LADders is a publication by LAD representatives for LAD representatives

Its purpose is to help LAD representatives do their jobs with confidence and pleasure by offering a place to share information and experiences.

Table of Contents

2017 LAD Council Meeting April 25 to 27, 2017
   Garden State Area Network Conference April 28 to 29, 2017   2

Working with Isolated Applicants: Challenges and Solutions   5

Comment dynamiser le DAM/Revitalizing the LAD   9

Time to Say Goodbye – When to discontinue inactive applications   11

How Would You Respond? – Maintaining motivation as children get older   12

Good Idea – Explaining the prerequisites   16

A Taste of LADI
   Alison Stanton, New Zealand
   Mónica Tornøe de Illescas, Guatemala   16

LAD Promenade – Congratulations on your appointment!   18

Photo Letters – My “non-LLL” passion   19
The LAD Council held its annual meeting in April 2017 in New Jersey, USA, in conjunction with the Garden State Area Network Conference. Nowadays, it is increasingly common to organise conference calls or online meetings because they are very practical. It is also true that we can achieve a great deal when we are all together. The LAD Council members feel ready and inspired to offer further support to LAD representatives worldwide.

Attendees:
LLL Alliance Karin Ali
Latin America Mariana Petersen
LAD West Lori Bryan
Asia Africa Middle East Juliet Matthee
Europe Ineke Leiter
Canada (English) Linda Wieser
Canada (French) Lesley Robinson (attending for Marie-Eve Dallaire)
LAD Council Advisor Cindy Garrison
LAD International Toshi Jolliffe

Absentees:
Great Britain Benaifer Bhandari
New Zealand Sue Sutton – representing New Zealand on the LAD Council
Europe Margaret McGuigan
Canada (French) Marie-Eve Dallaire

We were all very grateful for generous financial support provided by the entities listed below. Some members were also recipients of the Karin Gausman Fund: http://leadertoday.breastfeedingtoday-lli.org/karin-gausman-fund/

LLL Alliance, Canada (English), European Area Network, LAD West, LLL Luxembourg, LLLI

Please let me explain some of the highlights of the 2017 LAD Council meeting.

**April 25**
The meeting started late afternoon with each member’s report, “Challenges and achievements since the last meeting.” Absentees’ reports were read by either the replacement attendee or another LAD Council member.

Intense Discussion
April 26
On the second day the members offered sessions. The session titles were similar to LAD sessions organised at a Leader Study Day, but they were focused on how to support each entity’s LAD.

Session 1: Special consideration clause
We confirmed how to apply the following special consideration clause under the Personal Breastfeeding Experience Prerequisite, Appendix 18 to *LLLl Policies and Standing Rules Notebook* (PSR).

*Note: Special consideration may be given to a woman whose personal breastfeeding experience is outside the realm of a normal course of breastfeeding.*

This clause applies to a case where the mother and/or the baby experienced an anatomical, physiological or medical situation which made nursing at the breast challenging or impossible. The Guideline for Leaders No 10, Appendix 18, is relevant.

Session 2: Unique local requirements
Some Areas or Area Networks ask Applicants or mothers interested in leadership for different or additional requirements that go beyond what is written in the relevant LLLLl policies regarding Leader application and accreditation. LLLLl has set the universal accreditation criteria. The LAD accepts applications and accredits Leaders in the same manner no matter where they are. We discussed several real cases and assigned the member(s) who would work to resolve the situations.

Report from the LAD Director
The LAD Director (DLAD) has enjoyed the first year of her term. Her workload is intense, but many people are willing to help. The DLAD and the LLLLl Board developed mutual trust during collaborative work on revision of Appendix 17, Concept Policy Statements. The LAD Council members have helped the DLAD revise several documents on the LLLLl website for which the LLLLl Board has been grateful. The DLAD plans to continue updating the LLLLl website with support from the LAD Council.

Session 3: Separation dialogue, supporting local LAD—How to maintain consistency
Each LAD Council member explained the recent trend and approach to separation cases. We agreed that frequent consultation is essential for the LAD to maintain consistency.

Session 4: Recruiting LAD representatives, LAD orientation
We discussed various innovative ways to recruit LAD representatives. It is important to present a positive image and demonstrate how much we enjoy LAD work. At the same time, it helps to be honest and talk about how the prospective LAD representative can help. It was suggested to ask her to take a small job first and building a personal rapport from there.
Conference Call
We held a conference call to have discussion with the absentees. Special thanks to the LLLI Board and the LLLI Executive Director for allowing us to use its GoToMeeting account to accomplish this. We decided to have another conference call in the near future.

Session 5: Publications
Future article ideas

The Contributing Editor for the “Preparing for Leadership” column in Leader Today and the Managing Editor for LA8ders were both present at the meeting. They explained their future plans and article ideas.

The revision of LAD-related documents was also discussed.

- Appendix 18 to LLLI PSR
  There have been several requests to update this important document. The DLAD plans to ask the LLLI Board to consider revising it, mainly titles of resources and LLLI style points. The LAD Council will work on a possible draft, and the DLAD will contact the LLLI management.

