

Anime Club Startup Kit

Hello everyone. My name is Latasha James, club president of Delaware Anime Fans (DAF). I started my club in December 22, 2002. A lot has happened since then and I'd like to share some of the knowledge I have learned. Anyone can start an anime club; all you need is the passion, time and know how. This document will give you the know how, the rest is up to you. I will do my best to leave no stone unturned. Enjoy and feel free to pass this around. Thank you.

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Communication:

Staying in touch and keeping your members informed is very important as far as maintaining and keeping an anime club. I recommend creating a mailing list and/or forum. Some anime clubs use these instead of having web pages. They work just as well. Most people prefer mailing lists because they check their mail every day. This is what people usually get on the Internet for. Some don't surf, go to chat rooms or things like that. The down side is mailing lists sometimes flood your inbox. Others prefer forums, which you can keep organized by having sub forms for various topics. Typically, there is no email in your inbox unless someone replies to your posts. The down fall is with them is that you have to keep checking it to see if there are any updates (like new posts.) It's more of a preference choice as to which you use; there's also the option of just using both as well, but it can lead to misinformation due to the two mediums not syncing up. For mailing lists, I recommend Yahoo.

Locations:

There are many places for an anime club to meet up. Most businesses are more than happy to have you. You, the anime club bring the people, which in turn is an increased opportunity for the hosting store to make a sale. There's also the option of public libraries, cyber cafes and schools. Schools and College are a great place to not only hold meetings, but to also recruit new members. Not only do they often have the equipment you will need, but if you can manage establish your club as a respectable and legitimate club, there's also the possibility of school funding. I myself have never been in a school run anime club so I'll turn that over to one of the others. Hotels have also been used in the past, but tend to be rather expensive for the average club to afford on a regular basis.

One thing that I've learned is that if your club makes a profit from anything, it's usually a good idea to make a donation to the hosting location. Not only does it show that you're thankful for the use of their space, but also that you're considerate for the electricity and other resources you're using. This has actually lead to our club

receiving special discounts in the past, thus proving that one good turn deserves another.

Viewing:

When it comes to anime clubs, viewing are important. Make sure you show a variety of things; don't just show one genre of anime. In addition to anime, show things such as Live Action Asian Cinema (a big hit in my club.) As far as choosing what titles to show some clubs choose to let their members decide what to show while others have official choose what to play. Either way works, but again, be sure to show a variety of things to try to please as many people as possible, but still expose them to new things.

It's important to obtain permission when doing public viewing. If your meeting only draws 20 people or less, it's considered a private viewing. If it draws more, you're going to need permission. Below in the resource section is a contact list from Anime Clubs Unite (ACU) where you can find information to obtain viewing permission.

Never charge for viewings. In addition there are programs that help anime clubs. These programs will mail your club DVDs to show at your club and do not need viewing permission. You will find those links under the resource section as well.

A Question to Show Fansubs/Bootlegs:

A fansub is an anime where the fans add sub titles to the Japanese dialogue. Many are poor quality (taped from TV) and have poor translations. Fansubs are typically made for viewing purposes and are to not be sold for profit, but many don't adhere to this. Most fansubs are of shows licensed in Japan, but as of yet, unlicensed in the United States. People claim that anime companies monitor the download of fansubs in order to determine what is brought over. If that were true, anime companies and their representatives would be open to talking about fansubbing and you would find some kind of documentation regarding the matter. I, myself, have yet to find any company who lends credit to this rumor.

I have seen first hand how fansubs negatively affect the anime industry which is why I chose not to show them at my anime club. Many claim that they will buy the anime after they've downloaded the fansub but in reality, that is a lie. By downloading, many are putting the anime companies who make a living on such, out of business. The only benefit to showing a fan sub is the hope that enough anime fans will write a company and ask for it to be brought over to the states. You can better support anime and the companies by buying legitimate releases sold and licensed in the US.

"What if my anime club members want to see these fansubs?" Just because they wanted to see Advent Children before the American release and had the bootleg or had the Bleach fansub doesn't make it right. You have to be firm and stick to what you believe in. In the end, you will gain more respect by being legitimate. Many conventions have No Fansubs/Bootleg policies like Katsucon so why not anime clubs?

