

Recruitment Tip: Roll Out the Welcome Mat

hospitality /,həspə'talədē/

noun. The friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers.¹

[1Oxford Online North American Dictionary.](#)

When a prospective member visits your club, or when a club member brings along a friend or family member to a meeting, does that guest walk away feeling welcomed, valued, and excited to come back? We all know how to be polite and kind to strangers, but by taking a few extra actions to demonstrate enthusiastic hospitality, your club can really “WOW” visitors. That feeling will bring them back to participate in club fundraisers, mission-based projects, and can be the first step to member recruitment.

Here are a few ways your club can go above and beyond to welcome a visitor at your next meeting:

- **Offer transportation:** Even if the prospective member could drive herself to the meeting, it's still a great gesture for a club member to offer her a ride. Most importantly, providing a way to get there means the prospect doesn't have to enter the meeting by herself – she's already made a connection with a member before she walks in the door. Alternatively, you can also provide directions and/or offer to meet her outside when she arrives.
- **Wear name tags:** Keep blank name tags on hand for visitors, and ensure club members regularly wear their name tags. This makes conversation and connection easier for a guest, who may be overwhelmed by the number of new faces she is introduced to!
- **Create a hospitality committee:** Make sure that at each meeting, specific members are assigned to welcome visitors. Their job is to help a prospect find a seat, and sit with her or introduce her to other members to ensure that she'll be engaged right away.
- **Provide background information:** Keep packets on hand with basic information about SIA, our Dream Programs, and our organizational structure. Provide these to guests so that they understand what is going on during your club meeting!
- **Follow up:** Have a member call the visitor a week later to thank her and let her know what other meetings or club activities are coming up. This shows a prospective member that you really enjoyed her company and want her to come back. While you have her on the phone, this might be the right moment to ask her if she would like to join the club! You can tell her about the process for becoming a member of your club, and answer any questions she may have.

If your club already does some of these things, you're on the right track! By consistently providing enthusiastic hospitality by taking these actions, your club will be more likely to remain connected with guests. Visitors who enjoyed a meeting will come back to volunteer and participate in club events. Simply welcoming prospective members is the type of engagement that is the first step on the path to membership!