- “Discussion about Mother-Baby Relationship” document
  The revision was started at the LAD Council meeting and the revised version will be available soon.

- Leader's Pre-Application Packet (Packet)
  - Appendix 38 to LLLI PSR has been included in the Packet in the section “For Leaders.”
  - LLLI no longer uploads the Application form and the Leader Recommendation form on the LLLI website because the forms can vary depending on the location. The website suggests that the Leader contact the local LAD for the latest forms.

- Childbirth and Breastfeeding
  The revised version will become available in the near future.

- Leader card
  DLAD will contact the LLLI Executive Director to request that LLLI send a welcome letter and Leader card electronically when the Statement of Commitment is received. Everyone agreed that it is energising for a new Leader to receive acknowledgement and recognition from LLLI.

April 27
Session 6: “Q & A”
The following questions generated lively discussion among the LAD Council members.

- What have been your happiest and challenging times as a LAD Council member?
- How do you connect with those you support?
- When you go home, what are your plans?

LAD Council Alumnae Reunion
We welcomed our guests of honour: Amy Shaw and Lesley Robinson. Amy is a former LAD Council member who represented LLL Eastern United States/Alliance. It was lovely to meet her again. Lesley Robinson was the co-LAD Council Coordinator for five years until 2015. She is now the LA8ders Managing Editor. Amy’s wisdom and warmth and Lesley’s sincerity and sense of humour are inspirational!

April 28
Garden State Area Network Conference
At the opening, the LAD Council members and the DLAD went forward and introduced themselves. We briefly explained how the LAD works internationally so that we can achieve the universal accreditation criteria.

The “LAD Table” was set up in the exhibitors’ area and we handed out the compact version of Thinking About LaLeche League Leadership? It was a privilege for all the LAD Council members to meet and greet local mothers and talk about LLL leadership. We were also at the new Leaders’ ceremony and shared the excitement. Special thanks to Cathy Bergquist, LAD administrator for Garden State Area Network, for this unforgettable experience.
The 2018 LAD Council meeting will be held at the LLL European Management Symposium (EMS) in Berlin, Germany, on March 15-18, 2018. We look forward to meeting many LLL Leaders and administrators!

**Working with Isolated Applicants: Challenges and Solutions**

*Ideas from LAD representatives around the world*

Isolated Applicants are pioneers for La Leche League in their communities. They bring our special brand of mother-to-mother help to those who need it and provide a safe space for like-minded parents to share their experiences, ask their questions and enjoy a sense of community. As LAD representatives, it is our responsibility to help isolated Applicants to prepare to meet LLLI’s universal criteria for accreditation. An isolated Applicant has not had the opportunity to watch a Leader in action, to see how she helps mothers, leads meetings, runs the Group, uses resources and encourages others to become involved, so the LAD representative provides the primary connection to LLL and helps find solutions to specific challenges. LAD representatives in Future Areas work with many isolated Applicants and many LAD representatives help with this important work as ACLAs at-large. Many established Areas cover geographical areas large enough that they may receive enquiries about leadership from isolated locations. Here are some of the ways that LAD representatives meet the challenges of working with isolated Applicants.

Gorana Đergović is a LAD representative from Croatia who works with Future Areas in Europe. She shares the following:

*When I started to work as an ACLA, the Applicants I worked with were mostly isolated. I remember my question “How are they isolated?” and I also wondered about their supporting Leaders. The question about being isolated can have two basic answers. We can recognize an Applicant as isolated if she has La Leche League in her country, but there is no Leader in her town or even in her part of the country. There are also isolated Applicants who live in countries where there is no La Leche League and no active Leader.*

*Is this really important to the A/CLA who works with the Applicant? I think the answer is yes! I think that the first example is much easier. This Applicant probably has help from a Leader in another town and it is likely that she is familiar with the organization. In this*
situation it will be easier to introduce La Leche League and talk about philosophy. There is chance that we’ll work more on some things. Being isolated and the only potential Leader in town will require becoming thoroughly familiar with La Leche League.

In the Area where I live the second example of being totally isolated is very common. A mother might be interested in leadership, but she might know nothing about our organisation, our philosophy and our mission. There are many breastfeeding organisations, but La Leche League is unique because of our gentle philosophy, which we use as guidance, not as rules. In this situation the A/CLA and the mother will have a lot of work to do, even to get as far as a recommendation. The mother will need to understand so much, and as you probably know, it is much harder to listen and learn about something that is not in front of you to feel and see. This is always a challenge and the most important thing is to give the Applicant as many different answers as possible and to provide examples and stories because everything that the Applicant will know about La Leche League will come from the A/CLA or supporting Leader. When you give many examples, when you tell many different stories, or share different ways to use the Leader’s Log, this will allow the Applicant to adopt what feels most comfortable to her. The goal is to help the Applicant to understand and to create her own way. She must feel good as a Leader and feel sure of herself. Our basic task is to accredit a secure Leader who will be sure that what she is doing is right.

