

# New Recruits

by Lynn Singer

It's overheard at competitions every year -

'There must be something in the water in that town...they always have a great team. Where do they find them?'

It's not an accident. To keep interest in a program building each year, you've got to be pro-active in creating excitement about your team. Talk about your team, get younger performers interested early, and get your team involved outside of school. Give these ideas a try:

## Get 'Em While They're Young

There's no more captive audience than those who want to someday be a part of your group. Take your team to your local feeder schools for a special performance followed by a question/answer session with the team members. Have a few of your team members share personal experiences of what being involved in dance or auxiliaries has meant to them. Make the younger students see how much they stand to gain by making the team.

## Be Seen

Arrange special performances at girls and boys clubs, churches, retirement/assisted living facilities, festivals, and community and corporate functions. The more recognizable your team is in the community, the more 'word of mouth' publicity you'll receive.

## Start a "Pre-Training Program"

Hold an annual or semi-annual mini camp for feeder schools and younger students. Teach basic skills, 1 or 2 routines, talk about your program, and top it off with a special 'guest performance' at a halftime or spring show. This could be a great fundraiser for your team!

## Success Breeds Interest

Set high standards for your team—in performance, competition, leadership and sportsmanship. A great program is like a magnet for students coming up to high school. If they see a team full of people they want to emulate, they'll be lining up come audition time.

## Come to High School for a Day

Invite students who will be entering your school the following year to be a 'buddy' for a day with your team members. Pair them up and send them off to practice, classes and lunch so the younger students can experience first hand just how great high school - and being on your team - will be.

## About Guys...

Auxiliaries have always known it - and dance teams are catching on. Guys add an extra special dimension to performances. Strength for stunts, great partner work, and more variety on the floor are just the beginning of the wonderful choreographic elements co-ed teams can take advantage of.

Iowa and California are leaders in the country for all-male and co-ed dance teams. You can see the influence from studio, stage and auxiliary groups find it's way to these types of dance teams. And they don't have to be dancers. Remember - most female dance team members come to the team without formal dance training!

Ideas to open your team to boys:

1. Sisters, bring your brothers to practice
2. Get the athletes involved. Recruit football players, wrestlers, baseball players - all of the guys who can 'influence' the other guys at school and really set the co-ed team as the 'coolest thing' to do.
3. Approach it seriously.
4. Drill technical skills - especially the basics.
5. Perform with integrity - choreograph routines with some 'meat' to them - skills, stunts, partner work, etc.
6. Keep it appropriate for boys - funk, jazz, productions and (if trained) modern, are perfect dance styles for co-ed teams. In other words, you probably wouldn't ask your boys to perform a kick or pom routine!
7. Realize it will take a while - you may just start with a couple of boys. The key is to get them talking and recruiting their friends. Think of the dynamic performances you'll be able to create!

