



Suggestions for Inactive Clubs

WHY DO BUILDERS CLUBS BECOME INACTIVE?

Participation, involvement, and communication are keys to a successful Builders Club. Faculty advisors, school officials, committee members, Kiwanians, and Builders Club members must all play an active role in the program for a Builders Club to survive. When one of these groups loses interest, the Builders Club may become idle and, eventually, inactive.

IS EVERYONE PLAYING A PART?

The structure of the Builders Club program resembles a chain, and each person, or group of persons, represents a link in that chain. When each role is functioning efficiently, the chain is sturdy and reliable. Too often, though, a link in the chain breaks. Subsequently, interest drops, participation becomes low, membership decreases, Builders Club coordinators lack the time, and sponsor obligations go neglected.

If these things are happening in your Builders Club, take heed: It is not too late to make a final effort to revive it. Recognizing that a problem exists is a major step!

STEP 1: FIND THE WEAK LINK

A weakness can exist in one or more of the club's links. The Kiwanis club president, school principal, faculty advisor, Builders Club committee, and Builders club members no longer may have the time or interest needed to support, participate in, or direct the club. Ask yourself these questions when "troubleshooting":

- **Is the Kiwanis club president or advisor doing everything possible?** The sponsoring Kiwanis club's president or Builders Club advisor must be willing to dedicate time and effort to the Builders Club's success. The president must form a willing and interested Builders Club committee, support the Builders Club financially, and involve Builders Club members in Kiwanis activities. The Kiwanis club president should promote joint service projects and Kiwanis-family relations, and should encourage Kiwanis members to take an active interest in Builders Club and donate their time and ideas to the program. The president and advisor also are responsible for meeting the Builders Club's needs and addressing necessary requests.

- **Is the school principal genuinely interested in the program?** This school official has the ultimate authority in determining whether or not a Builders Club may exist in the school. If he or she is not in total support of the program, it may be more difficult to organize club meetings, carry out projects and fundraisers, recruit new members, and build interest in Builders Club throughout the school. Remember, he or she may not completely understand the program. It is the sponsoring Kiwanis club's responsibility to provide the principal with all the facts about Builders Club. Only then can he or she take on some demanding responsibilities and support the club in any way necessary. Making the club attractive to potential members, creating fun and exciting activities, showing an overall interest in the members and their projects, and promoting the ideals of Builders Club directly impact the club's membership and participation rate.
- **Is the faculty advisor working with and for Builders Club members?** The faculty advisor has perhaps the most demanding and crucial job of all. The advisor must donate time to directing club meetings, overseeing and organizing club projects and fundraisers, advising the club members on necessary decision-making, and acting as a positive role model for members. If the club isn't getting the attention and time it requires from the faculty advisor, perhaps he or she no longer is interested in advising the club. It may be time to seek a more enthusiastic and "less consumed" member of the staff.

Contact the school principal and ask for a more willing faculty advisor. There may be some new faces in the school staff that have yet to become involved with an extracurricular activity.

Ask questions:

- What activities have been successful in the school?
- Is the Builders Club program well-known and publicized?
- Are counselors and teachers aware of the program?
- Is there an interest in helping?

Let the principal know exactly what you're looking for in a Builders Club faculty advisor.

Make a presentation at the school's faculty or staff meeting. Some counselors and teachers may be unfamiliar with Builders Club, or they may have heard the name but are unaware of the program's objectives. An opportunity such as this could be educational.

Describe the relationship between Kiwanis and Builders Club. Stress the importance of role models and Kiwanis-family involvement.

Discuss some of the great projects in which Builders Club members can participate.

Outline the advantages of Builders Club: acquiring leadership skills, working as a team, learning to give, being creative, and gaining confidence through success.

- **Is the Kiwanis club supporting the Builders Club?** The Kiwanis club president, school principal, and faculty advisor cannot take full responsibility for a failing Builders Club. Often, it is the sponsoring Kiwanis club that is no longer willing to show interest or participate in the Builders Club, or the Kiwanis club is disbanding. If this is the case, there are alternatives to "calling it quits!"

It is the Kiwanis club's responsibility to find another willing Kiwanis club to take over sponsorship of the Builders Club. The club can make contacts at Kiwanis club functions; contact the lieutenant governor and the Builders Club district administrator; and make phone calls to other clubs that do not sponsor a Builders Club or are interested in sponsoring another.

When a new sponsor is found, the procedure for a sponsorship change is simple. The Kiwanis International Office requires only a short letter indicating the change and acceptance of sponsorship. Presidents of both Kiwanis clubs should sign the letter, showing consent of the change.

If morale is low among the club's surviving members—or if membership is nonexistent—it's time to focus on promotion:

- Set up a promotional table in a busy area of the school or conduct a special introductory meeting after school. Kiwanis International offers a Builders Club video that may be shown to potential members. Builders Club color brochures also may be ordered and distributed to interested students.
- Create decorative display cases, posters, and banners to hang on the school grounds. (This would be a great project for a co-sponsoring Key Club or Circle K club.)
- Invite co-sponsoring Key Club and Circle K members to the school to perform skits enacting the deeds, challenges, and leadership roles of a Kiwanis-family member.
- Ask teachers to invite five "key students" to each initial Builders Club meeting.

Remember: The Builders Club program has no minimum number of required members. Only a handful of students is needed to get the club up and moving.

STEP 3: BUILD INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION

Recruiting new members is the easiest part of reactivating an idle Builders Club. However, holding student interest and participation is a never-ending endeavor. Consider these "get-up-and-go" projects:

- Kick things off with a reactivation party, dance, or dinner.
- Plan a school clean-up project.
- Start a long-distance pen pal project with other Builders Club members, perhaps through the Builders Club Web site at www.buildersclub.org.
- Organize school or community auctions or rummage sales.
- Focus on disaster-relief projects.
- Advertise dance-athons, walk-athons, or service-athons.
- Visit children's homes or retirement homes.
- Work the school concession stand.
- Sell holiday treats, flowers, etc.
- Join co-sponsoring Key Club and Circle K club in picnics or joint service projects.

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS?

So, it's not a matter of replacing any of the "weak links"? The magic is gone, and the students just aren't interested. What's next, you ask?

Some clubs find it easier to let a Builders Club be placed on suspended status, instead of making the extra effort to reactivate the club. Don't get discouraged and take the easy way out!

- If the club is placed on suspended status, the club has until September 30 to recruit new staff leaders and plan for a new year of success.
- Recruit new group of students who will be entering the school, and these students could be looking for a challenging activity. Builders Club might just be it.
- Re-examine the Kiwanis club's goals and interest in the Builders Club program. If looking for a new sponsor, the club can make a more timely decision in choosing a reliable and enthusiastic Kiwanis sponsor.

Other helpful Builders Club Resources:

- Suggested Projects
- Club Advisor Guide

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