I was an isolated Applicant in my country with only one English-speaking Leader. The biggest help was the ACLA who worked with me. She was able to give me several examples of each topic we discussed and I was able to take what worked for me. She always had such warm and encouraging words for me and they meant so much to me. She was my La Leche League—she was the whole organisation to me. Later as a Leader I had the opportunity to become familiar with everything more closely.

Also, keep in mind that all discussions can be followed up by documents. There is so much to learn, so it is good to have all the documents that are available. The Applicant (and later the Leader) will have a place to look, as well as a person to ask. I will add something important here: there are so many things to ask and when the amount of information may seem overwhelming, Applicants may not be comfortable asking so many questions, so provide as many documents as you can. Sometimes when I start to talk about a topic they are so happy and they often say that they were reluctant to ask, even though they needed to know more.

The most important thing is to be there for the Applicant! If you don't have time to reply within few days, just send a short message. The Applicant will still feel isolated, but you can make a difference, so that she also feels welcome. Working with isolated Applicants can take more time, more letters and so much empathy. Remember that to these Applicants you are the organisation! How they feel about you as the A/CLA is the way that they will think about La Leche League. We acknowledge to them what we have in common and they will be able to develop their own style. I’m a good example of everything I have written. The support of some great Leaders has given me the chance to go even beyond what I had wished for in the first place!

Mariana Petersen is the Administrator of Leader Accreditation for Latin America. Future Areas in Latin America covers a vast geographical area with many countries. Mariana shares the following challenges and solutions:

---

**Reto**
Uno de los mayores retos con Aspirantes aisladas es que ellas puedan comprender la diferencia entre lo que es un grupo de apoyo comparten experiencias a diferencia de una charla formal.

**Solución**
Las Aspirantes leen el Manual de la líder en su casa y luego juntas, haciendo uso de la tecnología, lo leemos juntas haciendo una pausa después de cada párrafo para que ella pueda hacer sus comentarios o preguntas. Además, gracias a donaciones, pudimos invitar a las Aspirantes...
a participar en un taller de Área en Guatemala y justo un día antes había un grupo de apoyo y pudieron asistir y así observar y participar de la metodología.

**Sugerencias**
Algo que fue de gran ayuda fue la visita de una Líder de otro país que viajó a nuestra región y dedicó tiempo para trabajar temas con las Aspirantes. Esto favoreció que el proceso de Acreditación se acorta.

Mi recomendación es que Liga Internacional pueda establecer un canal donde las Líderes puedan anunciar que cuando las Líderes viajen puedan contactar a las Aspirantes y dedicarles un poco de su tiempo.

La mejor solución para todas nuestras necesidades ha sido el uso de la tecnología. Por ejemplo a través del uso del messenger de Facebook o el chat de WhatsApp nos comunicamos con frecuencia.

**Challenge**
One of the biggest challenges for isolated Applicants is to understand how the Group is an opportunity for sharing experiences as opposed to a formal talk.

**Solution**
Applicants read the Leader's Handbook on their own and then we read it together, paragraph-by-paragraph so they can make their comments or ask questions. In addition, thanks to donations, we were able to invite Applicants to participate in an Area workshop in Guatemala and the day before they were able to attend a Group meeting and thus observe and participate in the way it was run.

**Suggestions**
One thing that was very helpful was to have a Leader from another country travel to the region and spend time working with Applicants. This helped to speed up accreditation. My recommendation is that LLL establishes a communications channel for Leaders who are working with isolated Applicants to publicize their need, so that when Leaders travel, they can contact isolated Applicants and dedicate a little of their time to them.

The best solution for all our needs has been the use of technology. For example we communicate frequently using Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp chat.

Sue Hoffman is CLA for the British Columbia and Yukon Area of La Leche League Canada (LLLC). This is a geographically large Area with many communities that are far from LLL Groups. Sue shares the following:

Each year, the British Columbia and Yukon (BC/Yukon) Area of La Leche League Canada receives approximately ten inquiries from people in isolated communities who are interested in becoming LLL Leaders. Many of these inquiries come from people who have personal breastfeeding experience, who have noticed a lack of support for breastfeeding in their communities, and who are taking action to bring about change. Sometimes these inquiries come from health professionals who are looking for ways to increase support for breastfeeding in their communities.

Here is how I work with these inquiries:

- When I receive initial phone calls or emails about interest in leadership, I respond quickly and with enthusiasm, expressing appreciation for the interest shown in La Leche League.
- I begin by finding out what individuals already know about La Leche League. Have they ever attended a meeting? Have they visited the LLLC website? Have they read *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*? As well, I share information about LLL and LLL leadership. I email a description of the prerequisites to applying for leadership and share information about what Leaders do and the time commitment involved in both the application and leadership. I share the LLLC document *LLL Leadership: Is it for you?*
- If, after reading through the initial information, the individual
  - sees a match with the prerequisites to applying for leadership,
  - is able to make the time commitment involved in becoming, and working as, a Leader
  - and expresses interest in continuing
I recommend *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding* and invite the potential Applicant to begin a pre-application dialogue.
• I complete a written pre-application dialogue with prospective Applicants. I begin by asking for the “About You” section of the personal history. If leadership still seems like a good fit after the prospective Applicant has sent me the “About You” section, I email a copy of the *Personal History of Breastfeeding and Mothering*, and use the “About Breastfeeding, Mothering, and LLL Philosophy” section of the personal history as the base for our pre-application dialogue. Completing the work in this way allows me to discuss each of the concepts in depth, sharing information about leadership as I learn about the individual’s personal experiences. After we have thoroughly discussed all ten concepts, we complete an acceptance exercise as part of the pre-application dialogue. This exercise gives the potential Leader the opportunity to demonstrate the personal traits that are part of the prerequisites.

