Closure: How to End the Semester or Year

Saying Good bye...

The year passes so quickly, and all of a sudden it's time to say good-bye to the friends you've made in your organization. It is often easy to forget about "closing out" the year with the group. Why say good-bye? Just as viewing a good ending to a movie can greatly enhance our feelings about the movie as a whole, so can appropriately saying good-bye heighten our positive feelings about the phases of our lives coming to an end. When we take the time to say good-bye, to reflect on and prepare for upcoming transitions in our lives, we often gain a sense of closure or finality and feel better prepared to continue on in life. Here are some ideas to help make saying good-bye a little easier, or at least a little more memorable.

Five Ds for SUCCESSFULLY dealing with departure

- Determine ways to make your transitioning a gradual process
- Discover the significance that different activities have had in your life
- Describe the significance to others
- Delight in what you have gained and in what lies ahead of you
- Define areas of continuity in your life

Five Ds for UNSUCCESSFULLY dealing with departure

- Deny that is over
- Distort your experience by over-glorifying it
- Denigrate your activities and relationships
- Distract yourself from thinking about departure
- Detach yourself abruptly from your activities and relationships

Ways To Say Good-Bye

- Assemble the group to create a file of what happened over the year
- Create a photo album, scrapbook, or collage of pictures of everyone
- Create an address book with everyone's summer address and photocopy for all
- Create an individual collage for each member - have everyone cut out a picture that reminds them of each member and put them together to make a great memory
- Create certificates for all members (successfully completing a spectacular year)
- Create individual autograph or message books for everyone to sign
- Evaluate the year and set goals for next year
- Gather all of the "quotable quotes" funny things that were said during meetings or programs and put it in a book
- Give a memento to members - button, shirt, mug, etc.
- Have a good-bye theme movie night
- Have a graduation party for departing members
- Have a joint retreat with the new officers to share evaluations of the year, answer their questions and give advice
• Have a picnic or pot luck
• Have a slide show of activities from the year
• Have a T-shirt signing party
• Have an awards banquet
• Plan a reunion over break or when school resumes
• Share one thing you learned from being a member of the group
• Share three things you will miss about each person in the group
• Share your favorite memory of the year
• Solicit nominations and present funny awards
• Write farewell notes/cards to each other

It's important to finish that last chapter in your group's book by finding some way to say good-bye. Keep in mind that not everyone in your group will like sentimental good-byes, so take their feeling into consideration before planning any activities.