



FALL 2015 ■ VOLUME 8, NUMBER 1

NEHS NEWS

Your Best Year Yet

Start the new school year by determining your chapter goals.

Welcome back! Now that Labor Day is behind us, all schools are back in session for the 2015-16 school year. With a new year there are always new challenges, but it is our hope that this and future editions of *NEHS News* will help you respond to those challenges with new insights, ideas, and inspiration.

We're looking forward to sharing lots of ideas and resources with you again this year. It's time to start fresh with the tasks of teaching and learning and bringing your NEHS chapter together for another year of accomplishment. We hope your vision for this new school year is one that focuses on meaningful goals and ongoing contributions to the school and community through the good work of your membership. We look forward to serving you in this important effort throughout the year.

So how do you get started running your chapter this year? Have you and your chapter members already determined what your chapter service projects are going to be for this school year? If not, or if you're hoping to expand the opportunities for chapter members, consider conducting a survey to determine the service needs of your school and community.

A service-needs survey can be done formally or can simply be a topic of discussion among your chapter members or officers. Start with the school. Find out what the goals of the administration are for the year. Are there areas where your chapter could assist (i.e., provide service) to help accomplish those goals? Perhaps a goal is to see improved reading skills. Your chapter could set up a tutoring or mentoring program to assist. Inviting the principal in to talk about his/her goals for the year will get the chapter off on the right foot with the administration. Planning out a campus beautification calendar is always a valuable activity for chapter members.

Next, take a look at the community in which the school is located. Is there something that can be done for the neighboring homes or businesses? What can the chapter do to improve the school-to-community relations that exist?

When looking at the service needs of the greater community, consider contacting some or all of the following: the chamber of com-

merce, the mayor or county officials, leaders of nonprofit organizations, and other influential groups or organizations. These groups are often looking for people-power to help them accomplish their service goals for the year and the collabora-

Consider conducting a survey to determine the service needs of your school and community.

tion will provide a great opportunity for your chapter. You should also look into partnering with a National Honor Society or National Junior Honor Society chapter in your community.

Finally, if your chapter has the time and initiative, consider the service needs of your state, the nation, or even the world. By selecting one cause for the year that expands the horizons of your chapter members, you bring attention to the potential good that can be done by raising money for a contribution or otherwise helping others far from the security of your school.

The results of your service-needs survey can last for several years, so encourage the chapter officers to keep all of the information well-organized for use by the chapter in the future.



THE MEMBERSHIP YEAR

Here's a reminder of the key dates for the current membership year.

QUARTERLY: *NEHS News* and NEHS E-news (our email newsletter) is sent to all chapter advisers and principals. Your affiliation must be renewed for the 2015-16 academic year in order to receive these publications.

OCTOBER: National Principals Month. Get ideas for celebrating (including a student video contest) at www.principalsmonth.org.

MARCH: Annual renewal notices mailed to all NEHS principals.

APRIL: Annual adviser survey available at www.nehs.org.

JUNE 30: End of the membership year and deadline for payment of your annual affiliation fee for your chapter. Questions about the renewal process? Email membership@nehs.org.

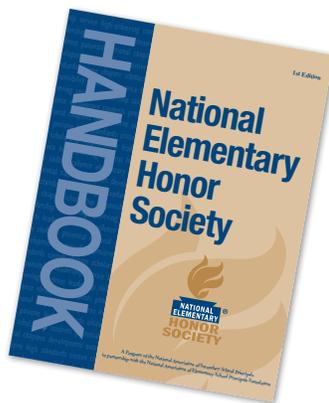
ADVISER TIP

Update Your Documents

At the beginning of each school year it is important to take time to update and edit your chapter documents. Whether to accommodate the fact that personnel have changed (it could be a new principal, new adviser, or new chapter president) or the bylaws are long overdue for revisions, a careful reading of all of your chapter files now will save time later in the year. Be sure to note the date of the revisions and file or archive all old editions of the texts to avoid confusion. Among the documents to review are:

- Chapter bylaws
- The description of your selection process in the student handbook
- Your candidate forms
- The list of member obligations for your chapter
- Your notification letters for selection and disciplinary matters

Also be sure to take advantage of the sample documents found in the *National Handbook* and online at www.nehs.org. A careful review of your documents will guarantee that well-written and up-to-date materials are available when you need them during the year.



