

"Membership Growth is Every Serran's Responsibility"



**USA Council of Serra International
2007-8 Membership Strategy**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introductory letter	3
Recommended membership actions	4
Appendix A: A New Serra Club Founded on Daily Mass Attendees	8
Appendix B: Fresno Model for New Clubs	11
Appendix C: Spokane Step-by-Step Membership Drive	13
Appendix D: Recruitment Team Training by Tom Walsh, former USAC Leadership Development Chair	14
Appendix E: Keeping Members	20
Sample Projects, Vocation Activities and Programs	21
Appendix F: Diversity: "One size does NOT fit all!"	24
Appendix G: Younger Members	27

Dear Fellow Serrans:

PLEASE READ THIS BOOKLET!!

Then:

1. Make a simple, one-page plan:

- Goal: 15% new members, new club etc.
- Who is going to do it: list club members, officers etc., including telephone numbers/ e-mails.
- Where it will be done.
- How it will be done.
- When it will be done.

2. Send the plan to the Membership Coordinator.

3. Membership Committee members will be calling you to discuss.

4. Report on progress to Membership Coordinator.

Let's turn around the membership trend! Please pray regularly for the success of this program. Please send, call, write or e-mail us your comments.

Peter Cunningham

Membership Coordinator, USA Council of Serra International

pcunningham@serraus.org

888.777.6681

Frank Gerner

Chairman, Membership Committee, USA Council of Serra International

fygerner@cs.com

785.266.3758

Greg Lynch

VP Membership, USA Council of Serra International

glynch7003@sbcglobal.net

408.725.1898

USA Council of Serra International 2007 Membership Strategy **"Membership Growth is Every Serran's Responsibility"**

Increasing the membership of the USA Council is vital to the capability of our organization to continue to accomplish its mission. All members from the Board down to the newest member need to make a commitment to successful recruitment. The following outline specifies the recommended actions for all Serrans for the year 2007-2008 are:

- I. USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee
 - A. Prepare and issue the Membership Strategy for 2007-2008
 1. Membership Growth
 - a. Identify target population
 - b. Establish sub-committee to prepare plan for recruiting youth /young adults
 2. Prepare PowerPoint presentations for use by anyone
 3. Establish sub-committee to develop plan for communicating the Membership Strategy to all Serrans.
 - a. Develop publicity campaign jointly with Communications Committee
 - b. Committee members to spread the word as frequently as possible by attending conventions, district council meetings, club meetings
 4. Establish Monthly Reporting System
 5. Form subcommittee to identify what prevents people from joining and approach that as a problem to be solved
 - B. Develop prayer for membership for use in magazines, parish bulletins, Serra publications, conventions
 - C. Publish successful ways to get new members:
 1. Daily Mass Attendees (Appendix A)
 2. Fresno story (Appendix B)
 3. Spokane Club (Appendix C)
 - D. Develop position description for district membership coordinator

II. USA Council of Serra International Board Members

- A. Each Board member to speak at least three meetings (conventions, district councils meetings, club functions)
- B. Each Board member to commit to recruiting five new members from July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008
- C. Each Board member to prepare an article on membership for external distribution to the Catholic press, parish magazines, Serra publications
- D. Report on their plans activities to achieve goal to Membership Coordinator.

III. Regional Directors

- A. Ask convention chairs for time during the 2007-2008 conventions for a membership workshop, PowerPoint, etc.
- B. Monitor club activities
- C. Request District Councils to appoint membership coordinator
- D. Prepare plan of action to accomplish goal. Submit plan to USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee
- E. Report monthly
- F. Insure that two members from each region will serve on USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee

IV. District Governors

- A. Help create one new club per district
 - 1. Decide on approach:
 - a. Mass attendees model (Appendix A)
 - b. Fresno model (Appendix B)
 - c. Spokane model (Appendix C)
 - d. Other
 - 2. Concentrate within your own districts as there are plenty of opportunities and you need local Serrans to do the work of establishing the new clubs.
 - 3. Make plan and appoint committee to accomplish
 - 4. Report

- B. Organize events such as a sponsored dinner with the bishop inviting church members from local churches to meet and hear his views on the diocese (and vocations); aim for 150 to 200. (Some of these may become members).

