

Motivating your members while fund-raising through community events

In the last issue, we featured insights into choosing and using chapter officers from **Lisa Siano**, advisor at Houston High School in Tennessee. Lisa also shared with us tips on motivating chapter members to be involved in activities, from the chapter's program of work to competitive events. Listening to outstanding teachers explain their programs always shows how the parts fit together to make the whole program work.

Event fund-raisers

As we mentioned before, **Lisa's chapter runs many community and school events each year.** Virtually all of the events at her school are put on by the DECA chapter. Since they also run the school store, DECA is highly visible at Houston High. One of their four major charity events each year is the Mr. Mustang Competition, a comedy-type event. The event raises money for MDA, and the contestants get gift certificates and other donated items. In contrast, their Senior Miss scholarship event is very serious. The top five contestants all get scholarships. The proceeds come from ticket sales, sponsors and entry fees.

Organization

These kinds of chapter activities take a lot of effort, encouraging and reminding. She declares, however, that "Kids are always willing to get involved in an event for a charity. Charity events are the key to motivation." The Houston chapter does so many charity events that they can't possibly submit them all into competition as Civic Consciousness Projects (or Creative Marketing or Learn and Earn, etc.). "If you can build motivation with community charity events, then members are more willing to do leadership training or competition or the other things. And the charity events are great public relations."

"You build leadership easily by being civic minded. Parents don't turn you down. Businesses don't turn you down." The Chamber of Commerce in her town loves Houston High School DECA. "The Chamber of Commerce is always totally impressed with the professional demeanor of the students and with their interest

in the business community and the community at large." **Once a year, all chapter members help to host the Chamber of Commerce's business expo.**

Better teaching

The curriculum is enriched by these activities. All of the activities are based on the state standards of instruction. They are "application through the event": public relations, promotion, ad writing, etc. As juniors, all of Lisa's students produce a written research project which they put into a portfolio. Most of these don't go into competition. She also ties the competitive events into her curriculum by doing testing and role-plays in class. She borrowed this approach from Dennis Sweetapple at Spanish River High School. This is her fourth year of using the components of competition in her classroom.

Says Lisa, "Marketing is fun in itself, but DECA expands tenfold your opportunity to do more with it. It's a lot of work, but fun work."

Lisa believes that one key to motivation is getting to know the students when they come into your program. She makes each student write an essay about himself/herself. "This way they know you care about who they are." But in order to get to know students, "you have to open yourself up as well." The effort to share yourself with the students is worthwhile. She reports that she feels energized when she goes to conferences and interacts with other people. She's always willing to share with peers as well. DECA activities are "a great opportunity for the advisor to develop as a teacher and as a person."

A simple tip: Lisa has 10 years of photo collages of chapter members and activities on the walls of her classroom. "My room is covered with them. People come by to see them." She thinks the photos are good for team building. Lisa's enthusiasm for DECA activity is summed up in her own words: "It makes me rich."

Thank you so much, Lisa, for sharing your expertise with the wider advisor community.

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