



eConnect

La Leche League US Western Division
Forming Connections Leader to Leader

Issue Number 6

What Does Support Look Like?

Misty Dunn, Sacramento, CA

“Support” looks and feels different to each individual. Many people view it as the feeling that there is someone there with whom to consult, share creative ideas, questions and experiences. It usually involves collaborative relationships, communication, and consultation.

Support may be seen differently depending on whether viewed from the person giving support or from the perspective of the person receiving it. In actuality, it often has more to do with your “Learning Together Style.” Marsha Conner, in her book, *Learn More Now*, has some excellent suggestions to help you determine how to find support from other people, and whether you learn best alone, in small groups or in large ones. Basically, you need people to play different roles: sounding board, challenger, dialogue partner, role model, advisor, cheerleader, cohort, mentor, coach, and/or friend.

Sometimes, the way information is given may be seen as support, or it may be viewed as mere suggestions (and therefore perceived as not having to be considered), or as being dictatorial (as being told, “This is what you must do”). If something that is suggested is not wanted or agreed with, it may be seen as interference and the person as not being supportive. Sometimes the person giving support may not want to be seen as dictatorial and so offers information so gently as “suggestions”

NEWS FLASH: Coming soon!

LLL Breastfeeding Helpline - US will soon begin service. 24 hour toll free helpline service will be available by calling 1-877-4-LALECHE (1-877-452-5324).

Watch for it!

Sending Membership Checks

As LLLI moves into using Kintera as our membership database, the office staff will no longer be able to process checks for memberships that are less than \$26. Rachel Lange reports, “It does not happen very often, but sometimes Leaders send us \$22 instead of the \$26. As of now we are returning the checks with the paperwork they came with and letting the Leader know that we cannot process the check for less than \$26.”

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Rachel (847-519-7730 x246) or email her (rlange at llli.org). She’s happy to help you!

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that the recipient may not realize that the information is important and/or helpful.

When someone is beginning a new role, support often includes ways to identify and clarify the roles and responsibilities of her job and of the people with whom she works, as well as ideas on how to set goals and develop a plan to accomplish them. When we look at how individuals move through the stages of development within a new role, it's apparent that different appearing and/or kinds of support would be needed at each stage.

Stages of Knowledge/Development: How each of us moves through any role in an organization.

	INEFFECTIVE	EFFECTIVE
A W A R E	Reflection <i>"What next? What do I need to know?"</i> 2	Confirmation <i>"I think I understand; do you agree?"</i> 3
U N A W A R E	Support <i>"Why am I here?"</i> 1	Space/Options <i>"Why won't you leave me alone?"</i> 4

1. When you start a new role, you're unaware of what you know, of what you need to know, the language, the context, etc. You don't know what you don't know. At the very beginning, you're unaware and ineffective. You may wonder, "Why am I here?" "Why did I agree to do this?" These are core questions. Over time, we forget how it feels to be in this stage and so we don't remember how to help others in Stage 1. Some people in Stage 1 can extrapolate how it feels and remember from other times they were in Stage 1 to determine what questions they might need to ask. Others don't have a clue what they don't know; they don't know what they should be doing and don't know who to ask.

One way to help someone through this stage is to show her what she needs to do and know. Don't wait for her to ask; don't expect her to know what she doesn't know and who/how to ask! Offer support that is nonjudgmental, proactive, and

mentoring to help her through this stage. Recognize that people may stay in Stage 1 for varied amounts of time.

2. As time goes on in the new role, you begin to know what you don't know. You are aware that you are not yet efficient ("up to speed") and you know who to ask for help. At this stage, additional levels of support can be offered. Now, the person offering support can tell her to ask if she needs any help. Give active mentoring-- after showing her the first time, you can ask, "What do you think?" She now has more information to answer after minimal instruction. Offer information such as "This is one way you might do this..." People may be very comfortable in this stage; they have no responsibility—they may stay here for years. Support may mean to help them with reflection and to ask questions.

