

Guild 101 – Educating New Members

The Symphony Guild of Charlotte, Inc.

Slides 1 & 2: [CLICK AND CLICK WITH INTRODUCTION](#)
Introduction

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Slide 3: The Challenges

Our Guild is continuing to work to bring in new members as they are critical to the long-term viability of our organization. Bi-annually, we have our Overture event late in the spring, a program designed to raise funds and friends. Twenty new members joined during the event; then 17 additional members joined throughout the year for a total new member class of 37. We had a challenge to educate these new members!

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Slide 4: The Goals

We needed to develop a program to educate our new members about who we are, how The Guild operates, what are the volunteer opportunities and how The Guild fits into the Charlotte Symphony family.

Plus, to make personal communications stronger, the new members needed to get to know each other, as well as our current Guild members and leaders. Guild leaders needed to understand and tap the new members' potential.

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Slide 5: The Plan

Given the very large class of 37 new members, we planned four Guild 101 events, two focused on training and two on social interaction.

The event calendar began in the summer after the beginning of our June 1 fiscal year, so that we could get the new members engaged quickly.

The other 3 events were spaced during the year when our general membership meetings were not scheduled.

New members were each assigned a mentor. Guild executive board members were invited to join the new members and their mentors at each event, which was held in a member's home. Our seasoned Guild members signed up to bring food, wine, other beverages and door prizes.

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Slide 6: Summer

The first meeting in July, early in our fiscal year, was a social event, “Getting to Know You.” The ice breaker, designed by the Membership VP, focused on learning facts about the new members. The executive officers briefly described their history with The Guild along with their current roles. The program included an overview of both future Guild events and the upcoming Guild 101 events. [CLICK](#)

Every Guest was crazy about the fabulous butterfly bush in Ginger’s yard!

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Slide 7: Fall

The fall meeting, held in October, kicked off with a social hour and was themed “Everything you always wanted to know about The Guild”.

New members were divided into small groups in different rooms of the house and the 5 Vice Presidents rotated in 15 minute increments to educate the new members in more detail.

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Slide 8: Fall

At the suggestion of a member of the New Members team and herself a recent new member, we created a one page – 2 sided – comprehensive handout, so that new members would have one convenient point of reference about Guild activities and events. The handout was designed to be very user friendly; and, as noted, the content was developed through the eyes of the recent new member who suggested it.

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Slide 9: Winter

Yes! We went to a Motown tribute Pops concert!

Since many of our new members were not regular symphony attendees, the New Members planned a February social outing to our concert hall for a Charlotte Symphony Pops concert.

Mentors were encouraged to contact their mentees and attend the concert together. We arranged to have group tickets available at the customary 20% discount. [CLICK](#)

Those attending enjoyed the fun concert with music from classic Motown artists including The Four Tops and the Temptations.

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Slide 10: Spring

The spring event, held at a member’s home, began with a social hour with wine and appetizers. The social hour also featured a violin quartet from the Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra.

The hour long program (ok it went a little longer), [CLICK](#) “Getting to Know the Charlotte Symphony Family”, began with The Guild President introducing the Charlotte Symphony

President and Chief Executive Officer. He thanked The Guild for their work for the Charlotte Symphony and gave us the state of the orchestra.

He was followed by representatives from the Oratorio Singers (the choral group), Pulse (the young affiliates) and the Youth Orchestra Parents Association.

The Guild President-Elect spoke about The Guild's upcoming kitchen tour, which was in the planning stages for October 2014.

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Slide 11: Logistics

Who were our volunteers?

The Membership Vice President and the two New Member Co-Chairs, with input from the President, planned and executed all events.

The two co-chairs split the responsibility: one handled the social events and one handled the education events. The co-chairs were responsible for the logistics of each event – the venue, food and beverage, youth musicians and thank you gifts for each performer.

Attendance reservations for new members, mentors and executive board members were handled on-line with sign up genius. Mentors made sure their mentees were called with an invitation to attend, as well. Food, wine and door prize donations were also done with SignUpGenius. New members were exempt from providing donations.

Our Office Administrator sent the invitations electronically, created the SignUpGenius interface and made name tags. This year a volunteer designed the online invitations; however, future invitations will be handled by our Office Administrator. Symphony Staff assisted us with ticket purchases for the February concert event. [CLICK](#)

Although the planning and execution of each program could be handled by one volunteer working alone, we found it helpful to have two committee members work together on the education events because of the scope of the tasks. This way the volunteer event planners do not feel overwhelmed. Tasks include welcoming and thanking musicians with gifts, welcoming new members, mentors, executive board members and guests, coordinating food and drink placement and seating for the education portion of the event. [CLICK](#)

Costs were minimal as food and beverages were donated. We did provide the musicians with a small gift for playing for us.

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Slide 12: Results

The new members who joined at Overture brought in some of the other new members as the year progressed. We believe the care we provided through our early social interaction directly contributed to this. [CLICK](#)

The effects on long-term membership retention will not be seen for a few years. Having a vibrant mentoring program in place and making sure new members are engaged in the right

volunteer opportunities are critical components of membership retention along with orientation and training. [CLICK](#)

The handout has been a ready reference on our website and can easily be updated and reposted as things change. [CLICK](#)

Seasoned members who attended the programs enjoyed the social aspects, plus they too learned additional details about the workings of The Guild. [CLICK](#)

The “Symphony Family” program has never been presented to the general membership and many current members at the training indicated that they also benefited from this.

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Slide 19: Close - Logo

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