

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR MODERN WOODMEN VOLUNTEER LEADERS

Impact

M A G A Z I N E

WINTER 2019

Healthy
activities p. 11

Sweet on
fraternality p. 6

Cat yoga – and
more offbeat ideas p. 8



Operations Coordinator Abby and her husband, Adam, lend a hand at a local homeless shelter.

A new year means a new beginning – new ideas, new outlooks, new opportunities.

This year, our focus is **inspiration**. As a fraternal leader, that's what you experience every day.

You inspire members to connect with people and learn new skills through social and educational events.

You inspire members to get involved in the community and truly make an impact through service projects, Matching Fund events and Hometown Hero ceremonies.

In 2018, chapters and youth service clubs held ...

- 10,171 service projects.
- 3,998 Matching Fund projects.
- 2,480 educational events.
- 14,976 social events.
- and 2,035 Hometown Hero events.

Take a moment to think of the lives that were impacted by those events. That's a huge accomplishment! **And it wouldn't have been possible without you.** By leading active chapters and youth service clubs, you exemplify what Modern Woodmen is truly about. We see you, and we thank you!

This issue of Impact features creative activities and impactful events from chapters and youth service clubs across the country. Our hope is that it inspires you to **inspire others**. You might just find the new idea, outlook or opportunity you've been looking for.

Abby Berntgen

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How would you turn a hobby into a fraternal activity?



"I love hockey! (Let's go Blues!) If I was an activities coordinator, I'd offer discounted tickets to support our local hockey team – or plan a bus trip for an NHL game."

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Frequently asked questions

Are funds only available through Oct. 31? Can activities be held in Nov. and Dec.?

In order to achieve premier status, chapters, Summit chapters and youth service clubs must hold certain events between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31. However, activity funds are available from Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, and activities can be held any time during those months, including in Nov. and Dec. In fact, chapters and youth clubs are encouraged to hold monthly events throughout the year to maintain member engagement.

How many activities can a leader/coordinator hold per month?

Fraternal leaders should hold at least one activity per month, but not more than three activities in a one-month time frame. Chapters and youth service clubs are encouraged to hold activities at various times and days throughout the year to reach members who might have obligations throughout the week or month. Also, be aware of events or holidays that might conflict with activities planned for certain times of the year. The goal is to try to reach as many unique members throughout the year as possible.



Share this great benefit

New! Do-Good Grant

Modern Woodmen's newest fraternal benefit can introduce you to volunteer-minded members. Ideal for those not currently active in a chapter or youth club, the Do-Good Grant helps members support community causes. Approved applicants receive a \$100 prepaid VISA® card to buy supplies for a service project, plus an in-depth guide and more to help plan and promote the event.

The best part? Fraternal will share the projects with local fraternal leaders, who are encouraged to reach out and invite recipients to their chapter or youth club events.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/MWADoGoodGrant>



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meet fraternal leader **Phyllis Kenney**

"Putting back into the community isn't just something we do – it's who we are."

Phyllis is pictured in the Gardiner Public Library in Gardiner, Maine. Her youth service club has supported the library and its archives for more than a decade.



City: Farmingdale, Maine

Occupation: Field administrative assistant for M&N Operating Company

Family: Son Josh (wife Leah, children Sophie and Joseph) and daughter Danielle (husband Benjamin, children Anabelle and Connor)

What's your favorite fraternal memory?

At each event, I get to watch one of our members shine. It always seems to be the one you least expect, which is part of the magic of volunteerism. My youth service club now has a second generation of children, and as I leave an event, I often have the memory of their parent when they were young and stepping up to the occasion.

What was your most successful event?

The truth is, I have a hard time trying to pick one. However ... our Matching Fund project for Hope Elephants (a sanctuary for two retired circus elephants, Rosie and Opal) was definitely a highlight.

What inspires your activity planning?

The members! We have a party at the beginning of the year. Everyone brings calendars and we make a tentative plan. Of course, life happens and we move things around, but everyone gives their input. It helps to have great parents involved!