Stages 1 & 2 need more "hands-on," specific, and frequent information. The learner may welcome someone telling her what it is she needs to do. This lessens the new person's apprehension of doing something wrong or missing something. (A checklist may be helpful—it is less-directive, yet still lists needed details.)

3. You now know what you know – You are effective and aware of what you know as well as what you need to know. However, you may not have confidence and may ask fundamental questions. You may find yourself asking, "I think I understand, do you agree?"

The key is that you want confirmation and that's the support that is most appreciated.

4. You know what you know. You feel determinedly and emphatically in the know. However, you may no longer be mindful of what you don't know, and may wonder, "Why won't you leave me alone?" if anyone offers suggestions. Support here can be in the form of offering space and/or options. You might be able to guide someone in Stage 4 to move on to other things. You can suggest that with effectiveness, one may also develop blind spots and you can suggest new questions, new learning. She may be very comfortable and happy and not want to move out of this stage. If she is not comfortable with

ambiguity, she may want to stay here as she doesn't want unknowns in her life. Show her that there is a path to the next stage 4, and that the organization needs her to move so she won't stagnate. She may find ways to stay in Stage 4 for some things and move through Stages 1, 2, 3 with other things; or if she remembers the beginner stage, then you could have her mentor others. She could move into a new box for some things or a whole new role.

After reading all the above, you may be wondering: What about distributed leadership—is support still offered?

Yes! In distributed leadership, support—what is needed in the way of support and how it may be given, will probably look much the same. The differences might be in where the support is found and from whom.

“Support persons” are there—the difference is that you usually don't have to go to one specific person; you may find your own resources if you'd prefer. What matters is that everyone who needs to know—those relevant and affected—is “in the loop,” and that the work gets done correctly. For instance, as a Leader, you wouldn't have to go to your DA to get approval for your Group flyer. You could ask other people you trust—those who would have the “big picture” of what is needed to responsibly reflect LLL, Group Leaders to ensure that the address/local information is correct, as well as perhaps someone outside LLL to ensure that the flyer is understandable to someone new to La Leche League.

With distributed leadership, those offering support would more likely offer guidelines and suggestions rather than directives. The phrasing would probably be less peremptory, for example saying, “You may want to try...” or “Many ADCs find this ... , this ... , or this ... helpful” instead of saying, “Do it this way.” A checklist may be offered so the person getting support could choose what specific areas of help she might get from her support person or what she might get from someone else. Many Leaders and ADCs already find much of their support and information from network/department or Area e-lists, CN discussions, online resources, and/or other

Leaders/ADCs interested in the same line of work. No matter where she gets the support/resources/information, everyone will benefit if her support person is kept “in the loop” of what is going on in her line of work. It is also to everyone's advantage when both the person getting support and the one giving it are open about what is working or not working for them.



USWD Frequently Asked Questions: Agreements

Q. Why is the USWD working with agreements?

A. Over the last several years, based on the LLLI Board's vision for LLL to allow Leaders more of a voice in decisions that closely affect them, many changes have taken place throughout USWD. We've been trying to be less bureaucratic, while strongly conforming to the key lessons learned by LLLI Leaders over the last half century:

- don't mix causes
- let moms make their own decisions
- stay focused on mother-to-mother support
- it's all about mothers and babies.

Q. How is working with agreements any different?

A. It's important to note that these changes are really about being explicit about how we work and connect right now. There will be no huge shift or major upheaval and some may even find these changes to be somewhat anticlimactic and wonder what all the fuss is about.

Briefly summarized, the agreements document explains:

- Expectations of all USWD Leaders
- What it takes to be recognized as a USWD Area, and the accompanying responsibilities
- The definition of USWD, its responsibilities, and its governing procedures.

Q. How will working with the agreements impact me personally?

A. 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. *All* Leaders everywhere must operate under the same basic policies and expectations set by the LLLI Board, including the importance of communicating and coordinating with each other no matter in which Area or Division we find ourselves. We are *one* set of Leaders helping mothers worldwide, and all of the other distinctions are mostly a matter of administrative convenience. While there are some legal differences country by country, and smaller ones state by state, they shrink in comparison to what we have in common as Leaders.

