

Volume LXXXVIII Issue 12, December 2025 A printable version of *The Voter* is available at <u>here</u>

A Message From Co-Presidents Sue and Ruth

November was filled with exciting learning opportunities. The Immigration Committee recruited Susan Martin, one of the authors of Welcoming Immigrant to Washington study, to help us understand the contributions made by our immigrant population. This same committee organized a workshop on Cultural Awareness. Both events were a huge success.

The Decline to Sign campaign is currently underway.

We strongly urge each of you to familiarize yourself with Initiative-126 and why the LWVWA is encouraging everyone to NOT sign the petition that is being circulated. For more information, please see our "Action Box" on page 2.

LWVUS has recently filed a lawsuit against the administration for taking away the right of non-profit organizations to register newly naturalized citizens. LWV represents about 95% of this work nationwide. Here in Spokane our robust program has been in place for over a decade. We have been engaged with the State and National for the past several weeks in the development of this lawsuit. Stay tuned for further information on this topic.

The December Membership Meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 4:30pm – 7:00pm at The Hive.

Our in-person guest speaker is Karen Crowley, President of the LWV Washington State who will inspire us in continuing our work as we reflect on and recognize the work of our committees and enjoy a cookie exchange.

Hope to see you there.

Moving Forward Together Sue and Ruth

December Calendar

AH&HS meeting, Sunday, Dec. 7 at 6pm on Zoom email lwvsaahhs@gmail.com for link

LVWSA Board Meeting, Thursday, Dec. 4, 5pm-7pm on Zoom, email ruthmay250@gmail.com for link

General Meeting, Tuesday, Dec. 9 4:30-6:30pm at The Hive. A time of Recognitions and Reflections with Karen Crowley, LWVSA President. We'll also have our Annual Cookie Exchange. See page 7 for details.

No Redistricting meeting in December.

The Voter Newsletter Deadline is Friday, Dec. 19. Send info to: corderographics@gmail.com

No Immigration meeting in December.

League Orientation and Lunch, No Lunch/orientation in December. We'll begin again in January.

Environmental Issues meeting
Thurs, Dec. 11th at 6:30pm on
zoom. Contact Amy Compestine
for meeting info at
amycompestine.lwvsa@gmail.com
for more meeting details or
information.

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ACTION Box — What YOU Can Do!

By Alison Wells

✓ ...locally: LWVSA

Sign up to join LWVSA's letter-writing campaign to support the Decline to Sign Campaign. This campaign encourages voters to consider whether I-126, the so-called Voter ID Initiative, would truly serve to improve the integrity of our elections before signing a petition to get the measure on the ballot. (Your letter would reflect your own views and you would not be speaking for the League.) Our campaign will kick off with a letter to the editor of the S-R from LWVSA co-presidents Ruth May and Sue Irwin, so watch for that. For more information about the Decline to Sign Campaign, follow this link https://lwvwa.org/IL26-126. To sign up for the letter writing campaign, contact: aliwells26@gmail.com

✓ ... statewide: LWVWA

Educate yourself and others about the Decline to Sign campaign. The LWVWA opposes I-126, the so-called "Voter ID Initiative," and encourages league members to learn about the League's position and share it with friends and family, in person or via social media. For more information about the initiative, visit: https://lwvwa.org/IL26-126

Answer the calls to action In the LWVWA Legislative Action Newsletter. The newsletter identifies and tracks bills that the LWVWA has identified as priorities and alerts you to the best and most timely ways to make your voice heard in Olympia. It will begin to show up in your inbox starting in January (the 2026 legislative session is a short one, running from January 12 to March 12, 2026). To ensure you receive the newsletter, go to: https://www.lwvwa.org/League-Newsletters

Share your health care story. If you are a League member facing a significant increase in your health insurance costs, LWVWA Board Member Angela Gyurko would like to hear from you. She has participated in the LWVUS's Healthcare Reform Issue Group for the past four years and would love to work with you, while protecting your privacy, to contribute to larger efforts across the nation to highlight the impact of the end of the ACA tax credits on ordinary Americans. You can reach Angela at: agyurko@lwvwa.org