• When the “About Breastfeeding, Mothering, and LLL Philosophy section of the Personal History” is completed, and neither the potential Applicant nor I have any remaining questions or concerns, I write my recommendation and invite the individual to apply for leadership. At this point, the personal history has already been completed—hooray!

• I have found that it is most effective to match each isolated Applicant with an Area Leader who will act as a mentor and supporting Leader. “Buddying” isolated Applicants with Leaders has been very successful in our Area. The Leader not only helps the isolated Applicant complete the *Checklist of Topics to Discuss in Preparation for LLL Leadership*, the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide*, and the *Preview*, but as well provides breastfeeding and parenting support and information, shares experience of managing a Group, creates a relationship, and generally continues to be an important connection for the Applicant after accreditation and when a new Group is opened by the isolated Leader.

In the BC/Yukon Area, supporting Leaders have mainly worked with isolated Applicants by telephone. They generally email documents and information to the Applicants. Some of the supporting Leaders have occasionally used Skype.

Supporting Leaders have shared the following hints:
• Begin by discussing how frequently the two of you can realistically talk, and how long you can stay on the phone. What will work for you and your families? Set up a schedule.
• Make sure to include some time for friendly conversation at the beginning of each phone call.
• Have an agenda for each phone call—what will you cover? How long will you spend on each task?
• Agree on a time limit for each call—if either party is late connecting to the call, either reschedule or end the call at the previously agreed upon time.

Working with isolated Applicants involves a considerable commitment of time. Whenever possible, share the work with Leaders in your Area. Not only does the isolated Applicant benefit, but the supporting Leaders also have the opportunity to share their knowledge, their experience, and their love of La Leche League. As well, they can help bring breastfeeding support to a new community. The Leaders who have worked with isolated Applicants in BC/Yukon have found the experience very rewarding. For the people who contact the LAD, and do not pursue leadership (for whatever reason), it is important that we leave a positive impression. While those individuals might not become Leaders themselves, they might share information about LLL with others in their community, and perhaps inspire someone else to open an LLL Group in the future.

Thanks to these LAD representatives for sharing their experience and wisdom.
Comment dynamiser le DAM
Marie-Eve Dallaire, Coordinatrice du département d’accréditation des monitrices (C-DAM), Ligue La Leche, Canada

Il y a, depuis plusieurs années, plus de monitrices qui quittent la LLL ou deviennent inactives, que de stagiaires accréditées. Les monitrices de la LLL sont de plus en plus nombreuses à se désengager des responsabilités de base de la monitrice, à se retirer de la liste téléphonique, à devenir monitrice de réserve ou à cesser leur engagement. Cela se ressent dans la formation des stagiaires, elles sont plus souvent isolées, ou appartiennent à un groupe qui ne tient plus de rencontres mensuelles. Souvent, elles n'ont pas accès à plusieurs monitrices comme modèles. Le département d’accréditation des monitrices (DAM) compte trop peu de ressources bénévoles pour remplir son mandat efficacement. Les stagiaires peu actives, qui terminent leurs démarches sur plus de 40 mois, ont tendance à être des monitrices peu engagées.

Notre projet
• Nous avons décidé de supporter la formation des stagiaires en offrant six journées de formation en présence pour sélectionner les candidates, leur écrire une recommandation au besoin, les initier aux séries de réunion, travailler le Guide des ressources en allaitement maternel (GRAM) et les exercices et diriger les travaux d'écriture, de lecture et d'étude individuelles.
• Nous avons circonscrit la formation sur une période définie et nous lui avons attribué un nombre d'heures reconnues: (6 mois, 6 jours en présence, un total de 100 heures de formation reconnues).

Nous encourageons l’écriture de l’histoire personnelle guidée par section, avec date de remise du travail pour faciliter la réponse par l’Adjointe au DAM (A-DAM).

Avantages anticipés :
• La possibilité d'impliquer des monitrices qui ne font pas parti du DAM pour le volet de formation en présence (travail du Guide des ressources en allaitement [GRAM] et des exercices).
• Les stagiaires apprennent à faire de la place à la LLL dans leur vie et seront possiblement plus engagées dans leur bénévolat.
• Créer un effet d’entraînement en ayant un groupe de stagiaires qui se connaissent et tissent des liens entre elles.
• Tangible et concret. La coordonnatrice du personnel bénévole reçoit chaque semaine des appels de mères intéressées par le bénévolat à la LLL, mais sans groupe local ou connaissance de l'organisme. Souvent découragée par la formation autonome et à durée non-déterminée.