Q. Is it true that our Area has to write its own set of agreements?

A. Nope! Start where you are. As a USWD Leader and Area, it is already accepted that you are working within the LLLI Policies for USWD Leaders. Of course, your Area and Leaders within the Area may choose to write your own agreements, if desired, or you can simply work from this existing document.

Q. Will USWD cease to exist and stop providing support after the LLLI Conference this July?

A. Nope! USWD Staff will continue to function to support Leaders and as an administrative body until there is no longer a need for them to act in these capacities.

Q. Where/how do we begin in our Area to work with the agreements?

A. An easy place to begin is by looking at the section titled Areas in the LLLI Policies for USWD. Just by looking at those few points, you can see that your Area already has most of the bases covered.



USWD FAQs: Mutual Accountability

Q. What is mutual accountability?

A. Mutual accountability means a Leader agrees to:

Hold herself accountable to a simple, common agreement,

AND

Demonstrate to those with whom she made it.

Example: Agreeing to send the monthly Group report for your Group Meeting and providing your co-Leaders with a copy.

Example: Paying your Area Leader assessment on time

(You can also substitute Area for Leader, Division for Area, etc. in this definition)

Q. What are some ways Leaders might hold each other accountable?

A. It might be helpful to think of accountability in terms of demonstrating and documenting. We document (keep a record of) finances and statistics such as adult attendance at meetings, phone, email, personal breastfeeding contacts, and outreach. We demonstrate when we report these statistics (records) in a timely and appropriate manner. Other ways we demonstrate our accountability is participation in leading meetings, phone helping, attending events, and sharing with a wider group of Leaders in person or through other venues such as an Area e-list.

Leaders are accountable locally, to the Area, to the Area Accountability Network (now known as USWD) and to LLLI.

Whatever system of documenting and demonstrating that is already in place is fine until Leaders see a need to change. When change is desired, Leaders will be explicit, i.e., they will write simple agreements.

Q. What is Consensus?

A. Consensus means...

What a group of people *already* agree about at a deep level, before they start working on related tasks.



LLL Strategic Plan

By Anne Hutton

Do you want more information about the LLLI Strategic Plan? Do you want to discuss how you can help implement parts of the plan in your LLL work? Do you want to collaborate with other LLL Leaders around the world who share your LLL interests? Do you want to share how your Group has had success in reaching targets? Then please join one or more of these special CN discussions.

We have created special CN discussions for Leader dialogue about the LLLI Strategic Plan (SP). Separate discussions have been created to provide a forum for discussing ways to implement each of the strategic objectives to meet the target outcomes. The new discussions are named:

SP-1-Mother-to-Mother Support:
SP-2-Volunteer Network & Underserved Populations:
SP-3-Credibility w HCPs:
SP-4-LLL Awareness: SP-5-Global Organization:

(To find a list of links directly to these discussions, go to:
<http://www.lllusa.org/uswds/resources/cnlinksec6.htm>. You will need the Leader password, which can be obtained from the Welcome page of the CN.)

As co-chairs of the LLLI Strategic Planning process, Marcia Lutostanski and I are moderators on each discussion; we will be available to provide information about the SP and will answer any questions as necessary. However, we expect to play a minor role in the discussion. The list is

primarily intended for Leaders to converse about the objectives and how to achieve target outcomes in our LLL work. We expect that Leaders will share questions, ideas, and successes via these lists. We also envision that these discussions will generate some action teams of Leaders who identify exciting new projects to achieve target outcomes.

All Leaders are welcome to participate in the discussions. You may join one or more of the discussions based on your interests. If you are a member of one of the Strategic Workgroups addressing specific target outcomes, you are also welcome to join these. (For more information about joining the Strategic Workgroups, please see the related LLLINews posting: The direct link can be found at <http://www.lllusa.org/uswds/resources/cnlinksec6.htm> -requires Leader's password.)

