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What is the Women of Today?

What is the Women of Today? The Women of Today is about people. The Women of Today is about community service. The Women of Today is about leadership training and development. The Women of Today is about fostering friendships and developing relationships within your community. The Women of Today is about making a difference, making a friend and having impact on your community through community service efforts. Women of Today may look a little bit different in each community because each community is unique. That's what the Women of Today is all about.

Purpose

The United States Women of Today bylaws state the purpose of our organization is “to encourage, foster and support the growth and establishment of United States Women of Today state and local member chapters.”

Mission Statement

The mission of the United States Women of Today is to provide state and local member chapter opportunities in the areas of leadership training, personal growth, community service and work in partnership with established foundations.

History

In anticipation of the dissolution of the United States Jaycee Women, representatives met to discuss the formation of the United States Women of Today. There were women from over a dozen states who felt that they and their communities benefited from the national affiliation. These women also felt that a new national organization would be needed and plans began to form one. In September 1985, the United States Women of Today was incorporated. Since then, the leaders on all levels of the organization have worked to uphold and support the ideals and principles under which the organization was founded. *(For a more detailed history, please refer to the most recent United States Women of Today Directory.)*

External programs are supported by the United States Women of Today. In previous year, the national organization has worked with foundation such as March of Dimes, Arthritis Foundation and Leukemia Society. In addition, across the nation, local chapters and states focus on community and state foundations or concerns of their own choosing. Chapter and states involve education as well as fundraising efforts in these partnerships. National figures estimate over one million dollars has been donated to nationally supported external programming over the past years.

The United States Women of Today also provides training programs to its members where they can learn effective verbal and written communication skills, how to be a dynamic and motivating leader, how to organize, prioritize, understand others and ourselves.

Our dedication and belief in the organization is stated in our creed:

*We, the United States Women of Today,
Are dedicated to serving our community and nation,
Are committed to strengthening our individual talents<
And stand united by our friendship and belief in the future.*

Public Relations

Product identification. Maintaining an image. Communication. Education. Promotion of a product. Promotion of and maintenance of an image within the public eye. The link between the service/product/organization and the community. As this manual was being developed, several people within the field of public relations, marketing and journalism were asked to define “public relations.” The ideas shared above are some of their responses.

The definition of “promotion of and maintenance of an image within the public eye” is all-encompassing and broad-based enough to include all that we are considering within the realm of public relations. To promote the image of Women of Today within our own communities, we need a variety of public relations communications tools and a strategic marketing plan.

In this section of the manual, we will first talk about the communication tools your chapter may choose to use. Your chapter or state will need to decide which tools will best meet your needs. It is also important to know that there is no “magic key” or special tool that works better than another. It is equally important to be aware that a combination of tools, presented in a specific manner and over a period of time, will help you gain the most from your public relations plan.

Logo

The United States Women of Today has copyrighted logo that all member states and chapters may use. Many states also have their own logo that is used in combination with the USWT logo. This is your identity or your “mark” – use it! To further explain this, when people see the following logos, they immediately think of the product: the golden arches of McDonald’s, the letters M&M, the stylized “swoosh” of Nike, the red letters of Campbell’s soup, and Target’s “target.” Any sports team also is readily identified by their logo, which may or may not include their mascot. You can see the power and recognition factor of a symbol, a few words or the manner in which they are visually presented.

You can use this logo on a number of promotionals or printed materials. Remember that a copyrighted logo is protected, however. (*See United States Women of Today bylaws, Article XI, Section 6 for more information on the use of the logo.*)

The United States Women of Today logo can also be purchased on a disk (from the current USWT Treasurer). With today’s computer capabilities a logo disk can be used in all sorts of creative public relations situations and internally within your own state and chapter.

Letterhead

Use of the USWT or state logo, together with your chapter or state name on a letterhead is another public relations tool. This letterhead should be used for all official correspondence to others outside of your organization. It can also be used internally. With today’s computer and desktop publishing capabilities, there is no reason why all states and chapters cannot have a professional letterhead to use. Remember that we as an organization are striving for the respect and courtesy other professional organizations enjoy; keep your letterhead cleanly printed, easily read and on paper that is of a neutral or muted color. (*See Appendix A for examples.*)

A chapter or state president can have a stylized logo and letterhead that represents her own there. This would be on that she might choose to use within the organization – this is where colors, fonts and clip art can be used to represent your own special personality.

Business Cards

Every officer of your chapter or state would benefit from a business card. Once again, the use of a logo disk and the wonders of desktop publishing will assist you with the production. Most computer programs have a built-in business package that includes letterhead and business cards. You can design one, and customize it to suit each member and office as needed. Business card paper can be ordered or purchased from most office supply catalogues or stores. A card given to contacts usually goes in their Rolodex and every time people flip through – there you are.

Newsletter

A newsletter is usually the most common tool used by chapters and states to communicate their message with the community around them. A newsletter is a snapshot view of your group; once again, promoting and maintaining your image. This newsletter has the logo prominently featured, an easily recognizable type or font and a look that is consistent from month to month. Newsletters can be sent to prospective members, other community groups, health-care offices (where people might wait for appointments), agencies and offices that serve your target population or any place that they will be picked up and read. Some chapters rotate their “extra” mailing list each month, targeting different locations.

Letters to the Editor

The letter to the editor is another way the Women of Today can have a continued public relations campaign and awareness within the community. The state information packets (SIPs) distributed via the United States Women of Today and the state to chapter distribution of information is a wealth of material for a letter to the editor.

You can write a letter during an “emphasis or awareness” month. A letter can go in ahead of a big fundraising or educational campaign, explaining why it is being held and the reasons that the community should know about it and participate. (NOTE: If you are submitting a letter of information/education regarding a project if an ad is purchased. You may also consider simply submitting a news release versus a letter to the editor – see next section.)

A letter to the editor can also help your group make a stand or take a position on events of community impact. Be cautious, however, in taking and making a public statement – be sure the entire group or the group consensus can all support the position if you sign the chapter’s name to the letter. Any individual can make a personal statement – just be sure you identify it as your own viewpoint and not necessarily that of the entire chapter.

It is a good idea to meet with the editorial staff of the local paper. Find out the deadline, how letters can be submitted and any other guidelines the paper uses. Some will request a word limit, or that facts and figures have the source. Ask for a copy of their standards or policies regarding what they consider a letter versus an ad versus a news release and then respect those guidelines. A letter to the editor is a gentle reminder that your chapter or state is out there and working for the betterment of the community. (*See Appendix B for an example.*)

News Release

A news release differs from a letter to the editor in that it is information or fact-based. No opinions should be included. Write the news release in the inverted pyramid format – the most important detail first (what, when, where, time, etc.). The next paragraph includes the why – a chance for a little education and information exchange. The last paragraph might be the standard paragraph on the organization, “...The Yourtown Women of Today is a volunteer community service group open to members over the age of 18. The Yourtown chapter meets at ... for more information call Suzie Q at 555-1234.” (*See Appendix C for examples.*) Don’t forget to send

news releases to radio and television stations. They appreciate news as well as the print media does.

Guest Contribution & Columnist

Many newspapers are on the look-out for people to write guest columns. You would get to combine a little of the “letter to the editor” (your opinion or viewpoint) with a news release (information/education). It usually combines a bit of the “how this affects our community” angle, as well. Once again, when you are meeting with your newspaper staff – ask about this. It is an excellent way to share your chapter with the community.

This is a good way to involve a member who might not always be able to attend meetings due to work schedules, etc. A written piece can be done at any time, as long as the deadlines are adhered to. Be sure that you select someone who is able to write well and express herself intelligently. Let’s face it – many of us panic at the thought of writing even a paragraph – let alone a column. Remember, it’s **your** image you are promoting and maintaining. (*See Appendix D for example.*)

Press Conferences

Many chapters may not find this as applicable as others. It is hard to attract the media’s attention with local events. Consider scheduling a press conference if a state or national officer is visiting your meeting. A press conference is appropriate if you are a major player in a big-time event in your community. Consider scheduling a press conference if your state or chapter has raised a substantial amount of money or collected an overwhelming quantity of something – and you want to share it. Send a news release if you have a scholarship winner to announce, or new officers have been elected or your state has made a change in policies or bylaws that people might be interested in. Really decide if a press conference or a news release is the most effective. Never waste the time of a newspaper with a “non-event.” It will be extremely hard to win back their respect and attention.

Classified & Display Advertising

Consider purchasing advertising for all your major fundraisers. This can be a simple classified ad in the Personals or Notices column or it can be a display (boxed) ad placed elsewhere in the paper. You might be wise to contact the local advertising department of the newspaper or shopper and establish a relationship. **Leave them** your business card and **take with you** information on rates, deadline, etc. Be sure to ask for the nonprofit rate when you discuss costs.

You have an easy job, really, with purchased advertising. A *classified ad* is just words – and the advertising staff will help you deliver the message in the best words. Expect to pay a few dollars depending on the number of words and the length of time the ad runs. A *display ad* is also very easy – bring in the information, have some suggestions for clip art (pictures) you want in the ad and ask them to make up the ad for you. If you have a copy of the national or state logo, leave it with them on file and ask that they use it when possible. Display ads are usually sold in increments of eight – a whole page down to 1/32 of a page. The ads are also based on column inches and the number of columns per page (ex. a two-column, three-inch ad). Expect to pay anywhere from around \$20 in small rural weekly papers or shoppers and up, based on the newspaper. City newspapers will charge more than this. You might ask about non-profit rates in both cases. (*See Appendix E for examples.*)

Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Most radio and television stations are pretty good about offering you public service time, which is broadcast time that is free. They are required by their regulations to do so. PSAs are usually produced in 15- and 30-second timeframes. You can read them or sometimes the studio staff will read them. They will also help you in writing the copy (words) if you want. A thought: the voices we hear every day on the radio can be just that – every-day voices. If you have a chapter member’s voice on the radio, it is different and catches your attention.