Le groupe de formation a débuté en janvier 2017 avec 13 inscriptions. Deux stagiaires ont cessé le groupe pour poursuivre de façon autonome, puisque la participation à distance via Skype fut inefficace. Une a pris une pause dans sa démarche pour des raisons personnelles. Des dix participantes restantes, six sont en bonne voie d’être accréditées, quatre poursuivront leur démarches pour compléter leur histoire personnelle d'allaitement et de maternage à leur rythme sur les mois à venir. Nous avons donc atteint notre objectif de voir accréditer un plus grand nombre de stagiaires que par le passé. Dix monitrices, dont deux membres du DAM, ont participé à la formation des stagiaires.

Les enseignements tirés sont :
• Qu’il est essentiel que les stagiaires aient déjà fait l'entretien préalable, reçu la recommandation d'une monitrice et que leur dossier sont accepté et ouvert au moment de prendre part au groupe.
• Que cinq journées de formation pourraient suffirent avec une structure bien établie, puisque les stagiaires ont déjà des dossiers ouverts.
• Que le travail sur l'histoire personnelle doit être mieux expliqué et guidé pour que les stagiaires y accorde le temps nécessaire pour compléter leur démarche en six mois.
• Que les documents du DAM ont besoin de mise à jour pour être utilisés dans les deux modes de formation, soit en groupe ou autonome.
• Que les liens tissés entre les monitrices et les stagiaires à l'occasion des journées de formation auront contribué à dynamiser l'ensemble de l'implication des bénévoles de la Ligue La Leche.

Revitalizing the LAD
Marie-Ève Dallaire, Administrator of Leader Accreditation, Ligue La Leche, Canada

Over the last few years there have been more Leaders retiring or becoming inactive than are being accredited. Ligue La Leche’s Leaders are more and more disengaged from the basic responsibilities of leadership. They do not take phone days, they go on Leader reserve or do not renew their commitment. This has repercussions for the accreditation of Applicants. They are often isolated or belong to a Group that no longer holds monthly meetings. They often don’t have access to Leaders as role models. There are too few LAD representatives to fulfill their task effectively. Applicants who are not very active, who take more than 40 months to complete their applications, tend to become uncommitted Leaders.

Our Project
• We decided to support preparation for leadership by offering six in-person training days to select candidates, write a recommendation if necessary, introduce them to Series Meetings, work through the BRG and exercises and provide guidance for the writing, reading and study assignments.
• With official Applicants we set a defined period for application work and assigned a recognized number of hours: (6 months, 6 days in attendance, a total of 100 recognized training hours).
We offer guidance for writing the personal history by section, with deadlines to facilitate the response by the ACLA.

Anticipated benefits:
• The possibility to involve Leaders who are not part of the LAD for the in-person training sessions (BRG and exercises).
• Applicants learn how to make room in their lives for LLL and will possibly become more involved in their volunteer work.
• Create a study effect with a group of Applicants who know each other and will form relationships amongst themselves.
• Tangible and concrete. We receive calls every week from mothers interested in volunteering for LLL who don’t have a local Group and don’t know the organization well. They are often discouraged by having to work on their own and by the unspecified duration of the work.

The study group began in January 2017 with 13 Applicants. Two Applicants left the group to work on their own, because working through Skype proved not to be effective. One took a break from application work for personal reasons. Of the ten remaining participants, six are on track to be accredited, four will continue their work on their personal histories of breastfeeding and mothering at their own pace in the coming months. We have therefore achieved out goal of accrediting more new Leaders than we have in the past. Ten Leaders, including two LAD representatives participated in the study days.

What we have learned:
• It is essential for Applicants to have already completed the pre-application dialogue and have the recommendation of a supporting Leader. The application needs to have been initiated before an Applicant can participate in the group.
• Five study days would be enough with a well-established structure, since Applicants have already begun application work.
• The work of the personal history needs to be better explained and guided, so that the Applicants can allocate the time they’ll need in order to be accredited in six months.
• LAD documents need to be kept updated, so that they work for both study groups and independent work.
• The relationships established between Leaders and Applicants during these study days will have a positive impact on the involvement of La Leche League’s volunteers.

**Time to Say Goodbye – When to discontinue inactive applications**

Lesley Robinson, CLA, Ottawa, Canada

When a new application is initiated, there is usually tremendous excitement for the Applicant, the supporting Leader and the LAD representative. Many Leader Applicants are so eager to get started that they send the “About You” section of the personal history and sometimes the whole of the personal history almost immediately. Others will take their time, but express enthusiasm about starting work.

However an application starts out, we are aware that for any number of reasons, it may not end in accreditation. It is likely to have nothing to do with anything the LAD representative has or has not done. Despite regular cheery notes and offers of what the LAD representative can do to help, an Applicant may go through a period of inactivity, which may end in a discontinuation. An Applicant may have a new baby, may move or start a new job. The Applicant or a family member may have health concerns or there may be marital or other relationship problems. In any of the above circumstances, we encourage Applicants, like Leaders, to put family first. We encourage them to take a break from application work if they need to. We can reassure and give our support, but ultimately the decision to continue or not lies with the Applicant. Sometimes there will just be an unexplained period of inactivity and silence.

