

Teambuilding

Creating a team environment in your organization will help you work together more effectively. It will help you build a more cohesive, supportive and trusting group. The simple fact that you all have common interests creates an immediate bond, but you are still different people with different backgrounds and it is important that you get to know each other. Also, you might all have different ideas about where the organization is headed. So, it's important to get everyone working together. But how do you do that?

Set aside some time early in the year to have a meeting or a retreat. Make it at a comfortable place, bring snacks and give yourselves plenty of time to discuss the important issues. Your goals for the meeting should be to:

- share who you are
- share what you think of the organization
- share your expectations of the coming year in the organization

One place to start is with an icebreaker. Icebreakers are important when groups come together each year and when bringing in new members. They can be excellent devices to help people feel more comfortable with themselves and others and feel more "at home" in the group. They also break up the cliques by inviting people to form random groupings and helping individuals meet others in a non-threatening and fun way. When used to set a tone for the time a group will be together, members are encouraged to feel comfortable and this can relieve tension. Warning - some people really don't like participating in these exercises, so don't overdo it.

It's important to establish an open and trustworthy environment at your initial meeting - it will determine the tone of all of your meetings throughout the year. As a student leader, it is important to model this behavior - listen, emphasize positive things, encourage feedback.

Don't stop building a team after the first meeting. Throughout the year, it is important that you continue to communicate, get to know each other, talk about goals and visions and most of all, keep having fun!

Icebreakers

Toss a Name

Everyone stands in a circle. The person holding the ball (koosh ball, tennis ball, stuffed animal...whatever) calls out the name of another person in the circle and tosses them the ball. A round is complete when everyone has had the ball.

Two Truths and a Lie

Each person says three things about themselves: two truthful and one a lie. The other members of the group have to decide which is the lie.

Toilet Paper

Pass around a roll of toilet paper to each person in the group. Tell them to take as much toilet paper as they would need to survive in the wilderness. For each sheet of toilet paper they take, they have to tell one thing about themselves.