PSAs are a chance to get your message into an entirely different market – the sound and visual market. Not everyone can read a newspaper or has the chance to read one. Everyone **usually** has access to radio or television, and can take a minute or two to listen and watch.

Consider PSAs during Founder’s Day, Women of Today Week and some of your more major projects. You might also see if a “live remote broadcast” can be arranged for a big event – they bring the portable radio station to your event, talk to those involved and generally help you promote the event. Explore the idea of purchasing some advertising time on the radio for a big project – it is really not that expensive, especially in the smaller market. *Rule of thumb:* if your chapter is doing a local ways and means, and hopes to make a profit, **buy** the advertising. If your chapter is hosting a fundraiser or educational event for another cause, check into Public Service Announcements.

Don’t forget to send your news releases to the radio and television stations when you send them to the print media. Many times they will use your news releases to add variety to the local newscast. Our organization’s awareness or emphasis month campaigns are a good time to use PSAs. The news agencies might even send a camera and reporter to cover events if they have time and manpower. (*See Appendix F for examples.*)

Videos

The other media to explore is television. Local network or public television stations often help community groups produce short video PSAs. Contact your local public television station, cable-access service, technical college or even local community education or high schools. All would be excellent resources. Some chapters have done this (one through a local community education class, another through local cable access or local programming, and another through the local public television station) and the finished product is great. Sometimes schools are looking for a project to work on and would love to have a product that is useable **and** marketable at the end. Videos can be produced by shooting footage live, using slides or photographs, music, taped video and graphics. It is really a project where you need the technical experience and expertise in order to have a professional product at the end. Remember, we are promoting and maintaining the image of a professional, first-class organization!

Radio & Television Interviews

These are both another excellent avenue of promotion for your organization. Some of the smaller stations have more freedom in this area; contact them and see how your chapter can be a part of the programming. Good times to target are around Founder’s Day, National Volunteer Recognition Week or Women of Today Week. Another way to approach the radio and television interview is to plan them around major events. For example, if your chapter is organizing a special walk or event of some sort, arrange for a radio or television spot to air a few days prior. Develop a brief outline of what message you want to get across and things you want to share.

It is also important to consider who will be your spokesperson for these events. Not everyone is comfortable in an interview situation. Select the people who will best represent your organization. This person should be comfortable with speaking in a spontaneous and informal

manner and it is spontaneous, even with a prepared page of questions and answers! This person should also be knowledgeable about the subject. Preparation is helpful but not a guarantee. Another important fact to remember is that we live in the world of “sound bites.” When asked a question, phrase your answer in complete sentences. This will allow any listener, even those who have just tuned in, to know what you are talking about. For example:

Q: The Women of Today has raised a great deal of money for the community through their annual craft fair, haven't they?

A: Yes, the Yourtown Women of Today are hosting the 20th annual fall craft fair and are proud to say we generally return over \$3,000 back into the community each year as a result.¹

A sound editor can easily lift out one or two quotes to run in a follow-up newscast. Imagine if your answer had been, “Yes, we do” – not much information is shared in that response and a person just tuning in has no idea what is being discussed.

You can also utilize cable-access television or public radio and television stations for your projects and events. Most allow a nonprofit group to run announcements or upcoming events at no charge, provided they receive them in a timely and properly submitted manner. Some chapters are purchasing some advertising time on the radio for major fundraisers. In some communities, hearing a familiar voice reminding the public of an upcoming event is the extra incentive for the community to participate. It is a fun opportunity to work with your local radio station – some will let you write your ad copy (the words you say) and even help you with sound effects, music and more.

A Public Relations Strategic Plan

As you develop your *year-at-a-glance* calendar as a state or chapter, look at the events you have coming ahead in the year. Sit down with a yearlong calendar and begin to put down your major projects. Next, look at the advertising deadlines and information you have already gathered from your media resources. Count backward from the event to the timeframe the media gives you. If you need to place display ads one month prior to the event – put it on the Public Relations calendar. If you can purchase four weeks of classified ads and get two weeks free for your fall and spring craft fair, get those deadlines on the PR calendar.

Once you have all of your project⁶ and event deadlines noted, look at your calendar again. Perhaps you are a guest columnist in the local paper 18 weeks out of the year. Make sure you have those deadlines noted and whose responsibility it is to do the writing.

Look again. Do you have a three- or four-week stretch here and there that is a little “PR weak”? If so, consider the communication tools mentioned previously and not yet being utilized. Determine how you can use them. Maybe a month has no PR activity listed. Mark that month down as the month you will print twenty extra newsletters and leave at selected sites around the community. You get the picture.

Effective public relations don't just happen or happen as a result of luck. Effective public relations happen because you work at it every single week – sometimes every day! It happens because a plan has been developed, using all the tools at your disposal and using a variety of media resources. Effective public relations are more than just putting meeting minutes or an announcement of upcoming meetings in the “local happenings” section of the paper. You have to plan to succeed and then work your plan. (*See Appendix G for examples.*)

¹ The name of group, a detail about the craft fair and the amount of dollars contributed are all part of this single sentence.

Marketing

Marketing could be defined as the process of planning and executing the conception, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. It can be simply said that marketing is everything you do to promote your business or organization! McDonald's, MTV, Sears, Subway – they didn't get where they are today by opening a store, making a video or good sandwich and then waiting for people to come to them. They worked on marketing – the selling and promotion of what they have to offer others.

The Wilder Foundation of Minnesota has an excellent book entitled, *Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations*. It is worth every penny of its \$25 to \$30 cost. It defines marketing in the following two ways.

Internal Marketing

This is based on the principle that a member of an organization must be “sold” on the organization in order to “sell” it to others. Things to consider are:

- *Who is responsible for recruitment of new members and public relations?*
They must be members who are in the right frame of mind – they still have the excitement and enthusiasm about Women of Today that they had when they joined, but they have the advantage of being members long enough to have gained working knowledge of the organization.
- *How would prospective members view your chapter and its meetings?*
How do your members view your meetings? Are they a fun and productive way to spend the evening or are they tedious and poorly attended? Are meetings fun and positive?
- *Are all members welcome and thanked for their efforts?*
Are prospective members welcomed when attending? Attitude IS everything – being positive and encouraging toward your members will make them want to stay and to share the Women of Today organization with others.

External Marketing

This is how we look to others. It is based on the principle that you are exchanging something of value for something you need. We should show that we are a proud, organized, motivated, excited and resourceful group. This will in turn show that we have something of *value* (leadership training, service to others, friendships, etc.) and we are *looking for* people to share it with.

Some external marketing ideas are: wearing your chapter jackets or shirts as a group; chapter banners with Women of Today name at projects or events; writing a letter to the editor; attending a local governmental meeting as a group for a specific purpose; honoring an outstanding volunteer, teen, senior citizen, teacher (or someone) “of the year”; or having a booth at a local parenting, volunteer, service club or other type of fair or expo. It can be running Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on local cable or television channels, manning phones at a local telethon or co-sponsoring a special speaker within the community. It can be as simple and easy as using coffee mugs, can coolers, post-it notes, key rings or other items with the Women of Today logo on it. Don't forget – any external project you do is an opportunity to market your organization, too!

Marketing Ideas

The next section of this manual will discuss several marketing ideas that you can use to promote your organization. Examples of some are included in the appendix of the manual – they are there to get you thinking about ways you can develop your own materials. (*See Appendix G for a synopsis of marketing ideas.*)

Flyers

Flyers are a one-sheet advertisement (any size, but preferably 8 ½ x 11 or 11 x 14) of a specific organization, project or event. It is made to be hand-distributed or posted on a bulletin board. It can be printed on one side or both sides of the paper. You should plan for the flyer to be “divided” into three parts: 1/3 to contain the logo, trademark or other readily identifiable information; 1/3 should have artwork (including clip art, graphics, maps or other “picture” type information; and 1/3 should be general information (called the copy) on what you are promoting. If it is a fundraising event, include where you will be giving the proceeds of the event.

Flyers should be eye-catching, interesting and easy to read. Bright colors draw attention so consider colored paper or color graphics. Use a bi-fold or tri-fold design. Utilize both sides of the paper. Some chapters have a mini-application form or a “send me more information” tear-off style page. Flyers should also have lots of white space – don’t be too wordy. Your text should be simple and to the point. You can also use bullets to highlight your message. If you couldn’t or wouldn’t read it standing six to eight feet away, no one else will either. (*See Appendix G for examples.*)

Brochures

Brochures are brief publications which are not permanently bound. Every chapter and state needs written literature to alert potential members to what they have to offer, to inform businesses from which you may request donations or to explain what you are all about and to display an image that attracts the public’s attention. The brochure attracts attention by using creative graphics, giving basic information and leaving a positive impression. Be sure that your brochure is professional looking and not **too** clever or creative. If the person reading the brochure cannot figure out what your group is all about because you have too many cute graphics, slang expressions or a font that is nearly impossible to read, you have wasted your time and talents on the brochure.

