

WAPF Chapter Meetings

Practical Tips for Building a Sustainable Chapter with an Enduring Impact

by Karen Voelkening-Behegan, Pasadena CA Founding Chapter Leader, 10/1/18

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5 Key Leadership Principles

- 1) ***Everyone has something to offer!*** If you'd like to maximize your impact by creating a long-lasting and sustainable chapter, you'll need to avoid burn-out. Don't be a one-man-show, at least not in the long-term! ***Listen*** to your community. Identify interested participants. Find volunteers to help bring your chapter to life. Let your chapter reflect the knowledge, talents, and passions that are already present in your community!
- 2) ***Elevate everyone!*** Make no one wrong, always show gratitude, and be aware that creating a sustainable chapter is a team effort. You want willing participants who are recognized and acknowledged for their talents. Recognition and acknowledgement give people a sense of purpose and inspire them to action, like the action it takes to create a sustainable chapter for the benefit of their health, community, and environment!
- 3) ***Be patient!*** Wait for your co-leaders to show up! You will know who they are! Keep your ears open and allow your chapter to unfold and develop itself naturally based on the participants in your area.
- 4) ***Never cancel a meeting!*** The show must go on no matter what, whether you can make it or not. Set your Meeting Schedule way in advance with the support of passionate and dedicated volunteers who can back you up if life gets in the way. To have a lasting impact, you need to build community by offering regular meetings on a consistent basis!
- 5) ***Be a leader of leaders!*** You'll know your chapter is a success when people don't know you're the founder because you let your co-leaders shine!

Logistics

1) ***Initial Steps***

- Build your Food Resource List
Ask around, check online, visit farms & farmers markets
- Build your Email list
Ask people who contact you in search of food if they'd like to be on your email list for future meetings
- Find a Venue
Ask Around! Affordability and availability are key!

2) First Meetings

- Decide your meeting frequency
Figure out how often and when you'll meet based on what participants want and what you can do!
- Commit to NEVER Cancelling a meeting!
Always have the resources in place to run the meeting no matter what! As long as there are at least 2 in attendance, then the meeting is worth having!
Keep the meeting even if the guest speaker cancels at the last minute.
Some of our favorite meetings have had no set schedule or topic!
- Solicit volunteers
In order to never cancel a meeting, you will need one or more backup hosts to help run meetings when you can't make it. Life will happen. Guaranteed!
- Offer leadership positions
Figure out who is most passionate and committed and create volunteer positions for them! This establishes a sense of responsibility among volunteers. You may have as many co-leaders as you wish even though only 2 of them may be listed with the Foundation. Offering co-leaderships or officer positions is enticing. People will want to volunteer in order to gain some leadership experience and to put it on their resumes!
- Pick your meeting dates and book them!
I always book out at least 1 year so we never have to worry about finding dates!

3) Activity Planning

- Meet with your volunteers
Once or twice a year, get together with your fellow volunteers, officers, or co-leaders and figure out who will lead each meeting.
- Brainstorm
Ask your group what they're interested in and plan your activities, topics, and guest speakers from there.
- Share Meeting Dates & Times
Make sure all volunteers know the Meeting Schedule, so they know the dates to for inviting guest speakers!
- Publish Meeting Dates & Times
Post the schedule online for your followers (all those whose email addresses you have collected)
- Add Topics later
Fill them in as you go! Leave the topics TBA and add them as you find them.
- Alternate topics & activities
Topics: Food, farming, & the healing arts
Activities: Movies, demonstrations, workshops, lectures, discussions
Some of our favorite meetings have had no schedule or topic!

4) Between Meetings

- Contact Guest Speakers
Remind them of their speaking engagement and ask if they need anything.

- Email meeting reminders
1 week before and a couple days before the meeting, so people don't forget!

5) *During Meetings*

- Take pictures!
- Have a start and end time
Manage the time for each section of the meeting
- Elevate participants
- Leave no trace
Be respectful of the venue and solicit volunteers to help leave it the way you found it!

6) *After Meetings*

- Show gratitude
Thank everyone who attended, helped, shared or spoke, including participants, members, volunteers, speakers, hosts, venue managers, and anyone you can think of!
- Thank your guest speaker(s)
Text, email, or call them!
- Post photos
To your blog, website and/or social media
- Post articles
To your blog, website and/or social media
Creating a blog post with links is a nice way to thank your speakers!

Volunteers

- Find volunteers
Ask them to help plan and run meetings
- Announce your volunteers
Publish the names and positions of your volunteers online, on whatever platform you choose!
- Recognize your volunteers
Give recognition as often as possible. Elevate your team!
- Listen for their talents and passions
Volunteers, Officers, and Co-leaders will work from their passions, so find their passions and let them shine!

Sample Volunteer Positions

- Co-leaders
- Officers
- Webmasters
- Social media gurus
- Photographers
- Speakers
- MCs

- Networking geniuses
- PR
- Fundraisers
- Field Trip Organizers
- Chefs & Cooks
- Farmers
- Healers
- Logistics Managers

Sample Activities, Topics, and Meeting Themes

- Movie Nights – Show a film. Borrow one from the Foundation
- Food Demos – Invite people to demonstrate and/or share, or follow recipes from Wise Traditions cookbook or other sources
- Sustainable Agriculture – Seek speakers from vendors at Farmers Markets
- Healing Arts – see who is available in your community!
- Ethnic Nights – explore different culinary traditions based on the heritage of your participants! Invite people to share one dish and invite participants to each bring a complementary dish!
- Meet & Greets
- Bring a Friend and Share your Story
- Holiday Parties
- Fundraisers
Raffles, Silent auctions, and Special events
- Membership Giveaways
- Conference Reviews

Sample Meeting Schedule

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| 6:30-7:00 | Gathering |
| 7:00-7:10 | Introductions
Either have everyone introduce themselves & the food they brought or label their dishes & ingredients (esp. for people with food restrictions) |
| 7:10-8:00 | Dinner |
| 8:00-8:15 | Announcements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community News – Invite members of the community to share about upcoming events and opportunities. • WAPF news – Share news from the Foundation (Action Alerts, conference announcements, etc.) |
| 8:15-9:00 | Educational Event or Discussion followed by a Q&A |
| 9:00 | Clean-up – Everyone pitch in! |

A Leader's Mantra

Everyone has something to offer. Recognize it, cultivate it, and watch it grow! Your job is to find the talents and passions in your community and allow them to sustain and

grow your chapter and spark the changes in consumer demand that build a healthier world! Identify volunteers to help make it happen. Identify and inspire participants to share their skills or give a talk. Your chapter will reflect not only what its participants and leaders have to offer, but also how effectively you inspire them, recognize them for their talents, and show your gratitude for their contributions!

The Art of Elevating Others

When you shine a light on your volunteers and other members of your community, you encourage them to find their greatness. You create a safe space for people to try new things and find the courage to follow their dreams, whether it's becoming a personal chef, holistic practitioner, or sustainable farmer. Consistent sustainable chapter meetings provide more than just education and camaraderie. They are breeding grounds for building community that people the opportunity to create something from nothing and make the world a better place!