himself for all these LLL years! Every time, I received a letter from my CLA, I sent my response back the next day so I kept her hopping. We eventually became good friends, and she told me later that my file was used as a training file for years to show how to handle difficult Applicants! ☺

I have been a lone Leader, a co-Leader (with up to five co-Leaders), an Associate Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (ACLA), a Coordinator of Leader Accreditation (CLA), an Area Coordinator of Leaders (ACL), a USWD Regional Administrator (RA), a USWD Division Coordinator of Leaders (DCL), a couple of other USWD jobs with initials, and now am simply the USWD Leader Department *contact*. No initials to remember and explain! (The next article will tell a little more about what that involves.)

La Leche League has been woven into my life over the past 25 years. It has given me insight, strength, lasting friendships, and other things too numerous to mention. Thank you, LLL, for a great ride!

Inside the Leader Department

By Wista Waldroop

In the years I have been involved with the Leader Department, we have gone five people supporting ACLs in the Western Division, to all the ACLs

supporting each other, facilitated and linked to the WD by one staff person—me.

When I was ACL, we were in Regions and although I did know who my co-ACLs were, we would have never dreamed of asking each other questions. We called or faxed our RA who had all the answers we ever needed. When I became RA, there were four of us, and one Associate Director of RAs (ADRA) who worked with and supported all the USWD ACLs. We were the 'answer women' and spent a lot of time tracking down answers and consulting with each other. Then slowly, things started to change, and we began to encourage ACLs to use their USWD elist to ask each other the questions. It was kind of like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, who had the way home all the time, in the red shoes she was wearing; she just didn't know it. The ACLs all had the mythical red shoes too; they just had to get used to clicking them together for answers. They had the same books the RAs had, the same access to LLLI, and more importantly, the collective knowledge among themselves for any question that might come up.

As terms ended, the RAs phased out, until now there is just me left. The ACLs all support each other as they share and find answers together. I just act as a contact as needed, and do things like keep the USWD ACL directory updated, send self-guided orientation materials to new ACLs, act as a consultant for ACL searches if asked, collect the Area stats twice a year for a report to LLLI, and send an occasional memo with letters/articles that the ACLs write since even though we all love email, we still enjoy something in the real mail every so often. All of these jobs will eventually be handled online or be taken over by the ACLs themselves. My goal now is to remain as a connector to the ACLs while slowly disconnecting from them.

In addition to these specifically Leader Department activities, I join other staff in the larger work of the staff, such as putting on meetings, facilitating conflict resolution and a variety of other projects.

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USWD: Money Matters

With all the changes taking place in the US Western Division, many Leaders are wondering how these changes will affect the portion of funds currently allocated to support USWD activities.

The USWD has an annual operating budget just as each Area does. You can access the current fiscal year budget for USWD on the CN at <http://community.llli.org/library.htm?mode=view&did=183564&lid=58804&wf=150059>. The Annual Report for Fiscal Year 05-06 can be found at <http://community.llli.org/library.htm?mode=view&did=214629&lid=58804&wf=150059>.

In the USWD much of the funding goes to support opportunities for learning and connection such as FutureTEAM (a meeting open to all USWD Leaders held in August, 2006), Transformative Large Group Conversations (TLGC), a meeting which was open to all Leaders, to learn about a variety of meeting methods, held in May, 2005), and International Mastery Symposium (IMS), which is meeting time for Leaders and Area Administrators held before an LLI Conference). The USWD underwrites the cost of these programs to keep registration as low as possible, and offers as many scholarships as possible to each event. Full-price registrations have never covered the full cost of any USWD TEAM event. Staff presence at IMS and LLI Conferences is an expectation and responsibility of Staff Administrators and is funded from the USWD budget. Most staff time at these meetings is spent working on the meeting itself or other staff business.

Funds are needed to pay for face-to-face staff meetings (usually an extra day or two tacked on to larger meetings) to allow for time to conduct business that can't be done online or over the phone. Costs associated with website and other online use, including necessary paid technical help, and incidental expenses of staff (phone, supplies) as they do their work are also included in the USWD's budget. The rest goes to support projects such as sending an LLI representative to the annual United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) meeting.