The best brochures are those with a fairly long “shelf-life.” This means that your brochure has enough basic information that someone handing it out or picking it up will still get the main message and important information. These will most likely be distributed to area businesses, utility companies, stores, Chamber of Commerce office, libraries and more. You will be kept very busy if you have to continuously update and replace brochures. Good information to include might be:

- A brief history of the chapter; a few sentences at most
- Highlight programs and projects that you are well-known for
- List the benefits of membership
- Member requirements, dues, etc.
- United States Women of Today and your state creed, mission statement or purpose
- Your chapter’s meeting time, date and location; provided it is a consistent one
- A dependable contact person and/or telephone number or organization’s address

These are the basics. You don't need to put everything into the brochure – prospectives will learn more as they visit your chapter or event for the first time. Be sure to include a warm welcoming statement – that invitation to join is so important! (*See Appendix H for examples.*)

Fairs & Expos

Informational fairs and expos are another way to get the word out. Many state and county fairs, school or community activities allow for free space (or at a nominal cost) for you to set up an information display about your chapter or state. There are also big expos in larger cities (special event for women, singles, businesses, etc.) that will charge for booth space but also provide wonderful exposure based on the huge numbers of people who will pass by your booth. Some of these larger events offer a free or reduced cost for nonprofit organizations. Be sure to ask about this. Things to consider when you look at participating in a fair or expo include:

- *What is your main goal?*
Are you looking for prospective members? Is your goal to draw public awareness to your chapter and its activities? Is it both? Your booth needs to reflect your goal.
- *What is the cost of booth, draping, carpeting, display items, etc.?*
If your chapter or state decides to actively participate in a number of events each year, you may be better off purchasing the supplies you need to put together a professional-looking booth. Many expos provide tables, chairs, draping, etc. Others provide or charge for only the floor space and you are responsible for the rest. You need to decide what your goals and resources are and work from there.

The **look** – think back to fairs and expos you have attended. What booths looked like they “meant business”? What did they have that others did not? For a professional look, tables should be skirted and draped. Cover the floor, too, with a small piece of carpet. Check with the expo planners – find out if a backdrop or drape is provided to separate your booth from the person behind you. Some states and chapters have chosen to purchase these booth dressing pieces so that they are always sure the look of their booth or display will be what they want and expect. You can purchase some plastic draping, skirting and tablecloths at most party supply stores. If you chose to purchase fabric items, check with any hotel or catering company for their supplier. Make the booth look as welcoming and inviting as possible. You want people to stop – not pass by.

The **giveaways** – drawing items are an “attention-getter.” People like to sign up and take a chance on winning something. Consider a watch (*make time for volunteering*), a pamper basket (*you deserve a break*), or a gift certificate. Be sure your sign-up slip includes name, phone, address and a spot to mark if they would like more information on the organization. You could also have a giveaway item with your chapter or state's name and a contact phone number printed on it – something smaller that **everyone** would get just for stopping by. (Make sure these are items you would want for yourself or you will have wasted money on an item no one wants.) Several years ago, one state brought extra copies of their state newsletter to hand out and they were extremely popular. Women, especially, like to take things to read later. (A small flyer for “further information” was also tucked into the folds!)

The **display** – will your display have a specific theme or will it be a generic display that can be used at a variety of fairs, expos or other events? If you will be participating in a variety of fairs or expos, you may want to invest in a professional three-sided display board that can be easily changed to fit a variety of themes or that can be used as a standard display. You can also purchase a three-sided cardboard or foam-board display board at larger office stores such as

Staples or Office Depot. Smaller office stores or local stationery supply stores can also order these if they do not carry them as regular merchandise.

The **sign** or **banner** – *Yourtown Women of Today* should be prominently displayed in your booth or display area. This can be computer generated, stenciled or professionally made by a sign shop or banner maker. Attach them-based signs (*Isn't it time to make a difference?*) to permanent name sign. You might also pick a phrase or several words from the mission statement, creed or purpose to use in a sign.

You can also attach brochures, enlarged color or black and white photocopies of your group in action, enlarged copies of news articles or other material to complete your booth. When using photos or news articles, enlarge them at least to 5 x 7 inches, or preferably 8 x 10 inches, and mount these enlargements on foam core. Attach the mounted photos and/or articles to the display board with Velcro. Add some color with construction paper, photo-mat or even a small print fabric for variety. Add a descriptive line or two about each photo so people know what the project or event is all about.

Adding your mission statement or creed in a large, easy-to-read font is also a good idea. This usually gets to the heart of your organization. You could also bring along a photo album, a page of “talking points” (10-12 commonly asked questions and answers you have prepared in advance) about your chapter or state organization. (*See Appendix I for examples.*)

If you are giving away an item such as a pamper basket, etc., display the item. Have a gift bag set out for the drawing names to go into. If possible, have your registration slips made into pads – it keeps the booth area neat and less cluttered looking. A tip on organizing your booth – do not have your booth materials all flat on a table. Bring a small box or two; place them underneath fabric to create visual variety. Place the giveaway item, a basket of freebies, etc., on the different levels to complete your display.

Expo Hints & How Tos

The following is a partial list of hints and things to do (or not to do) if you are manning a booth. You may think of others to add.

Do

- Smile and be friendly
- Be inviting and welcoming
- Encourage visitors to sign up for drawing
- Arrange booth materials attractively and in an easy-to-read fashion
- Offer them the flyers, freebies or other things you have
- Stand up and position yourself near the front or outside of your booth to greet people
- Be neat, tidy and professional
- Draw people in with some “small talk” questions; see “Things to Say”

Don't

- Have negative body language: crossed arms, hands in pockets, bored look
- Wait for people to ask you questions
- Cluster with other workers or friends and forget your purpose in being there
- Drink or eat in the booth – ABSOLUTELY NOT!

Apparel

- Chapter nametag
- Chapter shirt
- Nice outfit: slacks and top or sweater – NO JEANS or SHORTS
- Comfortable, nice shoes – NO TENNIS SHOES, if possible

The nature of your booth will dictate your clothing; at a county fair in August, nice shorts, chapter shirt and tennis shoes are probably appropriate.

Things to Say

- Do you have a Women of Today chapter in your area?
- Do you volunteer? What kinds of things do you do?
- Are you interested in learning more about the Women of Today?
- Would you like a flyer or contact information on the Yourtown chapter?
- We're having a drawing; wouldn't you love to win?
- Feel free to ask questions if something in our booth sparks your curiosity.
- Thanks for stopping by!
- Share your own special experiences with Women of Today.

A couple of additional thoughts about working a booth are worth mentioning. You will have to trust your own judgment about when to continue a conversation or when a person is just "looking." Some people are more than willing to talk and visit. Others are very turned off by a person who is too chatty. Just let your smile and positive attitude carry you through. The second thought is that you really have to want to work a booth to do it well. Do not pair up two relatively shy people on a shift – no one will hear your message. You also need to be assertive; go up and say hello to someone looking at your newsletter or photo display. Make small talk and conversation. Don't hesitate to share the fellowship.

You should have a small clipboard or notepad for each work shift to leave notes for the next. Assign someone to check in at the end of each day and assure that there are plenty of supplies, etc. Consider having a state roster available so if someone from a nearby town wants to know about the chapter in their community, you can easily access the contact name and number.

Historical Society

The county historical society is another valuable resource or access for public relations. They may have a display area devoted to community service --- and that fits the Women of Today. Consider donating a subscription to your state or chapter newsletter, brochures, t-shirts, etc., to their society. Check with your local museum to see if this is possible and what the procedure is. Some past state and national officers have given commemorative mugs, campaign brochures and other collectibles to help preserve history and share your chapter's and member's contributions to the community.

Awards

Awards and community nominations are another area where you can gather some publicity and honor someone special. Many television and radio stations honor outstanding volunteers through special awards programs. Mayors, Chambers of Commerce, community groups and governors honor programs or organizations that do volunteer work. There are also businesses that have programs such as JC Penney Gold Rule award; some insurance companies offer recognition (or monetary awards) and almost all communities recognize some sort of

“outstanding” person – senior, teen, volunteer, parent, etc. Our members commit themselves to making the world a better place in which to live. Find out about the award and recognition programs offered in your community and nominate a deserving chapter member or project for the honor.

Your chapter may also want to consider developing your own recognition program for someone within your community. You can develop some guidelines, put out some publicity and run the recognition program. This would be a perfect opportunity to call a press conference to recognize the nominees and name the outstanding winner. For the cost of a small plaque and some public relations efforts, you have accomplished a lot.

Media Kit

A media kit is also a wonderful addition to the promotion of your chapter and state organization. You first need to determine how this media kit will be used; will you use it for state or regional conventions, for every event or for special press conferences? How it will be used will help determine what to include. In general, you might want to include the following:

- *Cover letter from the public relations member of your chapter*
This will inform the news agency who is sending out this media kit and why.
- *Fact sheet on the organization*
When the state or local chapter was founded, some of the highlights of the past years, and funds raised for what causes should be included.
- *Fact sheet on the president*
Include the president’s Women of Today history, achievements, details about their professional experience, other organizations they may be a part of, something about their personal life, and a statement or two about their goals or personal mission statement. Some include a good black and white photo.
- *News release that is specific to the event*
If the kit is for a specific conference, project or other special event, provide a news release that has all the vital information – answer the who, what, when, where, why and how. Include a quote from a key person (officer, project chair, etc.). Include a name and number for further information.
- *Schedule of events*
If it is a specific event, provide a schedule so the media can see at a glance what is happening.
- *Other things you may want to include*
If you have them, a brochure, business card, or clean copies of news articles that further explain your organization.

