



# MAK-AIRS Midwest I&R News

## AIRS & MAK-AIRS Membership

It's that time of year again. Leaves changing colors, kids back in school, holiday decorations for sale in the stores, increasing numbers of callers seeking help with their heating bills, and most exciting of all — it's time to renew your MAK-AIRS Membership!

You may join as an agency or as an individual. If you do join as an agency, the membership benefits apply to all current staff and volunteers. Your membership includes both AIRS and the regional affiliate, MAK-AIRS for the same price. If you are joining as an individual, the membership benefits apply only to the person concerned and not to everyone within the organization.

All memberships renew on January 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are a new member, your initial membership may be pro-rated from your date of joining until January 1<sup>st</sup>. If you are joining towards the end of the year that pro-rated amount will cover you through the following year.

Some of the benefits of a membership in MAK-AIRS include:

- Affiliates provide a testing site for professional AIRS CIRS, CIRS-A and CRS certification
- AIRS offers an annual meeting and training conference; 2012 will be in New Orleans

- MAK-AIRS offers an affordable annual meeting and training opportunity in our service area
- There is access to AIRS online training
- MAK-AIRS Professional of the Year Award
- MAK-AIRS Newsletter and website [www.mak-airs.org](http://www.mak-airs.org)
- You won't have to explain what an I&R or I&A Specialist does for a living to colleagues
- You can share information with professionals in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri

And one of the newest benefits is access to a Web 2.0 I&R social media application that allows all members to work online with their colleagues in endless configurations of professional interests and activities.

To renew your membership or become a new member, please visit [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org)

Fall 2011

### MAK-AIRS Board Members

#### Officers

*President:*  
*Margi Valleroy, CIRS*  
*Manchester, MO*

*Vice President:*  
*Robin Pokojski, CIRS, CRS*  
*St Louis, MO*

*Secretary:*  
*Janice Conrad*  
*St Louis, MO*

*Treasurer:*  
*Jennifer Miller, CRS*  
*Kansas City, MO*

#### Board Members

*Penny Adams, CIRS*  
*St Joseph, MO*

*Rita Harris, CIRS, BSW*  
*Kansas City, MO*

*Heather Pierce, CIRS*  
*Wichita, KS*

*Teresa Smith, CIRS*  
*Lowell, AR*

## News From the MAK-AIRS Board

The MAK-AIRS' Board meeting was held on September 22, 2011, at the United Way of Greater Kansas City office in Kansas City, Missouri prior to the annual conference. All members were in attendance. Members discussed the upcoming National AIRS Conference that will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana in May of 2012. The theme of the conference will be "I & R And All That Jazz".

Election of officers to the MAK-AIRS Board will be held in February, 2010. The board currently has one opening and is looking for a hard-working MAK-AIRS member to join!

The MAK-AIRS Board is very excited to report that the application for 501(c) (3) non-profit status was completed on September 23, 2011. Please visit our website [www.mak-airs.org](http://www.mak-airs.org) for information regarding the 501(c) (3) application submission status, annual meeting minutes, newsletters and contact information for Board members.

MAK-AIRS Newsletter :  
*Patt Harvey, CIRS*  
*Editor*



## MAK-AIRS Annual Meeting & Conference A Success!

The 2011 MAK-AIRS Annual and Conference was held September 22 & 23 at the United Way of Greater Kansas City. The morning of the first day a certification testing session was available and 10 people tested. The conference began with the annual membership meeting which included reports on the MAK-AIRS treasury, membership, public policy, the affiliate council meeting and the AIRS Annual Report. Janice Conrad reported that paperwork for the Federal 501(c)3 had been completed and will soon be submitted. We also discussed board nominations and how to increase membership for MAK-AIRS.

Following in the newsletter you will see an overview of the sessions that were provided at the conference. We hope that this will entice you to attend the conference next year!

### Getting to Know You, Getting to Know All About You -Janice Conrad

We started off our 2011 MAK-AIRS Conference with a song from "The King and I" called "Getting to Know You." This was the beginning of our ice breaker. As each person walked in to the conference room, they picked a candy bar from a bag without looking and sat at the table where that particular candy bar was placed.

This way people who knew each other were not, necessarily, sitting next to each other and everyone could meet someone new. There were four groups of four, which worked out perfectly.

