



What Each Member Brings Means Success for All!

Our organization is a success because of its members. For the many active members, thank you for your efforts.

A recent study showed that the main reason people do not volunteer is because no one asked them – 71 percent, in fact. The next reason, predictably, is no free time; followed closely by not knowing what would be expected of them or how to be a successful volunteer.

For the 71 percent who have not been asked, consider this your personal invitation to become more engaged in your association this year!

Many of you must be thinking – what does that mean? Do I have to join a committee? Will it take hours every week? Not at all – being more engaged could mean:

- Visiting the website to see what's new (five minutes)
- Submitting an abstract to speak at a seminar (a few hours)
- Bringing a colleague to a meeting (five minutes)
- Donating to the scholarship or humanitarian assistance funds (five minutes online)
- Judging a student poster competition (one hour)

What a difference it would make if everyone did just one small thing.

Our scholarship program is a testament to what volunteers can accomplish. One of the biggest challenges we face is that ours is a graying profession, and we need to inspire students to study science and engineering. In just a few years, NYWEA raised over \$420,000 and awarded over \$70,000 in scholarships. Amazingly, this was achieved with only five percent of our membership contributing. Can you imagine what we could accomplish if every member pledged \$20 for the next five years? With almost 2,000 members, that alone would raise \$200,000 in scholarship funds. Full participation by our membership would also open doors to major corporate donations. Small efforts by many people can work miracles!

What if all of us asked one person to come to a meeting, and half of them came, and of those, 100 became members? One of those new members could be a future WEF president, like NYWEA member Adam Zabinski, or could establish a new program that would benefit us all.

You've now been asked and you've been reassured that volunteering only takes a little bit of your time. So the last question is, "how will I know what to do?" I guarantee that will come naturally; but if it doesn't, someone will help you. After all, volunteering is just a series of small tasks. **Consider these:**

- If you know a person who is a great speaker, ask them to speak at a meeting.
- Do you know a lot about a topic? Read a few abstracts and tell us which one is the best.
- Staff the registration booth at a meeting. There's no better way to meet people!

How It Benefits You

Forget the benefits to NYWEA if everyone did a little bit – the rewards to you personally are what really matter. What do *you* get out

of it? Here are just a few possibilities:

- New friends that can help your career – maybe someone older who can answer a question for you; or, someone younger who can clue you in to the latest technology
- Personal satisfaction that you have made the world a better place
- Career advancement
- Respect from your colleagues and employers
- Awards
- Greater knowledge and increased confidence
- Using your talents doing something you enjoy

Share Your Talents

If asked what your greatest strengths as a human being were, what would you say? For me, one is organization, so I do things in the NYWEA that involve organizing like: creating an online abstract database; coordinating programs to increase women's involvement; and compiling institutional knowledge into a spring meeting manual. Here are other ideas:

A *strong communicator* can attract new members, give seminars, talk to the media or politicians on NYWEA's behalf. A *financial wiz* can handle registration fees or be chapter treasurer. A *great naturalist* could lead a tour of wetlands. A *parent* could talk to a child's class or scout troop and inspire young people about environmental careers. A *proud worker* could nominate a treatment plant for a safety award or bring members, elected officials, or children in for a tour. A *helpful or altruistic person* could donate or raise money for humanitarian assistance. A *visionary* or someone with ideas who may not know how to make them happen, can share ideas and let others implement them. A *great writer* can submit articles to our magazine or write a paper and collaborate with someone who is a *great speaker* to present it. A *computer-graphics wiz* could add a little pizzazz to a brochure, website, or a program announcement. A *great salesperson* can sell exhibit space or advertising.

None of these requires a big time commitment or special skills – we just need your unique skills. **Whatever it is that you do well – you can do it well within this organization.** If you don't know how to begin, ask any officer or committee chair. If you need training in volunteering or leadership – we will provide it. There's no cost, and many rewards.

Employers Benefit Too

What does your employer get out of it? For one - recognition. When you moderate a session or present a paper, your employer's name is printed on the program next to yours. In addition, they get an employee with more knowledge and confidence who is a better collaborator, communicator and overall a more seasoned, experienced and effective employee.

I ask not only you, the members, to join me this year in becoming more engaged in your association, but also, you, the employers, to encourage and support your staff in their volunteer efforts.

I guarantee that when the year is over, you both will feel as I do – that it was well worth it. I truly look forward to working with all of you this year!

Janice Jijina, PE, AICP