The presentation of this media kit is also important. It does not have to be done by a professional printer, but it should look professionally done. You can purchase pocket folders in a variety of colors and styles at most stationery stores or departments. Choose paper of a high quality and in a soft pastel or neutral color. Some media kits are designed so that the different sections are “stacked” – when the folder is opened, the different sections are assembled with the paper of shortest length is in the front and the tallest piece in the back. The pages would be

clearly labeled in a bold font (**History, Fact Sheet on the President, Schedule**, etc.) so the needed document can be easily selected and removed. (*See Appendix J for examples.*)

The media kit is not returned to the organization, so be prepared to make multiple copies of your materials and photos. Most newspapers, television and radio station maintain an information file and will add this to their resources.

The **Media Kit Timeline** is an important part of a public relations campaign. Many resources suggest sending out a media kit approximately four to six weeks prior to your event. This would allow the news agencies time to plan their coverage and make additional contact with you. It is also recommended to that you send (or fax) media alerts (in essence, a single news release that changes slightly as the event approaches) two weeks prior, one week prior, and two to three days prior to your event.

The big event has come and gone. You followed all the suggestions, sent all the recommended news releases, contacted the right people, and still no coverage – now what? Why not contact that report you have developed a relationship with and learn, straight from the source, what you could do differently or improve. You may find out it was as simple as a shortage of reporters that night. Perhaps the newspaper would be glad to publish information on the event – do you have good photos or a follow-up news release for after the fact? You will never learn what works in your community unless you try something and then follow up if the public relations coverage is not what you had hoped.

The other important thing to remember is that developing a marketing and public relations campaign plan takes time and planning. The Women of Today have a great deal of media events or projects worthy of public relations. If something doesn't work, you can try it again!

.....
A listing of books and other related materials that may be of assistance for you as you develop your own public relations and marketing plan follows.

- *Do-It-Yourself Advertising* by Fred E. Hahn, John Wiley and Sons publisher
- *The Business Owner's Advertising Handbook* by Alvin Boyd, Patch & Frazzle Press
- *Sell Yourself Big* by Edwin A Moll, Topaz Books
- *How to Market Your Business* by Ira B. Rosengarten, Sourcebooks Trade
- *Marketing without Megabucks: How to Sell Anything on Shoestrings* by Shel Horowitz, Fireside publisher
- *The Publicity Kit* by Jeanette Smith, John Wiley and Sons publisher
- *Practical Publicity* by David Tedone, The Harvard Common Press
- *Publicity for Volunteers: A Handbook* by Virginia Bortin, Walker Publishing Company, Inc.
- *Targeted Public Relations* by Robert W. Bly, Henry Holt and Company
- *Publicity, How to Get It* by Richard O'Brien, Harper and Row
- *How to Get the Most out of Trade Shows* by Steve Miller, NTC Publishing Group
- *The McGraw-Hill 36 Hour Marketing Course* by Jeffery L. Seglin, McGraw-Hill Publishing
- *Marketing Workbook for Non-Profit Organizations* by Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
- *Non-Designer's Design Book* by Robin Williams, Peach Pit Press

Public Relations Oriented Days or Events

There are several natural public relations events – days or weeks throughout the year – that are perfect for the promotion of Women of Today or that would be excellent opportunities for the Women of Today to partner with other organizations.

Use your creativity to determine what your chapter or state can do for these events or special days. Some of the Women of Today events will have special activities already determined by the national, state, or chapter public relations committee. You can use these activities or your own additional plans. Any of the ideas, the public relations materials or marketing tools mentioned earlier in this manual can be used to promote the organization or the event. (*See Appendix K for examples of these events.*)

United States Women of Today Events

- Founder’s Day.....July 1
- Public Relations Emphasis Months.....July, September, October, April
- Women of Today Week.....last full week in September

National Events

- Make a Difference Day.....last Saturday in October
- Volunteer Recognition Week.....third or fourth full week in April

Buckets of Sunshine

Don’t forget the Women of Today Buckets of Sunshine campaign. The original manual came out in June/July 1997, and was revised in 2002. It was distributed by the United States Women of Today Public Relations Director. This campaign was developed by the Women of Today and is perfect for any public relations or marketing event.

The concept is to spread “buckets” (or baskets, pails, boxes, etc.) of sunshine as a chapter project. You might give cleaning supplies, packaged in buckets or laundry baskets, to a homeless shelter. You might give personal-care items packed in a small make up carrier or bathroom wastebasket to residents of a women’s shelter. You might distribute school supplies for individual students in school book bags or totes. You could also give a kitchen “starter kit” of spices, baking staples, etc. in a big mixing bowl to families moving from transitional housing to their own homes or apartments.

The Buckets of Sunshine manual is a valuable tool. Locate it and use it to assist you in promotion of your state or chapter. (*See Appendix L for logo.*)

Acknowledgements

People Resources

- Lauren Auchincloss, 1997-98 Treasurer, United States Women of Today
- Laura Bonds, 1997-98 Public Relations Director, United States Women of Today
- Sheila Carroll, 1997-98 President, United States Women of Today
- Valerie Kvale-Lunning, Minnesota Women of Today
- Terry Pronko, 1997-98 Programming Vice President, United States Women of Today
- Amy Pumper, 1997-98 Extensions Director, United States Women of Today

Resources Used to Assemble this Manual

- *US Women of Today Extensions Media Kit* by Mary Malmberg, 1993-94
- *What You Should Know About Public Relations* by Laura Bonds, 1997
- *Marketing Handbook for Non-Profit Organizations* by Amherst H. Wilder Foundation
- *Talk Now* by MN ENABL media and public relations guide, MN Attorney General office
- Resources and examples from member states and chapters of the United States Women of Today
- *1000 Words*, PO Box 394, 803 Highway 69 South, Twin Lakes, MN 56089-0394, 507-852-4121, Valerie Kvale-Lunning owner
- *M-Prints*, RR2 Box 152, Walnut Grove, MN 56180, 507-629-3532, Mary Malmberg, owner.

Originally printed and distributed in June 1998 – under the direction of Laura Bonds, Public Relations Director, United States Women of Today.

The document samples included in the following pages are designed to give you samples and examples of many of the public relations tools and marketing ideas mentioned in this manual.

Please use them – either as they are, with your own data included, or as a springboard to your own creative endeavors.

Appendix A: Letterhead & Newsletter Headers

[The copy quality was too poor to reproduce for the CD version.]

Appendix B: Letter to the Editor

Request for new members for your chapter

This was a letter written by the Balaton Women of Today and placed in their local newspaper in an attempt to generate interest in their chapter. They planned a Membership Night for January 24, sent this letter to the newspaper and sent out over 75 invitations. As the letter states, they were in jeopardy of losing their chapter due to a drop in membership. The letter proved to be VERY effective as they signed five new members that night! Two of the prospective members came as a direct result of the letter in the newspaper.

The Balaton Women of Today have given permission to distribute this letter in hopes that other chapters may have the same success they did. Feel free to contact any of the members listed below if you would like further information.

To All Women in the Balaton Area,

Are you interested in bettering yourself and your community? Do you like to have fun? We would like to invite you to an evening of fun and information on Tuesday, January 24, at 7:30 PM in the Community Center. All women ages 18 and older are welcome.

Frankly, we could use your help. Because of a requirement in the Minnesota Women of Today bylaws, we have only a few weeks to increase our membership numbers or lose our chapter. We would like to think there is a place in Balaton for an active women's group. There must be several women here who would be interested in an enjoyable and very informal civic group.

The Women of Today organization in Minnesota is celebrating 45 years of existence in 1995, tracing its beginning back to the Mrs. Jaycees in 1950. Over the years, the organization has evolved with the changing times. One of the changes was to delete the age limit. However, the original purpose of the group remains the same. Those purposes include community service, leadership training and fellowship.

The Balaton chapter was founded in 1986. A few of the projects completed since that time include the All-Town Rummage Sale, babysitting clinic, special family essay contest, Light Up the Night contest and a pet show. We have many, many ideas of projects we would like to do, but our shortage of members prohibits us from attempting many of them.

Not everything we do is "work." We do many fun things such as one-day trips, picnics, family nights, and hearing speakers. We have met other Women of Today members from our area and made some friends. We DO NOT require attendance at every meeting and/or function held. Our members participate only as much as they choose.

We hope many of you choose to attend our informative meeting on January 24. Come and check us out! For more information, call any of our members listed below.

Balaton Women of Today Members,
Cathy Newville 734-2773
Mary Jo Henkel 734-6341
Mary Timmerman 734-5011
Clarinda Miller 734-2701
Glenda Kvale 734-2424
Gayle Kaup 734-2981

Membership – Catch the Wave

Appendix C: News Releases

Anytown Women of Today
999 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345

CONTACT: Sally Smart, Public Relations 555-555-1234

August 1, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FALL FASION SHOW & LUNCHEON

The Anytown Women of Today will present a Fall Fashion Show & Luncheon, featuring clothing from the Colony Shop, Casual Corner, Dillard's, Irma's and Carter's Corner, on Saturday, August 16, 12:00 PM at the Main Street Auditorium.