✓... nationally: LWVUS

Commit to the LWVUS's Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative to defend democracy. To learn more and sign the pledge of support: https://act.lwv.org/page/84217/petition/1

Urge Congress to support the District of Columbia. The people of Washington, D.C. deserve the same rights as their fellow Americans living in the 50 states. This includes full voting representation in Congress and the end of congressional interference in their local government. Contact your Congressional representatives here: https://www.lwv.org/take-action/tell-congress-stop-interfering-dc

KSPS Civics Bowl Information Session

Would you like to write civics questions for the 2025-26 KSPS Civics Bowl? In the KSPS Civics Bowl, teams of high school students answer civics questions in a Jeopardy-like format. Spokane League members will have textbooks for writing questions.

To learn more, plan on attending a Zoom information session on Friday, December 5 at 12:00. Contact Beth Pellicciotti at pellicmb@gmail.com for more information and the Zoom link. For More info see https://www.ksps.org/civic-health/civics-bowl/

Observer Corps - An essential watchdog in these chaotic times.

Here is an easy way to help the LWVSA defend democracy and to stay connected with what is happening in our local government. Just attend, in person or virtually, a city council, county commissioner, school board, planning commissioner or a neighborhood council meeting, fill out a short report form found on our website and submit. The idea is to attend regularly enough to understand what is going on so that you can alert members if there is something the League needs to comment on.

City Council meets Mondays at 6:00 pm and streams live on Channel 5 online at https://my.spokanecity.org/citycable5/live

County Commissioners meets Mondays for Board Briefing at 9:00 am and Tuesdays at 2:00 pm. https://www.spokanecounty.gov/2077/Public-Meetings

Spokane School Board meets in the evening at 6:00 pm. You can register for the zoom link at https://www.spokaneschools.org/ page/school-board-meetings

Public Hearings are held in the Commissioner's Hearing Room. Lower Level of the Public Works Building. To find public hearing information, visit the page.

Public Meetings can be held either in the Commissioner's Hearing Room or a conference room in the Public Works Building.

Our goal is to grow this committee so that each of the above public meetings can be attended regularly by one or two LWV Spokane Area members. Currently we have regular observers at the County Commission Meetings and Spokane Valley City Council.

If you are interested in helping to defend democracy contact Sue Irwin at sgirwin@gmail.com



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lwvsaleadership@gmail.com

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lwvsaleadership@gmail.com

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Immigration Committee

Co-Chair Julia Presar julia.presar@gmail.com **Co-Chair Louise Chadez** lchadez@gmail.com

Observer Corp

Sue Irwin lwvsaleadership@gmail.com

Redistricting Committee

Mary Lloyd riteasrain190@gmail.com

Voter Services

Elaine Harger eharger@drizzle.com

Welcoming Committee

Lunell Haight Ih1@fasmail.com

The deadline is Dec. 19 for the January 2026 issue of **THE VOTER.**

Email submissions to Julie at corderographics@gmail.com

Defending democracy starts at home. State and national elections are important, of course, but the real change and infrastructure for democracy is local. Community boards and commissions are the beginning and frequently the end of democracy. Think about school, planning, park, and library boards. This is where League members play an important role in securing democracy.

Attend, testify, and observe meetings. Better yet, apply to be on a board.

https://www.spokanecounty.gov/2061/Current-Vacancies

https://my.spokanecity.org/bcc/

https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/MonthlyOutreachReport_1.pdf

Affordable Housing and Homelessness Solutions (AHHS)

'Tis the Season for Generosity

By Marilyn Sullivan

As the days grow shorter, the weather becomes colder and the holiday season approaches, it's a good time to think about how we can help others in Spokane County. Added to the challenges faced by the oncoming winter, was the government shutdown and the withholding of SNAP benefits.

The November 6, 2025 Homeless Coalition meeting was at a larger space at the North Hill Christian Church. Manpower, funding and clothing are all needed to address the shortages our neighbors are experiencing right now. The conclusion of the shutdown will not entirely reduce the needs facing our region.