V. Presidents

- A. Aim for an increase of 15 % new members (about 3% net)
 - 1. Ask members to recommend at least two members, hold meeting with potential members to explain the activities of and to sell the merits of Serra.
 - 2. Ask Bishop to support and write letter
 - 3. Ask pastors to support, bulletin announcements, and pulpit support
 - 4. Have frequent membership programs for new members
- B. Speak to important parish committees
 - 1. Show Serra Parish Vocation Committee DVD
- C. Use major Serran events to promote Serra
 - 1. Vocation Week
 - 2. World Day of Prayer for Vocations
 - 3. World Day for Consecrated Life
 - 4. Priesthood Sunday
 - 5. Parish Ministry Days
- D. Prayer
 - 1. Say a special prayer at each meeting for vocations
 - 2. Organize special prayer events, rosaries, Eucharistic Adoration for membership.
 - 3. Prayer services inviting all local churches to participate (rotating this every 3-4 months among parishes)

VI. Individual Serrans

- A. Recruit at least two new members.
 - 1. Promote Serra to relatives, friends, associates; anyone you think is a potential Serran.
- B. Insert articles into Sunday bulletin, parish newsletters
- C. Organize Serra Activities in your parish
- D. Review Serra publications and www.serraus.org to keep up to

date on Serra news.

- VII. Leadership Development Committee
 - A. Include session at Governor's Planning session on membership strategy
 - B. Prepare PowerPoint presentation for use in regions, districts, and clubs by USA Council of Serra International leadership
 - C. Utilize Tom Walsh's recruitment teams training session (Appendix D)

Appendix A: A New Serra Club Founded on Daily Mass Attendees

STARTING A NEW SERRA CLUB: MY EXPERIENCE

by Lloyd Crockett, Serra Club of Williamson County, TN

Soon after retiring, my wife and I decided to move back to my hometown, Franklin, TN, a town I had left 37 years earlier. After settling in, I transferred my Serra membership from Memphis to Nashville, about 20 miles away, and began attending meetings, only to find it a chore to attend regularly due to distance and traffic. I had an idea: Why not start a new club here in Franklin? There were now three parishes in the county, with approximately 5,500 families; surely, that was enough to put together a thriving club.

My first step was to discuss the idea with my pastor. With his blessing, I next contacted our bishop in Nashville, who, after checking my credentials through members of the Nashville club, wrote and sent a letter of approval endorsing the creation of the new club to the three pastors involved. Members of the Nashville club were most encouraging and supportive.

My handicap was that I knew very few Catholics in the area since I had been away for so long, and secondly, at the time I left Franklin, there were only 28 Catholic families in the entire county! But that was all about to change, thanks to daily Mass.

As soon as we moved back home, we began attending daily Mass and soon came to know many of the 50-75 people who were there every morning. They asked me to join the Romeo Club (aka Retired Old Men Eating Out) and at these informal gatherings after Mass, I began talking about Serra and here the seed was planted. One in the group was a former Serra member in Nashville and he immediately became my "right arm" (and later became our first president).

After about three months of talking about Serra to the group, my wife and I hosted a party at our home, inviting approximately 40 people. The

invitation list was put together by the ROMEO group. During the evening, I talked about Serra, its history and its importance to the Church, and then I showed the USA Council of Serra International video, "The Spirit of Serra." After that, I asked all who were interested in helping to form a new club here in our county to sign a sheet of paper indicating their interest and support. TWENTY-SEVEN signed up that night! We were off and running!

We met informally for approximately six months, on the first and third Thursdays of each month. One meeting followed morning Mass and the other was a dinner meeting. We decided to make the evening meeting a potluck supper to keep our costs down. What a good decision this was - - and we enjoy fantastic meals! During this period, we continued recruiting new members, even naming a "spotter" at daily Mass to look for new prospects. Our growth was good, interest was high and enthusiasm was in the stratosphere! Our first project was to start First Friday Adoration following morning Mass. It was an immediate success: attendance at mass grew from 75 parishioners to over 140. We were ready to apply for our charter!