Attendees will be treated to a luncheon followed by the fashion show with reigning Miss Anytown as emcee.

Tickets are \$12.00 each and may be obtained at the Main Street Auditorium during business hours (9:00 AM – 5:00 PM) or by calling 888-1212.

All proceeds from the show will benefit the "Back to School" program for the Anytown Elementary School. Chairperson of the event is Jane Doe and committee members are Sally Smart, Vicky Volunteer, Hannah Happiness and Connie Competent.

The Anytown Women of Today have been serving this community for 15 years, providing leadership training, personal growth and community service.

Anytown Women of Today
999 Main Street
Anytown, USA 12345

CONTACT: Sally Smart, Public Relations 555-555-1234

August 1, 1997

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WOMEN OF TODAY CHAPTER FORMING

A new women's organization, Anytown Women of Today, is being formed in the community, with the first meeting slated for Thisday, Month 1, at 7:00 PM.

Connie Competent, one of the organizers, said Anytown Women of Today "is a group committed to bettering our community and ourselves."

Anytown Women of Today will be a part of the Ourstate organization and the United States Women of Today. Membership is open to any person, 18 years of age or older, with an interest in volunteer service, fellowship and personal growth.

The United States Women of Today was formed in 1985 to provide leadership training, community service opportunity for all people. Since their beginning, chapters have raised over \$1,000,000 for medical health foundations such as Cystic Fibrosis and March of Dimes. Millions of dollars have been donated to communities by local chapters and thousands of volunteer service hours are behind the projects that each chapter sponsors.

We urge all those interested to bring a friend and attend the organizational meeting. For further information, Connie may be contacted at 555-1234.

Appendix D: Newspaper Articles

[The copy quality was too poor to reproduce for the CD version.]

Appendix E: Ad Promotions

This ad promotion is designed for chapter doing an extension. Public relations are very important to the beginning of a good relationship with the new town. Start by doing some advertising prior to the actual first meeting. These ads are designed to spark interest and encourage attendance at meetings. Use them for four weeks prior to the meeting, or four days prior if they have a daily paper. Complete these ads with information regarding your first meeting.

Interested in:

Community Service



Watch for more details...
Anytown Community Hall
Tuesday, March 8, 1990
7:30 PM

Interested in:

Leadership Training



Watch for more details...
Anytown Community Hall
Tuesday, March 15, 1990
7:30 PM

Interested in:

Personal Enrichment



Watch for more details...
Anytown Community Hall
Tuesday, March 22, 1990
7:30 PM

Sound Interested!

**We invite you to be a part
of this new organization.**



A new chapter is being formed in your area!
Anytown Community Hall
Tuesday, March 29, 1990
7:30 PM

Use these advertisements in your local papers or newsletters.



**Women of Today
dedicated to serving our community
and nation.**

Call today for more information.



**Women of Today
committed to strengthening our
individual talents.**

Call today for more information.

United States Women of Today

- Community Service
- Personal Enrichment
- Leadership Training



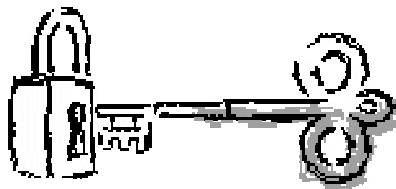
Join us today!

Want to volunteer to work in your community?

Women of Today is for YOU!

Call today to see what you can do to help.

The key to your success!



Women of Today

For more information contact:
Mary Membership 555-4321

**We are dedicated to
serving our community
and nation.**

*~from the United States
Women of Today creed*

Join Women of Today!

Interested in:

**Community Service
Leadership Training
Personal Growth**



**Women of Today
*invites you to become
part of our organization.***

For more information contact:
Mary Membership 555-4321

Appendix F: Public Service Announcements

10 Seconds

A successful community is one that is brimming with active volunteers. Become a community volunteer through the Women of Today chapter being formed. Women of Today – an organization dedicated to the betterment of your community. *[Insert local tag.]*

15 Seconds

Do you wish you could meet more people in your community? Enjoy the friendships of people who share your interest in community service, fun and helping others by joining the United States Women of Today. A Women of Today chapter is being organized for you. Become a part of it! *[Insert local tag.]*

15 Seconds

Do you see a need in your life to do something “just for you”? Become a member of the Women of Today and discover the satisfaction of friendships, fun, learning and service to your community. Women of Today is organizing a chapter now. Please join – just for you! *[Insert local tag.]*

15 Seconds

Share the excitement of creating your own local organization. The Women of Today organization wants to be a part of your community. The focus is on leadership training, community service, fellowship and YOU! Join the thousands of other members throughout the nation who care about their community. We need your help today. *[Insert local tag.]*

20 Seconds

Have you heard the news? After a decade of decline, volunteerism is on the rise! Yes, being a volunteer can provide a balance in your busy life of work and home, and can give you the satisfaction that comes with giving to and helping others. Take advantage of this trend and become a part of the United States Women of Today. A chapter is being organized for any person who would like to see improvements made in the community. Please attend the informational meeting and share your ideas for a better tomorrow. *[Insert local tag.]*

25 Seconds

Are you an individual who recognizes the importance of the work of volunteers in your community? Would you like to take a more active role in strengthening your community and helping to provide needed services, fun and spirit? Then your ambition and motivation is needed as a member of the Women of Today. A chapter of this national service organization is being formed to offer fellowship to its members, to organize needed projects and to help improve the lives of everyone in your community. Be a volunteer! Become a part of the Women of Today! *[Insert local tag.]*

30 Seconds

Successful, caring communities are ones that benefit from the work of active volunteers. Volunteers sponsor activities for all ages, raise funds for special needs and feel good about the contributions they are making. The United States Women of Today is a volunteer, community service organization which offers experience, project ideas, and support to their chapters, and they provide leadership training opportunities for their members. A Women of Today chapter is being organized to benefit your community. You are invited to become involved in this exciting opportunity – and to take an active role in making your community the best it can be. *[Insert local tag.]*

NOTE: if you are unable to time your announcement, follow these guidelines:

10-second spot = approximately 20 words; 20-second spot = approximately 50 words;

30-second spot = approximately 75 words; 60-second spot = approximately 100 words.

Appendix G: Public Relations Strategic Plan

May

- News release/photo of new officers
- Radio interview with new president or MVP
- “My mom’s the best” essay contest with rose bouquet for winner and news release and font; arrange for TV coverage with family

June

- Article/photo on national convention highlights
- Chapter gives teachers apples as thanks and a brochure advertising Women of Today
- Business cards to chapter officers
- Planning for chapter Founder’s Day activities

July

- Founder’s Day article, proclamation and photo
- Television or radio interview – Founder’s Day
- Special new member/renewal celebration
- Begin Women of Today Week planning
- Float or entry in local 4th of July Parade

August

- Back to School kick-off – coffee and rolls at schools
- Invite prospective members to Friendship Day activity
- Plan Make a Difference Day activities

September

- Women of Today Week Activities
- TV or radio interview
- Display ad in local shoppers/newspapers
- Wear chapter shirts one day
- Use bank and business marquees to announce
- Statewide social on special day

October

- Special new member/renewal celebration
- Business appreciation – letter to editor
- Make a Difference Day activities – chapter can sponsor or participate
- Begin planning for Breakfast with Santa

November

- Article/photo on national convention highlights
- Begin scholarship program PR – news release to papers and local high schools
- Radio interview with last year’s scholarship winner and project chair
- Newsletters to fifteen prospective members – Friendship Day

December

- Nametags/shirts – participation in holiday project
- Send a thank you letter to all chapter families for all that they do all year long
- Sponsor Breakfast with Santa for chapter kids – get photo in paper

January

- Booth at local women’s expo
- Plan Sweetheart’s Dinner – news release, photo, information
- Begin planning outstanding senior citizen of the year award
- Notify paper and radio of announcement date for senior scholarship winner two weeks prior

February

- Sponsor a drawing for Sweetheart’s Dinner
- Hold press conference for senior scholarship winner and present \$1,000 check
- News release about regional meeting with USWT president attending in March – announce date

March

- Schedule radio interview and press conference for USWT president
- Announce winner of outstanding senior citizen and present at their annual senior citizen luncheon

April

- National Volunteer Recognition Week – letter to editor in paper
- Display ad on joining WT in local paper
- Week of Young Child – have a booth at local expo
- “My mom’s the best” essay info published in newspaper and sent home with kids

Checklist for a Successful Public Relations Campaign

One-Time Event Timeline

- Compile list of media sources available to you with address and contact names.
- Decide what kind of promotional materials you will use to promote the event: brochures, flyers, posters, ads, etc. Prepare these items and distribute them throughout the area.
- Prepare announcements news release about the event and send to the newspapers.
- Prepare public service announcements about the event and send to TV and radio stations.
- Contact the radio and TV sources and ask for an interview at their station. Some local cable companies offer nonprofit organizations “free” spots on their station.
- Organize a press conference, if applicable.
- Make sure that photos are taken during the preparation activities working up to the event. Check with the newspaper to see if they can cover the meeting to take pictures or will run a story on the event.
- Make sure that you clip all articles and place them along with photos into a project book for recordkeeping.
- Write “thank you” notes to newspaper, radio, TV and any contacts for any help they provided for the event. VERY important – you will need their cooperation again and this is a great way to let them know their help was appreciated.

