

Networking and Promotional Ideas

Chapter MER NOW (Mothering) Task Force

As the leader of your local NOW chapter, you are already well aware of the challenges faced by non-profit organization. We struggle for membership and financial donors. Reaching out to this untapped group of feminist mothers could work to the benefit of a local chapter in many ways. But how to get the word out to these women is the question. We have a few suggestions, many which have worked in practical application for the existing Chapter Mothering NOW Task Forces.

*** What's going on in your town?**

Who is placing notices in the local paper and flyers on the community bulletin board at local supermarket? Who is selling cookies to raise money for new uniforms? Who is sending you mail about community events?

*** Get involved!**

Join as many clubs and organizations as possible. That might sound extreme, but solid alliances can only be created if you are willing to make them. Become an active part of your community. Truth be told, of the mothers organizations, many offer social programs and playgroup based gatherings that a NOW chapter cannot. Many of the existing Chapter Mothering NOW Task Force members belong to these other groups to balance out their needs socially and politically. Invite leaders from like-minded mother/civic groups to your meetings.

*** Host an MER NOW (Mothering) Event**

When you are comfortable, hold an Open House. You could have an expert speaker or host a "Thinking Moms' Book Fair" with a local bookseller. Have a sing-a-long or storytelling time for the kids while the moms mingle in the other room.

*** Get the Mothering Task Force name out in public view**

-Get press releases out to local media. Develop friendly contacts with features editors and reporters on the Work/Life, Women's Issues or Political beat. (see "sample press release")

-Get meeting dates into the calendar sections of "parenting" giveaway papers and in the "What's Happening" calendar of cable TV listings.

-Organize members to send letters to the editor on a specific Mothers' Economic Rights topic, making sure you sign off indicating that you belong to your Chapter Mothering NOW Task Force.

-Get a table at any Summer/Fall festivals in your town. Have a float or walk with your group in a town parade.

-Make merchandise. Even if you don't sell the stuff right away it's great to have a t-shirt or button with your chapter Mothering Task Force logo. For an efficient way of creating a good quality t-shirt with a custom logo, check out www.cafepress.com.

-Ask local businesses if you can put Mothering NOW Task Force literature out on the counter in a point-of-purchase type display.

-Hang Flyers and Brochures in high traffic places that local moms frequent.

*** Places to flyer and leave brochures:**

Local mothers' groups (see "Mothers Organizations Resource List")

Women's civic clubs - Junior League, League of Women Voters,

Junior Women's Club

Public Libraries

Preschools/daycare centers

Commercial infant/pre-k enrichment programs -- Gymboree, Music Together, early education programs for computers, art, reading, science, etc.

Food co-ops, health food stores, alt. shopping

Gyms, weight loss centers, yoga studios

Coffee shops, bookstores and cd/music shops

Craft stores and art classes/studios

Independently owned toy stores and kids' clothes consignment shops

Women's studies programs at area universities

Like-minded non-profit organizations -- Planned Parenthood, ACORN, PFLAG, etc.

Women's business associations (See Work/Life Balance: Businesswomen Resource)

Labor unions

Medical clinics

Progressive houses of worship

*** Use your Imagination**

We have a section on the NOW-NJ web site with downloadable tools for meetings (handouts, templates, meeting plans, etc). For other resources, please refer to the NOW web site chapter leadership resources (<http://www.now.org/chapters/states.html>) and / or NOW.org action center "media guide"(<http://www.capwiz.com/now/dbq/media/>).

For the more web savvy, you could start your own Yahoo Group (for example call it: mychaptermotheringnow@yahoogroup.com). That way you can invite new members and offer them the opportunity to build community online.

Ultimately, there are lots of things that you can do. Each Chapter MER (Mothering NOW) Task Force will find its own rhythm and way of doing things. Your ideas will make this movement grow.

For more information regarding NOW-NJ Mothers' Economic Rights Task Force, Chapter MER TF development, or to receive additional action kits, please contact Laurie Pettine at mertf_info@nownj.org or 973-214-2643.