The Serra Club of Williamson County, TN, was chartered in November, 2004, with 44 charter members. Since then, we have grown to 56 members. More importantly, we began new programs in the parishes to support vocations, such as the Elijah Cup, spiritual weekend retreats for YPA members, the 31 Club, and altar server training. We continue our First Friday Adoration. At each weekend Mass, after the Elijah Cup is presented to a family, our pastor leads the congregation in the Serra Prayer for Vocations, now printed on the cover page of our hymnals.

God has truly blessed our efforts and we have begun to plant the seeds for a culture for vocations within our parishes. The USA Council of Serra International Membership Manual on starting a new Serra Club was a great help, although we did "tweak" it a bit to meet our own local situation.

From this endeavor, I learned four important lessons:

1. The best prospects for Serra are those lay Catholics who attend daily Mass! Why? They have a love for the Church, the Eucharist and the PRIESTHOOD that is unsurpassed. And in most instances, they have the time and the financial resources to be good Serrans. Eighty percent of our members are daily Mass attendees!
2. Seventy-five percent of our members are couples. At our age, husbands and wives like to do things together. Serra affords that opportunity.
3. Keep the members busy and productive! Everyone should be assigned to a committee, be it in charge of adoration or setting up the room for the potluck meal. Everyone is involved and every assignment is important. As Christ said, "He who serves the others shall be first."
4. Many good Catholics want to become Serrans. Like many priest prospects, they are simply waiting to be asked! As a good Serran friend said, "My best friends are Serrans. Why? Because I asked them!" There is a lesson here to be learned.

May God continue to bless our efforts in His Vineyard!

Mary, Mother of vocations, pray for us!
Blessed Junipero Serra, pray for us!

Lloyd P. Crockett
Charter Member, Serra Club of Williamson County, TN
Serra International President, 2007-2008

Appendix B: Fresno Club's model for new club

by Joe Costanza, Serra Club of Fresno

When the Serra Club of Fresno's then-President Ray Sartini was sworn in, he set as his goal the creation of new Serra clubs in our diocese. First, he telephoned our Bishop John Steinbock, who advised Ray to call each of the deans of the five deaneries of the Diocese of Fresno and share with them his desire to form a Serra Club in their deanery. Bishop Steinbock gave Ray his blessing and asked him to keep in touch.

Ray had already done a Catholic population study of the various communities and parishes within the five deaneries. Using this information to his advantage, he sent a letter to each dean asking them to respond if they were interested in meeting with our Serra members to proceed with the formation of a club in their deanery. Four of the five deans gave Ray a positive response to his letter.

Using the "Organizing a New Serra Club Manual," Ray formed a district extension team of seven Serrans. He then followed up with the four interested deans and set up a luncheon meeting in their deaneries. The response was most gratifying. Of the four deaneries, the parishioners of St. Mary's in Visalia were the most enthusiastic, with 40 of them attending along with several parish priests.

The DET team decided to focus on setting up a Serra club at St. Mary's parish in Visalia and held several evening meetings at the church hall. Both the pastor and the parochial vicar were present at each of these meetings. The "Organizing a New Serra Club Manual" was a big help at all of these meetings and a copy was given to the pastor. Getting a leader to step forward was difficult, but thanks to the prompting of the pastor, a parishioner stepped forward and the process of formation began.

A big help in getting responses from the deaneries was the fact that our Serra club holds an annual seminarian golf tournament and an altar

server picnic, and an Altar Server Recognition Service every other year (this particular event is held at parishes in the various deaneries). We have not only gained name recognition, but also the support and praise of many of the clergy and parents whose boys and girls attend these events. We do believe that these events were the catalysts for starting a Serra club in Visalia and why we received such a positive response from the deans on Ray's letter. Of course, the bishop's response to Ray's inquiry was very encouraging for us all.

We continued to meet and keep in contact with the new Serra club at all times during formation and after the charter presentation ceremony. We are in the process of starting a new Serra club at Sacred Heart Church in Planada, which is part of the Merced/Mariposa Deanery. We have received very positive responses from their pastor.