Appendix H: Flyer

Women of Today is:

- Community Service
- Personal Enrichment
- Leadership Training

*Our next scheduled meeting
Anytown Community Hall
Tuesday, March 29, 1990
7:30 PM*



For more information contact:
Mary Membership 555-4321

Who are the Sauk Rapids Women of Today?

Community Service, Personal Growth, Leadership Training and lots of FUN!

With the member from Sauk Rapids, Saint Cloud,
Sartell, Rice, Saint Augusta and Clearwater areas.

We are:

- Women who care!
- Women that want to make a difference in our communities.
- Women that want to have fun.
- Women that want training in leadership and personal growth.
- Women who want to make some great friendships along the way!

The Sauk Rapids Chapter has 23 terrific members from all walks of life. They are professional women, daycare providers, stay-at-home moms, and home-based business owners to name a few. They are of different stages in life: married, single, looking for fulfillment in many areas. Each one is special to the success of the chapter. Each one brings as much to the chapter as she receives in return! We have A LOT of fun along the way!

Women of Today is a national organization. Minnesota has, by far, the largest membership base with 125 chapters and 2379 members plus. The Sauk Rapids Chapter sponsors many events locally such as Babysitting Clinic, Santa Secret Shop, Hommerding Home Christmas Party, and Holiday Food Baskets to name a few. We also work with many foundations like March of Dimes, Juvenile Diabetes, Friendship Ventures, and Kidney Disease. We also provide our members with effective writing, effective speaking, leadership skills, and personal enrichment training. We cannot forget the socials and fun we have.

The Sauk Rapids Chapter meets on the third Tuesday of each month at the American Legion in Sauk Rapids at 7:00 PM. For further information call President Cindy Houck at 251-1069 or MVP Connie Jorgensen at 253-4424. All meetings are open to the public.

Appendix I: Brochure

Come and see what this organization is all about!

Meetings held each fourth Monday of the month at Ramsey City Hall at 7PM

You are cordially invited to join this dynamic women's organization the Women of Today.

Any woman over 18 years of age is invited to become part of this vital group of women. This organization is a place in which women are encouraged to become involved and hold positions of leadership.

Women of Today members can participate in various activities for the community and for yourselves.

This is the Ramsey Women of Today's third year in the community. We are looking for new members like you for our chapter. Come and join us for a meeting or a social, and see what Women of Today can offer you!



Service

Women of Today believe very strongly in service to others. Activities are conducted to educate the chapter members of the community in a variety of external and internal programming areas.

Women of Today support projects such as:

Community Involvement

- ◆ Adopt-A-Highway
- ◆ DARE
- ◆ Outstanding Young Adult Scholarship
- ◆ Easter Egg Bunny Brunch
- ◆ Senior Citizen Activities
- ◆ Family Week Awareness & Activities
- ◆ Food Shelf Donations

Foundations

- ◆ March of Dimes
- ◆ Lupus
- ◆ Kidney Disease
- ◆ Juvenile Diabetes
- ◆ Friendship Ventures

Minnesota Women of Today Creed

We the Women of Today are service, growth and fellowship. We believe that through us great lessons can be learned, worthy deeds performed, and a hand of fellowship extended to millions of women everywhere. May we leave this world a better place because we lived and served within it.

Would you like to know more about this exciting and rewarding organization?

Call Jana Brady at 753-0867
or
Josie Bisenius at 767-1075

Growth

Developing one's self confidence and learning how to work more effectively with others is also a priority in the Women of Today.

Opportunities for leadership training exist at all levels of Women of Today, from committee work and officer positions in the local chapter to committee work and officer positions in the state organization.

Our Personal Enrichment Programs are designed to help "build a better you" through a variety of areas:

- ◆ Effective Speaking
- ◆ Effective Writing
- ◆ Personality: Understanding You and Others
- ◆ Financial Management
- ◆ Communications
- ◆ Effective Parenting
- ◆ Time Management
- ◆ Leadership & Team Building
- ◆ Self-Esteem, Goal Setting & Assertiveness

1997-98 Ride the Wave into the Future



Ramsey Women of Today

Fellowship

Membership in Women of Today offers the opportunity to develop close friendships with women who share similar interests.

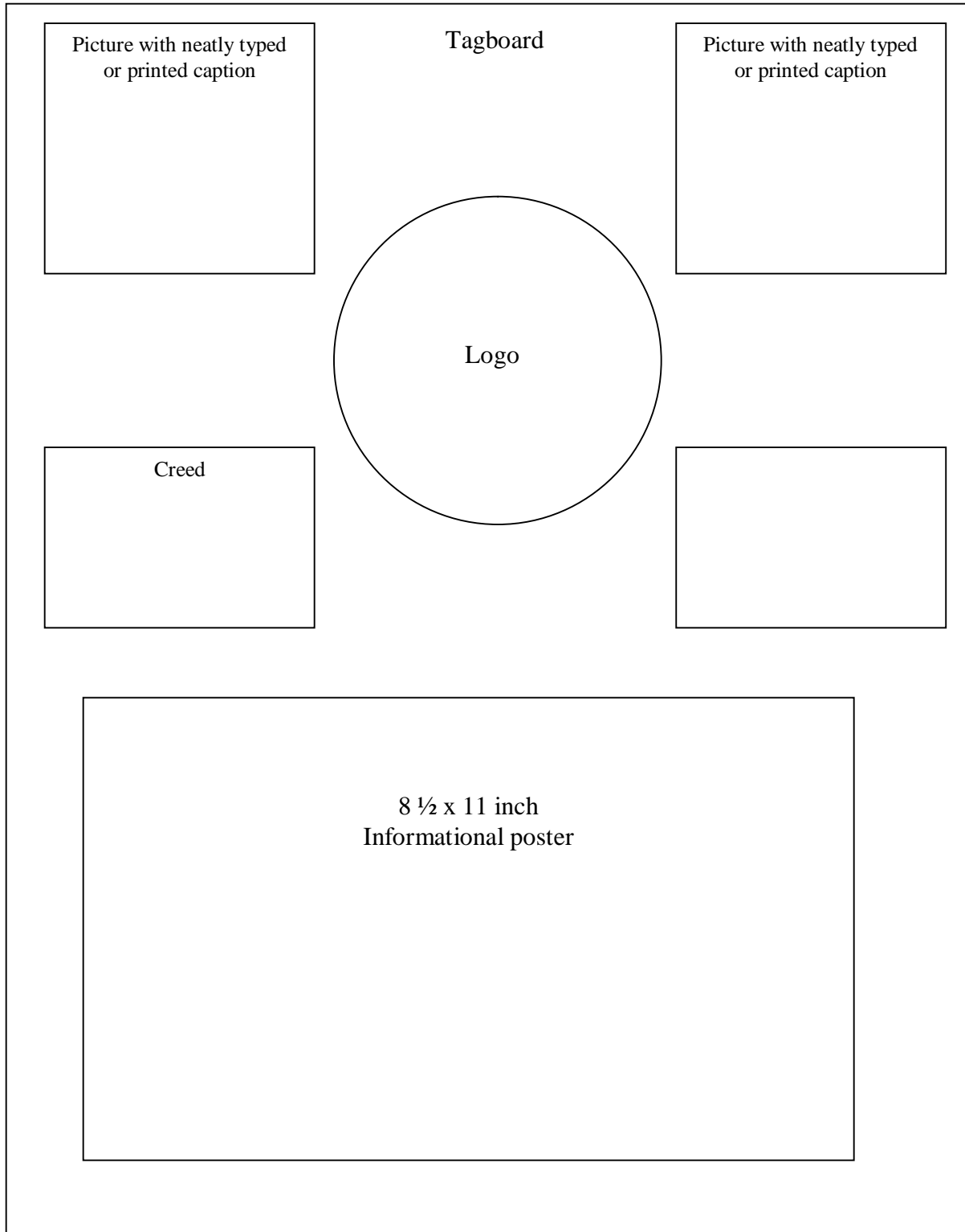
Social and other fun-filled events are held to encourage members to get to know one another better. Some of these events include family members.

- ◆ Holiday Parties
- ◆ Theme Parties
- ◆ Pamper Yourself Day
- ◆ Progressive Dinner
- ◆ Family Picnics
- ◆ Silly Suppers
- ◆ Craft Nights
- ◆ Cookie Exchange
- ◆ Movie Nights and Outings

The development of these long-lasting friendships is one of the "special" benefits of being a member of the Women of Today.

Appendix J: Display

Make your display neat and eye-appealing. Here is just one idea on how to incorporate items from this kit into a display or window poster.




Appendix K: Marketing Ideas

As leaders in Women of Today, we gain valuable leadership skills. Here are a few ideas of how you can share your light within your community:

- Serve on another nonprofit board representing Women of Today.
- Participate in a women's expo by having a Women of Today informational booth; check with your Chamber or local mall for upcoming opportunities.
- Sponsor a women's fest or expo
- Contact your local newspaper about serving as a "guest contributor" to their editorial page. We learn so much through Women of Today and should share it.
- Contact your local cable or public television station. They are often looking for guests on their shows or might even be willing to help you produce a regular show of your own.
- Sponsor an event – a speaker on women's issues, children or parenting topics are good ones. If you can't afford to solely sponsor the event, research another community group that would work with you.
- Provide work crews for community events. Sometimes, chapter finances don't go far enough, but we can offer many willing and helpful hands – March of Dimes, Habitat for Humanity, local Early Childhood Family Education projects are just a few ideas.
- Sponsor a Volunteer of the Year contest during National Volunteer Recognition Week. Honor someone outside of your local chapter for their hard work and dedication.
- Get involved or sponsor a ____ Day. Thank an individual or a group for all they do to make our communities a better place.

