HOW TO START A WOA GROUP IN YOUR AREA

Women of ASPE

American Society of Plumbing Engineers™
The Women of ASPE (WOA) was created to help engage, retain, and advance women in the plumbing design industry, through education, leadership development, and networking opportunities. WOA is committed to bringing women together and assisting them in achieving their professional and personal goals, so ASPE encourages all local Chapters to start a WOA group in their area. But how do you begin?
The first step is to appoint a Chapter WOA Liaison. If you have volunteered for this position, thank you! Here are some tips on getting started:

- Check out the WOA webpage. Here you will find contact information for the national WOA Committee, including your WOA Region Liaisons. The webpage also has some marketing materials that you can use in your Chapter’s newsletter to get the word out and encourage involvement from others in your area. WOA also has started recoding podcasts! Links to them can be found at the bottom of the page.

- Next, follow/join WOA’s social media to see what others are doing and to post pictures of your events: Facebook Group, LinkedIn Group, and Instagram. Feel free to use the #WoASPE hashtag on any social media platform. (Friendly reminder: When you post photos of WOA events, ask participants to put down their drinks when possible.)
Next, start brainstorming and planning local events to host in your area. This is probably the hardest part of the Chapter WOA Liaison’s role, and the goal is to host two to four events per ASPE year that are focused on WOA. The events can be anything, and it’s helpful to get input from your local Chapter members. The preferences of members vary from Chapter to Chapter, so it may take a couple events to figure out what will attract the most attendance. Some event ideas include:

- Forming foursomes to play at local golf outings.
- Hosting educational events—both technical and professional development—with other industry organizations, local government/inspection bodies, manufacturers, engineering firms, etc.
- Organizing social networking events like wine tastings, painting/crafts, ax throwing, happy hours, etc.
- Participating in philanthropic efforts such as gathering and donating blankets/jackets in the winter or new/slightly used personal care products for shelters. You can get involved with a local scouting organization or do a charity walk/run as a group too. “WOA Cares” is the tagline WOA uses for these events.

Tips for a Successful Event

- **Location**: Try to find a venue that doesn’t require a down payment or minimum number of attendees. Venues with easy directions and parking are always appreciated by attendees. Sometimes it is easier to find a sponsor first and then ask them for help with finding a venue.

- **Determine a cost for the event**: Although a lot of WOA events are free, most social-type functions do charge ticket prices to offset the cost and the sponsorship money required. Determining a cost will help you find a sponsor and/or determine how much you should charge for the event.

- **Find a sponsor**: See “Step Three, Sponsorship at the local level”.

- **Get the word out**: See the marking section below.

- **Plan to get to the event early**: to make sure everything is set up and ready to go when attendees arrive.

- **Be sure to take attendance and take lots of pictures of your event! Then share your event success with your Chapter, the WOA national committee, social media, etc.**

- **Getting event feedback from attendees (and sponsors) is invaluable. Since each WOA group is different, learning what your particular group likes will make planning the next event so much easier!**

When marketing your event:

- Use “WOA [Chapter name]” or “[Chapter name] WOA” to differentiate your local event from WOA National events.

- Contact ASPE’s Graphic Designer, Nadine Saucedo (nsaucedo@aspe.org), who can help you come up with great flyers/banners/graphics for your event.

- Publicize your event in your local area via email, social media, and the Chapter newsletter. Also, contact ASPE’s Communications Director, Gretchen Pienta (gpienta@aspe.org), for help in publicizing your event via ASPE’s website and social media.
Finally, reach out to your fellow Chapter members and encourage them to join WOA on the national level. They can do this by checking the WOA box when they join or renew their membership, or they can email the WOA Staff Liaison, Racquel Rodriguez (rrodriguez@aspe.org).

**Reminders**

- **All are welcome!** WOA is inclusive, not exclusive. Our goal is to make all members feel comfortable at events. Although we are geared toward the female members of ASPE, WOA is open to anyone who wants to participate—and we encourage all to join!

- **Sponsorship at the local level:** To help defray the cost of events, reach out to local engineering companies or manufacturers to ask if they would like to support WOA by sponsoring an event. Be sure to recognize all sponsors in marketing and at the event.

- **Celebrate!** When a local WOA member has made the news in our industry, help us announce/brag this accomplishment by contacting Gretchen Pienta (gpienta@aspe.org) with the information.

- **ASPE Tech Symposium and Convention & Expo WOA Scholarships:** WOA National offers full-ride scholarships for WOA members to attend the ASPE Tech Symposium and Convention & Expo. Keep a look out for these opportunities (typically announced in late spring of each year) and help promote them to your members. We love being able to help members attend our national events and see why ASPE is such a great organization!

WOA is about what you make of it. Our goal is to find ways to make all members feel included and more comfortable at all ASPE events. Get out there, have fun, and connect, and thank you for your willingness to help your Chapter and ASPE grow into a diverse organization!