What's your biggest challenge? Weather and family obligations. We plan in advance, and you never know when a snowstorm will thwart your event.

What's your favorite movie? "It's a Wonderful Life."

What do you do in your free time? I enjoy paper crafts and working on our family history. My grandchildren are the eighth generation on their great-grandfather's farm. My granddaughters (ages 10 and 12) have joined me as members of our local historical society. We recently discovered a family link to the Mayflower, so we're going back to Plymouth Plantation with new eyes, knowing our ancestor has left his footprints there.

What's your personal motto? If it's not fun, I'm not doing it! I love to "fa-la-la" and be merry.

What would people be most surprised to learn about you? It shocks a lot of folks to learn that I am a spiritual medium. Also, I hate snow! With the exception of Christmas, of course. Christmas snow is magical.



HOW-TO GUIDE:

Keep furry friends happy and healthy

Phyllis Kenney heard from a friend that their local Meals on Wheels program was looking for help. Meals on Wheels, a charitable organization that delivers nutritious meals to seniors, had not received a grant they expected and sought assistance to maintain the breadth of their program.

"I spoke with our group and asked if they'd be interested in helping," Phyllis recalls. "It was a resounding yes!"

Phyllis's youth service club found a special way to help: purchasing and delivering kibble to help feed the seniors' pets.

More than a meal

The Meals on Wheels "Animeals" program was a perfect fit for the club. After buying cat and dog food, the youth service club members got together to bag it up and deliver it to the Meals on Wheels office.

.....

A youth service club member learns pottery at a local studio; young members donate an American flag; members visit a rescued circus elephant from Hope Elephants; youth club members pose beside May Day baskets.

"The Animeals program currently feeds 60 pets a week," explains Phyllis. "It was put into place so the seniors who are unable to go out can keep their pets at home with them."

The youth service club's local Meals on Wheels chapter currently helps 238 seniors, delivering 1,190 meals each week. By supporting the pet-specific program, Phyllis's youth club promoted something special – companionship – for seniors in their community.

Warm and fuzzy

The Meals on Wheels administrator took notice and wrote a heartfelt thank-you letter to the group.

"We'll definitely add this to our to-do list again in the near future," says Phyllis. Next time, she plans to offer more times for youth club members to meet and bag food. That way, she can help accommodate busy schedules.



Youth service club members learned about maple tree tapping and made maple-sugar candy during a trip to the farm.

SANBORNTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Youth service club has a sweet time at a maple farm



If you have a sweet tooth, check out this project. Sheryl Duford and her youth service club visited Heritage Farm in Sanbornton, New Hampshire.

The group explored the tapped trees of the farm, learned about boiling sap and tried their hand at making maple-sugar candy. The best part: it's great for kids and adults!

HOW TO: Planning the project was as easy as making a call. Sheryl contacted the farm's owner, Matt, to arrange a day and time for the group to visit. Planning in advance helped because slots fill fast for the farm's tours. Sheryl and Matt discussed a tour price that allowed the youth club to use their fraternal funds. Sheryl was inspired to plan the event because she had gone on a similar tour years ago with her Modern Woodmen chapter.

WHAT WORKED: Because Sheryl called to set the date early, the farm had more openings to accommodate her youth club members' schedules. She scheduled the tour right after school, which made it easy for parents and kids to attend. Because the farm is used to having visitors, the group got an extra surprise: the farm owner's wife prepared a pancake "cake" with fresh maple syrup to celebrate a youth club member's birthday during the tour.

NEXT TIME: Sheryl would absolutely plan this activity again – in fact, she plans to make it a tradition for her youth club! Repeated events can be a good opportunity for playing with themes (see Page 8) or working in a ritual related to the activity (see Page 9).

