

## **Board Update to Chapter Leaders**

**June 28, 2019**

**From the ICAN Board of Directors:** We want to address the conference of 2016. ICAN planned and expected to recoup the investment in the event. However, the conference led to a significant loss of funds, amounting to over \$30,000. Through that experience, ICAN learned that our target demographic no longer relies on conferences for their educational and support needs, and are no longer willing or able to spend money on travel, childcare, and other expenses accrued through attending in-person conferences at the consumer level. ICAN did solicit for professional sponsorships, but found that sponsoring a national consumer based conference of this type does not hold the same benefit level as sponsoring a professional based conference, so high level sponsorships were difficult to obtain. There were logistical and administrative challenges that led to the unexpected financial outcome. However, the conference did produce valuable content, experiences, networking opportunities, and provided webinars that ICAN can use for years to come. While attendees raved about the conference experience, the severe financial deficit ICAN was left with afterwards is still affecting the organization today. ICAN's main priority at this time is to recover financial stability to sustain the organization as a 501c3.

### **Ideas From Chapter Leaders and Answers from the Board:**

- **More unique and attractive benefits for members.**
  - The board has been aware of the need to update and strengthen the benefit packages we offer. We have recruited a new webinar coordinator that has added new content to the website. Unfortunately, we do not have the finances to add benefits such as physically mailed items. Until we recover our costs from conference, we cannot add benefits that increase the needed funding for our membership benefits package.
  
- **Actively recruiting and sponsoring the first year chapter leader volunteer positions for areas with really high cesarean rates.**
  - We agree with this project, and would love to work towards it. We are in need of a volunteer coordinator that can focus on target areas throughout the world that would benefit from a chapter. Lindsey is currently filling the volunteer coordinator position in the interim, but there are numerous open positions on the national level that need to be filled in order to work efficiently, so that is the priority at this time in that category.
  
- **I think each chapter needs their own Instagram account. We are missing an entire generation by not utilizing this platform to grow meeting attendance.**
  - While we agree that instagram is becoming more popular in new and upcoming parents, our social media policy is based around liability insurance parameters and is the best we can do right now. We do not have the workforce to moderate and maintain an additional social media platform for each chapter at this time. While we are unable to add an additional at this time, the board is frequently discussing the best, most appropriate way to keep up with the ever-changing social media landscape. In the meantime, you can

contact the [instagram@ican-online.org](mailto:instagram@ican-online.org) with any graphics or posts you would like to share, and she can add the details for your chapter.

- **Also, I saw that canva offers free upgraded accounts for non profit organizations. I tried to reach out to them but perhaps my question was too confusing. It would be great to be able to use their upgrades for ICAN!**
  - Canva does offer an upgraded account for non profits, but it is only one per organization, and 10 people can access it. We currently use this account for our graphics, and do not have the ability to add every chapter leader, due to the limits set by Canva. However, chapters may request that the graphics coordinator ([graphics@ican-online.org](mailto:graphics@ican-online.org)) create graphics on their behalf to take advantage of the additional options of the upgraded account.
- **And thank you for all you guys do! You're all appreciated.**
  - Thank you! We appreciate all of you!!

#### **Concerns from Chapter Leaders and Responses from the Board:**

- **I'm concerned about the whiteness of our board of directors. Has there been any effort to recruit black/ Hispanic/non-white women?**
  - The board currently only has 5 people, which means the workload is 20-40 hours/week minimum, including 4 annual phone meetings averaging 3-4 hours, and 1 in person meeting averaging 40 hours over a 2.5 day span plus travel time annually. The executive team is currently bare bones, and has a very high turn-over rate. When an executive member steps down, a board member fills that position until a new volunteer is found. We actively recruit for board members but the time commitment of the positions greatly reduces the overall number of interested parties, leaving us with very few people that are willing to help. Unfortunately, the current board members are the only people that have expressed the ability and desire to work on the board. The DEI committee was our intention to start an internal review process, make us more inclusive, and to help with networking and overall connections to communities throughout the world. The goal of the DEI was to help diversify our organization, which would then lead to more diverse interested parties for the executive team and board of directors.
- **Finances- I'm still not really sure how it works. Seems like it's harder than it has to be. Membership- we need to be able to access an updated member list at any time. We shouldn't have to request it. Maybe we could do a Google sheets document that can only be edited by the person who updates it but can be viewed by any chapter leader? Encouragement and support for chapter leaders- seems like a lot of folks are discouraged, especially by low attendance numbers.**
  - ICAN currently use Donorperfect service for membership and donation management. This service does link to Constant Contact, but does not link to our website. We have to manually update that list, which takes additional working hours. We are in the process of changing out membership and donation service to a company that offers a more

streamlined product. This will allow us to update the list more frequently. In the interim, our pro-member procedure has been updated to include an email to the chapter of each professional member receipt. This provides a notification of new professional memberships to the chapter and allows them to send a thank you to the new member. Hopefully this will help as we are currently searching for a new service provider that will fit better into our workflow.