We hope these new discussions will help Leaders engage in the Strategic Plan implementation phase.



Reflective Optimism

Letter from Jane Tuttle, LLLI BOD Chair, to Arizona LLL

As La Leche League International celebrates fifty years of helping women to discover the joy of mothering through breastfeeding, I am quite confident that LLLI will continue to help women and their families for years to come. I can be confident because the LLLI philosophy of mothering through breastfeeding is true and strong. I can be confident because the LLLI mission of mother-to-mother support is unique and tested. I can be confident because of the good work done by talented women who spend their volunteer hours sharing this philosophy and mission. These women, LLL Leaders, are passionate and compassionate.

LLLI is, by default, also a business. I am confident that the business of LLLI will continue as well. It is true that we are experiencing cash flow issues and that programs that were once housed in our

office have been discontinued or moved into the field. This change is worrisome to some Leaders, yet I would ask you to think of the time these programs spent being administered from the office as something of a business incubator. These businesses are now ready to move out and take root. Can the Leaders in the field provide a quality health care providers seminar? Yes, they can and they have for years. Can the Leaders in the field provide a help line for mothers with questions? Yes, they can and many have for years. Will Leaders still have access to high quality breastfeeding research and information? Yes, they will through a network of PL Leaders who feel passionately about that work. Will the business side of LLLI survive? Yes it will with changes to the business model and improved infrastructures to support the business model.

This is a time of change for LLLI. The world is very different than it was in 1950's when LLL began. Our philosophy remains unchanged and our commitment to mother-to-mother support is unshakable. Will LLL survive? Yes it will with all of us working to make that happen.



Lisa Leaderwoman's Top 10 Reasons for Volunteering as an Operator on the LLL USA Breastfeeding Helpline

By Sue Scott

10. Give back the support that you received as a mom in need of breastfeeding help
9. For less active Leaders - stay in touch with the information needs of the breastfeeding mom today
8. For new Leaders - begin helping moms and build breastfeeding information skills
7. For all Leaders - keep current on common issues in breastfeeding
6. For the isolated Leader - an opportunity to be in touch with breastfeeding mothers on a regular basis
5. Showcase LLL as *the* resource for breastfeeding support
4. Reach mothers outside the population we usually serve

3. Respond to the mother who needs help NOW or she will quit breastfeeding
2. Let mothers know that when they call, LLL answers
1. Gain the satisfaction of fulfilling LLLI's mission and the vision of the Founders by reaching out to one mother and one baby at a time

The LLL USA Breastfeeding Helpline will soon be going live. In order to begin service we need YOUR help!

Helpline operators are sought for the following shifts:

Weekdays -

Shift one: 5:00 AM-9:00 PM

Shift two: 9:00-1:00 PM.

Shift three: 1:00-5:00 PM

Shift four: 5:00 PM-5:00 AM

Weekends -

Saturday/Sunday Shift one: 5:00 AM-11:00 AM

Shift two: 11:00 AM-5:00 PM

Shift three: 5:00 PM-5:00 AM

*** these are Pacific times***

If you are interested in volunteering to take helpline calls please submit the following information:

- Name
- Telephone number
- Email address
- Time zone in which you live
- Preference for shifts you are willing to work
- Number of shifts each month you are willing to work
- Number of telephone lines you have in your home
- Do you have call waiting? If so, can it be turned off?
- Do you have Internet access? If so, does it tie up your phone line or are you able to access the internet while also talking on the telephone

Don't pass up on this golden opportunity. ACT NOW and join the LLL USA Breastfeeding Helpline Volunteer Network!

Contact:

Betsy Grenevitch: blindangel@joimail.com
Sue Scott: msscott1@mindspring.com and/or
Amy Shaw: shawclan@connecttime.net

Do it TODAY!!!!

Please share the above information with those who are not on the CN or do not have access to electronic communication.