APPENDIX C: Step-by-Step Membership Drive

by Mike Doohan

1. Ask the Program VP to schedule a Membership meeting.
2. Hand out two sheets of paper to each club member.
3. Ask each member to identify and write down the names of possible new members in the following sequence:
 - Spouses
 - Siblings
 - Children
 - Fellow parishioners
 - Business associates
 - Neighbors
 - Fellow Alumni
 - Other Club members
 - Other Categories
5. Have each member draw a line under that list.
6. Have each member review his or her list and write down the top five. Make a copy of the top five on the second sheet of paper.
7. Give the top five copy to the Membership VP for his or her follow up.
8. The club invites potential members from your list to an introductory meeting on Serra.
9. At the introductory meeting, club leaders discuss the history of Serra, its ministry, objectives, and your club's local activities.

Appendix D: Tom Walsh's Recruitment Team Training

I. Serra Assistance Team PHASE 1: Pre-planning, Resource Gathering, Site Selection

A. Preplanning

1. The SAT coordinator will obtain from Chicago staff all available information and contacts that are known in the general site area, including previous people/organizations that could have been involved in a possible Serra club.

B. Resource Gathering

1. Bishop Contact: Get information on the bishop, his interest/attitude toward a Serra club. If the Bishop has not been previously contacted, the Chicago staff or coordinator will contact him initially by letter with a rapid telephone follow-up. Determine if the bishop will support an attempt to form a Serra club.

a. If he is supportive, ask him to send a letter to all pastors in the site area informing them of his interest in forming a Serra club and asking the pastors to submit to the Diocesan Vocation Office the names of five men/women/couples (with addresses and phone numbers) who might be interested Serra. If less than 5-8 parishes are in the target area, ask for 8-10 names from the pastors.

b. Arrange for the pastors' nominees to be sent to the coordinator for review and initial contact.

c. Send a letter to each "nominee" with USA Council of Serra International pamphlets and copy of the bishop's letter and indicate that a representative from the diocese would like to visit in their home to discuss becoming a Serra member-at-large.

d. Set a time that in two weeks they will be called for an appointment.

2. District Governor/Regional Director

1. The coordinator or Chicago staff person will contact both director and governor to obtain any past /current contacts in the site area. Determine if either/both governor and director can be involved in the team effort.

C. Select site/team orientation

1. With advice from Chicago staff, input from governor

and director, select site and contact potential team members.

2. One or two team members who live near the site would be most beneficial to the team and project.

3. Set a time/date/place for a team orientation meeting of a minimum of 5/6 hours. At the orientation, materials including videos will be made part of the interview package. Basic interview techniques will be explained and time frames agreed upon. Each team member's role will be reviewed. Reimbursement and expenditures will be totally reviewed.

Note: the National Council Executive Committee must approve this effort and plan since they are responsible for providing funds for this national model. Upon Council approval, the Leadership Committee would develop and teach the 5 hours of team training.

II. Serra Assistance Team Phase 2: On-site visits and contacts

A. Team Assignments

1. The SAT coordinator, who could be the team leader, will determine how many team members are needed for the on-site visits. Many of the interviews could occur in the evening while retirees could be visited during the day. Previous arrangements will permit scheduling the visits and confirming the visits.

B. Interviews: The personal contact is the best approach at generating interest in Serra.

1. Each interview should not last more than one hour and a stamped, self-address envelope with a member-at-large application should be left at each interview. Hopefully all interviews can be accomplished in two days (depending upon number of team members available).

2. While the team is conducting personal visits, another member should visit the diocesan office (if within reasonable distance) and talk with the editor of the diocesan paper, the Vocation Office and bishop (if convenient). These visits should be arranged, scheduled, and confirmed.

3. At each personal visit with the nominees, the team will leave an extra member-at-large application for friend/family.

C. Assessment meeting

1. If possible, all on-site team members should be brought together to evaluate their efforts/contacts before leaving the area. Notes are given to the team leader for later summary and distribution. Suggestions for future efforts and additional on-site contacts should be explored while activity is still fresh in all minds. All team members may not have been involved in this initial effort and should receive timely information on the activities.

III. Serra Assistance Team Phase 3: Processing the Member-at-Large Application

- A. Confirmation calls to people visited or contacted within 30 days: The team leader or Chicago staff person should call each person interviewed to determine their interest in becoming a member-at-large.