It's true that USWD staff, as currently organized, will be disbanding. It will be replaced by the Coordinating Council and the Agreements Council that will do the work that pertains to USWD as a whole—similar to what staff does now. Any organization needs money to function; it makes sense that whatever council/committee/group of people replaces staff will need some sort of budget to carry out their work. Continuing the work and continuing to provide support will require continued funding. So the assessment would continue until changed by whatever entity(s) is doing the work of keeping us connected and accountable. At that time assessments, if any, will be made by agreements with the councils. I am sure these decisions will be based on needs identified by the councils.

Most administrators, whether Area Administrators or from some other LLI entity, find that a periodic in-person meeting with other administrators is vital to allow them to keep up to date on what is needed to do their jobs. If there is no longer an LLI Conference held every other year, it's quite possible that some alternate version of IMS or TEAM will need to be planned. In fact, discussions of that possibility were heard at FutureTEAM last August.

Costs associated with online and web usage will continue. Though the change from paper publications to online-only publications reduces the time and money involved, it is nevertheless not free. In addition, as LLI shifts more and more of its US-related programs/functions to the Divisions, those entities will need funding for the programs if they are to continue.

If you have questions about any of the line items found on the budget, or any comments about how funds are spent by USWD staff, we invite you to share your thoughts by sending an email to USWesternDivision at community.llli.org (reaches staff only) or AskUSWD at community.llli.org (general USWD questions list).



Community Network Tidbits

By Miena Hall, Bolingbrook, Illinois and
Ann Marie Lindquist, Lexington, MA

Sue Ann Kendall's instructions for using the Community Network (CN) can be found on the Leader password-protected pages at www.lli.org

The web pages are listed under the left sidebar heading "Resources/Leader Pages/Online Communications" at:
<http://www.lli.org/leaderpages/onlinecomm.html?m=0,3,6>

Or go directly to the Community Network Page:
<http://www.lli.org/leaderpages/cn.html>

At the top of the page, you will see 3 links:

1. A "Sign Up!" page to walk you through your first login in.
2. A "Preview" of the CN with screen snapshots instructing how to navigate from the Welcome page to the various CN discussions, libraries, and wiki notepads.
3. A general "User's Guide" explaining the CN in greater detail.

Have you heard from Leaders who are signed into the CN, but are NOT receiving CN mailings regularly? It could be that the CN messages are

being sent to the Leader's spam folder. This can be fixed by changing the options for the email's spam filter to route emails from "&&&@community.lli.org" directly to your inbox. (Here &&& corresponds to the mailing name of a discussion.)

Another possible reason for not receiving CN email is that the Leader's email address is not verified. If you look on any participant list for a Discussion, each Leader will have an envelope next to her name. If the envelope is faded, it means CN does not have a valid email address for her.

To correct this situation, the Leader clicks on Email Settings on the upper right hand corner of the screen. This will show what email address(es) she is using. If she has changed her email address or wants to add a new one, she should add it under "Add New Email Address," then follow the directions to verify that email address (this may involve having a message sent to her email account). Then she should check the list of her Discussions on that same page and choose a verified email address for each Discussion. It is possible that only one or two of her Discussions will show unverified email addresses, so she may not need to change them all. She can also make changes by clicking on "My Membership Settings" next to the name of each Discussion.



Who to Call for What at LLLI

Issue	Name	Email	Phone
Membership and Education	Carol Kolar	ckolar@llli.org	847-592-7553
Finance	Jennifer Pharis	JPharis@llli.org	847-519-7730 ext. 267
Publications	Sharon Barsotti	sbarsotti@llli.org	847-592-7555
Public Relations	Tricia Noack	tnoack@mtco.com	
Alternate Public Relations	Mary Lofton	mlofton@llli.org	847-519-7730, ext. 271
Ordering Information	Marlene Orlandini	MOrlandini@llli.org	847-519-7730, ext 269
Bulk Ordering	Marlene Orlandini	MOrlandini@llli.org	
Electronic Communications and Online Resources	ITNetwork	ITNetwork@community.llli.org	
Electronic Communications and Online Resources		ITNetwork@llli.org (for those not signed on to the CN).	
Online Store	Rachel Lange	RLange@llli.org	847-519-7730 ext 246
Memberships /Dues	Susan Comer	SComer@llli.org	847-519-7730, ext 269
Donors	Linda Ensley	lensley@llli.org	847-874-8975
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