Each group had two minutes to come up with five things they had in common. When time was up, a spokesperson announced their five things. Some of the most interesting connections were a group in which everyone had sons, and a group comprised solely of managers.

After this, everyone introduced themselves. The music and leader of this activity broke the ice so that the start of the conference was more relaxed.

### Are You Ready? Preparing Yourself and Your I&R for Disaster -Robin Pokojski

2011 has been a very rough year for America. Not only has the economy and job market been challenging but federal disaster declarations have been made for 43 of the 50 US States. In light of this, many individuals and organizations are asking themselves....Are we ready?

I&R services can be come critical during and following a disaster. So, it becomes critical that an I&R provider design and implement a COOP. A COOP is Continuity of Operations Plan. A COOP is designed to help an organization define what its' essential functions are, identify key personnel, delegate authority, address issues of storing vital records, recognize and plan for communication issues, find and make arrangements for an alternate facility and then Test! Train! and Exercise it!

However important it is for an organization to be ready, it is even more essential that you, the individual, be ready. State and county emergency plans usually incorporate strategies to help people who can't help themselves. For those of us who are able and capable, it is assumed that families be able to take care of themselves following a major disaster for 48-72 hours.

Are you ready? To find out if you and your family are ready, there are some great resources available. American Red Cross and FEMA have several tools and suggestions to help you and your family prepare for a disaster. Some websites to check out include:

<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html> to find out what items should be included in your family's disaster kit and <http://www.ready.gov/america/downloads/familyemergencyplan.pdf> for a family emergency plan template.

Remember to talk to your family and friends about disaster preparedness and be sure to ask them "Are you ready?"





## Tour of the New AIRS Networker -Heather Pierce

The new AIRS Networker at <http://airsnetworker.airs.org> is a Web 2.0 application that will allow AIRS members to work together in all manner of online communities and collaborations.

It allows for the creation of searchable resource libraries, public and private discussion groups, blogs, searchable directories and private online communities. You are free to harness its power in any way that helps yourself and your organization. To get on the new AIRS Networker, you must be an individual member of AIRS or a staff/volunteer of an organization that is a member of AIRS.

If you are the "billing contact" for your organization (that is, the person who receives emails from AIRS on membership renewals), use this document ([http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS\\_NetworkerInstructions\\_BillingContact.doc](http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS_NetworkerInstructions_BillingContact.doc)). It will show you how to login for the first time, get started on the New AIRS Networker and clean up your organizational record.

If you are not the billing contact, use this document -- which will try and get you to nag the billing contact into giving you the information you need ([http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS\\_NetworkerInstructions\\_NonBillingContact.doc](http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS_NetworkerInstructions_NonBillingContact.doc))

If the written instructions need some support, this video will play on Windows Media ([http://02ccd94.netsolhost.com/AIRSNetworker\\_GettingStartedWebinar.wmv](http://02ccd94.netsolhost.com/AIRSNetworker_GettingStartedWebinar.wmv)) and shows how to complete the above tasks (seems to open best via Internet Explorer).

We hope you will all register to use the AIRS Networker as the MAK-AIRS board plans to begin using this tool to distribute information in the future.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the AIRS Networker. At the top left is the AIRS logo. To the right, it says "Welcome to the New AIRS Networker!". In the top right corner, there are links for "AIRS.ORG" and "Contact Us". Below the welcome message is a "Login to see members only content" link. A navigation bar contains links for HOME, MY PROFILE, DIRECTORY, RESOURCES, DISCUSSIONS, EVENTS, and BLOGS, along with a search box. A printer-friendly version link is also visible. The main banner features the text "Information and Referral/Assistance" and "Bringing People and Services Together". Below the banner are three columns: "What's Hot" with tags like accreditation, ADRC, disaster, and training; "In the Know" with a "GET CONNECTED" section and a "Find an Expert" link; and "Our Community" with a "GETTING STARTED" section listing five steps for new users.



## Using Social Media To Reach The Masses -Jennifer Miller

Traditional media, like television, radio and newspapers, deliver content but don't allow interaction with the consumer. Social media uses technology to turn communication into an interactive dialogue.