LEADERS

WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

Club members foster a love of reading

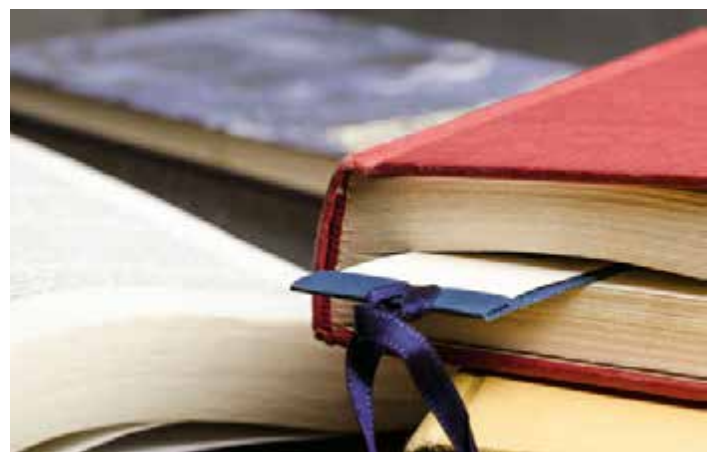


Cara Moffett's youth service club found a fun way to give back: reading with kids at a local youth development center! The impact was twofold: the activity inspired the young students at the center and showed Cara's young club members how fun reading can be.

HOW TO: Planning was easy, and the youth club spent no money preparing for it. Cara simply called the youth development center and explained the project idea, then they worked together to set up a date. The youth club solicited book donations from friends and family members so the kids had materials to read again and again. Cara also prepared a bookmark crafting activity for attendees.

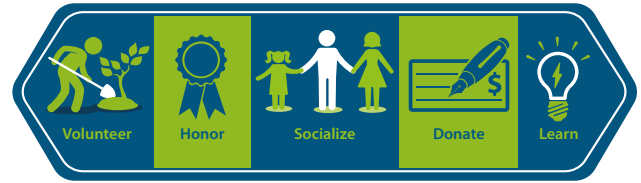
WHAT WORKED: Because Cara's youth club received a variety of book donations, they were able to select books to read based on age level. The group held small discussions with students at the youth development center, which made the event even more meaningful. The bookmark crafting activity was the star of the night. Cara provided cardstock, stickers, markers and crayons, and the kids got to use their imaginations to create a keepsake from the event.

NEXT TIME: The event was easy to plan and only required a few hours of the youth club's time. Cara thinks the event could be made even bigger by combining the efforts of a few local youth service clubs. That way, they could provide more books for everyone to enjoy.



The youth service club visited a youth development center to read in a group, discuss books and make special bookmarks.

Key: Borrow or put your own twist on these service projects, social activities and educational events.



Chapter members in Alabama came together to donate full-size toiletries and more to women recovering from addiction.

JASPER, ALABAMA

Chapter helps women in recovery



Laura Williams heard about a charitable organization doing great work in her community: Hope for Women. It's a one-year program that offers shelter and recovery assistance for women suffering from addiction.

Laura's chapter decided to prepare toiletry bags for the women to help them in their journey.

HOW TO: The chapter started by making a list of things they thought the women would like: shampoo, lip balm, razors, face cleanser, deodorant, etc. The shelter has 31 residents, so the chapter purchased 31 of each item. Then they assembled everything using Modern Woodmen bags, putting one of each item into each bag. When everything was ready, they delivered the bags to Hope for Women.

WHAT WORKED: Using an assembly-line process to fill the bags (putting one shampoo bottle in each bag, then one body wash in each bag, etc.) helped keep everything organized. The chapter also purchased bulk personal hygiene items and ponytail holders for the women. Reading up on the organization helped too, says Laura. The experience was a rewarding one for everyone involved.

NEXT TIME: Because the residents cycle yearly, Laura's chapter hopes to do this again next year to help a different group of women. She also thinks this project could be adapted for other organizations, like a homeless shelter or family shelter.

MOUNT VERNON, OHIO

Chapter brightens hospital stay with activity baskets



After a family friend had been admitted to Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, Rachel Houser learned that patients occasionally receive activity baskets (with games, toys, snacks, journals, etc.) from donors, which adds much-needed positivity to their stay. Rachel and her chapter worked with Nationwide Children's Hospital to assemble and donate baskets for patients of all ages.