CHAPTER MANAGEMENT TOOLS ON THE NEHS WEBSITE

Are you taking full advantage of the resources available to you on the NEHS website? The Adviser Zone (www.nehs.org/adviserzone) has a plethora of helpful tools and guides to help you effectively manage your chapter, including:

- The NEHS Constitution
- Sample bylaws
- Sample meeting agenda
- Sample chapter meeting script
- Meeting icebreaker ideas
- Thousands of project ideas on the National Student Project Database

Log in to the Adviser Zone now to access these resources and more.

CHAPTER PROFILE

Advice from a Veteran NEHS Adviser—Put Members at the Helm

Don't be afraid to let your students be in charge—well, as much as you possibly can, considering you are dealing with 9- and 10-year-old children. That's the advice of Michelle Harrelson, a six-year NEHS adviser from Sangaree Intermediate School, in Summerville, SC.

In other words, if one of your student members suggests having a Pickle Sale as a fundraiser, don't dismiss it. On the heels of fulfilling provisions of the Healthy Schools Act, Harrelson explains, "We had always had a bake sale, and I explained to the students we're going to have to come up with something else." That's when one member suggested the unique St. Patrick's Day fundraiser that yielded nearly \$200 toward a yearlong drive. "If you just let them come up with their own ideas, you can be a genuine facilitator."

Harrelson says the funds from the Pickle Sale went toward her chapter's proud efforts over the past school year to raise approximately \$1,400 to support the purchase of microchip locator devices for dogs that serve as part of the local police department's K-9 unit. Their fundraising efforts "even made the local news, so that was very exciting."

Harrelson also suggests beginning the year by establishing a meeting schedule, routines, and a formal communication vehicle with member parents. "Some sort of group email or using Remind 101 ... makes your life easier."

Sangaree Intermediate School is a Title I school of about 650 students in grades 3–5. As one of the very first NEHS chapters in the nation, Sangaree stands as testament to the National Elementary Honor Society's power as a schoolwide catalyst for excellence.

"We began with 14 students. We now run closer to 40." She elaborates, "The kids know and see who's in NEHS. We really stress what it means to be an exemplary student in all ways, not just grades. You'll hear other students say, 'I wish I was in NEHS. How do I get into NEHS?' I do believe having NEHS at our school has raised the bar."

She also credits a team of co-advisers—Layne Stafford, Nancy James, Brooke Melcher, Malia Stewart, Gale Chappelle, and Rebecca Long—for the chapter's success. "Without the advisers and willing parents, our organization would not run as smoothly."

The long-lasting impact of membership is evident. She remembers, for example, one of their first members who was born in Bolivia. Because of his birthplace, he came to realize he could never have the opportunity to run for U.S. president. "His dream was to become president of the United States." But, she explains, he could be president of NEHS. His fellow members elected him and "helped him overcome his disappointment that he could never be president of the U.S." Now a high school student, this member is still exemplifying the role model standards and behavior that characterize an Honor Society student.

Overall, she describes the student members as "engaged and excited," and individuals who "really get a feel for what it means to think about someone besides themselves."

Students wore blue on "Blue Day" in honor of National Type 1 Diabetes Day.



A Valentine dance at Sangaree Intermediate School helped their NEHS chapter raise nearly \$1,000 toward a yearlong fundraiser.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICHELLE HARRELSON

IDEA EXCHANGE

During the year, all NEHS chapters are asked to conduct at least four projects or activities in support of the purposes of the organization. Chapter meetings can be counted as a chapter activity, but it is hoped that chapters will use their other projects and activities to provide service learning experiences for their members along with leadership development and character building activities.

Through this publication, the quarterly NEHS E-News newsletter, the *National Handbook*, and www.nehs.org, the national office provides information and resources to help chapters identify and select activities best suited for their students. Below are several key resources to begin planning for your chapter's year of events.

SERVICE PROJECTS. Learning to Give (www.learningtogive.org) provides a full range of teacher-created, standards-based lessons and resources. In addition to all of the project activities, divided into grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12, you'll find an index of quotations, community-building activities, and many other useful items.

Youth Service America, sponsor of Global Youth Service Day, also lists a variety of activities that can be connected to celebrating youth service each spring. Visit www.ysa.org to view the variety of resources for your chapter.

CHARACTER BUILDING. Many elementary schools have adopted programs for use at the local level. Among the most widely known is Character Counts! (www.charactercounts.org). Their website provides many valuable character building activities for elementary, middle, and high school students. The site also maintains a collection of character quotations and links to a variety of other resources.

The Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (respect and responsibility) provides many success stories and links to research and organizations on their site, www.cortland.edu/character. Under the leadership of author Tom Lickona, this center also provides a model for a comprehensive approach to character education for schools.

