

Guider Symposium 2014  
Café Exchange session  
**Community Visibility and Service**

All participants were introduced and told us a few things about themselves.  
7 Districts were represented, mainly Spark and Brownie Guiders, Trefoil and one Treasurer.

**Visibility:**

- It depends where you live, your town can support Guiding through service projects and participation in cultures events.
- Sometimes a leader is living in another town then the one she is guiding in (Mc Gill students) and does not know about availability in town. Should go and ask Commissioner she will be able to help. Or maybe speak to PR person if there is one.
- It was pointed out the French population has no idea about Guiding and this has to change.
- For a PR person it can be a leader who wants to have a break from unit duties but wants to stay involved in Guiding or a parent who does not want to commit to weekly meetings.
- A great way to be visible is to go to parades, festivals and community events as a large group in uniform and use a banner or sandwich board to show who we are.
- Our new uniform makes us look more like a cohesive group.
- Question was asked how many had a unit flags and most answered yes! Some samples were shown around of banners we can use. It was concluded that every District should have banners that can be used at all events and gatherings.
- A good idea is that you put up a Guiding sign if you are camping at a public or non-Guiding campsite, it is great PR and it is easier to find the site.
- Have a sign on the door of your meeting place when you are there "Girl Guides meet here" and just remove it when you leave again.
- Make good use of the electronic community boards if your city has one. Very often there are times when the city has nothing special to announce that is when you try to get PR info on the board.
- Information about WAGGGS: Many people do not know about Guiding around the world and that we travel to many places. Talk it up!
- Take pictures and write up a story about your activity. Send it to the local paper. You may not get it in every time but the time you get it in is great!
- Suggestions where you can be visible and give service at the same time:
  - Toffee on snow at a carnival/skating party.
  - Serve coffee at event
  - Sell lemonade at Canada Day
  - When possible set up an activity so public can see what we do.
  - Roasting marshmallows over fire
  - Show of that we do handle tools (wood working, shopping wood etc.)
  - Buddy burners at overnight camp in town/city park
  - Bingo night as a group in uniform at town community center
  - Drive by cookie selling and cookie pick up on a shopping center parking lot.
  - Penny arcade

- Invite local newspaper to all PR opportunities and events. See if you can befriend one newspaper person by talking to them and explaining all about Guiding and all the wonderful things we do. Once they understand they may be more willing to give us visibility.
- Grocery bagging (This can only be done in independent stores since large stores take a cut for their own charity and we cannot allow this)
- Have an outside meeting at least once a month, most things we do inside we can do outside. Do not forget to put up a sign.
- 
- A Question was asked: How do we get younger Guiders on board and more invested? Get them to pass on information to the girls even though they will not be involved in the activity! It seems that girls will not participate if their Guiders do not participate.
- It was suggested that we should have social evenings (with food) with our Guiders so we can share and feel the sisterhood of Guiding. Give the new Guiders a mentor to help them on their way. We should also be flexible and realize that not all Guiders are able to attend all meetings or extra events. This was the condition on which they joined.
- It is important to get the young Guider to say what's in it for me and point out all the benefits.
- Another suggestion was that maybe we should change our approach and have our parents police checked so that when it is needed they can jump in and help out whenever there is a need. Or when a Guider is not able to go to the event.
- Once we get young Guiders comfortable in their role they will be more comfortable to go out in the community to represent us and this way we can show we are a vibrant (all ages) group of leaders.
- When we have sharing time in the unit and ask our girls what they have done in the past week we should not forget about ourselves. We should also share what we have done, this way they come to understand (and the parents too) that we do a lot more than just our unit time.
- The more visible our trefoil becomes the better, people will remember our brand.
- For Sparks and Brownies it is important that we reinforce the importance of wearing the uniform out and about, so that it becomes a habit.
- It was suggested that there should be something that can be worn over snow suits and jackets to identify the girls when it is cold.
- In the folder handed out at Symposium is a bookmark with info we should memorize to use when asked for info about Guiding (elevator speech) It only takes a few minutes.

- Get in with co-operate activities like Virgin's Movie's in the Park. They have at the moments scouts serving popcorn. Every time the station mentions the event, they mention scouting. Free publicity and visibility in all the communities they go!
- Bumper stickers; I am a proud supporter of Girl Guides.
- Selling cookies at craft fairs.
- Face painting at community events (in Uniform)
- Run the BBQ at a community event.

#### **Service:**

- When you are out in the community to do a service. be visible.
- "Bob for a Job" (in England)  
"Heitje voor een karweitje" (in Holland)  
These are chores done by the girls done during a service week in the Guiding year. For instance you go walk the dog for an elderly person, you help an elderly person with doing the groceries or mow their lawn.  
This can be done by signing up with neighbors and friends for a certain time when the chore will be done.

It was suggested that we have a Quebec Provincial Service week in which we all do a service for others outside our house and earn money for world friendship.

- Royal Bank has grants where you work together on a project picked by bank employees (such as bike path clean-up, tree planting etc.) and you get the grant money.
- After you have done a service advertise the fact you did so in newspaper, piccolo, block or cite paper.
- Have a sign-up sheet for parents to help at some occasion
- .Parents are valuable resources when opportunities come up (including dads)  
Have them share about their careers or try to visit their workplace (in uniform)
- Yellow fish road, the project is undervalued. It can be done by District or just by a unit. It can be shared with scouts to cover a larger area. There is a web site for information and it is great PR.
- Hike for hunger – collect food for shelter.
- Combine levels for an event. The older girls plan a meeting with stations to travel around the world than invite the Sparks and Brownies to come. Everybody brings (donates) dog or cat food as entrance fee, this will be donated to the SPCA by the older girls on visit to the shelter where they stay and do some chores (clean cages, sweep floors, wash bowl etc.)

- Valentines for Veterans. (Info on National face book page)
- Sew PJ pants at a meeting.. Each girl makes two pair, one to keep and one to donate to a shelter.
- Collect bottle caps and can tabs for the Shriners.
- Once you have successfully completed an service project or event tell us in the piccolo what you did but also how you did it and what it took to organize it so that others can do it also without having to start planning from scratch.
- Montreal Highland Games in August

And last but not least: WE CHALLENGE ALL GUIDERS TO WEAR THEIR UNIFORM ALL DAY ON FEB 22ND! (or the Friday before at work as well)