



## Utilizing Volunteer Efforts to Accomplish Tasks

In order for a Sisters in the Brotherhood (SIB) Committee to be effective, it must incorporate the volunteer efforts of many members. To effectively utilize volunteers to accomplish tasks your committee might want to develop an action plan that includes Delegating, Prioritizing, Following Up, and if necessary, Making Changes to the plan.

### Delegating

It may be best to have One Sister take the lead on a task. This may be the Sister who suggested the task, the Sister who volunteered to take the lead, or the Sister who may have just shown an interest in getting it done.

- ✓ Remember that the Sister who takes the lead on a large or long-term task will need help from other committee members or volunteers.

It may be best to have a small team of two sisters work together to take the lead on a task. That way they can help each other stay on target until the task is completed.

### Prioritizing

To implement a list of tasks, it may be a good idea to assign Priority Status. Some tasks may get high priority for different reasons. Some of these are below:

- ✓ Tasks might have a high priority because they must be done before other tasks can be implemented. For instance, if your SIB committed to surveying all sisters in your Local; then writing a letter to the president of your Local to request a mailing list might become a high priority because the survey cannot be sent until the mailing list is received.
- ✓ If you just have one agenda item, several tasks might be ranked according to when they must be completed. For example, a high priority might be assigned to tasks that must be completed in weeks, a medium priority might be assigned to tasks that must be completed in months, etc.
- ✓ Some tasks might have a higher priority because a deadline is looming. For example, if your SIB committee has committed to participating in a walk to raise money for breast cancer research and to participate in habitat for humanity, you might need to change task priorities if the deadline for the walk is earlier than the habitat event.

- ✓ Some agenda items may receive a higher priority status because they are critical to your mission statement. For example, if your main goal is to get SIB members involved in union activities, phone banking for the Local may be assigned a higher priority than planning a SIB picnic.

Remember that Priority Status can change. You might make those changes at each meeting based on the above criteria, you might make those changes as tasks are completed, or you might make those changes as new tasks are identified.

### **Follow-up**

Even the most enthusiastic volunteer has a life outside of the SIB, and sometimes life just takes over. When a timetable is agreed upon for any task, no matter how small, provisions should always be included to make sure tasks stay on track.

- ✓ A less complicated task may just require planning for deadlines. For example:
  - If a letter to the Union President is due by the end of the month, a draft might need to be sent to committee members to review one week earlier than the due date.
- ✓ More complicated tasks that require the work of a lot of volunteers may require subcommittee meetings between regular SIB meetings. For example:
  - Work might proceed during the subcommittee meeting and a representative would report the progress of the subcommittee to the full membership at regular meetings.
  - One Sister member might be assigned to only make sure a complicated campaign is going according to schedule. This Sister may have no duties other than to follow up on activities and deadlines or send reminders and post reports.

### **Making Changes to the Plan**

**Flexibility** is important in organizations where consensus of the members and volunteers is needed to get work done. So be ready to make changes. Below are two examples of when this might happen:

- ✓ **Circumstances change.** Perhaps the Sisters had some SIB committee agenda items before the Local Union got involved in an important political race where a Sister is running for a township council seat. Given the added publicity and focus, agenda items might need to change so the Sisters do not become overextended.
- ✓ **Plans change.** What seemed to be a really great idea doesn't work out. For example, the Sisters may have made a commitment to volunteer for Habitat, but a lot of overtime on a job begins demanding the Sisters' time. So, agenda items might need to be adjusted.