1. This will give an opportunity to clarify what a member-at-large is and does. It will also serve as an opportunity to see if the interviewee has given anyone the second application.

2. If the person is interested, ask them to return the signed application ASAP. This contact should be upbeat and positive.

- B. Letter to Pastors sending in Nominees

1. Follow-up is most essential and the team leader informing them of the results of the nominations should send letters to each pastor. If few or none of a pastor's nominations were interested, ask the pastor for 4 or 5 more names. This part of the activity will require TIME. So, be patient in this aspect of the program as pastors are extremely busy and we do not want to lose their interest.

- C. Retention of signed member-at-large application and \$8.00

1. This part of the program should be coordinated with the Chicago staff member handling membership. It is essential to have people who have signed a member-at-large application to be periodically in the loop. If the team leader does not envision a club-in-formation for another 6-9 months, then have Chicago retain the completed applications.

- D. On-going contact

1. Team leader should retain a high interest level and be in contact with those team people who are living on or near the target site. As more names surface, plans should be made for further interviews.

E. Informational meeting, on-site

1. When eight or more applications have been received, team leader should consider setting a date on site for an informational meeting. At this meeting, more information is given about Serra mission and ministry. An update is provided and hopefully there are new people willing to attend with an interest in joining as a member-at-large.

IV. Serra Assistance Team Phase 4: Organizing a Serra Club

A. Council Manual: The *Organizing a New Serra Club* manual is an excellent tool and all team members should have a copy.

B. Developing a Core Group of members-at-large

1. As you get to know the new members, you should start building interest with a core group who might be willing to serve as acting officers. If possible you can meet with this group to dispel a fear or anxiety at undertaking this big challenge. As indicated in Phase 3, it is necessary to build a relationship with the members-at-large without badgering them.

C. Serra "gatherings"

1. It is suggested you not have a Serra meeting until you have 15 or more members-at-large. It can be a negative experience for a small number of people to attend and begin to question that they do not have a sufficient number to start a club. You can have gatherings to support their interest, awareness and obtain new members-at-large.

2. Care should be taken not to overwhelm with organizational materials, charts, etc but rather dwell on the vocation efforts and possible activities. At such gatherings, provide a positive picture on the dues structure, including what the National Council provides as a part of Serra International.

3. At one of these gatherings, try to obtain a priest or religious who has a positive experience or perception with Serra. At another, show the 12-minute video, "Spirit of Serra."

4. Use these meetings to encourage more people to become interested in the Serra mission of vocations and their own spiritual development.

5. These meetings can also be used to form the four major committees and mentors can help them understand how these commit-

tees function. It is helpful to have one of the mentors be the acting secretary and record these meetings and make copies available for those who could not attend.

V. Phase 5: Mentoring the club-in-formation up to and including charter night

A. Five mentoring team members

1. Carefully select members from the team to serve as "mentors" for the four acting VPs and the president and president-elect. Each mentor can offer to assist, support, and guide the acting officers in considering their position description. It is essential to point out that all of the requirements under each position are not expected the first day they are elected as officers.

2. As more people join, each member is placed in one of the four committees. Some of the assistance can be provided by phone or e-mail but care must be taken not to place a heavy communication workload on these members-at-large.

B. Planning toward charter night

1. Please consult the manual *Organizing a New Serra Club* in helping these new members plan and conduct this important evening.

2. Help can also be given to assure that all the materials are properly completed and forwarded to USA Council of Serra International in the charter application process. Once you are assured of 25 members, ask the bishop to set a date and time for the event. (Six to eight weeks is necessary between the charter application going to Chicago and USA Council of Serra International and Serra International Board having sufficient time to prepare all the materials.)

C. Mentoring after charter night (first three months)

1. Team leader can assign one team member to attend one of the monthly meetings to assure proper procedures and good planning is the result.

2. Many new clubs in their first year use questionable procedures, etc. In addition, they may have difficulties, particularly those with only one-year terms for the officers. If a team member is present, they can report to the team leader of any visible difficulties or problems

so the problem can be timely and efficiently rectified. For example, collection of dues and forwarding to USA Council of Serra International can present problems.