Appendix L: Media Kit

<div data-bbox="250 569 683 989" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p>We ARE the Difference!</p> </div>	<div data-bbox="846 405 1450 989" style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY STATE PRESIDENT DEBBIE JOHNSON</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY CONTRIBUTIONS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Minnesota Women of Today chapters offer financial support to</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY FACT SHEET</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In February 1995, the Minnesota Women of Today celebrated</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">MINNESOTA WOMEN OF TODAY MISSION STATEMENT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The mission of the Minnesota Women of Today is the help women improve their own lives and the lives of people in the communities around them. The organization shall be a place in which young women are actively encouraged to become involved and hold positions of leadership. The organization shall provide opportunities for members:</p> </div>
	<div data-bbox="953 1073 1362 1283" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;">  <p>Minnesota Women of Today</p> <p>Nancy Dvoracek Executive Director PO Box 232, Anoka MN 55303 612-421-4718 (office and fax)</p> <p><i>“Community Service and Personal Growth”</i></p> </div>

Organization Fact Sheet



United States Women of Today

Fact Sheet
1997-98

PURPOSE	To contribute to the betterment of our community while providing leadership training and personal enrichment for its members.
ESTABLISHED	July 1, 1985 (previously known as the United States Jaycee Women).
MEMBERSHIP	Membership is open to all persons at least 18 years of age. The United States Women of Today currently has over 4000 members in 17 states nationwide.
LEADERSHIP	The national organization is led by a President and Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of officers, program managers, directors and state presidents.
PROGRAMMING	Internal – Effective Speaking, Effective Writing, Focus on Women, Project Recognition, and STEP (Success Through Enthusiastic Participation). External – external programs are supported by the United States Women of Today on a rotation/bid basis. Currently the United States Women of Today support RESOLVE, an infertility education and awareness program.
MEETINGS	Two meetings are held annually. The Mid-Year Meeting is held in October and the Year-End Meeting is held in June.
NEWSLETTER	A bimonthly newsletter is distributed to all members of the Board of Directors and chapters.

Cover Letter



Minnesota Women of Today

May 1, 1998

Randy Peterson
Albert Lea Tribune
707 Front Street
Albert Lea, MN 56007

Mr. Peterson:

The United States Women of Today are coming to Albert Lea! This media kit is our formal announcement that we are coming to your community in June for our Annual Convention.

Included in the media kit is a fact sheet on the organization, our national president, a schedule of events for the weekend of June 12-14, 1998, and a news release for your use.

I will be in contact with your publication two weeks prior to the convention to answer any questions you may have and to update you on any convention schedule changes. If you have further questions, please contact me at 555-123-4567.

Sincerely,

Suzie Publicity
Public Relations State Program Manager
Minnesota Women of Today

enc

Press Release

Yourtown Women of Today
12345 Main Street
Yourtown, STATE ZIP

CONTACT: Sally Smart, Public Relations 555-555-1234

[DATE]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UNITED STATES WOMEN OF TODAY MID-YEAR MEETING

The United States Women of Today Mid-Year Meeting was held in Fargo, North Dakota, October 2-5, 1997. More than ____ women from ____ states across the nation were in attendance for the event.

Sheila Carroll, President of the United States Women of Today, from Springfield, Minnesota, presided over the business meeting and activities of the weekend.

Events of the weekend included training sessions for the national staff and board as well as training for the general members. A business meeting was conducted and an awards luncheon as well as an evening banquet were held.

Attending from (chapter and/or state) was/were (list all those who attended, offices held or other pertinent data as applicable).

During the convention, (list anything of importance to the organization, to your chapter or to you personally such as training sessions that inspired, business from the meetings, etc.)

The Yourtown Women of Today were recognized for the following achievements: (list awards received). Also recognized for outstanding service to the organization was/were (list individuals and honors received).

The Women of Today is a nonprofit civic organization which provides personal growth and leadership training for its members through community involvement. The Yourtown Women of Today sponsor locally (list your projects). Membership is open to members over the age of 18 years. The Yourtown Somen of Today meet (list time, location and date of regular monthly meetings). For further information on the Women of Today and its activities, contact (list name of contact and phone number).

President Fact Sheet



United States Women of Today

President Fact Sheet **Sheila Carroll**

Serving the United States Women of Today as President for the 1997-98 year is Sheila Carroll of Springfield, Minnesota. Sheila is a member of the Springfield Women of Today and has been active on the state and national level for several years.

“Sharing the Light of Leadership and Service” is the theme Sheila has chosen for her year as President. Sheila believes that through our service to our communities, we are sharing our light with others, and provide very valuable volunteer services. It is through continued service to others that we can develop leadership skills that will help us to be more effective in all areas of our lives. Her mission is to continue in the traditions of the past which have made our organization distinguished, while balancing the changing needs of our members, now and in the coming years.

Her past experience within the organization includes holding local and state offices and positions within the United States Women of Today including those of STEP Program Manager, Programming Vice President and Extensions Director. Sheila has also been recognized on the state level by many awards and honors including the state’s highest honor, Key Woman. Her dedication and commitment to the national level has also been recognized. She has been honored with the Presidential Award of Excellence twice, and was awarded Presidential Medallions as well as receiving the most prestigious award, the United States Women of Today Ambassador Award.

The Women of Today is not the only organization to benefit from Sheila’s involvement. She lives in Springfield, Minnesota, and has served with the Springfield Rotary Club, Springfield Hospital Board, Springfield Area Health Care Foundation Board, Downtown Revitalization, Springfield Chamber of Commerce and the United Fund. Sheila is also a certified professional photographer and owns her own business, Portraits by Sheila since 1991.

Schedule of Events



United States Women of Today Mid-Year Meeting
October 2-5, 1997
Fargo, North Dakota

*Λιγητσ□Χαμερασ□Αχτιον
Λετ τηε Γοοδ Τιμεσ Ρολλ!*

Thursday, October 2

8:00 – 9:00 PM	Executive Committee Meeting	Sonata II
9:00 – 11:00 PM	VPs meeting with PMs & Directors	Sonata II
10:00 – 1:00 AM	Registration & Hospitality	Presidential Suite

Friday, October 3

8:00 – 10:00 AM	Registration	Hallway
10:00 – 1:00 PM	Staff Meeting	Sonata II
1:30 – 3:00 PM	President's Roundtable	Sonata II
3:00 – 8:00 PM	Registration	Hallway
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Bylaw Committee	Sonata I
3:00 – 5:00 PM	Finance Committee	Sonata II
4:00 – 5:00 PM	Materials Review Committee	Sonata I
5:00 – 6:00 PM	Program Study Committee	Sonata I
5:00 – 6:30 PM	Membership Committee	Sonata II
6:30 – 7:00 PM	Extensions Committee	Sonata II
6:00 – 8:00 PM	Future Directions Committee	Sonata I
7:00 – 8:30 PM	Bylaw Committee	Sonata II
7:30 – 8:15 PM	Effective Speaking Competition	Overture
8:00 – 8:30 PM	First Timers	Sonata I
8:30 – 9:30 PM	Sharing Tables	Etude
8:30 – 11:00 PM	National Store	Etude
8:30 – 1:00 AM	Party – "Schmidt Sisters" at 9:15 PM	Mozart I & II
10:00 – 11:00 PM	"Sharing the moment with Photography" Seminar by Sheila	Overture

Saturday, October 4

7:00 – 8:00 AM	Registration	Hallway
7:00 – Noon	National Store	Hallway
8:00 – 8:30 AM	Welcome	Bach
8:30 – 9:25 AM	Membership Moments – Capture the Excitement!	Bach
9:30 – 10:25 AM	Lighting a Spark – Training & Motivating your members	Bach
10:30 – 11:10 AM	Election Committee	Sonata I
10:30 – 11:10 AM	Programming – RESOLVE Forum	Overture
11:15 – 11:55 AM	Foundation Board Meeting	Sonata I
11:15 – 11:55 AM	Extensions Forum	Etude
11:15 – 11:55 AM	Public Relations / Secretary Forum	Overture
12:00 – 2:30 PM	Luncheon	Mozart I & II
2:30 – 2:45 PM	Credentials	Hallway
2:45 – 5:00 PM	Board Meeting (Open to General Membership)	Bach
6:30 – 10:00 PM	Banquet	Bach
10:00 – 1:00 AM	Hospitality	Presidential Suite

Sunday, October 5

9:00 – 10:00 AM	Fellowship Breakfast	Bach
10:00 – 11:00 AM	Closing Ceremonies	Bach

Spirit Awards for participation in all events
General members are welcomed and encouraged to attend committee meetings

Appendix M Founder's Day Activities & Ideas

Whatever you decide to do for the celebration of Founder's Day, please forward to the USWT Public Relations Director copies of clippings, pictures, proclamations, etc.

Thanks and have a great FOUNDER'S DAY!

- Press release in newspapers, on radio, on television, and on local cable channel (sample included).
- Contact local television station and see if they will interview some of the officers about the history of the United States Women of Today.
- Proclamation from local mayor (sample included).
- Businesses that have local marquees may place an announcement for you.
- Have a luncheon for members and honor past chapter/state presidents
- Make contribution (financial or physical) to local charity in honor of Founder's Day and have news release or photo placed in the local newspaper.
- Place an ad in the local newspaper (samples included).
- Contact another local women's organization and ask to speak at one of their meetings to share the history of the Women of Today; you may gain new friendships from this one.
- At your meeting closest to the July 1 date, distribute United States Women of Today past history to your members. Some may not know how we got our start!
- Have a birthday party for the United States Women of Today.