A long list of events offering Meals and Resources can be found at:

- www.thefigtree.org--scroll to Calendar 2025 for a list of dates and locations.
- www.spokanehelpersnetwork.org--for ways to donate or volunteer your time to help the community

Speakers at the Coalition meeting included Ariel Anderson of City of Spokane who described the new Inclement Weather overview for shelter contractors beginning January 1, 2026. The new rules are based on "feels like" temperature of 32 degrees rather than actual temperatures. The heat index "feels like" temperature will be 95 degrees.

City of Spokane Police Chief Kevin Hall reported on the practical effects of the unanimous "Safe and Accessible Spaces Ordinance" enacted by the Spokane City Council on October 28, 2025. Hall said the new ordinance was "thoughtfully written" to permit his officers to use their discretion on address the long-term outcomes for the unhoused they encounter on the city streets. There are new resources that were not available 12 months ago. Now with cooperation and coordination with the City and County, new resourced include the Outreach Teams provided by Catholic Charities located in each precinct and the Navigation Center managed by Jewels Helping Hands. There is also the STARS (Spokane Treatment and Recovery Services), a stabilization center, which is managed by The Rayce Rudeen Foundation.

In the week since the ordinance was enacted, Chief Hall reported 125 citations, but only 12 people have gone to jail. Those going to jail have outstanding warrants or in possession of illegal drugs. Thirty-four have accepted services (compared to zero accepting services under the previous ordinance). The rest were offered treatment and were taken by the officer or the Outreach Team to the Navigation Center. Others were released with court dates to appear at Community Court. There have been 250 warnings issued. The discretion his officers have been given through the ordinance has been a big boost to officers' morale, as they now have permission to use their experience and discretion.

Chief Hall described the biggest gap as the lack of nighttime services. Some individuals .can be taken to the Behavioral Health Unit but others are just "moved along". The other concern is negative impact on the neighborhood around the new Navigation Center. One way the officers have addressed the concern is to not drop anyone within 45 minutes of the Center closing. Its hours are 8:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Donations of snacks and clothing are sought by the Outreach Teams and the Navigations Center.

We also heard from a panel of providers offering numerous services to the unhoused or with unstable housing. Supportive services, training, job fairs and much more.

Donations of snacks and clothing are sought by the Outreach Teams and the Navigations Center. They could use hand warmers, coats, hats, gloves, ponchos and baked goods. The donations can be made to Catholic Charities and Jewels Helping Hands by scheduling drop-off.

A 4-page list of Food Assistance Resources throughout our region was handed out at the Coalition meeting. It's in addition to Second Harvest, which is the food bank to many Eastern Washington food banks. If you would like a full list of resources, including Spokane, Spokane Valley, Mead, Cheney, Deer Park, Airway Heights, Elk, and Otis Orchard, please contact AHHS at lwysaahhs@gmail.com.



HOME GET INVOLVED * ADVOCACY * EVENTS VOTER TOOLS * CIVIC EDUCATION * ABOUT US * DONATE FOR MEMBERS

Join the LWVWA Board of Directors

The skill set you already have may make you an ideal candidate for our board.









Civic Education LWV Spokane

Meet and Greet Invitation from the LWVWA Nominating Committee

By Beth Pellicciotti

Consider being on the LWVWA Board and apply your skills to create new and transformational programs. Bring your questions about serving on the LWVWA Board to the Saturday, December 6th (10:30 am) Meet and Greet. Nominating Committee members will welcome you to an informal discussion. For the ZOOM link and more information on the nominating process, see https://lwvwa.org/Nominating-Committee.

Environmental Committee The December meeting will be Thurs, Dec. 11th at 6:30pm on zoom. If you want to include the zoom link, that would be helpful, and/or they can email me (amycompestine.lwvsa@gmail.com) to get meeting details or get more info.

We will meet to discuss current environmental issues and continue planning for an environmental presentation in the winter (early 2026), details TBD.

Thank You New & Renewed Members!