Leader Resource Fair

By Cindy Howard

Our Area recently held a Leader Enrichment Day and decided to include a two-hour resource fair in response to comments from Leaders who said they didn't want to attend a Meeting and then go home with MORE work to do. When publicizing this part of our day, we tried to make it clear that this was a time to work on projects.

The room was set up with tables and chairs and each table was to cover a specific topic. We had generated the topics over the course of two Events Team meetings, with DAs checking in with their Leaders to see what they wanted to cover. Each table had a coordinator, who generated the handouts and gathered materials, and two hostesses, who staffed the table for one hour each.

Table hostesses received a \$5 discount on their registration fee. Some Leaders volunteered and some were asked to work at particular tables; for example, the APL sat at the outreach table for an hour and the CLA was at the Applicant table the whole time. For some of the volunteer Leaders, I worked with them to find a table that interested them.

A District Advisor who couldn't be at the event put together a folder with four meeting ideas and all the props and handouts as a gift for all the Leaders who attended. We distributed these gifts at the beginning of the Resource Fair and one of the stations was a Series meeting discussion,

where Leaders could learn more about the ideas in the packet.

These are the table topics:

Meeting ideas

- Bag of tricks
- A notebook of meeting ideas already prepared
- Running meetings
- Learning styles

Library ideas

- Sponsoring books
- What are other Groups doing?
- Labeling
- What to do with old books
- Disclaimer stickers for books
- Book swap
- Book Evaluation Committee

Finances

- Opening bank accounts
- Getting EINs
- Bookkeeping
- Setting up escrow
- Memberships

Leader Applicant workshop

- Supporting Applicants
- BRG case studies

Communication Skills

- Schedule date
- Letters for invitation

Involving Group workers

- Memberships
- How to ask
- When you don't ask, we think we can't
- Ways to acknowledge volunteers
- Things that can be delegated: treasury

Managing the Task List

- What is most important
- 7 habits of highly effective Leaders

Extra Meetings

- Enrichment Meetings

- Toddler Meetings
- Employed mothers
- Outreach
- Breastfeeding café

Developing a Community Resource Guide

- What to include
- Where to put it
- How to recommend
- Yahoo group databases

Activity Reporting

- Leader logs

Massage

- Chair massage
- Yoga

USWD

- What is it? What does it do?
- Recommended books displayed

USWD Agreements

- What are they?
- How might they affect the Group Leader?

Most evaluations for the day included suggestions for future resource table topics. The only complaint on the evaluation forms was that two hours was too long; that comment came from a very introverted Leader and I did notice that at first it was hard for the introverts to join in. Then I put chairs in front of the Resource Fair tables as well as behind them and that seemed to encourage everyone to stay longer and visit.

During the fair, I saw some Leaders set up Leader logs, work on their Group checkbooks, and pick out library books. A couple of Applicants did large parts of their applications orally. Other Leaders hadn't brought anything to work on, so they mainly got ideas to take home.

The fair was held immediately after lunch, and I did notice that women moved into the Resource Fair early from lunch; in hindsight, we could have had a shorter lunch and the same amount of time for the fair or a longer lunch and a shorter fair. By the end of the fair, many Leaders were sitting in

small groups in the middle of the room discussing their issues and concerns.

One thing that might have helped Leaders engage more would have been to introduce each Resource Fair table and give a description to the entire group, as they moved in from lunch. But because people drifted in, there was no good time to give announcements like that. If I had this to do again, I'd probably plan to introduce the fair while everyone was gathered in one place for lunch.



Leader Enrichment Day

October 2006, Northern California/Hawaii

By Cindy Howard

Our Area decided to try having a conference every two years, alternating with a CE day for health care providers, followed by a Leader enrichment day with the CE speaker. We make almost as much money from a single CE day and it's much less work. Also with so many more breastfeeding coalitions and organizations sponsoring conferences, it's hard to find a time when we don't conflict with another organization. This schedule ensures that our event is held the same time every year so other organizations can plan around us.