The following facts according to readybuzz.com, a social marketing company, provide a snapshot showing why social media might be important to your organization:

Adults spend an average of over 15 hours a week online.

Facebook has over 500 million users; if it were a country, it would be the third largest behind China and India.

2-3 Twitter accounts are created every second, generating over 50 million tweets a day.

78% of people trust peer recommendations. Only 14% trust advertising.



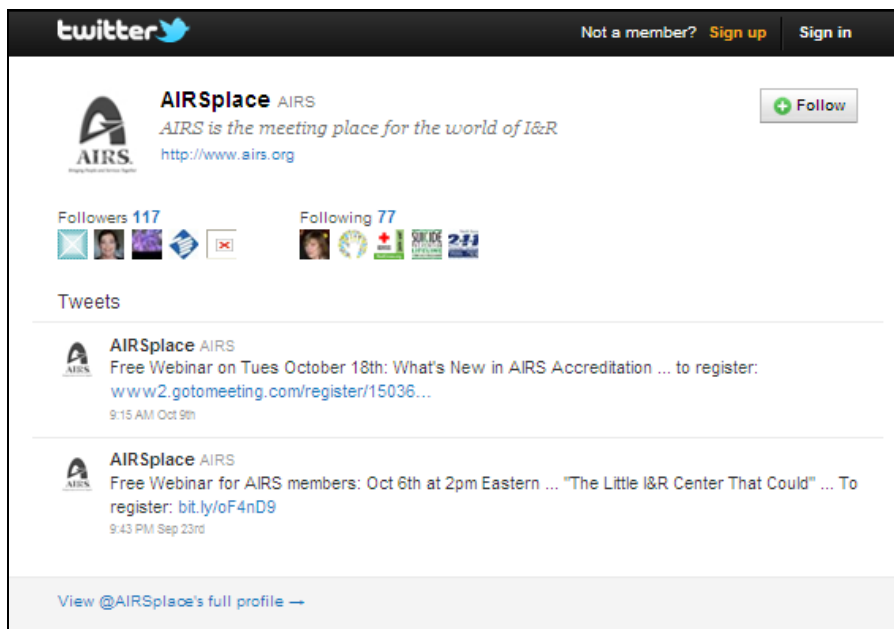
What are your options? Here are just a few...

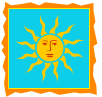
These social media sites allow you to post information, pictures, and video; link to websites; connect to other people and organizations through friending, following, liking and creating a network; pass on content from your network through sharing and retweeting; organize posts and pictures through tagging; and start a conversation through commenting and @mentions.

What are some ways to get started on a social media site?

1. Define your audience. This will help you to figure out which site(s) will be most relevant to you and your organization.
2. Listen to what people are saying about you and your organization on these sites.
3. Participate in the conversation. Answer questions and respond to the comments of people who are talking about you.
4. Engage your audience with interesting content. Use pictures, videos and link to capture attention.
5. Keep generating content/posts. One goal should be to give others a reason to pass on your content to their networks.

AIRS now has a twitter account where you can keep up with current topics, find out about training opportunities, etc. Follow AIRS @AIRSpIace.





## How The Heck Do You Keep Your Resource Database Updated? -Heather Pierce

The time in this session was used to share ideas and successes, as well as complaints and concerns, when it comes to keeping your referral database updated. Feels a bit like laundry and dishes sometimes, doesn't it? As soon as you finish, it is time to start again. We began by taking a look at the AIRS standards for resource database maintenance, specifically the Quality Indicators for Standard 12. You can take a look at those standards yourself here: [http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS\\_Standards\\_6\\_0Final.pdf](http://www.airs.org/files/public/AIRS_Standards_6_0Final.pdf)

Once we understood what is expected in order to meet the standards we spent time discussing what our individual databases look like and what we are currently doing to update each year. Things like direct mailings, e-mail, phone calls, website visits, 2<sup>nd</sup> notice post cards, site visits, using resource guides, faxes, web surveys, offering incentives, tying updates to United Way funding, creating consequences (making them inactive), using reports (times referred to), and a lot of hand holding. Despite all this we still run into the challenge of agencies not responding to our requests. Then comes the challenge of trying to find the time and money it takes to follow up with them...

repeatedly. During our brainstorming sessions we came up with a few ideas that you might want to give a try. First, if it isn't working...change your approach.