NEW MEMBERS

Marsha Rooney

TRANSFER MEMBER

Nancy Havorson

RENEWED MEMBERS

Jean Alliman Darla Austerman Michael Bell Julie Biggerstaff Marilyn Darilek Judith Gammon
Susan Hales
Lunell Haught
Mary Hughes
Mary Lou Johnson
Jeff Lambert
Stacy Mainer
Gretchen McDevitt
Teresa Overhauser
Alison Wells

(Updated 11-19-25)

Immigration Committee Update

Immigration Committee Activities

By Susan Hales, Immigration Committee member Julia Presar and Louise Chadez, Co-Chairs



League member
Susan Hale (at mic)
introduces
Rumyana Kudeva,
(at Susan's left) who
holds a Doctorate
in Social Work, and
led our Cultural
Awareness
Workshop on
Saturday, Nov. 15.

As members of the League of Women Voters, we are encouraged to use our relationships, skills and power to engage actively in support of Spokane's immigrants and their communities as they cope with the effects of current and emergent immigration policies. In November, the Immigration Committee presented events which a) provided us with an in-depth understanding of the immigrant experience and current immigration issues, and b) increased our cultural awareness and cultural competency skills for active engagement with immigrants.

November 12 - Welcoming Immigrants to Washington:

This impactful, 2024 LWVWA research project, was presented by co-author Susan Martin, LWV-San Juan Islands President, at our November General Meeting. Please see our Committee's partner article by Julia Presar, on page 7 in this issue of *The Voter*: "Immigration Committee Hosts Susan Martin at November General Member Meeting".

Join the
Immigration Committee
Meetings every 4th Tuesday,
7:00 – 8:30 pm on Zoom.
Contact Co-Chairs: Julia Presar
julia.presar@gmail.com and
Louise Chadez
lchadez@gmail.com for an invite.

November 15 - Cultural Awareness Workshop:

Thirty League and community members participated in this interactive learning workshop to increase cultural awareness and competency skills for active involvement and support for Spokane's immigrant communities. Workshop presenter, Rumyana Kudeva, DWS, came to us through our new collaboration with the EWU School of Social Work. The Woman's Club of Spokane generously hosted the event at no charge. If you would like to receive the presenter's resource list, please contact workshop co-coordinators:

Susan Hales (susanhales2015@gmail.com) or Louise Chadez (lchadez@gmail.com).

The Immigration Committee was delighted to welcome so many members to these events and looks forward to presenting you with more such events in the near future. To get involved in activity and event planning and learn more about immigrants, immigration policies, and community action, please contact Immigration Committee Co-Chairs, Julia Presar (julia.presar@gmail.com) and Louise Chadez (Ichadez@gmail.com).

"Welcoming Immigrants" is a powerful tool that can guide us in advocacy and support for our immigrant communities. For example, Susan suggests that we meet with local immigrant-lead and immigrant supporting organizations, and support their efforts: a campaign to get more health care for immigrants, or a campaign to help fund legal aid for immigrants.

Immigration Committee Update

Immigration Committee Hosts Susan Martin at November General Member Meeting

By Julia Presar

On November 12, Suan Martin, lead author of Welcoming Immigrants to Washington study, virtually shared her insights with members.

She reminded us that Washington State has made a commitment to being a "welcoming state" for immigrants, ensuring our state "remains a place where the

rights and dignity of all residents are maintained and protected." Susan stated that lack of secure legal status slows integration into Washington communities, due to concerns about family separation, fear of detention and deportation, and the high cost of applying for immigration

status or naturalization. Legal representation on the path to citizenship is essential, but there is no right to free representation. In our state, 1 in 5 workers is an immigrant, in varied industries from high tech, agriculture, construction, hospitality and health care.

Local League consensus on outcomes of the study led to publishing the following:

Welcoming Immigrants to Washington State positions. These positions are currently used



Susan Martin virtually led us through LVWWA's Welcoming Immigrants to Washington State positions presentation at our Nov 12 general meeting.

for advocacy at the local and (Washington) state level. The LWVWA, under Susan Martin's leadership, intends to bring this study and its positions to the LWVUS Convention 2026 for potential national adoption of the positions through concurrence. If delegates to the Convention approve the study and its positions,

these positions could be used by every League in the United States for advocacy.

"Welcoming Immigrants" is a powerful tool that can guide us in advocacy and support for our immigrant communities.