HOW TO: To create a list of items to donate, Rachel talked with her family friend and consulted the hospital's online wish list. The hospital puts limits on what gifts can and cannot be distributed, so Rachel's chapter used that information to adjust their plan. They made different lists for boys and girls and for children and teens, then gathered members to help shop. Though health and privacy restrictions made face-to-face delivery impossible, the chapter members all knew stories of how deeply appreciated these donations are for patients.

WHAT WORKED: Having a family friend who directly experienced the impact of these gift baskets helped Rachel and her chapter focus their list. It also helped to work with such a large organization; the hospital could easily identify areas in need. Finally, Rachel unexpectedly received a discount from their local bookstore, Paragraphs Bookstore, after explaining the project vision.

NEXT TIME: Rachel thinks adding small member donations or handmade items would add something extra special to the baskets. She also believes this project could be adapted for other groups, like medical providers or area nursing homes.



Chapter members assembled age-appropriate baskets with games, toys and more for patients of a local children's hospital.

Cat yoga and Harry Potter

Put a twist on your next activity

Want to shake things up with your fraternal activities? Good news! Planning a new, creative activity can be as simple as putting a spin on a traditional one.

Try these tips for one of your upcoming events:

- **Change the theme.** Put the “fun” back into fundraiser by giving yours a special theme! Target specific interests, like movies, music or sports. You may get more attendees for rock ‘n’ roll bingo and Harry Potter trivia than for a more broadly defined event.
- **Change the activity.** You’ve heard of walk-a-thons and dance-a-thons, but what other activities could you fit into that category? It can be expanded to cover a wide range of member passions. Try planning a bake-a-thon, sew-a-thon or read-a-thon.
- **Change the treat.** When you hear “cook-off,” you probably think of chili. Try focusing on a different food to pique the interest of your guests, like a kid-friendly grilled cheese cook-off or a holiday-themed cookie bake-off. These could work well as fundraisers (Matching Fund, anyone?) or social events.
- **Change the expectation.** Add a twist to an activity that’s already in your community. For instance, members might be curious about trying yoga, but *cat yoga* could be what helps them take the plunge. (That’s right – Fluffy can get in on the action!) Or, for a more allergy-friendly take, look up other offbeat fitness classes offered in your area.

Stumped? Here’s a place to start: Think about an activity you did last year. How can you jazz it up for 2019 using the ideas above?



Another way to change up your events: Give ‘em a healthy spin! Flip to Page 11 for a list of wellness-focused activity ideas.



How a Summit chapter nailed it

When you think of an activity for nursing home residents, what do you think of? For a Summit chapter in Lincoln, Maine, the answer was to host a spa day!

Maryann Tudor and Summit chapter 18138 used the spa day idea as a service project. Maryann contacted a friend at a nursing home, who put her in contact with the activities director. She learned that the nursing home has twice-weekly spa days for residents, and they needed supplies and extra volunteers.

The chapter made a list of things to buy (fast-drying nail polish, nail files, nail polish remover, cotton balls and hand cream), set a date to visit and divvied up responsibilities. Some removed the old nail polish, some applied fresh polish and some offered hand massages.

The event was a hit. The residents appreciated interacting with the visitors – and getting pampered, of course – and Maryann’s members enjoyed the creative opportunity to make an impact. The chapter has considered turning it into a quarterly project.

Make it yours

Though spa days were already in place at the Lincoln nursing home, it could be a new idea for a nursing home in your community. If a pampering party doesn’t fit with your chapter or youth service club, try calling the activities director of a local nursing home and brainstorming other ideas for giving back and socializing.



Modern Woodmen creed

"There is a destiny that makes us brothers; none goes his way alone; all that we send into the lives of others comes back into our own."

Modern-day traditions

In Modern Woodmen's early days, it was common for members to share secret handshakes, wear ceremonial garb or perform elaborate routines during activities and meetings. These rituals harken back to our old-school roots as a fraternal benefit society.

Of course, a lot has changed since 1883, and today our chapters and youth service clubs opt for a more low-key approach. (Understandably!)

