How to Light a Fire Under Your Ward

Notes from the Ohana Software Webinar

Understanding your Ward:

1. This can be done through Surveys:
   - Computer Skills
   - Genealogist in Family?
   - What are their interest?

2. This can be done by talking to the members of your ward and taking an interest in their work
   - What ancestor would you like to meet? What would you talk to them about or ask them?
   - Do you have a favorite family heirloom? Why is it important to you?
   - Do you have pictures of your ancestors? How far back do your pictures go? Do you look like any of them?

Example surveys can be found at: http://www.ohanasoftware.com/?sec=ldswc&page=questionnaire

Steps to spreading the "electricity" of family history work.

1. Build Support: Plan activities, provide fliers, and other information.
2. Connect Your Power Lines: Get the Support of your leadership (Stake, Relief Society, Elders Quorum, YM, YW, Primary)
   - Use them to gather information.
   - Discuss and customize activities to each group.
   - Get feedback afterwards
3. Set Up Utilities: Give members the tools that they need to be successful
4. Provide Continuous Power: Consultants and directors provide a heartbeat for ward excitement.

Road Block: Lack of Excitement. How do we combat it?

- Talk about one on one work to get them started
- Be brave. Ask for an appointment to meet with them in their home or at your Family History Center.
- Get them results right away!
  1. Get a preliminary file (4 generations or less) with Get My Ancestors. See the tutorial video here: http://www.ohanasoftware.com/?sec=lessons&page=GetMyAncestorstutorial
  2. Get them to jump right in by searching for a source. I recommend using FamilySearch's Record Search found here: http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.html That way they can begin to see the stories behind the ancestors.
  3. Help them learn principles of research as they search for and fill in sources and new information from FamilySearch.
- You can also use a buddy system to keep them motivated and engaged in the work.
- Do some preliminary searching for a ward member, then TEACH them a principle of research and let them search. They should have success because you have scouted ahead.
- REMEMBER!- let them do the driving and make mistakes. If you tell them how and where to go, they won't be able to find information without you. The process is half the fun!

Ideas From the Webinar:

- Take you ancestors to temple day - Begin planning at least 6 months in advance. If possible get support from your stake & temple leadership to hold temple sessions all day that day. This activity should be used in conjunction with other activities that allow members to find an ancestor to take to the temple.

- Genealogy Buddies - Meet once a week to motivate, tell stories, and set small goals for the week.
- Computer Night - Set up multiple computers in the cultural hall for a ward activity. Have people log on to new FamilySearch and start building their tree. You can also use this idea to help people get a preliminary file with Get My Ancestors, or to find an ancestor's record using the Record Search index.
- Indexathon - Use the new indexing program to involve the youth or young adults. Set a goal for the ward to index so many names (fun idea for ym/yw competition).
- Host a fireside on personal histories and how they can be used to strengthen relationships.
- Weekly "Personal History Question" or "Genealogy Tip" in the sacrament meeting program.
- Family history lessons to be handed out to primary or in the primary newsletter.
- Take advantage of stake activities such as a Trek. Have everyone with pioneer roots look for their ancestor who migrated to Utah at any time. Have converts look for what their ancestor's were doing at key times in church history (1820, 1830, Nauvoo period, etc)

Comments and ideas from YOU:

Margo Snowden - I put on a play/program which takes you into the Spirit World where we meet ancestors who are concerned about their temple work being done. The play runs about 40 minutes and has a special musical number written by my sister in law which ties the whole program together. I will be more than glad to email the program with the music to anyone interest **(margo@hotmail.com).**

Diane Spackman - We recently had an open house at our family history library. It was very well attended. The classes were most popular, and the displays, although people browsed through them, were not as exciting. Our classes were each hour and were on topics as beginning indexing, signing up and navigating through New Family Search (it was just being opened in our area), local sources for researching in our region, computer research, scanning photos and documents--with some photo touch up, and new information/manuals

Carolyn Benjamin - I live in Minnesota and our youth go on a church history trek every year. This last year the youth were challenged to take five family names with them and they did baptisms in the Nauvoo Temple. It was a wonderful experience for them and we are now going to do it every year

Noelani Phillips -The church's site has a wonderful resource too. Go to familysearch.org then choose the Family History Lessons resources, these are excellent an give suggestions for all ages and all ways to present Family History. The lessons are at this web link:
http://www.familysearch.org/eng/default.asp?page=home/welcome/site_resources.asp%3FwhichResourcePage=fhlessonseries

Ethel Bryant - Activities that have worked well in our area have been:
1. Present Christ with a White Christmas; We saved all the names taken to temple during the year and put them on white cards and hung them on a tree at Christmas.
2. Classes on making heirloom family quilts with photos, which also included basic computer skills classes on scanning, etc. scrapping worked well too.

Martha Fish - We have a cluster of Family History Center's in southern Oregon. We take turns hosting a big family history fair each year.

Lana Archibald - Sharing an idea, which the Logan FH Center gave to us a year ago -- Summer of Sleuthing Ward Activity. More details at: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~archibald/SOS.html
Followed by an "Antique Roadshow" of heirlooms displayed at our ward summer social. Ward members display the name, photo, and short description of who the heirloom originally belonged to.

Tammy Magilke - I have also done a survey. This helped me find out who needed to complete their 4 generations and what days/times worked best for them.

Rebecca Richards - We had a family history fair and invited our entire community. Turned out well.

Deborah Abel - Once a month in relief society we have a five minute family history time rather than the five minute music time each week. I try to prepare something interesting that will intrigue the sisters to visit the family history center. It offers an opportunity for questions about family history and is a monthly reminder for working on their family history. It's a small step but seems to be working.

Rebecca Batty -
We have a decent sized center here in Lehi, but being so close to Salt Lake, I usually arrange groups to go directly there for their initial experience. They have loved it, so far. We do the introduction video and if missionaries are available, they give personalized attention. I help where needed. There have been some great experiences, so far!

Charlotte Brigmon -
I am a director of a family history center. I have been giving orientations to our FHC to the different ward Relief Societies. As a Relief Society activity night, the sisters of that particular ward come to the FHC. I let them get on the computers and together I introduce them to FS, Record Search, Portal access, etc. Then they continue by searching for their own ancestors that night. Also anyone who needs to get signed up on new.familysearch does so. The sisters really like it.

Abby Palmer -
Because Priesthood support is so important, I had the Bishopric and their spouses to dinner at my home. I asked each of them to bring a story about an ancestor. I read the stories and everyone had to guess to whom that ancestor belonged. It was a fun activity and we really learned a lot about each other. It also had some of them locating "the box" with all of their stories and sparked some "discovery interest" they hadn't experienced before. After dinner, we registered everyone for nFS at the FHC.