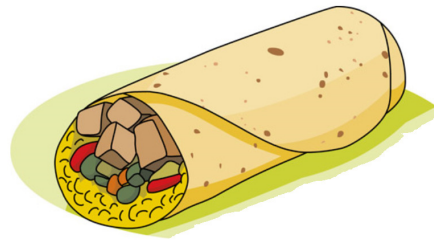


TACO: Talk About Chapter life Openly



P.E.O.? I've never heard of them. Is that some group here in Marguerite-ville?

Yes, there is a chapter here, but P.E.O. is not only in Marguerite-ville. There are chapters all over the United States and Canada. P.E.O. is the organization that helped Mary Smith finish her nursing degree. Remember the geranium you purchased last spring? That's our big money-maker to support the loans, grants and scholarships that P.E.O. provides for women's education.

P.E.O.? What kind of secret club is this? I've heard everything is so secret.

P.E.O. isn't a club as we think of clubs. We have meetings, dues, a Constitution and a password. We are a Sisterhood based on love and friendship. The use of a password is a holdover from when P.E.O. was founded 150 years ago. Seven young girls started our organization and passwords were very popular at the time. It's meant to be fun, not exclusive. Even though we don't talk about all of our P.E.O. business to people who aren't members, what we do certainly isn't a secret. We WANT people to know about what we do!

I received an invitation to become a P.E.O. but I can't join. I'm not a teacher. It's an organization of all teachers, right? I just wouldn't feel comfortable with a room full of teachers.

P.E.O. is made up of women from all different personal and professional backgrounds. Their individual educational status has nothing to do with it. We have nurses, stay-at-home moms, accountants, musicians, custodians, and of course some teachers, too. The organization is open to anyone who is sponsored by an active member. That is what makes going to Chapter XYZ so much fun. I wouldn't have contact with many of these women anywhere else, if it wasn't for P.E.O. I love the diversity of the women it brings together, including the fact that we're all different ages, because it expands my perspective.

I received an invitation to join P.E.O. I can't join. I'm not a Methodist. It's only for Methodists. Right?

P.E.O. is made up of women from all faiths. The only requirement is that members profess a belief in God. Believe me, there is no conflict between our vows and family or religion.

I would love to join but, I just don't have time to add one more thing to my week. I go to enough stuff. If it's not church, it's the library board, gymnastics, and on and on, and on.... What exactly do you do at the meetings?

It is a commitment. Our regular monthly meeting is on the first Monday of the month. Then three times a year we have social meetings where we don't do any business. They are just for fun. Attending the meeting on a regular basis helps develop the relationships that make us "sisters".

Our meetings typically take about an hour. That includes the business meeting, a program and refreshments. The business meeting lasts about 30 minutes and then we have a program. The programs are often presented by the membership and I'm always amazed at what I learn from my sisters. A member may share a talent or hobby she has. Sometimes we have outside speakers come and talk about things going on in the community. One that comes to mind that we had recently was "all about the business of making chocolate" given by a local chocolatier. The program lasted about 15-20 minutes. Finally, we have refreshments. I used to think the refreshment time wasn't important, but now it is the part I look forward to the most. It's an opportunity to visit and catch up with my sisters face-to-face, not in tweets, texts, or e-mails.

How much does it cost me to be in P.E.O.?

To join chapter XYZ it will cost you \$35 for an initiation fee. We have annual dues, too. For example, our chapter's dues are \$48.00. Some of this money goes to International dues, some goes for state dues and the rest stays in our local chapter. Our mission is to support the P.E.O. grants, loans, and scholarships for the education of women. Some chapters have fundraisers and some give money through their dues, but everyone supports these projects according to what they can afford and that's very personal.