BIKE COLLECTIONS. Bicycles offer students an environmentally friendly means of transportation and an opportunity for healthy exercise. Sadly, every year thousands of bicycles are thrown away as children outgrow them and parents can no longer find room to store them in the garage. Your chapter can help reduce landfill usage, recycle usable resources, and improve the health of riders by sponsoring a bike collection project this year.

Consider creating a project to either collect bikes or to raise money to help ship bikes to areas of greatest need. Considering many students may be getting new bikes at Christmas, a good time of year to look into this activity would be immediately before and after the holiday, but any time of year could work.

Many adult service/civic organizations administer collections along with local law enforcement agencies and groups in the faith-based community. Local bicycle repair shops or bike retailers may also be aware of collections taking place in your community or would make excellent partners to help promote your chapter's project once it gets underway.

There are numerous online programs available for you to explore as you look to collecting old bicycles. We encourage you to review the information on these websites to determine which program might best meet your service project needs.

- **Pedals for Progress**, www.p4p.org. The group supervises collection and then ships bikes overseas to a variety of countries.
- **Recycle a Bicycle**, www.recycleabicycle.org. This organization focuses on New York City for its efforts, but provides some models for instructing students about bike usage and care.
- **Bikes for the World**, www.bikesfortheworld.org. This organization makes bicycles affordable and available to lower income people and those in developing countries. The website provides tips for students to organize a collection.



You could also consider inviting your PE teachers to add a service-learning component about the benefits of bike riding for this activity. Not many projects can combine recycling, reusing, and healthy lifestyles all in one service activity.

PUBLICITY TIPS. Whether creating posters to spread the word about your upcoming food drive or sharing information about selection and induction in the spring, your chapter needs to publicize its activities to the school and community every year. You should look at four topics when considering your poster making: purpose, content and design, planning, and location.

1. What is the purpose of your poster(s)? What is the main message you hope to convey? Remember, a good poster is self-explanatory—it speaks for itself. The goal is to direct people to stop, read, and remember your message, and then take action.
2. What words and images do you want to include and how will you arrange them on the poster? The key for the words is that they are readable, so pick fonts that are easy on the eye and a font size that is appropriate for your message. Where design is concerned, the key is simplicity. Limit each poster to a single idea or message, keep language to a minimum, and avoid clutter.
3. Planning is key to a well-organized and effective poster. Create several drafts using different designs and content for the same message—then have peers evaluate which draft is most effective. Consider the audience you wish to reach and what appeals to them.
4. Location is also key to a successful poster. Find out where people gather. When picking the location, consider how far away the typical viewer will be. This will determine the size and thickness of effective lettering on your poster.

An Idea for Your INDUCTION CEREMONY

One way to emphasize your chapter's commitment to service is to request that all the participants (students, parents, and guests) in your upcoming induction ceremony bring a canned food item or a children's book as their "admission ticket" to the ceremony.

Include a special note about the collection with the letter informing students of their selection. Set up boxes to collect the items at the ceremony and, if possible, tally up the results and share them with the audience at the end of the ceremony. Make the collection display visible during your reception after the induction ceremony along with a sign that indicates which organization will receive the donated items. This idea will add value to your ceremony and reinforce the chapter's commitment to service activity throughout the year.

Do you have project ideas you'd like to share with other NEHS advisers? Would you like to highlight your induction ceremony? Send the NEHS national office images and stories of your induction ceremony or other chapter activities by emailing nehs@nehs.org along with your school name, city, and state. Please secure all necessary permissions from people appearing in the photos so that we can post them online and use them in upcoming editions of the newsletter. We look forward to seeing your new inductees.



Brick Mill Elementary School students, Middletown, DE

LOOKING FOR SERVICE PROJECT IDEAS?

Get inspired by nearly 3,700 project ideas for community service, fundraising, civic activities, and more through the National Student Project Database. When you log in, you will have access to projects submitted by National Junior Honor Society and National Honor Society chapters, many of which can be adapted for elementary students. Use your adviser login credentials to access the full database on the National Junior Honor Society website at www.njhs.us/projects.



ADVISER FAQs

Q: When students leave my elementary school for middle school, can they transfer their NEHS membership to the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) chapter?

A: As with NJHS and National Honor Society (NHS), NEHS membership does not transfer or automatically convert to NJHS membership. When students enter middle or junior high school, their active participation in NEHS ends, and the students can be considered for NJHS membership during the second semester of sixth grade if their school has an NJHS chapter.

