

## **Boomers and Courtship: If at First You Don't Succeed...**

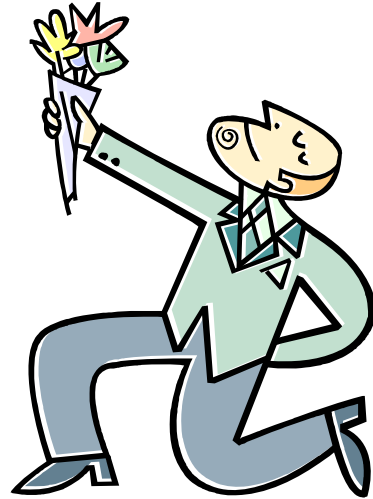
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*by MeChelle Feldkamp, Family Development Center*

Baby Boomers are busy, and their time is valuable. While they are plentiful, Boomers aren't yet a wellspring of availability. Many are still working. Many have care responsibilities for elderly parents, children, and grandchildren. And some haven't hit that I've-been-retired-3-months-and-now-I'm-bored thing yet. An initial attempt at engagement may not yield positive results. *Don't underestimate the power of the multi-ask!*

Sometimes Boomers have to be courted. Let's face it: We all want to be wanted. It just makes us feel good. So don't give up just because you've asked the volunteer question already. Wait for a while, and then ask again. It lets people know you haven't forgotten about them. It makes them feel like somehow you need them and shows that they're important enough to be remembered.

Create a follow-up list, not only for individuals, but for clubs, service organizations, etc. From time to time, reach out to them with a specific request or an invitation to a specific training that might be of interest. Ask for help for something specific but non-volunteer related. You create an opening for dialog that may lead to a regular volunteer commitment.



Recently, we asked a local interior designer to help with our entryway “greeter” board. It's a large space that includes employee pictures, volunteer pictures, etc. Trying to find ways to make the entire thing coordinate has always been a challenge (and time consuming!) We've worked with this designer for different things on and off for probably 10 years, always on projects that were non-kid related. We've thrown out the volunteer “ask” several different times, several different ways. *Nope. Time is money. Not enough time.* So, the other day after talking about ideas for the greeter board (which she volunteered to do for free!), we threw it out there again, “Would you consider doing some classroom art with the kids?” “Hmm,” she said, “Ya know, I think I've got some time to do that.”

Those crazy Boomers. Just one step away from solving all our problems!