

## May 2013 Guidance on Opportunities: Leadership Transitions

### **Appreciative Icebreaker**

Think about a time when you tried something new and it went VERY well. It could be something associated with League or another organization or wholly unrelated (such as a new recipe or new hobby).

Using that experience, answer the following questions:

1. How did it feel to succeed in something new?
2. Why do you think that you succeeded?
3. What set you up for success?
4. What impact or influence did this successful experience have on your trying other new experiences?
5. How would you compare this experience to one that did not go well?

### **Leadership Transitions**

This is the time of year when leadership transitions occur at the state and local levels of League. Despite our many processes and procedures in League, in many Leagues we tend not to have strong processes for transitioning from one leader to another. While we would encourage all League leaders to *plan* and to *be intentional* in how they prepare their successors for taking on their new role, this Guidance will focus on how to promote and ensure the sustainability of the Membership and Leadership Development program.

There will likely be three “baskets” of learning that coaches can support to help new leaders and the MLD succeed:

1. Maintaining general support for the program: A big part of this is ensuring that the local League board understands what the program is, how it works, and a belief that through consistent and intentional work to build the League, we can grow!
2. Understanding specific roles within the MLD program: Another key element is to ensure that individuals understand the various roles and expectations in the program. What can local MLD teams expect from their state coach? And, what is expected of them?
3. Sharing content: This is simply a sharing of resources. Are they using the Yahoo! group? Did they get a binder from their successor?

While different situations will require different actions, there is a common theme: **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**. Coaches and new MLD team members will need to build new relationships with each other, and new relationships may need to be formed between the MLD team and the incoming local League board.

Coaches should brainstorm about some good team-building/relationship-building activities.

They might include:

- Identifying some common goals, expectations, and in the case of calls, ground rules.
- Getting to know each other personally.
- Leveraging technology to “see” each other (e.g., Skype, Oovoo, Google+).
- Using some of the appreciative icebreakers from past Guidances.

Beyond building relationships, there are some concrete steps that League leaders can take to ensure a smooth transition and help to set individuals (and the program) up for success. These might include:

Helping them offer ways to engage: How can new Board members get engaged with MLD?

- What are the opportunities to do an exercise with the full Board?
- How can the entire Board be kept informed of the MLD effort on a regular basis?
- When can the Board try out the event checklist to plan out an activity together?
- How can common goals and expectations be built among the Board members?
- When can successes be shared?

Helping them learn what to do: How will the new leader learn about her/his role?

- What is the transition between the outgoing and incoming leaders (such as a call or meeting)?
- What job description, lists of roles & expectations and files have been shared?
- What questions are still unanswered?
- What do they know about the program's structure? (Who is on the calls? When they happen? Why they happen?)

Helping them find resources: How will the new leader learn about the program?

- How will she/he learn about the best practices to grow membership and develop new leaders?
- How will they obtain key materials, such as the events checklist?
- How will they learn about the Yahoo! Group and join?
- How will they learn about the coaches (state and national) and the assistance and support they provide?
- What opportunities exist to be trained in the program (such as attending a state-League-sponsored in-state training or a session at a state council or convention)?

When transitions are supported by consistent and easy communication, the MLD effort is more fully sustained by all League leaders. A team working on any activity not only develops leaders but makes it more successful pursuit.