So how do we know when it is time to say goodbye? After all, some Applicants take years to complete their applications, perhaps with periods of inactivity surrounding successive births or other life events. The key lies in the communication you have been able to keep up with Applicants. If they keep you informed of what is going on in their lives and let you know when you can expect to hear from them again, then there is no reason for a period of inactivity to put an end to an application. If, on the other hand, your friendly reminders and words of encouragement elicit no responses, then it may be time to close the file. Keep up communication with the supporting Leader as well. The Leader might be able to help you understand the situation. A phone call to the supporting Leader would be helpful. Ask whether the Applicant has been attending meetings regularly and working with the supporting Leader. Sometimes these communications yield unexpected results. You may learn that the Applicant has been very active in the Group and has been working diligently on checklist items and the *Breastfeeding Resource Guide*, even though you have received no written work. You may find that the Applicant has completely disappeared from the Group, perhaps without the Leader even knowing why. If the latter is the case, it is definitely time to say goodbye!

The Semi-Annual Reporting period provides a good opportunity to reestablish contact or to close the file. Contact inactive Applicants and ask them to let you know when you can expect to receive some application work from them. Some may reply and get straight back on track, whereas others, despite expressing good intentions, may not realistically be able to continue. If this happens, then the end of a second successive reporting period in which no significant work was accomplished would be the time to say goodbye. Instead of asking whether an Applicant plans to continue, give a simple deadline, for example the end of the reporting period, for a response, in order to keep the file open. The wording can be completely positive, for example, “If I hear from you by (date), then I shall be able to keep the file open.” Page 30 of the *LAD Manual* has some suggestions on how to approach such a communication. If you hear nothing by the deadline, the decision has been made by default. For some Applicants setting a deadline will help them to see that it is time to make an honest appraisal of their plans for leadership. In giving them “permission” to discontinue, your accepting attitude may be a catalyst for them to carry on with renewed energy. There may be some Applicants who would dearly love to continue, but it is just not practical for them at this time. Let them know that we keep files for at least a year and Applicants can reapply without repeating completed work during the time that the LAD has kept the file. If the outcome is a discontinuation, then remember that the decision was in the Applicant’s hands, so it was not your call, but it was the right time.
Here is an extract from a new Leader Applicant in response to the ACLA’s introduction:

Dear Angelina,

Although my introduction to La Leche League came when my first baby was six months old, it was almost a decade and three children later before I applied to become a Leader. My pregnancies were happy and uncomplicated, likewise the births of my babies, and breastfeeding was a joy and a delight, so why am I still a Leader when my four children are all grown? I think because I valued so highly the support and accurate information LLL gave to me. Without La Leche League I might not have breastfed my twins into toddlerhood or even breastfed them at all. Breastfeeding research is ongoing and ever-fascinating, and it gives me great pleasure to be able to share with new mothers information about breastfeeding and mothering that may help them and their babies as it helped me and mine.

Warmest regards
Lucy Leader

Vicky Reynell, South Africa
Dear Angelina Applicant,

You ask how I can stay committed to helping mothers breastfeed and to La Leche League when I’m no longer a breastfeeding mother myself. I suppose it’s something I would have wondered too when I first came to LLL. The Leaders weren’t just lactating mothers. Some had quite big children, some only adult children and some were grannies! And yet here they were, talking about the importance of mothers and babies being together, answering phone calls about sore nipples, running LLL Groups and helping other Leaders. Now, I’m one of them. My youngest hasn’t breastfed in seven years and I too have “adult children” although that seems like a contradiction in terms.

I guess when you feel so passionate about something, it’s hard to walk away. And why should I, when there is such a need for Leaders and when breastfeeding help and support are still so needed? Just yesterday I took a call from a mother of twins who were eight weeks old. She was in pain every time she fed. She said that it had always hurt, but she knew that was normal in the beginning. We discussed proper positioning and she was eager to try laid-back breastfeeding. She’s contacted me today and can’t believe the difference it’s made already! I’ve really helped that mother. I guess she could have called another Leader, but I’m glad I was the one who was able to help her. It took only 15 minutes out of my day, but that’s the kind of work that really matters. This does.

The other work I do in LLL, helping Applicants prepare for leadership and leading my Group meetings, all boil down to that same element—helping a mother breastfeed her baby. I still get a kick out of it! Even after 21 years of being a Leader. Besides that, for me being a part of LLL means being a part of a wider circle of Leaders, Applicants and Group mothers where I can just be myself. A lot of mothers say when they found LLL they felt like they had “come home”, that it just felt right. It still does. When there is a group of Leaders who have different levels of experience as Leaders, as mothers with children of all ages, a ready-made group of mentors forms and we can ask each other all sorts of things and know that the answers will always reflect LLL Philosophy.

I used to think that maybe these “older Leaders” just had too much time on their hands, maybe nothing else to do. Ha! That’s laughable to me now. My days are as busy as they ever were and I find I’m not at home nearly as much as when I had a baby at my breast. I find it hard to find time to get LLL work done some weeks, but I make it a priority and it gets done eventually. If something is important enough to you, you’ll make sure you find time for it.