Our CE speaker was Linda Smith. Some Leaders came only to the CE day and some Leaders came to both events. We used SurveyMonkey to enlist Area Leaders' help in choosing Linda Smith's topics (from the list she shared with us, excluding the ones we had already asked her to present for the CE day) for the Leader day and also the title of the Leader day event. The Leaders who voted chose LEAD: Leader Enrichment and Applicant Development. Leaders seemed to like the cute acronym but I found there was little name recognition when I used the title "the LEAD."

The two events were held in different locations in the same city - we were able to find a free location for the Leader event. Some Leaders were surprised to learn that we wouldn't be at a hotel so we found a local family-friendly hotel and negotiated a family rate for Leaders who wanted to spend the

night. We asked Leaders on the Events Team what they wanted to do for lunch and everyone wanted a catered lunch instead of a potluck. The Leaders in the local District arranged a continental breakfast - Leaders baked and froze muffins and we got donations from Costco and Safeway for tea, yogurt, and fruit. The site provided coffee. We used the same caterer for both the Friday CE day and the Saturday Leader day - the caterer provided box lunches with a variety of sandwiches on focaccia bread. The lunches were really good and both the health care providers and the Leaders appreciated a less formal lunch.

The general schedule for the Leader day was:

Morning: Linda Smith presented two sessions

Lunch: Lasted for 90 minutes and was held outside at tables in a grove of trees. We made placards for the tables so Leaders could choose to meet and eat in smaller groups: home-schoolers, lone Leaders, Applicants, etc. Some tables had blank cards for Leaders who wanted to choose groupings for themselves.

Afternoon: Resource Fair for two hours, followed by a birthday celebration. See previous article to read more about the Resource Fair.

Because there were books left over from the CE day, we had a bookstore open during lunch and the Resource Fair. I've not yet seen the financial report, so I don't know if this bookstore was worthwhile.

The birthday celebration focused on 50 years of LLL. When she arrived in the morning, each Leader found either a trivia question or an answer in her folder, which provided the basis for an icebreaker to start off the birthday celebration. Each Leader needed to find the person with the matching question or answer. The questions were the top song, president, top TV show, first class postage, best movie picture, and most popular boy and girl names for babies in 1956, 1966, 1976, 1986, 1996, and 2006. These questions turned out to be much harder than I thought they would be - and the hardest question was the presidents. (Do you know the presidents for each of those years?)

I put together a humorous slide show with the answers for each year and then for each decade I showed a graph with the breastfeeding rates at birth and 6 months. At each decade I paused for the Leaders who had been accredited in that time period to come forward, put their name on the wall, and receive a small gift. Then we recognized newly-accredited Leaders and Leader Applicants with special gifts, had birthday cake, and everyone helped clean up.

About 75 (out of 230) Leaders attended. According to the evaluations, most Leaders prefer having an annual event, alternating between an Area Conference and a CE day/Leader day. What I liked about this day was that Leaders came for the CE sessions, and received practical Group management information, also. At Area Conferences, the newer Leaders tend to focus on the CE sessions and miss out on the Group management sessions, which are equally important.

One thing I noticed is that by the end of the day many of the newly-accredited Leaders and Leader Applicants had already left, so they weren't present to be recognized. We deliberately held the celebration at the end of the day because it's hard for new Leaders and Applicants with little ones to get to a session at 8 AM. I suppose it's equally challenging to keep toddlers entertained until 4 PM, even though we did have a play area with toys in the back of the room. We're exploring options for honoring new Leaders at the next Area Conference.



Western Roundup

What's Happening in USWD Areas?

Alaska: The smallest Area by Leader numbers and the largest Area by geographical borders, has been experimenting with some alternative ways to reach out and support Leaders.

Financial support has been offered to Alaska Leaders in the form of scholarships to attend the LLLI Conference and/or Global Strategic Planning

Summit in Chicago this July, as well as the Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition Conference.