For example, Susan suggests that we meet with local immigrant-lead and immigrant supporting organizations, and support their efforts: a campaign to get more health care for immigrants, or a campaign to help fund legal aid for immigrants.

If delegates to the Convention approve the study and its positions, these positions could be used by every League in the United States for advocacy.

Our Annual Cookie Exchange is will during our General Meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 9, from 4:30-6:30pm at The Hive. Contributions to the exchange are welcome, but not required. Everybody gets treats whether or not they bring any. Here's how it works:

- (1) Bake/buy/steal 18 cookies/crackers/cakes
- (2) Plate 6 to share at the meeting. They can be cut into pieces to maximize the number of tastings at the meeting.
- (3) Pack the remaining 12 into 3 containers of 4 each for folks to take home. Containers? Be creative wraps or bags or boxes,

ho-hum or festive!

- (4) Provide a note with your name and treat name on the container. Include more information as relevant: GF, Vegan, Paleo, Keto, nuts, etc. Maybe the story behind the recipe.
- (5) If not proprietary, provide the recipe so guests can copy or photograph it.

PHOTO BY JULIA PRESAR

Redistricting Committee Update - A Program Action Committee

By Mary Lloyd

Redistricting Commission Reform Committee (RCRC) - Next Steps

- Our LVWWA Leagues Redistricting Commission Reform mantra is Put People First.
 - Washingtonians deserve stable representation that protects the voices of all voters.

In the November issue of *THE VOTER*, we had the opportunity to learn a bit about the steps it takes in our state to change the Washington State Constitution. The first step is to **prepare a Legislative Proposal**. Reminder - any proposed amendment requires approval from two-thirds of both houses in the Washington State Legislature. This process ensures that significant changes to the Constitution are made with broad support from both elected representatives and the public.

At the end of October, following months of preparation by state team members, the Model [survey] Redistricting Committee Legislation Questionnaire was released to Washington Redistricting state league committee members, participants, and Local Action Teams (LATs). The questionnaire survey questions in the following categories included:

Redistricting - Commission Formation; Size;
 Qualification; Legislative Action to Support
 Commission; Redistricting Criteria; Map (Plan)
 Amendments by Legislature; Reconvening
 of Commission to Modify Map (Plan); Terms
 and Vacancy; WA Supreme Court Rule; Legal
 Standing of Maps (Plan) by Commission;
 Legal Establishment of REDISTRICTING as
 Amended. 1. Outline of Topics - WA State
 Constitution REDISTRICTING Components
 ver2.docx - Google Docs from where it is
 under Amendment 74 (1983), to what it can
 become.

This survey aims to identify areas where education can be improved or questions need clarification or more options. This feedback will help our state team create a statewide questionnaire. And from this to create framework to guide the League's **Legislative Proposal**.

The LWVWA RCRC team also considered proposing a redistricting commission "Accountability Bill" for 2027, since the 2026 legislative session is only 60 days and legislators face many funding challenges their task ahead will be very

focused.

Many involved in redistricting still need to read and learn more as we continue working toward our current goals. In November and December, our state RCRC team will review the latest (2019-2020) redistricting commission update to identify adopted changes and determine key points for our "Accountability Bill" analysis.

Looking ahead, our focus will shift toward analyzing the survey results to pinpoint key legislative priorities and educational gaps. The committee will be synthesizing feedback throughout the winter months, with plans to present preliminary findings and next steps early in the new year. Active participation from all league members and local partners will be vital as we refine our legislative strategy and advocacy messaging for broader public engagement.

Join in the educational discussion by reading HB 2575 HB 2575 Washington State Legislature. Just to get a look at the many insights into what we are identifying...

Due to the numerous exciting activities happening in December, the RCRC Local Action Team will not meet during December 2025.

In January, we invite all of you and others with interest to our monthly - **Third Thursday of each month at 3:00 PM** at (TBD) location if you wish to learn more about our program goal and become a member of the Local Action Team of Spokane Area. Through this action we can help in our goal of Defending Our Democracy! Also, visit me at our SA league general meetings so we can discuss your interests in becoming part of our Local Action Team RCRC member.

So, enjoy the holidays however you embrace the season, eat wisely, sled carefully, and catch snowflakes on your tongue!