3. After the first three months, the "assistance" visits can be less frequent and only on request.

VI. Serra Assistance Team, Phase 6: Assistance to Governor and Club

A. Assistance to regional director and governor

1. If the director and governor have not been part of the team, then the team leader must constantly keep them and governor elect "in the loop." After the new club has been chartered for six months or longer, team leader can offer assistance to the regional director and governor should problems appear.

2. Clues to problems are lack of positive club reports, club members not attending governor's training programs, no real vocation programs, no new members, delays in submitting dues to USA Council or Serra International.

B. Feedback on Success of pilot

1. The USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee, the council president, USA Council of Serra International staff will be periodically informed of the model's progress. After club's chartering an "exit report" should be submitted to, the Board via the Council VP for Membership and a second model project be selected and approved.

APPENDIX E: Keeping Members

Goal: To reduce the drop-outs in Serra Clubs by stimulating activity and commitment by current members.

People join Serra to do something, to contribute to vocation activities and to help increase vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It is the officer responsibility to see that Serrans are accomplishing something. Here is one proven way.

1. Decide which projects your club will undertake in the next year and prepare a list.
2. Distribute the list to all club members at a meeting. Explain to the members the purpose...
3. Ask the members to indicate on the list, which projects interest them and return the list to the President.
4. The President will assign a project leader to each club project. The President will assign all the members to club projects.
5. At the next meeting, the President will distribute initial project assignment sheets and sign up forms with their name on them to each member. Ask members to sign up for new projects or cross out their names from assigned projects that they no longer wish to participate in
6. When all forms are returned, update project assignment sheets and distribute to all club members.
7. Ask each project leader to prepare a mission statement and action plan for their project. The action plan should include the names of all members of the project team, individual responsibilities of team members and a timeline and action plan for the current club year. Upon completion, the project leader will submit the completed document to the club secretary for review and use by the board of directors and other

club members as needed. To keep projects current, this step will be repeated at the beginning of each club year (July).

8. As each new member joins the club, she/he will be asked to complete a project sign up sheet. The Membership chairman may advise them of projects that are especially in need of new members. The new member will immediately be assigned to the project(s) that he/she has selected.

Notes:

- 1) All members will be given the opportunity to add or drop projects at the beginning of each club year.
- 2) The board of directors with the advice of the membership may create, combine, or delete projects at any time.

Sample Projects, Vocation Activities and Programs

Prayer Activities: To petition God's help in providing priests and religious.

- Thirty-One Club - offer Mass one extra day per month for vocations
- Vocation Prayer Cards - print and distribute for World Day of Prayer for Vocations
- Vocation Prayers - inclusion in Prayers of the Faithful
- Serran Prayer for Vocations - prayed at each gathering
- Eucharistic Adoration - pray for vocations at individual parishes
- Attend and help with 40 Hour Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations at Carmelite Monastery
- Daily Vocation Prayers
- World Day of Prayer for Vocations - print and distribute materials to all parishes
- Vocation Awareness Week - print and distribute materials to all parishes
- World Day for Consecrated Life - support and attend celebration
- All School Mass for Vocations

- Parish Bulletin - prayers for vocations
- Mass for deceased Serrans
- Increase Serrans' spirituality with vocation speakers
- Participation in Priesthood Sunday, Pray for a Priest Program
- Traveling Chalice or Cross Programs

Awareness Activities: To bring about religious vocation awareness among candidates, families peers, and other support groups, and to identify and invite candidates to the priesthood and religious life.

- Form and participate in Parish Vocation Committees
- Student and Adult visits to local seminary
- Vocation Posters - print and distribute to all parishes
- Altar Server Recognition Programs
- Assist visits by groups of seminarians to parishes for Sunday Mass
- Encourage Vocation Homilies at Mass and talks in classrooms by seminarians
- Project Andrew - furnish dinner for attendees
- SJSU - Campus Ministry support and help
- Sponsor S.J. Giants baseball game for youth groups
- Elementary school programs - which include:
 - Mass with students
 - Essay or poster contests
 - Vocation video presentations
 - Vocation talks by priests, sisters, and seminarians
 - GODSTUFF - take photos of students in mock up of priest or sister
- Spring Leadership Planning Conference - preparing new leaders to do vocations work
- Serra Recognition Dinner - awarding members for outstanding vocations work

Affirmation Activities: To show love, respect, gratitude, and encouragement to those who have accepted the religious vocation call. To help them avoid undue mental and physical stress. To counteract any negative reference to religious life.