To reach out to Area Leaders, the Area Council purchased several 120-minute long-distance calling cards and sent them to all active and reserve Leaders and Leader Applicants. Recipients are encouraged to use these cards to call whomever they feel would be helpful to them. Alaska Leaders are not all connected by a road system and for some, the nearest LLL Leader is an expensive plane ride away.

In addition, the Area Council scheduled quarterly audio-conferences using www.FreeConference.com. As the name implies, there aren't any costs associated with the service, but to call in requires a long-distance call and everyone now has an LLL calling card to cover this cost. The calls are publicized with a mailed flyer and followed up with a couple of email notices. Each of the conference calls is held at a different time, on a different day of the week, to increase the likelihood that everyone would be able to "attend" at least once, although Leaders and Applicants are encouraged to attend them all.

Participation has been low, but the people who have questions or who want to participate in the camaraderie of talking together can get their needs met. There isn't a set agenda. Discussion topics are determined by those who participate and there is always at least one Area Council member present to facilitate if needed. It is like an informal LLL Group meeting for Leaders and Applicants over the phone.

Wanda Fulton, AFC, wrote: "It is working for us here in Alaska and I'd be happy to answer any questions from others considering this for their Area Council, District, Area or other workgroup. Send an email to me at 'LLLofAK at yahoo.com'."

Arizona: Sharon Olson describes their recent Leader Education Workshop as "A great day for generating Leader enthusiasm and camaraderie!"

She says, "I was able to share the information from FutureTEAM in person with Arizona Leaders, and I think it made a significant difference in how positively they now perceive the

direction our organization is going. One of the things I stated is that LLL is US: every Leader in the room makes a difference to the mothers and babies she assists on behalf of LLL."

Karen Sims, ACL, had asked Jane Tuttle, LLLI Board Chair, to provide a statement to be shared at this event. It warrants an article of its own; read it above: "Reflective Optimism."

Several new Area Council Team appointments have been made in the last month. Karen Sims has retired as ACL after serving in that position for over 5 years. The Area welcomes Wendy Arendt as ACL, who began her term March 1. After serving as ACC/ALLE for two years, Ina McGinley has been appointed CLA, and she will begin orientation to this job as soon as she publishes the up-coming issue of *Sunshine*, the Area Leaders' Letter. Karen Sims, wanting to ensure that she doesn't get bored, has just accepted the position of ACC/ALLE for this Area.

Arkansas/Oklahoma: La Leche League of Arkansas/Oklahoma will host a series of Leader Workshops in April. At these workshops, ADCs will hand out and discuss the new AR/OK Area Handbook in detail with Leaders. Also planned are break-out discussions meant to provide Leaders with an opportunity to keep up-to-date.

The AR/OK Area Handbook is meant to fill in information gaps for Leaders. As Leaders need additional information or resources, the Area Handbook will also serve as a directory of available departments, Area specific resources, and forms. The handbook will also serve as a means to provide transparency of AR/OK Area operations, and will explain in detail how the AR/OK Area meets the USWD Agreements for implementing LLLI Policies provisions.

LLL of AR/OK is once again using Search Teams to fill open ADC positions.

Illinois: LLL of Illinois had a fantastic Centralia Workshop with a turnout of almost 50 attendees on March 24th! A reporter from the local Centralia newspaper came and interviewed us for a story. We also were fortunate to hear from Heidi Sloss (former LLLI Board member), Dee Kassing,

and Laurie Shornick. We are offering "\$50 for the 50th" to all Leaders in Illinois. In return for filling out our Area Leader Survey (to learn more about how Illinois Leaders would like to be supported by the Area), Illinois is giving each Active or Reserve Leader \$50 to attend the 2007 LLLI Conference in Chicago. We have heard from 78 Illinois Leaders out of 236 who plan to attend. If any Leaders coming to the conference need help finding lodging, many Chicagoland Leaders are willing to open up their homes to help keep others' traveling costs down. Also, Leaders might consider staying at a youth hostel in downtown Chicago, run by Hosteling International. It is within walking distance to the conference. And at \$29 for one person, it is a great deal. It is relatively new and pretty nice. They can accommodate families. Leaders can check it out at <http://www.ihf.org/dba/list.php?lang=E>

