

My Daughter, My Sister

How one local chapter makes a tradition of initiating their daughters

by Debbie Clason, Coordinator of Membership Development

On a sunlit Indiana porch last May, six college daughters of Chapter AL, Shelbyville, Indiana, members were initiated into the P.E.O. Sisterhood. The event was a happy one for the aunts, mothers and grandmothers who attended the initiation as well as a labor of love more than three years in the making.

Liz Wheeler, member of Chapter AL and mother of initiate Sarah Wheeler, organized the daughters' initiations. "All of the mothers are very close," she said. "We started talking with each other about proposing our daughters' names the Christmas before. Once their invitations were extended and they had accepted, we coordinated the initiations to occur the week before they began their summer jobs."

After the names were proposed, each sponsor stood up and talked about her candidate, including where she was attending school.

Three of the girls attend Purdue University, one attends Ball State University, one attends Butler University and one is a graduate law student at the University of Akron, Ohio.

Liz said Shelbyville is a small town where everyone knows everyone else so the girls were

Liz's daughter, Sarah, is a fourth generation P.E.O. Liz served as president for the initiation and her mother, Carolyn English, took the picture featured in this article. Sarah's great-grandmother, Karlene English, was an active member of Chapter AL until her death at age 107.

Members understand that by initiating these young women into P.E.O., they have introduced their daughters to a world of friendship, leadership development and philanthropy that will last a lifetime.

well known among the chapter members. "Our girls grew up surrounded by P.E.O.," she said. "They would come home from school just about the time the meetings were over. Many chapter members had attended our girls' athletic events and other school activities."

In fact, most of the new initiates enjoy a rich P.E.O. heritage. Rebecca and Emily Borchert are third generation members of Chapter AL. Melanie Clark is a third generation P.E.O., too. Her mother, Shari Clark, served as treasurer for the initiation. Melanie's grandmother, Susie Clark,



First row, from the left: Rebecca Warner, Hayley Warner, Sarah Wheeler, Melanie Clark, Rebecca Borchert, Emily Borchert
Second row: Pam Warner, Elizabeth Wheeler, Shari Clark, Linda Borchert

and aunt, Kim Taylor, are members of Chapter P, Indianapolis, Indiana, and attended the initiation. Haley and Rebecca Warner both became second generation members of Chapter AL, joining their mother, Pam.

“Initiation day was a lot of fun,” Liz said. “The day was bright and beautiful and the moms all got a little teary-eyed. The girls were very excited—they finally got to find out the meaning of our letters!”

Chapter AL enjoys great age diversity, with members ranging from 18 to more than 90 years of age. Their method is simple—they expose their daughters to P.E.O. purposes and philanthropies long before membership is an opportunity.

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Collegiate Connections Program

Today's young women, known by generational researchers as the Millennial generation, are hard working, socially conscious, multi-taskers who are loyal to their organizations. They make great P.E.O. sisters! If you are fortunate enough to initiate some Millennials into your chapter, make an effort to nurture them if they attend college away from home.

Two documents in the Membership Tool Box can help you. If your chapter has collegiate members who are attending school away from home, download the **Collegiate Connections Guide for Local Chapters with Collegiate Members**. This guide gives ideas on how to nurture your young members while they are away from their home chapters. Also, be sure to complete the **Introduction of a Collegiate Member** form and send it to local chapters located in her at-school community. Although collegiate members often have demanding schedules, just knowing there's a chapter of P.E.O. sisters close by can be a comfort—both to the home chapter as well as to the student herself.


Finally, if your chapter meets in a college town, be receptive to those chapters who introduce you to their studious members by way of the **Introduction of a Collegiate Member** form. Download the **Collegiate Connections Guide for Local Chapters in a College Town** for guidelines that will help you care for collegiate members who are attending school in your community.

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"It's tradition, I suppose," Liz said. "As a result, the majority of them have been initiated into a P.E.O. chapter somewhere."

Five of the six new initiates are juniors this year so they won't be attending Chapter AL meetings on a regular basis for awhile. Still, members understand that by initiating these young women into

P.E.O., they have introduced their daughters to a world of friendship, leadership development and philanthropy that will last a lifetime.

"My daughter looks forward to attending chapter meetings whenever she's home on break," Liz Wheeler says. "She knows P.E.O. will be a great way to meet people wherever she lives after she graduates." 

Introducing Our Daughters to P.E.O.

To start a conversation with your chapter about introducing daughters and granddaughters to your sisters, refer to **Introducing Our Daughters to P.E.O.** in the Membership Tool Box. This document gives you a simple process for initiating discussion about the women in your immediate family who might make good P.E.O. sisters.

Very simply, the conversation involves making an announcement during the membership committee report that you will be talking about eligibility information regarding daughters of chapter members at the next meeting. Then, during New Business at the next meeting, ask how many members have daughters living at home who are 18 years of age or older and currently not members. Continue with a discussion on how to get to know them better.

Also, ask how many have daughters (or granddaughters) living in another city or state who are currently not members. Ask if it's appropriate to send **Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O.** forms for each of them.

By definition, young women 18-28 years of age are part of the Millennial Generation. Research tells us they are optimistic, technologically savvy, hard working individuals who believe in volunteerism and serving their community. They enjoy a sense of play and fun in the volunteer arena and want to connect their actions to personal and career goals.

When you talk to Millennials about P.E.O., help them understand their ideas and opinions are valuable and they will be mentored by bright, creative women who will help them make a difference in their communities and worldwide.

Introducing our daughters and granddaughters to P.E.O., at any age, helps them understand the value of developing close friendships and working toward a common philanthropic goal. It also preserves the legacy of P.E.O., a timeless friendship organization devoted to helping women reach their educational aspirations.

Resources

The following resources are located in the Membership Tool Box on the P.E.O. website.

1. Introducing our Daughters to P.E.O., Resource Documents Panel, Local Chapter Tool Box
2. Collegiate Connections: Guide for Local Chapters with Collegiate Members, Membership Initiatives Panel, Local Chapter Tool Box
3. Collegiate Connections: Guidelines for Local Chapters in College Communities, Membership Initiatives Panel, Local Chapter Tool Box
4. Introduction of a Collegiate Member, Membership Initiatives Panel, Local Chapter Tool Box
5. Introduction of a Woman Who is Not a P.E.O., Membership Forms Panel, Local Chapter Tool Box