- Letters of affirmation to priests in times of negative media attention
- Individual Ordination Anniversary cards to priests
- Individual birthday cards, gifts to religious
- Individual Christmas cards
- Individual luncheon and dinner invitations to religious
- Immediate praise for good homilies by parishioners
- Bishop's Day lunch
- Pastors' Dinner - furnish and serve dinner to all pastors at diocesan meeting
- Retired Priests Lunch
- Women Religious Lunch
- Group One Priests Lunch
- Host periodic dinners for seminarians

Support Activities: To assist seminarians, priests, or religious with personal involvement or monetary means.

- Financial support and information distribution for St. Patrick's Discernment Weekend
- Financial support for some seminarians
- Financial support by individuals to St. Patrick's Seminary
- Encourage pen pal correspondence with seminarians by providing addresses
- Help clubs adopt a seminarian
- Attend programs at seminary
- Attend Ordination of new priests - furnish and serve food and refreshments for reception
- Attend Ordination of new deacons - furnish and serve food and refreshments for reception
- Provide assistance to Vocation Office for seminary programs
- Attend and support Seminarian Picnic
- Financial support and help for Third Continental Congress
- Financial support for Miguel Pro House
- Help and financial support for priests' and seminarians' basketball game

APPENDIX F: Diversity: "One size does NOT fit all"

The LOCAL club is the key to a successful strategy for membership, growth, and retention, including diversity in membership.

Unfortunately, most club officers frequently see the problem as one that must be solved at a high level in the organization, asking: what can USA Council of Serra International do for us, what plans or strategies do they suggest we use, or what ideas work! The issue is that "one size does NOT fit all!

Clubs even in the same city are faced with different facets of the same problem: developing interest in vocation awareness and support of the concept that vocations are everyone's business. In some clubs, only the retired are members, while in the same city only the working business managers are members, and in the third club of the same city, it is a mixture.

How can any one formula be the answer for all of these clubs? It can't!

The national office can only propose and offer what has succeeded in other local clubs. It is thus essential that the local clubs with the membership committee at USA Council of Serra International share such information. A basic strategy for USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee is to collect details of successful local club efforts and make them available to other clubs across the nation.

Each club must recognize what it has to offer its members and strive to seek out others of the same cloth.

- What is it that makes your club what it is?
- Who are your members?
- Do you recruit ONLY from friends?
- Have you developed a "typical club member profile"?
- From this "profile," you can determine what it is that would make your membership diversified.

Diversified membership is based upon common goals. People of differ-

ing cultures (language, or ethnic background) may have a common goal in associating with each other rather than someone who is of another ethnic group. These differences can be a barrier for some as they are more comfortable in their own "culture" but not all persons are so inclined. Some are more "cosmopolitan" (comfortable in moving back and forth and being a member in two different groups). I have met a Vietnamese woman who resents the idea of joining a Vietnamese Serra Club, she wishes to be seen for what she is: a Catholic interested in vocations. How did she join? Someone asked her! Sound familiar? She is the springboard to bring one or two more members of her community.

Other persons prefer their own culture/ethnic group. Here the ethnic parish pastor is the person who can help. Ask for some names of persons he would recommend for membership and ask permission to make a presentation at a gathering, event, or parish meeting. Offer an invitation to your club as a way of introduction to the Serra mission. Exposure to a good program at your club is a start; also, assure that that person is welcomed. Introduce them around before the meeting so others can extend a warm greeting. Other connections are made in other ways.

Do you have a positive and strong connection with your pastor and other local pastors? Do you offer help in vocation oriented and sacramental projects and carry through? Do keep the parish office informed of national programs and events without creating work for them but do the work for them? Do you depend exclusively on your own club members? (Invite non-members, may be someone who can add to the diversity, to help out; the more personal contact with members the greater the potential for joining). Have you a connection with the parish council and the vocations committee?

