

# A Voice for Rural Women



After more than 50 years of advocacy on behalf of farm women the world over, Guelph's Peggy Knapp was recently presented with an honorary doctor of laws degree from the University of Guelph.

The recognition was bestowed by the University's Ontario Agricultural College for her work with the Federated Women's Institutes, where Knapp's name is legendary.

"My life has been full of challenges that became opportunities, that led to something further," she said in an interview at the home she shares with her husband Wally. "I never had any grandiose plans to be somebody."

Despite her modesty, Knapp is considered a powerful force in the agricultural industry, one of only 13 women inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

*Peggy Knapp with Lincoln Alexander, Chancellor of the University of Guelph and former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.*

Diminutive, energetic and with a quiet yet determined air that suggests she knows how to get things done, Knapp has held top executive positions in both the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and its umbrella organization, the Associated Country Women of the World.

She serves on the Ontario Veterinary College Deans's Advisory Committee, several other university-based committees and has been the force linking the Women's Institute with the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair.

"She's certainly a leader; certainly a diplomat," said Pat Salter, a long-time colleague. "She's very kind, very understanding, regardless of whether she's dealing with a scholar or someone who hasn't had the benefit of an education."

Extracted from an article written by Valerie Hill in the Grand River Life supplement to the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, Saturday, March 31, 2001.

## Five Key Steps to Successful Recruitment

**R**ecruitment of new members and volunteers is critical to building and maintaining an organization. There are five key steps to successful recruitment:

- know what your product is
- create a clear path to your door
- make your recruitment message user friendly
- get to know your market, and
- advanced recruitment.

### Know your product

Be sure that your volunteer opportunity is important to achieving your organization's purpose. Prepare job descriptions or at least lists that clearly describe the task to be done, the skills or knowledge required and what the value of the experience is for the volunteer. A potential volunteer or member wants to know, "What's in it for me?"

### Create a clear path to your door

Plan your recruitment campaign, any screening processes that may be required, and training and matching of people to

tasks. Don't start recruiting people until you are ready to move them right into your group or task. If potential members contact you be sure to get back to them quickly before they lose interest.

### Make your recruitment message user friendly

Compose a message that answers the volunteers unspoken question, "Why should I volunteer for you?" Not your question, "Why should you volunteer for us?" Answer other questions that new recruits ask, "What will I be doing?, How often and when?, Where?, What training will be provided?" Avoid red flag words like need and desperate that scare volunteers away. Be honest. Truth in advertising counts.

### Get to know your market

Acquaint yourself with all the ways you can get the word out. Are there potential non-member volunteers who might help you do some of your activities, like youth or seniors or men, who might become members in the future. For example, teen-

age girls, young mothers, single or working women, recently retired women.

Keep informed about your competition and how they attract new members. A 1997 Canadian study showed that people who were employed, especially with part-time jobs, were more likely to volunteer than those who were unemployed or not in the labour force. In Canada, there is a volunteer rate of 44 per cent for part-time workers, 32 per cent for those working full-time and 27 per cent for those not in the labour force.

### Advanced volunteer recruitment

Decide who your ideal volunteers are and then use what you know about their personalities and interests to compose a message to fit their needs. Although you should still recruit to the general public, use what you know of your ideal volunteer to target your marketing.

Extracted from the presentation "Visions for Volunteers" by Lorraine Holding, Discussion Groups, ACWW Conference, June 2001.