- **Are we still having a meeting in Atlanta area in November? If so, it would be great to get the dates and details ASAP.**
  - We don't know at this point. We are working on options for having sponsors that would cover the lodging and food, but it is becoming challenging to find a location that can host more than 10 leaders. Justen is frequently checking into options and working on solutions, but it may be difficult to keep the cost under \$100/person.
  
- **I think more should be done to optimize the website for mobile users and also search engine optimization.**
  - We completely agree and we desperately need help in this area. The board members are not webmasters, and wordpress has been a learning curve. We need a volunteer that has computer programming experience and can head this up, because there is no money to pay for help.
  
- **I feel we can be more doing to discuss the cesarean rate for black mothers. I remember there was an announcement about a fund to help black mothers become ICAN leaders- what is the status of that?**
  - There is \$140 remaining that is earmarked for this program. We have had one chapter leader utilize this fund. It is not need based; it is an incentive to diversify the organization. A DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) committee was created to oversee and manage this project. The board has been working diligently to fill the DEI committee, but have been unsuccessful to this point. At least 7 people have been interviewed but backed out. There have been three that accepted the position but stepped down before any tasks were completed. We are desperately in need of dedicated volunteers for the DEI committee that can focus on goals such as recruiting chapter leaders of color.
  
- **Also, is there a way for national to help chapters find local or state cesarean rates?**
  - The CDC keeps the state cesarean rates fairly updated. Local rates depend on the state and if the department of public health publishes the data. You can contact the state department of public health and ask for this data based on the Freedom of Information Act. This is research is part of chapter leader duties, falling under the advocacy and education sections of our mission.
  
- **I love the graphics but have seen a decrease in citations. Also can we have more data centered graphics?**
  - Please send the board specific examples so we can correct this ([board@ican-online.org](mailto:board@ican-online.org)). We strive to always cite sources when using outside information and data. Yes, we want

more data centered graphics. When Justen took over the ICAN page she was not on the board and had more time to focus on informational graphics. Working on the board is a 20-40 hour/week job, so the page activity has slightly declined. We will work to return to more data centered info soon.

- **Burnout – I have been a solo leader for 10 years. I have a fairly active FB page, but no one comes to meetings. My kids are older & I'm just feeling burned out. I wish there was a way to grow & develop new leaders. This is my baby & I'm not giving it over to just anyone.**
  - We often have chapter leaders recruit replacements and stay on long enough to train the person and help them grow in the community. Tulsa is a recent example of this. ICAN offers the training, but local leaders are the best option for mentoring during the transition. We do our best to assist in recruiting by sharing graphics in groups, but we are not connected to the local community, so our help only goes so far.
  
- **I personally don't feel that we should be asking chapter leaders to have more roles within the organization. The burn out rate is high and it's already a lot for the leaders. Is there a way to reach a bigger demographic of volunteers for small roles so that we don't have to ask current volunteers to take on more?**
  - The volunteer coordinator advertises all of our executive positions on the public page, on our website and include in our general newsletter. We do not restrict to chapter leaders and we explain to each person that they do not need to be a chapter leader to volunteer on the national level. Volunteer recruitment and retainment is much more difficult than many people realize so when we find an ambitious volunteer, we are eager to accept their offer to help regardless of their chapter leader status. Chapter leaders are always welcome to publicly share our current open volunteer positions listed on the website ([www.ican-online.org/volunteer](http://www.ican-online.org/volunteer)).

We are diligently working to improve things to ensure the chapters can continue their missional work in their communities . We are looking for ways to cut costs, streamline giving and fundraising efforts, and manage costs of the required administrative services of a nonprofit organization. We are running an internal audit of expenses, policies, and programs to determine more effective and efficient ways to accomplish ICAN's mission. Thank you for sharing your comments, concerns, and ideas and for all your hard work in your communities. Please, if you have further thoughts contact us at [board@ican-online.org](mailto:board@ican-online.org). If you are able to help on the national level please contact [volunteer@ican-online.org](mailto:volunteer@ican-online.org).