Yet there's value in bringing elements of our historical society into the 21st century. Why? Because traditions can enhance that "membership" feel. Originally, rituals were meant to remind members that they're part of something greater – as a member, a citizen and a person.

Here are some easy ways to work modern-day rituals in to your chapter or youth club.

- 1. Liven up arrivals.** Make sure to greet each member as they arrive for your activity. Consider exchanging something with regular members – a secret handshake, or the annual password (See below). Use the exchange as a fun icebreaker to share with new members.
- 2. Make intros meaningful.** Before your activity begins, introduce yourself and thank everyone for attending. Call the "meeting" to order and take a few minutes for members to share personal news or suggest ideas for future activities.
- 3. Recite to remember.** Find something for your members to recite together before or after activities – like the Pledge of Allegiance, the Modern Woodmen Creed or an inspirational quote. It builds a feeling of togetherness, which can add even more meaning to your event.

Password puzzle

Did you know Modern Woodmen has shared annual, coded passwords with members for over a century? Use the official cipher below to learn the 2019 password. Deliver the password to your chapter president and share it with members at your January activity.

ANNUAL PASSWORD

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OFFICIAL CIPHER

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Earning premier status: a guide

One of the questions we get most often is how to achieve premier status. Here are some tips to help you stay on track and avoid last-minute obstacles.

Plan ahead for the upcoming year.

A lot goes into planning an event. You need to figure out the logistics, notify members, and sometimes prepare a contingency plan. This is even harder to do on a month-by-month basis.



Our tip: Before the year begins, outline each month's event. Send the tentative schedule to members in a holiday card or as a calendar. It requires some extra work up front, but it'll pay off when you have that kick-start on planning. Plus, if your members know the dates ahead of time, they can plan their schedules accordingly.

This is also a good time to reflect on the previous year's events. Decide what worked and what didn't, and use that information to plan an even more successful year with more impactful moments and member engagement.

Involve your chapter board and members.

You don't have to do it all on your own! And a chapter board meeting is required for chapters to earn premier status. Schedule the meeting early to discuss the previous year and



plan for the coming one. Divvy up responsibilities so every board member has a hand in making events successful.

Involve members in the planning, too – even just through a quick survey or poll. If they're able to share ideas that interest them, it'll likely increase your member engagement. This is also a good opportunity to find out what days and times work best for members so you can plan activities that won't repeatedly conflict with busy schedules.

Set dates for bigger activities (like Matching Fund and Hometown Hero) for earlier in the year.

Matching Fund and Hometown Hero events are typically more challenging to plan; there's simply more to coordinate. If you schedule these events earlier in the year, you can make sure they're completed well before the deadline for premier status. Planning ahead also gives you time to choose the recipients and promote the event.



If you're having trouble deciding on a recipient, try these resources:

- **Annual community events.** There's likely to be a fundraiser that would make for a good Matching Fund event – or a potential Hometown Hero who has continuously supported these events.
- **Charitable organizations.** Find out how you can boost events they already have planned. You can also ask these groups to recommend standout staff members or volunteers for the Hometown Hero award.
- **Your members.** Ask members to name a specific cause that could use the extra support through a Matching Fund event, or see if they have any Hometown Heroes to nominate.

Premier status ideas

How do you avoid obstacles to earning premier status?

Katie LaVelle, Ohio

Plan ahead! I set dates ASAP for bigger events, like Matching Fund and Hometown Hero. I don't want to scramble at the last minute to find a good fundraiser. I hold my board meeting early, like January or February, to set dates and discuss the things we most want to do.

Heidi Fairbrother, Maine

I print off the premier planner from the fraternal website and plug in details based on members' suggestions. Last year, I held events based on offbeat holidays, like National Ice Cream Day and National Hamburger Day. Think about the season and community needs for each month: January = hats/mittens, May = planting flowers/trees, etc.