Activities:

There is so much your anime club can do. Marathons, Video Game Days and Tournaments, Mini Conventions, Various Other Contests, Educational Panels, Guest Speakers, and Trips to conventions and other locations are all great ideas. Remember, not only should the goal of your group's goal just be to watch anime, but also to develop friendship and educate as well. Don't be afraid to do things together! These are also great fundraising possibilities, but can also be a great use of funds themselves as a show of appreciation for the club's hard work and dedication.

Fundraising and Dues:

Nothing is free. It's unlikely that you're willing to pay out of your own pocket for everything your club needs. The question is how do you ring in money? Donations, fundraising, and dues are the answer. There are many

ways to fund raise. You can raffle off items, hold anime auctions and even simple things like a car wash will help bring in those much needed funds.

Some clubs implement a dues system. This is a topic of debate for most as you're not allowed to collect dues for viewings. It's illegal. You can, however, offer discounts to members who do pay dues and implement other bonuses such as discounts on club merchandise, possibly a free raffle ticket for raffles or even dues exclusive raffles such as a ticket to a con. In addition they are used to maintain the equipment, pay the establishment, and fund the event planning. Consider it a VIP pass.

The third option I mentioned is donations. I'm not recommending that you pass around an offering plate or anything, but a little blurb about the donation tin by the door or the club's PayPal account may help bring in those much needed funds as well. It's a little harder to get money for nothing in return, but you could be surprised at how your members see your efforts and would like to give out of the kindness of their hearts.

Advertising and Recruiting:

An anime club wouldn't be any fun if it was just you. There are many ways you can get the word out and recruit members. Word of mouth has to be one of the cheapest and best ways to bring in and keep more members for your club. Consider a free raffle ticket or some other incentive for members who bring in new people to sweeten the deal.

Flyers are a good place to start. Other than the obvious places, like conventions, and gaming/comic book shops, it's also a great idea to post a few at the local libraries, schools and even gas stations. I honestly think that the bulk of our new members have cited the ad at the local WaWa for how they found out about us. Be sure to ask the owner of the establishment before you lay out flyers, it's common courtesy. Another thing to be aware of is the area's litter laws.

In addition, the web is your friend. Create a web page, it doesn't have to be the greatest thing in the world or have its own domain. There are many sites who offer free web space and service, though if you can afford it, paid web service tends to offer better options, bandwidth and a few other perks. Also consider creating a group on sites such as Yahoo, MySpace or one of the various Blog Journals.

Club Officers and Staff:

Having officers and staff in your club is very important. This helps to take some of the burden off of you. The first thing is to make sure you have reliable people. Ask around about your member's talents and jobs. Having an accountant as Treasurer is definitely a plus. Officials can either be elected by members or chosen by the President. As always, the members will feel more ownership in the club if their voices make a difference, but also use common sense. Using the example above, it might be best to choose someone who you know isn't going to take the money and run.

Cross / Inter Club Rivalries:

Although it should never come to it, rivalries between clubs can become a serious problem if it's left to get out of control. Remember that the whole point of creating a club in the first place is to make friends, not enemies. Try talking to the leaders of the other club to come up with resolutions to any problems. If it comes to it, I've implemented penalties for cases where I find one of my members harassing or otherwise causing unneeded problems between the other clubs in our area. If it continues to be a problem beyond that, which hopefully it shouldn't, you may have to remove the member from the club.

In situations where there are issues between the club's leaders, it's probably in your best interest to avoid them all together. There's nothing worse than having your members get involved w/ a disagreement between leaders;

keep it behind closed doors. Remember that there's a possibility that you share members with the same club. Don't make them choose sides. Above all else, avoid feuding between the clubs. Never promote anything that would fuel continued disagreements and or squabbling.

Common Problems:

One I've encountered is dealing with parents. Your best bet with parents is to keep them informed. Don't just post the play list on the site and in your ads, include the age ratings and content as well. Permission slips are another great idea. Some parents are ok w/ certain types of content and won't mind "little Timmy" seeing some mild violence and language, others may not. Be sure to greet every parent when possible, go over the content of the viewing, talk about the club don't just let them blindly sign the slip.

Another issue is the possibility of members w/ mental disabilities. Be sure to meet the parents / caretakers and if possible have them attend the first few meetings. While it's understandable that there may be some difficulties at first after a while there should be little to know problems. Just be sure to get contact information if the parents / caretakers wish to leave them unattended should they need to be reached before they return.