One last thing: I feel it has benefited my family greatly to see the commitment I give to something I truly believe in with all my heart. My five children (all boys) have grown up with a great respect for babies’ needs. It’s upsetting to them to see a baby cry and they know the value of breastfeeding. If I had stopped being a Leader years ago I don’t think they would have been exposed to those ideas quite so much. They also realise how valuable this kind of work is, not just paid work. And besides, they can all now describe how to position a baby properly at the breast—almost without thinking!

LLL Love,
Lucy Leader

Margaret McGuigan, Ireland

Hi Angelina,

Let me get directly to your question. First, I love babies and being involved in LLL lets me see lots and lots of adorable babies. Sometimes at meetings I get so involved watching the mothers and babies, I lose track of the topic. And tied in with that is helping the mothers with their breastfeeding concerns. I want each mother to have the most rewarding experience possible, so if I do say or do something that helps a mother get past a problem, see what an awesome job she is doing with her baby or know what to do when a question comes up, then my love of mothering and breastfeeding is passed on.

LLL gave me the means to raise my babies both by breastfeeding them and parenting them with love and respect. I want LLL to be there for my children and grandchild and that is a big part of the motivation for me. However, the
biggest reason I stay involved with LLL is because that is where my friends are. LLL has given me a network of friends all over the world—mothers who understand my feelings and views and who are there to answer questions for me.

Let me know if you have more questions related to this topic.

Lucy Leader

Lori Bryan, USA

Liebe Angelina,

Die Antwort zu deiner Frage wegen der Motivation für die Stillberatung, auch wenn die eigenen Kinder schon aus dem Stillalter herausgewachsen sind, ist für jede Mutter wahrscheinlich anders. Ich persönlich habe es nie mit meinem eigenen Familienalltag gekoppelt. Vielmehr ging es mir darum, anderen Müttern helfen zu können, ihnen zu unterstützen in ihren Wunsch nach einer erfolgreichen Stillzeit. Als LLL-Beraterin versuchen wir immer unsere eigenen Erfahrungen von der Stillberatung zu trennen, es steht für uns die Situation der ratsuchenden Mutter im Mittelpunkt. Denn nur durch eine gewisse Distanzierung von unseren eigenen Erfahrungen können wir ganz offen bleiben für das Anliegen der Mutter, die sich von uns Unterstützung und Hilfe erhofft. Würden wir das nicht klar trennen können, würden wir immer in ihre Antworten und Fragen unsere persönlichen Gefühle und Erfahrungen erkennen, und dadurch nicht mehr hören, was sie uns wirklich sagen möchte.


Lucy Leader

Dear Angelina,

The answer to your question about the motivation to help with breastfeeding, even when your own children are already grown, is probably different for every mother. Personally, I have never linked breastfeeding support to my own everyday family situation. Helping and supporting mothers to achieve a satisfying breastfeeding relationship has been my motivation. As LLL Leaders, we try to keep a distance between our own experiences and the situation of the mother who is asking for our support. If we are unable to keep these separate, we will always hear our own feelings and experiences in the words of the mother instead of hearing what she really would like to tell us.

So for me, it is the joy of supporting mothers and babies that is crucial to my work. Every time I see a baby nursing successfully and happily, it gives me fresh motivation for the next time I help with breastfeeding.

Lucy Leader

Ineke Holtslag, Netherlands
Here is an extract from a Leader Applicant in response to an inquiry of status:

I would like to apologize for my silence over the last few months. I have been reflecting on things that have happened and thinking about what to do in the future.

I feel tremendously grateful and loyal to La Leche League, which has been such a big part of my life as a mother. I would like to switch supporting Leaders if that were possible, although there is no other Group nearby. I no longer have any wish to work with Lynn under any circumstances. I am very much pained by this situation. I feel that Lynn is a liability for LLL. I have heard directly from many who claim she has alienated a large number of LLL members and colleagues within the breastfeeding support community, although, I am sure she has helped numerous others.

I have recently started volunteering as a peer counsellor with another local breastfeeding support organization. My motivation is still as strong as ever. I would frankly prefer to be a Leader with LLL, but I do not see how it would be possible under these circumstances. Unless you see any other options, in spite of my desire to continue, I do not see a way forward.

Ashley Applicant

How would you respond? Send your ideas for a reply or an extract you would like to share with other LAD representatives to Lesley Robinson mummypiggy@gmail.com.
If you are looking for an upbeat way to explain why we pay careful attention to the prerequisites to applying for leadership, try the following:

The way that a mother meets the prerequisites to applying for leadership can be compared to the fit of a pair of shoes. It is important for the candidate, as well as for us, that LLL philosophy is a comfortable fit for her. We wouldn’t ask someone to walk around all day in a pair of ill-fitting shoes. Sometimes we may be prepared to put up with a little discomfort if the shoes are particularly stylish or just our colour, but in the long run we would regret the decision.