Marian Crow, Virginia

I check newspapers and community calendars for upcoming events and gather ideas from our members. Then, by December, I plan 10-12 events for the upcoming year and send the tentative schedule to members in a holiday card. Most of my "Summiteers" don't use social media or email, so sending a card is a great way to keep them up-to-date on our activities.

Diane Gearlds, Kentucky

Don't be afraid to ask your members for help and new ideas! They love to get involved. My motto: Think outside the box.



Engage online! Join the closed group "Modern Woodmen Fraternal Leaders" on Facebook. Exchange ideas, ask questions, get tips and more!

Health and wellness in the new year

A common theme in New Year's resolutions is to make healthier choices. Why not work wellness into your 2019 fraternal activities? Here's a list of healthy activity ideas for your chapter or youth service club.



Host a field day

Project type: Social

Fun for all ages! Ask your members to share their favorite childhood games and activities, then invite them and their families to participate in a nostalgic field day. This can work indoors and outdoors, and members can donate the supplies to keep costs down. Add more feel-good vibes by donating the supplies to a local shelter or youth organization after the event.

Make a meal worth sharing

Project type: Educational/Service

Some grocery stores have in-store dietitians or staff members who offer meal-prep classes. A local chef may organize similar events. Take your chapter or youth club members to a cooking or meal-prep class to steer them toward happier, healthier dinner options. Turn it into a service project by donating the prepped meals to a local shelter.

Cook up fun with a potluck/cook-off

Project type: Social/Matching Fund

Who doesn't love good food – especially when it's guilt-free? Gather and swap recipes with more veggies and fewer carbs so members can try the new meals at home. Add a competitive element by having attendees vote on the best dish in each category (entrée, side, dessert). Or turn it into a Matching Fund event by inviting the public to eat for a small entrance fee.



Learn a new fitness activity

Project type: Educational

Smash the perception that exercise is a "necessary evil" and make it fun! There are so many new fitness activities to try – dog yoga, cardio drumming, Jazzercise, tai chi. Find a unique or interesting class at a local fitness facility for members to take. You might be able to get a discounted group rate or goodies to give away, and you'll help promote a healthy habit!



Visit the farmer's market

Project type: Social

Support your community farmer's market by hosting a fraternal activity there. Encourage members to learn about locally grown whole foods and get lunch from a market vendor or local café.

Be inspired by a motivational speaker

Project type: Educational/Hometown Hero

Are there speakers in your community who talk about wellness-related topics, like leaders of health-focused charities and organizations? Arrange a presentation with your chapter or youth club members to get them inspired to make healthier choices – physically, mentally and emotionally. If the speaker is from a charitable organization, consider turning the event into a surprise Hometown Hero ceremony.

Attend a health fair

Project type: Educational/Service

Research local health screenings or fairs. Attendance is often low-cost or free, and they can make a big impact on attendees. Call the organizers and ask about arranging a speaker to address your chapter or youth club members. Add a service element by encouraging members to volunteer at the fair.



Run (or walk) for a cause

Project type: Matching Fund/Hometown Hero

Gather members to participate in or volunteer for a community walk/run that supports a specific cause or individual. Support the cause by making it a Matching Fund activity, or thank an awesome volunteer coordinator or leader with a Hometown Hero award.



Tip: Use your closed Facebook group to poll members on their 2019 resolutions. Let the results inspire and guide your activity planning for the year.



Think big ... and take the next step

"Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground." – Theodore Roosevelt

It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of the new year. You may have huge plans in mind – for yourself, your community, and your chapter or youth service club. That's great!

But, as Teddy recommends above, be sure to keep your feet on the ground. In other words, connect your ideas to *actions*.

Your chapter and youth club members have lots of plans and

only so many slots in their busy schedules. What kind of activity will they make space for? Don't be afraid to ask for ideas or assistance. Member engagement is about togetherness, after all!

We hope this issue of Impact inspired you to be creative and explore new ideas in 2019. We also hope it'll drive you to bring those ideas to life. Figure out how to make them work. And enjoy the journey.

List notes and your favorite ideas from this issue below. Reference during 2019 planning as needed.