Minnesota/Dakotas: This comes from Susan Sailors, ACL: "LLL of Minnesota and the Dakotas (MN/DAs) next Leader Day and Continuing Education event is scheduled for Nov. 4th and 5th, 2007. Both events will be in St. Paul with Leader Day at the Minnesota Department of Health, Snelling Office Park, and Continuing Education Day at the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education Center. Our CE Day speakers will be Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, PhD, who will present on postpartum depression, and Dr. Madeline Gartner, who will present on breast health issues during lactation. For Leader Day, Kathleen Kendall-Tackett will present "The Hidden Feelings of Motherhood" and the "Well-Ordered Home." If you would like more information about the events, you can contact Linda Dech at 'ldech at charter.net'. We would love to have sister Leaders from nearby states participate in these events!"

Montana: Montana Area Leaders are busy fundraising to attend the LLLI Conference in Chicago. At the moment, more than one quarter of Area Leaders are planning on attending! (Easy to do when Leader numbers are small!) ACL LeeAnn Swain shares. "We'll be holding our LLL of Montana Spring Workshop in Billings. It is always fun to get together!"

Nebraska: Effective April 1, 2007, Nebraska is an affiliate of Eastern United States (EUS).

New Mexico: Gina Peterson reports: LLL of New Mexico is currently going through many changes. We are exploring new ways to work together as an Area, so that all Leaders feel supported and have an opportunity to influence what happens. Instead of an Area Council, we built an Administrative Team. Because taking an Area position can be intimidating, we thought it may be helpful to break up the ACL position into mother-sized pieces. The ACL position could become the Leader Support Team. I would personally like to concentrate on corresponding with Leaders through surface mail and email. Another Leader on the Leader Support Team could collect and process the monthly and bi-annual statistics. We could schedule conference calls often and also work closely through email so that all interested New Mexico Leaders could participate regardless of geographic location. As we discern more of the needs of the Area, we will add more members and responsibilities to the Leader Support Team.

Oregon: ACL Esther Schiedel writes: "We have formed what we are calling our Area Decision Circle--seven Leaders, mostly current Area Department Coordinators--that we hope to make into our final decision-making body. We've got a CN discussion group and have met once in person (most of us) in Feb. We're hoping to confer by conference calls or online chats as well. "We were disappointed that our Area Conference in Nov. 2006 lost money, but we are gathering together a group of Leaders interested in planning for future events--whether conferences or CE days or something different.

"We had a Leader-organized workshop March 1, which was educational and a good time to connect. We have scheduled a Meeting of the Minds for April 21 to talk about Area structure. We are hoping to have other workshops and meetings throughout the state this year."

Texas: LLL of Texas is excited to have their Area Coordinator of Events (ACE) team in place for their next Area Conference, which will be held in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area in the summer of 2008. Rachel Hillman and Shannon Blakely will be co-ACEs for this event. This worked well for

their last co-ACE team, Tina Castellanos and Nancy Graves.

LLL of Texas has already given out eight (of their ten) \$50 LLLI Conference stipends to Area Leaders. LLL of Texas feels strongly about helping support the LLLI Conferences and helping Texas Leaders attend.

The Leader department has been working hard to update the Area Directory and encourage Leaders and Groups to stay current with dues to LLLI and LLL of Texas. A new Area Leader Handbook is

also planned. The Area hopes to distribute it electronically to most Leaders to save on printing and mailing costs.

Wisconsin: The ADCs met in February and started writing the Wisconsin Agreements. They also decided to extend full scholarships to some Leaders to attend the LLLI Conference this summer, as a thank you for doing Area work. So far there are three confirmed "yes" Leaders. The ADCs are happy to be able to offer this option this year!