Alison Stanton, New Zealand

Denis and I are parents of seven adults, Josephine (39), Craig (36), Larah (34), Peter (32), Ruth (25), Jed (20) and Thomas (20). Our family continues to grow with sons-in-law and daughters-in-law coming into the fold, along with eight mokopuna (grandchildren) ranging from 13 years to 9 months. We live in East Auckland on a peninsular between Bucklands Beach and Eastern Beach. Two of our daughters and their families live in Sussex, England and another in Melbourne, Australia.

La Leche League is and has been a huge part of my life. I would not be the parent I am today had I not come in contact with LLL philosophy, the organisation and the people I have met during my LLL “career”. Although I began the accreditation process in New Zealand, I was accredited during the sixteen years that our family lived in England. I have served as an Area Workshop Coordinator, as a Communications Skills Tutor, Administrator of Communication Skills and as the LLLNZ Director. I am currently a Support Leader for the local Group, Coordinator of
the LLLNZ Alumnae and I am one of the volunteers on the 60th Anniversary workgroup. When not spending time with family or working on LLL matters, I can be found in the garden, walking or reading.

As the Coordinator of the LLLNZ Alumnae I see and hear how LLL values have impacted the lives of the women involved through the various stages of their lives and in other areas of their lives. I decided to accept nomination to the ALA role because I see a great need to support more mothers into the role of an LLL Leader and in turn to support, encourage and train those who are supporting these mothers. The ultimate goal is to make La Leche League more accessible by having more Leaders and LLL Groups in more communities.

Warm regards

Alison

Mónica Tornöe de Illescas, Guatemala

English translation follows

Mi nombre es Mónica Tornöe de Illescas, estoy casada con Alejandro y tenemos una hermosa hija de 5 años llamada Crista. Amé Liga de la Leche desde mi embarazo y hace dos años soy líder de Liga de la Leche Guatemala. Desde octubre de 2016 soy coordinadora de aspirantes para Guatemala. Disfruto muchísimo apoyar a las madres, y ahora a las aspirantes para formarse como líderes apasionadas y confiadas en que en LLL somos portadoras de un valioso y trascendental papel con mensajes e información de amor, salud, respeto y relaciones saludables para futuras generaciones.

Adjunto foto de un grupo de apoyo de LLL Guatemala, zona 15 en mi casa. Soy la chica de abajo a la izquierda con blusa corinta con mi hija Crista en mis piernas.

My name is Mónica Tornöe de Illescas. I am married to Alejandro and we have a beautiful daughter. She’s five years old and her name is Crista. I’ve been a member of La Leche League since my pregnancy and two years ago, I became a Leader with La Leche League Guatemala. Since October 2016, I have been the Coordinator of Leader Accreditation for Guatemala. I greatly enjoy supporting mothers, and now Applicants as they become passionate Leaders, confident that in LLL we have a valuable and inspiring role, sharing information and messages of love, health, respect and healthy relationships for future generations.

In the picture is a group of members of La Leche League of Guatemala at my house. I am at the front on the left in the burgundy blouse with my daughter, Crista on my lap.
Congratulations on your appointment!

Joan Crothers, CLA, Massachusetts/Rhone Island/Vermont, USA
Charlene Jenkins ACLA, North Carolina, USA
Elizabeth Johnson ACLA, Kentucky/Tennessee, USA
Melissa Fuller-Killgore CLA, Alabama/Mississippi/Louisiana & Arkansas, USA
Shiuh-jane Lin CLA for English- and Chinese-speaking Applicants, Future Areas in Asia and the Middle East (FAiAsiaME)
Caryn Paradise ACLA, Florida/Caribbean Islands, USA
Rebecca Renegar ACLA, North Carolina, USA
Alison Stanton ALA, LLL New Zealand
Katherine Teske ACLA, Alberta/Northwest Territories, Canada
Missy Wang ACLA for Chinese-speaking Applicants, FAiAsiaME
My “Non-LLL Passion

I study Latin, Greek, Old Norse, and Old English in my ‘spare’ time. I love learning grammar and being able to read with more and more facility. I am hoping, in the future, to turn my passion for Latin (and learning ‘dead’ languages) into a career, but will probably focus on a slightly different era than antiquity.

Lauren Allen, ACLA, Northern California/Hawaii, USA

My non-LLL passion is “herps”*—I have nine snakes, a day gecko, and three frogs as pets! I also do herp rescues. This is a photo of me and an eight- or nine-foot boa constrictor. In addition to various kinds of snakes from less than a foot long to about nine feet long, I have taken in frogs and lizards, such as a chameleon, a giant day gecko about five inches long, and a green iguana about three feet long.

Sandy Moore-Furneaux
RALA, LAD West, USA

* “herp” is short for herpetology, the branch of zoology dealing with reptiles and amphibians.
Meaghan with Evelyn (now 4) a year ago.

I am passionate about beekeeping and teaching my kids about sustainable living. We live in a city, but little things like supporting honeybees, keeping chickens, herb & vegetable gardening, and composting help reduce our impact on the environment. My kids love joining me in these activities & it is a great way for us to connect.

Meaghan Wells
ACLA, Washington, USA