Mary

Voter Services Report

LWV Files Lawsuit Against USCIS Prohibitions Concerning Naturalization Ceremonies

by Elaine Harger

On 18 November, the LWV in partnership with the Campaign Legal Center filed a lawsuit against the USCIS and Department of Homeland Security over the USCIS's policy change that prohibits the League from registering new voters at administrative naturalization ceremonies. It is essential to note that judicial ceremonies — those conducted in courts by federal judges — are not impacted by this policy change.

Here in Spokane, the naturalization ceremonies League members attend in order to register new citizens to vote are both judicial and administrative. This means that LWVSA will continue to be present at the judicial ceremonies.

Sadly, the situation on the westside is different. In western Washington all naturalization ceremonies are administrative and so all League voter registration at these events has stopped completely. This is true across the country, and joining the national League in the lawsuit are state Leagues in Colorado and New Jersey, two county Leagues in New York and Wisconsin, a League similar to ours in South Carolina.

The LWV press release can be found here: https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/ league-women-voters-campaign-legal-centersue-uscis-dhs-and-other-federal

The text of the lawsuit can be found here: https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2025-11/002- Complaint.pdf

Updates regarding this lawsuit will be provided as it develops. Watch for updates here in The Voter and via LWVWA newsletters. See https://lwwwa.org/League-Newsletters

VOTER SERVICES & CIVICS EDUCATION COMMITTEE PLANNING INFO SESSIONS AND TRAINING

Sometime in February, Voter Services and the Civics Education Committee will host an information session, followed by a training session for members interested in tabling at public events throughout 2026 and in outreach to high school civics classes in May.

All LWVSA members are invited to attend these information and training sessions, and regardless

of whether you are a longtime member or a new one you are sure to learn something helpful in any work you do in the League.

A few of the questions covered in the trainings might be:

- How does voter registration work in Washington?
- How does the LWV help citizens register to vote?
- What does it mean to represent the League out in public?
- What are some techniques for engaging members of the public?
- What are best practices for making presentations on behalf of the League?
- What is the difference between being an advocate for a League position and being partisan?
- What is your "elevator speech" when asked questions about the League?
- How can League members practice being culturally competent out in public?
- How can League members avoid getting drawn into a partisan argument while tabling?
- How can one be an effective communicator when talking with a child, a teen, an adult?
- What questions do YOU have that should be addressed about League outreach work?

At the LWVSA monthly member meeting on December 9th at The Hive, from 4:30-6:30pm, there will be a sign up sheet for any and all interested in attending the information session and the training session.

And, of course, if you have any questions/ideas for these events, do get in touch with me — eharger@drizzle.com, 509-893-8862 (landline), 425-221-8294 (texts).

Welcoming Committee Update

by Lunell Haught

Permanent name tag

The perfect gift – for you or a member/friend. If you would like a permanent name tag to take home, email

Lunell Haught lh1@fastmail.com with how you want your name to appear and whether you prefer a pin or magnet style. \$15 includes tax, you can pick it up at a League meeting. Order by December 5 and it'll be ready at the December meeting.

No Lunch/orientation in December. We'll begin again in January



Someone will call...

If you didn't have a chance to complete the membership questionnaire a welcome committee members will phone you for a brief (or not) conversation about your interests in League – and who you would recommend for a leadership position.

250 year celebration of the signing of the declaration of independence

If you're interested in a program or activity to recognize this anniversary during 2026 please contact Lunell at lh1@fastmail.com or phone 509-443-1319 (land line - no text)

America 250

2026 is the 250 anniversary of the signing of the US Declaration of Independence.

If you are interested in helping plan and coordinate activities in the Spokane area please contact Lunell Haught at https://linear.com. Many local groups are considering activities (displays, panels, articles) and the League could be a part of a consortium or activities to celebrate the year and to highlight the constitution.

DECLINE TO SIGN IL26-126

Washington's voter registration system is being challenged. 126 is an effort to solve a problem that doesn't exist. Keep Washington elections accessible and decline to sign I-126. Learn More at: https://

www.lwvwa.org/IL26-126

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission/achievements as well.

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