Q: Can our chapter establish a “statute of limitations” for appeals for non-selection?

A: Yes. The national office encourages establishing a formal appeals process, which includes a deadline to register appeals with the school principal. While there is no legal right to appeal nonselection decisions, chapters are encouraged to establish a procedure which allows the principal to hear parents’ concerns and review nonselection decisions to ensure that the chapter’s policies and procedures are in compliance with NEHS national policies.

If your chapter does establish a formal appeals process, it should be in writing and easily accessible to parents and students. Within the written procedure, include a deadline by which appeals must be registered (in writing or otherwise.)

The national office is available to support you and answer your questions at any time. Do you have a question about chapter management? Email us at nehs@nehs.org.

Q: How much time should we give candidates to complete their candidate forms?

A: There is no mandatory time limit in the national guidelines for chapters to use when asking students to complete their forms. There are, however, several pieces of advice we can offer that can be applied to local chapter procedures regardless of the level of complexity found in your selection procedures.

Reasonableness. The first test of your deadline for submitting forms is whether the length of time you give to students is reasonable. Consequently, it is essential that the chapter provide a reasonable amount of time to complete and submit the forms you require.

School Events. Advisers, when considering this factor, should take into consideration aspects of the school calendar to avoid having your deadline on an already-busy day during the school year. Avoid deadlines on special school days. Similarly, choose a day midweek, avoiding not only Fridays (still commonly

considered a test day by some teachers) but also Mondays. Midweek allows you to use Monday as a final reminder for all students regarding the submission schedule.

Size of Your Candidate Packet. Look at the quantity of pages and forms that are required for candidate submissions when determining the amount of time to provide. If your candidate form is four pages and also asks candidates to find several teachers to complete recommendations, time must be provided for both steps in the process.

Delivery methods. The *National Handbook* encourages all advisers to take steps to ensure that all candidates are provided with the candidate forms. Calling a special meeting to hand out the forms in person is a common practice where attendance can be taken. If forms are mailed home to students and parents, then time for delivery needs to be included in the schedule, along with time for the parents to review and sign off on the forms—another practice encouraged in the national guidelines.

When in doubt, or when faced with a large number of late forms or complaints by candidates, talk to your current members and/or officers, asking them what a reasonable time for completing forms should be and then incorporate their suggestions into your procedures. A well-developed selection process that provides ample time for completion of candidate forms will earn respect for your chapter’s procedures from students and parents alike.

NEHS Items You'll Want for Fall

Start the year off right by ordering these must-have NEHS items to enhance your chapter activities.

NEHS Banner

This ready-to-hang 24" x 48" nylon banner with corner grommets is silk-screened and imprinted with the National Elementary Honor Society name. We recommend adding your school's name by ordering the customized version (just \$15 more). This banner truly makes your chapter official and is perfect to use at your induction ceremony.



Flameless Candles

Add an element of sophistication to your induction ceremony with this set of 15 ambient—yet safe—flameless candles.



Registry

Keep a permanent record of your chapter's inductees with this padded leather registry. This is a great historical keepsake to pass down to future advisers.



Officer Coins

Recognize your officers with the coin that matches their elected position. These coins are true keepsakes and your officers will be proud to receive them.



Order these and more NEHS merchandise online at store.nehs.org or from your *Adviser Resource Guide*.

Get More NEHS News Online

The NEHS website holds archives of *NEHS News*, which contain valuable advice to help you run your chapter. Check out these past issues and what you can learn from them:

Summer 2014: Get in-depth ideas about collection drives for things like food, clothes, and toys for charity.

Fall 2013: Become a project-planning guru and learn the 12 Ws of project planning.

Winter 2012: Learn where to find speakers for your induction ceremonies, chapter meetings, and school assemblies.

Visit www.nehs.org/adviserzone/ publications to view past issues of *NEHS News*.



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NEHS NEWS

FALL 2015

WHERE'S WATSON?

Watson, the official NEHS mascot, is quite the experienced traveler and is anxious to hit the road again—and he could be coming to your school! He is available to travel to visit chapters around the country to learn about any service projects and chapter activities that are currently underway. He'll even

show up for your induction ceremony!

If you'd like to have Watson visit your school, please email the national office at nehs@nehs.org with the adviser contact information, school name and location, and the date(s) of your event(s). Please contact the national office at least two weeks prior.



For more inspirational quotes, “like” the official NEHS Facebook page at www.facebook.com/elementaryhonors.

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

ARISTOTLE