These questions focus on the activities and involvement a member may have that can interest someone in joining. A strong set of goals that are obvious to the eyes and ears of the public makes you known to them and their awareness makes them potential members. Do you, or other club members, make an effort to approach someone who does not fit

your "club profile" (as it exists) and introduce yourself, inviting them to explore the possibility of being an active Catholic in supporting religious vocation development? Do you have a goal or policy to pursue new members that bring diversification? (On the other hand, does that create a discomfort?)

Ask other clubs what do they do to recruit and try to get very specific details. If they might work with your community, even with minor /or major changes, try them. If you work on the principal "we don't do things that way" then you are giving up the chance for possible growth. Communication with other clubs at regional meetings and at training events (SLPC) is a great way to explore and exchange ideas.

Ask the person who turned you down for their very exact reason, not just "not interested." Find out why they are not interested, you may discover they really know little to nothing about Serra. Therefore, you should be very well grounded in what you know of Serra and your own commitment before you reply to their objections.

As indicated above: one size does not fit all, and the key to local growth is knowledge of what the local club is to its members and who is in the club.

Thus, the role of USA Council of Serra International in a basic strategy to assist local clubs is to gain information from the success of LOCAL clubs, and then disseminate those successful programs to others.

APPENDIX G: Younger Members

The term "younger members" can mean anything in recruitment, so it is very important that the term be defined. A beginning point is to have a "profile" of the typical club member. If the average age of a member is 73 yrs. of age, what is a younger member: 65? 55? 45? If your target population is someone in their 30's or 40's then the challenge of how to recruit would be very different than a person at 55 and older. So define your term.

Note: it is important that you know where you are as a club and where you want to be regarding membership composition. If there is no one under 60 or 65, you have only 5 yrs or so left in the club before it feels the end coming! New and younger members must be inducted on a continuous basis.

When you identify your target population examine their typical response to an invitation. By identifying their problem (yes, it is their problem) it becomes a task for you to find a solution for it. For example, if they argue they do not have the time that can mean anything from: you do not meet when I can go, I am over committed with other clubs/activities like sports, or I don't know anything about Serra but it probably makes time demands on me ("I am just ignorant of what you are really asking of me"). Having been presented with the objection it is necessary to ask questions of a specific nature to determine which of these the person really means. Do not accept general rejection get specific information.

After securing specific information, you can respond with greater accuracy to change a situation. Vagueness produces vague and ineffectual "solutions." Consider that their barrier to join is real and that if you make a minor change (having discovered exactly what they meant about "not having time") in the club then they would be responsive and join. So consider that it is you that needs to change something (meeting time, place, day, etc.) that would not be an imposition the majority of current members.

Another consideration after identifying the target population is to characterize their life. Are they grandparents? Are they primarily parents of children, or adolescents, are they full-time employees? Having identified such traits, it is important you describe the opportunity for them to encourage and plant the seed for a religious vocation in their own family. One way is for their active support of those that have already made that decision to answer the CALL. Parents who are active with their children may claim having no time, invite them to bring their children and provide a child care service from members (on a rotating basis if need be). Young grandparents are a good target to approach with the same idea, bring your grandchildren if you are "sitting them."

Flexibility in scheduling may require a different time for the "younger" members compared to the "older" members (one breakfast meeting and one lunch or dinner meeting). All members would be invited to attend the most convenient time (the meeting time is not exclusive to only a particular age group). Location becomes an issue for those who work and "downtown" meetings may be inviting for some. "We have never done it that way" is an invitation to deny growth and assure death of a club.

As indicated in another report on recruiting, SHARE information with other clubs and solicit their successes and failures. Develop a plan and goal for a target population and modify, as needed (discovering the barriers and adjusting to assure success, do not stick to a failing plan just because "it was planned that way.")

A repeated strategy for the USA Council of Serra International Membership Committee is to secure input from local clubs as to their efforts and tactics in obtaining a "younger" member. Then formulate a small booklet listing these same tactics and distribute to clubs via "in the loop" linkage.



For more information, contact:

The USA Council of Serra International
65 E Wacker Place
Suite 802
Chicago IL 60601
www.serraus.org
888.777.6681