Take a look at the list above and try something new. Also, consider the frequency of your follow ups. Sometimes nagging works! One I&R is planning to try an agency fair this year where they hope all the agencies will come to them and do their update in person that very day. Collaborate when possible. If some other agency is updating the some information you are, then there is an opportunity to work together. Look into using volunteers to help with follow up calls! We hope to have a sample script posted to the AIRS Networker soon that you could use to get you started. So, pick out something new and give it a try.



## Final Conference Thoughts

In the middle of the programs on Friday there was a session called Toot Your Own Horn that allowed attendees to share a story or achievement from their organization with the group. The organizations that were in attendance were AFL-CIO Community Services of St. Joseph, MO; Mid-East Area Agency on Aging of St. Louis, MO; Children's Mercy Hospital of Kansas City, MO; Marion County Department on Aging of Marion, KS; United States Coast Guard of St. Louis, MO; United Way of Greater Kansas City/2-1-1, MO; United Way of Greater St. Louis/2-1-1, MO; United Way of Northwest Arkansas/2-1-1 of Lowell, AR; Army OneSource of Zion, IL; Northwest Missouri Area Agency on Aging of Maryville & St. Joseph, MO; and Kansas Children's Services of Topeka, KS.

The conference closed with a program on stress reduction techniques from Vicky Whitsitt, Lifestyle Coordinator at Care Connection for Aging Services. Vicky offered tips for reducing stress like breathing techniques and taking time for yourself, as well as lead the group in a guided relaxation visualization.

Attendees were provided with an evaluation form at the end of the conference. All of the comments on the evaluation forms were positive. Everyone who joined in the fun of the dinner outing at Gordon Biersch had a great time. Almost everyone learned something to share. And someone made the great suggestion of having some fruit for breakfast in addition to the doughnuts. Someone suggested that we offer a scholarship or stipend to increase attendance. Ironically enough, we had just proposed this for next year at our Board Meeting prior to the Annual Meeting. Some really liked the location. Others would prefer to go to Kansas next year. Great ideas! We thank you for them and look forward to some positive changes for next year.

Thank you to all of the presenters and attendees for making this a fantastic conference!



## News Briefs...

- Every year AIRS surveys it's members about programs, planning and priorities for the upcoming year. You can complete the survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/AIRSSurvey2011>
- Senate Resolution 241 aims to raise public awareness and recognize the critical importance of the I&R/A field through the establishment of a "National Information and Referral Services Day." The following link provides more information including how to help support the AIRS resolution *designating November 16, 2011 as "National Information and Referral Services Day."* [http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS\\_SenateResolution\\_CallForAction.doc](http://www.airs.org/files/members/AIRS_SenateResolution_CallForAction.doc)
- Do you have a news item or story from the I&R community? Do you feel like we should cover a specific topic in this newsletter? Please send suggestions to one of the newsletter committee members at [pattharvey@uwgkc.org](mailto:pattharvey@uwgkc.org), [raharris@cmh.edu](mailto:raharris@cmh.edu) or [pennybadams@yahoo.com](mailto:pennybadams@yahoo.com).

## About MAK-AIRS

MAK-AIRS is the regional affiliate for the Alliance of Information and Referral Systems (AIRS) for Missouri, Arkansas and Kansas. We are here to serve you! Our job is to further the goals of information and referral services through providing opportunities for networking, education, training, certification testing and community awareness.

Formerly known as the Midwest Information and Referral Services Association (MIRSA), MAK-AIRS works closely with AIRS to support you in the important work you do.

**Margi Valleroy, MAK-AIRS President**

Phone: 636-207-0847

Fax: 636-207-1329

E-mail: [mvalleroy@mid-eastaaa.org](mailto:mvalleroy@mid-eastaaa.org)



**We're on the web**

**[www.mak-airs.org](http://www.mak-airs.org)**

**In order to receive the MAK-AIRS Newsletter and other communications from MAK-AIRS, please let us know your email address. If you are unable to receive electronic mailing, please provide your postal mailing address to [pattharvey@uwgkc.org](mailto:pattharvey@uwgkc.org)**

**MAK-AIRS Newsletter Committee  
Patt Harvey ~ Rita Harris ~ Penny Adams**