Letter to the Editor²

Dear Editor:

Mayor/Governor (name of Mayor/Governor) has signed a proclamation declaring July 1 as Women of Today Founder's Day. The Women of Today is embarking on their ninth year as an organization which is dedicated to personal development, leadership training, and community service. The Yourtown Women of Today will celebrate by (event to be held).

The Yourtown Women of Today have been active in the (city) with such projects as (list some causes you have donated to) and have given (number) service hours through the many projects they are involved in.

On behalf of the members of the Yourtown Women of Today, I would like to thank the citizens and merchants of (city) for their continued support during this past year.

The Yourtown Women of Today meet (date – i.e., third Thursday) of each month at (place) at (time). Everyone is welcome to attend. For more information, contact (name) at (phone number).

² **NOTE:** Remember to type all Letters to the Editor double spaced and submit with a contact person's name, address and phone number at the top. Include photos if possible. Due to space limitations they were single-spaced here.

News Release³

FOR RELEASE: June 17 (about two weeks prior)

Women of Today Celebrate Founder's Day

Members of the Yourtown Women of Today are proud to join together with the Women of Today members across the country in celebrating Founder's Day on July 1. This date marks their ninth year as the Women of Today organization, which is committed to leadership training and personal enrichment through community service.

In observance of this special day in the history of Women of Today, the local chapter will be participating in (list activity or activities planned). The Yourtown chapter looks forward to many more years of service, growth and fellowship.

The Yourtown Women of Today meet the (date) of every month at (location) at (time). All are welcome to attend and learn more about the organization. For more information on the Women of Today, please call (name) at (phone number).

Public Service Announcements⁴

July 1 has been designated as United States Women of Today Founder's Day. The organization was founded on July 1, 1985. Women of Today provides leadership training and personal enrichment opportunities through community service to members across America. The Yourtown Women of Today provide (list community services). If you are interested in finding out how you can become involved in your community, call (name) at (phone number).

The Yourtown Women of Today are celebrating Founder's Day. Their organization was founded on July 1, 1985. The Women of Today offers members the opportunity for growth through personal enrichment, leadership training and community service. Join us at (station letters) in congratulating the Yourtown Women of Today for their service to (city).

Proclamation

WHEREAS: The United States Women of Today and the Yourtown Women of Today have set aside July 1 to recognize the many community activities of dedicated Women of Today members across the nation; and

WHEREAS: The United States Women of Today is an organization of over 4000 members in 17 states; and

WHEREAS: The United States Women of Today and the Yourtown Women of Today are dedicated to promoting public awareness and service programs such as (list USWT external areas), (list local and/or state foundations); and

WHEREAS: The United States Women of Today and Yourtown Women of Today provide personal enrichment and leadership training for its members; and

WHEREAS: The United States Women of Today believe that "we are dedicated to serving our community and nation, committed to strengthening our individual talents, and stand united by our friendship and belief in the future"

I DO HEREBY PROCLAIM JULY 1, 1997, TO BE UNITED STATES WOMEN OF TODAY FOUNDER'S DAY.

³ **NOTE:** Remember to type all news releases double spaced and submit with a contact person's name, address and phone number at the top. Include photos if possible. Due to space limitations they were single-spaced here.

⁴ **NOTE:** Remember to always check with the radio and television stations to see how they want to handle public service announcements and if they ask you to send the PSA to them, type each one on a separate sheet and double space them.

Appendix O: Women of Today Week Ideas

- Hold a seminar for women in the community – have several women’s and children’s services come out and place their brochures or giveaways out for the public.
- Hold an Outstanding Women of Today contest within your chapter and have members nominate other members they feel are most deserving of the award. Hold a luncheon and award the recipient with a gift or plaque.
- Run ads in local newspaper, send proclamation to Mayor’s office and send press release to local newspaper. Check with local TV stations and see if they can set up a time to interview you about your activities for the week or about the history of the United States Women of Today and your chapter. This will allow you to complete the part of the Shout Out with Pride form for running a PR campaign.
- Go the extra mile and organize a special membership night. Maybe plan a “Murder Mystery Party” or you can try out the “Death by Chocolate” that Christine sent out in her Membership VP mailing.
- If you have just completed an extension, hold an Extension Party. Celebrate with your chapter and your new chapter and make the announcement of your membership growth!
- If you are into fitness, have a personal trainer come out and do an aerobics class for your chapter. Have a pool day and everyone go to the YMCA or local pool.
- Everyone take a CPR class together – oh my, you just did an event that would certify you in some of the Focus on Women requirements! Everyone needs to know CPR!
- If you want to pamper yourself, set aside some time to go to lunch or dinner with friends.
- If you start now, you could try your luck with a Book Club. Choose a book and everyone that is interested can read it and hold a luncheon or dinner during Women of Today Week and discuss your likes and dislikes of the book. Like the Oprah Book Club, if she hears about ours, maybe she’ll have us on her show –yeah, right! Oprah’s show is in hyenas, but her Book of the Month (summer) is “Songs in Ordinary Time” by Mary McGarry Morris. Make sure that you video tape the dinner or luncheon so that we can send it in to Oprah. Any group that completes a book club with dinner or luncheon, please let USWT PR Director know.
- Have a Family Day at the park – cookout and play games. Plan it as a chapter event or individually.

Press Release⁵

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Women of Today Week Celebrated

The week of September (date and year) has been set aside by the United States Women of Today as Women of Today Week. During this time, chapters and states nationwide will be celebrating accomplishments, hosting membership drives and other special events.

The Yourtown Women of Today are (list here your activities or events that you will do to celebrate Women of Today Week).

The United States Women of Today was chartered in 1985 and have celebrated over (number) years of successful educational and fundraising partnerships with other groups such as March of Dimes, Leukemia Society, Arthritis Foundation to name a few. The United States Women of Today is an organization open to all persons, at least 18 years of age, interested in promoting community service, personal enrichment and leadership training. Today over 4000 members belong to the organization in 17 states and are making a difference in your community.

The Yourtown Women of Today have been serving this community for (number) years. Some of their projects include (list projects). The Yourtown Women of Today meet (location, date and time). For more information, please contact (name and phone number).

⁵ **NOTE:** Remember to type all news releases double spaced and submit with a contact person's name, address and phone number at the top. Include photos if possible. Due to space limitations they were single-spaced here.

Appendix P: Volunteer Recognition Week

- Provide needy families with firewood.
- Work at a crisis pregnancy center.
- Teach adult literacy classes.
- Volunteer at your local food bank.
- Adopt-A-Highway – contact your highway department.
- Have a scavenger hunt to collect food for the needy.
- Start a recycling program in your school or neighborhood.
- Organize and perform a puppet show for children with terminal illnesses.
- Sponsor a poster contest to promote a drug-free lifestyle; place posters in nursing homes afterwards for their enjoyment.
- Collect toys for domestic violence prevention center.
- Put together Buckets of Sunshine for abused women and children.
- Do yard work for a senior citizen; contact local senior citizen service agency.
- Adopt-A-Grandparent in a nursing home; read, write letters, visit.
- Teach English as a second language.
- Teach adults computer skills.
- Chapter president can organize an appreciation dinner for members.
- If your community is recognizing a volunteer, participate by nominating someone.
- Call the local Habitat for Humanity and see how you can volunteer.

Some measure their lives by days and years, others by heart throbs, passions and tears.
But the truest measure under the sun is what in your lifetime for others you've done.

Points of Light Foundation

Mission Statement: to engage more people more effectively in volunteer community service to help solve serious social problems.

Points of Light Foundation was founded in May 1990. This nonprofit organization is devoted to promoting volunteerism. The foundation is based in Washington, DC, and works in communities across the United States through a network of over 500 Volunteer Centers and partnerships with corporations, nonprofits and individuals. The Board of Directors includes prominent and politically diverse leaders from the business, education and nonprofit communities.

Building public awareness about the foundation's message requires a significant commitment to media outreach, recognition and national community service events. The foundation promotes its message of *engaging more people more effectively in volunteer community service* through a national public service advertising campaign. The foundation also sponsors various awards that recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements of volunteers. Three of these awards are:

- President's Service Awards⁶
- Awards for Excellence in Corporate Community Service
- Daily Points of Light Awards (soon to be restarted)

To increase interest in volunteering and inspire millions of people to volunteer, the foundation sponsors and promotes five national service events:

- National Volunteer Week
- Make a Difference Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- National Youth Service Day
- The Big Help Campaign⁷

⁶ **NOTE:** If you are interested in entering your chapter or state in the President's Service Award, call me at 870-933-0423 or the number on the form which can be found at www.pointsoflight.org. To learn more about the Points of Light Foundation, call 202-223-9186, ext. 209, or email volnet@aol.com.

⁷ You may have seen information on this at McDonald's Restaurant or on the Nickelodeon channel.

Appendix Q: USWT Creed & Logos

United States Women of Today Creed

We, the United States Women of Today,
Are dedicated to serving our community and nation,
Are committed to strengthening our individual talents,
And stand united by our friendship and belief in the future.



Buckets of Sunshine Logo

