

## 6c1

# Welcoming Host

### Do

Identify a friendly person who is already a part of the community organisation who will welcome the newcomer and introduce them to other members.

### Story

Nottingham Museums and Art Galleries invite people who are know through their outreach programmes to previews of exhibitions. They make sure there are some familiar faces at the door. *(Dodd & Sandell 2001)*

An alternative and often more effective approach is to contact directly the club, society or recreation centre where the proposed activity is to take place, and attempt to find one or more individuals prepared to help out. This approach obviously needs careful planning, with a delicate balance to be struck between giving information to potential helpers and the individuals'; personal privacy.' *(Gilbert 1993, p100)*

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### Hints & Hazards

The welcoming host will know the host organisation well, but will not know the person at first. 'The Partners Projects enlist the help of the informal leaders of the senior centre. These leaders proved helpful and unselfish in wanting to make their centre pleasant for the disabled newcomers. At times, integration has involved a sponsor from among the centre's leaders, someone who facilitates introductions and activities. This way, the elders who have been the mainstay of the centre over the years are reinforced rather than threatened.

We know of mainstream elders who attend the senior centre only on days when the elders with learning disabilities participate. They report how meaningful it is that 'someone needs me'. (*Ansello et al 1997, p52*). However gaining new skills together can be more empowering than always being supported by someone who knows more about the people and the topic than you. See also 2c2 'Benefactor' and 6c1 'Community Buddy'.