



# Community Membership Awareness 2010 Special Insert

Tips and tools to help run a community membership campaign.

## Top Ten Reasons to Join your Community Association

- 1. Programs and Services for all Ages – Preschoolers to Seniors:** Community associations offer programs directly or provide support to other organizations offering programs such as girl guides. Many associations also partner with the City of Calgary to offer such programs as Park n Play and Youth Drop-in programs. Community associations may also provide support services to residents in need such as snow shovelling for seniors.
- 2. Sports:** Community associations offer organized sports opportunities for youth such as baseball, basketball, skating, hockey, soccer, ringette to name a few.
- 3. Community Safety:** Block Watch, Block Parent and bicycle safety programs are examples of how community associations ensure safety in the neighbourhood.
- 4. Special Events:** Many events are provided throughout the year that provide families with an opportunity to meet others in the community. Events include stampede breakfasts, craft fairs, skating parties, recycling days, and many others.
- 5. Raising Awareness and Developing Responses to Planning and Development Issues:** Community associations make every effort to keep track of development and planning proposals in the areas such as transportation, roads, park and playground development, as well as traffic issues. The City of Calgary often consults with the community association on these issues.
- 6. Community Newsletters:** Community associations keep their residents in touch with their neighbourhood by circulating newsletters that update residents on the activities, programs and services happening in the community.
- 7. Facility Operations and Rentals:** Many community associations operate a facility that is available for programs, meetings, social and private functions. Outdoor ice rinks and tennis facilities are also maintained for the benefit of the community residents.
- 8. Representing the Community on Regional Committees and Initiatives:** Community association designates represent the community on regional issues of interest such as major parks, major infrastructure projects in the area or social issues.
- 9. Home and Auto Insurance Discounts:** Membership does have its benefits. Toole Peet Insurance Brokers will provide special group rates for all community association members.
- 10. Improving the Quality of Life:** Community associations are created by individuals who want to improve the quality of life for themselves and others in the community. Share the feeling of community pride-become a community association member and volunteer.

**Inside this Section:**

- 1 Top Ten Reasons to Join!
- 2 How Do I find Members
- 3 Door to Door Canvassing Tips
- 4 Promoting Your Drive
- 4 The Follow up to a Drive

# How Do You Find Members?

## Some Ideas to Consider:

### Step 1:

#### Decide what membership means in your organization.

- Benefits of membership.
- Responsibilities of the members - do they see themselves as consumers or participants.
- What do you expect of the members?
- What do the members expect of the organization?
- Do membership categories meet different needs?

### Step 2:

#### Assess the current situation of your organization's membership.

- Has "what you do" changed, and does it meet the needs of the community?
- Is your membership recorded so that you can determine the demographics of your membership?
- Has your membership and residents been asked "what do you want your Community Association to offer"?
- Do you address the diversity in your community?
- If so, do your programs meet the needs of your diverse population?
- Does membership cost you more than the membership fee?

### Step 3:

#### Establish your membership goals

- Which is more important, the size of membership or the number of active participants?
- Be prepared to evaluate membership drives in terms of time, volunteers and dollars.

### Step 4:

#### Develop a membership project list

- Mail or email notice of membership drive to former members (be personal if possible).
- Follow up with unpaid membership.
- Recruit current members to sell membership to friends and neighbours. They know the benefits.

### Step 5:

#### Select techniques and Tools to recruit members

- Consider a phone blitz.
- Have well prepared handout materials, with advance notice through signage and the newsletter.
- Consider a discount program of community businesses.
- Be creative, consider special events, registration evenings, open house etc.
- Prepare the volunteers that will be recruiting membership so that they can answer common questions and have referrals information available.



## Door to Door Canvassing

Canvassers are often the first human contact potential members have with your community association. If your canvasser represents the association well on the doorstep, chances of recruiting a new member increase. If the canvasser, however, is not well prepared or does not relate well to the potential member, the effort likely won't be successful.

Each canvasser should receive training and information outlining:

- the names and contact information of the membership chairperson, area captain and anyone else they may need to contact,
- the basics of a community association,
- the benefits of membership,
- your community association boundaries and the specific area they should be selling in,
- the membership kit of materials
- how to complete the membership card and canvassing forms,
- how to sell the product – your community association!
- know your association
- believe in your Association
- know your market – understand your neighbours' motivations
- discuss, don't defend
- procedures for callback when no one is home,
- how to handle instances when fees offered are less than the amount of the full membership fee (gratefully accepted, but with an explanation that the member will not enjoy full membership privileges how to identify themselves – wear a button and an identifiable piece of clothing – and how to make the introduction at the door,
- the deadline for returning the completed membership materials to the membership chair or area captain.



## Canvassers' Membership Kit

Consider including the following in the canvassers' kit:  
\*Membership cards, skate/shoe tags, door stickers and callback cards.

\*Information sheet listing (ensure sufficient copies so this sheet can be left with prospective members if they show interest):

- general benefits of membership
- activities and initiatives your community association offers
- adult, children and youth programs
- community hall information
- skating rinks
- development projects
- volunteer opportunities
- contacts for each activity
- your community association's boundaries

\*Map outlining the canvasser's area of responsibility

\*Copies of the pamphlet explaining what a community association is and the advantages of membership

\*Information on when and where the community association board meets, with an invitation to attend a meeting to learn more about their community association.

\*Information sheet on money handling procedures:

- GST on the membership fee – applicable only to those Associations required to pay .
- The canvasser should give all monies (cash, cheques, money orders) only to designated individuals (area captain or membership chair). These monies, particularly cash, should be given to the designated person within 24 hours of collection.
- Encourage people to pay by cheque, but accept cash if the person wants to pay this way.
- The canvasser should turn in the top portion of the membership card to the designated individual with all monies received. The receipt portion, along with the membership card, should be given to the member.
- Collection, receipting and depositing of monies should be double checked by at least one other person, with all those checking the work initialling the appropriate control sheets.



## Promoting Your Membership Drive

Following are some suggestions that have worked well in promoting your membership drive:

- Prepare a newsletter and distribute before and during the membership drive.
- Locate large posters or flyers throughout the community.
- Hold a community membership event.
- Put a specific membership message on a changeable text sign in a prominent location in the neighbourhood.
- Insert advertising in your local elementary school's take home package.
- Talk about it!

## Follow-up after the Drive

The membership chair and area captains have a number of steps to complete after all the canvassers have finished their areas.

1. Area captains check that all their canvasser control sheets balance. When they do, attach the canvasser control sheets to the area control sheet and return the sheets and all monies to the membership chair. (If the Association does not use area captains, canvassers return their sheets and money directly to the membership chair.)
2. The membership chair ensures all control sheets balance.
3. The membership chair enters the results onto the Membership Sales Master Control Sheet.
4. Forward the area control sheets/canvasser control sheets and all money to the treasurer for deposit.
5. The treasurer will return the area control sheets/canvasser control sheets after he/she is finished with them. Attach these sheets to the Master Control Sheet and file them in a secure location.
6. The membership chair should table a full report of all memberships sold at the next Association board meeting.

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