

Take a Field Trip

In our chapter, program planning is done by our Executive Board, and we all give ourselves assignments for making contacts, rather than having our program chairman (who last year was local Convention Coordinator as we hosted the Alpha Rho State Convention) do all the work.

One of the most memorable programs of our chapter's biennium was a Field Trip to a local organization that provides services to at-risk youth. Ours is called Kids Unlimited, but you probably have a similar program in your area. Located in downtown Medford, Kids Unlimited is a lively place, as you can imagine, with teens playing basketball, little ones learning ballet, students doing homework with volunteer tutors, and a myriad of other activities designed to promote health, success in school, self-discipline, and fun.

Our group met at the facility on a Saturday morning, our regular monthly meeting time, dispensing with any chapter business. We had all brought school supplies to donate, and the mound of backpacks on a table was pretty impressive! The activity director met us there, apologizing for the remodeling that was in progress. As flexible educators, we assured her that we had all been there-done that and that the results for the young people would be well worth the disruption. We toured the facility, learned about the many activities that go on with a minimum of paid staff and a lot of volunteers. The ground rules are fairly strict, and the students respond to a sense of order that some of them have never had before. Many of the volunteers were young adults who were "graduates" of the program—what wonderful role models!!

After our tour, we had a catered salad lunch, provided by staff, volunteers, and participants. When we left, we felt we had met Purpose #6, "to stimulate the personal and professional growth of members and to encourage their participation in appropriate programs of action".

In order to make this kind of program worthwhile, the chapter needs to find a great program for youth, contact the right person within the organization, and plan carefully. I met with the activities director several times, and we talked on the phone about who we were, what we wanted to learn, how we could help out—and could we get lunch!! Each program will be different, but the idea of the Field Trip can happen in any chapter, and members will love it—and maybe become volunteers.

**Louise Holmes, President
Epsilon**