Setting up a Convention:

First and foremost, you need to plan. Planning is very important. First, you need to decide when your convention is going to take place. Make sure that your convention does not happen on the same day(s) as other conventions. It's courteous and will help prevent you from competing for members. Second, go to various Hotels, Fire Halls, Ballrooms etc., and price the space. Find out how much the space will be per day, cost of the down payment, how long the space will be available per day (so that you may plan your hours), and if the establishment will be available on your selected date(s). Once you've collected your information, you can start developing a budget plan and begin fundraise. I advise to start advertising and fundraising after you have the room reserved. Many things can happen. You do not want to give false information because your event has changed. A good way to get the word out about your con is for it to have it's own webpage. Once you start advertising, perspective vendors should come to you. If not, you can always contact them. Vendors, admission, and ads in your program book are various ways for your convention to make money. Contact various anime companies asking if they have anything they wish to contribute to your convention. Companies will be more than happy to send promotional and screening materials. When you send them an email, make sure to state the dates of your convention. Be polite as possible. Having a staff is of the utmost importance. You need people for security, to run the video rooms, host the events, give information and various other things. Common events at conventions are panels, Cosplay contests, Viewing, Video Gaming, Artist Alley and Guest Speakers.

Resources:

Links:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/animeclubsunite> - Anime Clubs Unite (ACU), Where club presidents and people who want to start anime clubs come share ideas, talk about problems and how to solve them.

<http://www.ClubFlyers.com> - Offers great rates on printed flyers

<http://groups.yahoo.com> - Yahoo Groups offer Mailing lists where people can communicate.

<http://www.cafepress.com> - Upload an image (like an anime club mascot) onto various products like T-shirts and pins. Cafe Press will make them and ship them for you for free.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AnimeClubsUnite/message/1651> - An older version of the Anime Club Startup Kit wrote by Darold Higa in 1993.

http://operationanime.com/Main/dsp_starter_kit.htm - Anime Club Starter Kit by Operation Anime
Other versions of the ACSK wrote in collaboration of members from ACU coming soon.

Event Advertising Links – These places are good to promote your club's events.

<http://cosplay.com>
<http://cosplaylab.com>
<http://animenewsnetwork.com>
<http://www.fansview.com/>
<http://www.newtype-usa.com/events/>
http://www.theanimenetwork.com/event_lounge/index.php
<http://anime-cons.com/>

Anime Club Programs – Free newsletters and screeners sent to your anime club

<http://www.animeaddict.org/home/index.htm>
<http://www.advfilms.com/advocatesnew/index.asp>
<http://www.operationanime.com/>
<http://www.centralparkmedia.com/animeu/>

Bootleg and Fansub FAQs:

<http://www.digital.anime.org.uk/piratefaq.html>
<http://www.jazzmess.com/merch/bootlegfaq.html>
<http://www.fansubs.net/fsw/general/asciifaq.txt>

Screening Permission Contacts:

Company	Company Web-Site	Point of Contact	E-mail Address	Phone Number
ADVfilms	www.advfilms.com	Kristien (last name unknown)	animeclubs@advfilms.com	UNKNOWN
AnimEigo	www.animeigo.com	Brian Godwin	brian@animeigo.com	910-251-1850
Bandai Entertainment	www.bandai.com	Jon Nguyen	fansupport@bandai-ent.com	714-816-9639
Central Park Media	www.centralparkmedia.com	Peter Tatara	ptatara@teamcpm.com	UNKNOWN
Funimation Productions	www.funimation.com	Sophie McNutt	mcnutt@funimation.com	817-788-0627 (ext 7)
Geneon	www.geneonanimation.com	Stephen Tang	Stephen.tang@geneon-ent.com	310-952-2606
Hirameki Intl Group Inc	www.hirameki-int.com	Aldo Donnalioia	a.donnaloia@hirameki-int.com	626-965-2900
Manga Entertainment	www.manga.com	Keith Burgess	Kieth@manga.com	UNKNOWN
Media Blasters	www.media-blasters.com	John Patterson	UNKNOWN	212-868-0991 (ext 260)
Right Stuf	www.rightstuf.com	Allen (last name unknown)	rsservice@rightstuf.com	515-252-6116
Tokyo Pop	www.tokyopop.com	Charles (last name unknown)	Charlesb@tokyopop.com	323-692-6700
Urban Vision	www.urban-vision.com	Elizabeth Crutch	Elizabeth@urban-vision.com	323-292-0147
Viz Media	www.viz.com	Wendy Shimamura	Wendy.shimamura@viz.com	415-546-7073 (ext 279)