

Kiwanis Insider



Rob Parker • Chief Executive Officer

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For the Leadership of Kiwanis International

Dear Kiwanis Leaders:

Strong Volunteer Leadership Essential for Kiwanis International

For over 90 years, the members of Kiwanis International have elected men and women to lead at all levels of the organization. From local club officers to the International President, members select nearly 80,000 talented leaders annually to provide guidance and direction to their clubs, divisions, districts and international. On October 1, 2008, **Don Canaday** began his service as our 93rd International President. As a retired Brigadier General, Don is no stranger to leadership and has high expectations for Kiwanis during the 2008-09 year. President Don is committed to leading his International Governors to some of the most aggressive growth results in recent history as Kiwanis accelerates towards its goal of recruiting one million members by our 100th birthday in 2015. This type of bold leadership will need to be replicated at all levels for Kiwanis to make the leap from good to great.

Off and Running

With the second month of the Kiwanis year drawing to a close, there is a lot of excitement about the progress being made throughout the Kiwanis Family. President Don and the 2008-09 team wanted to set a record for clubs opened in the first month of the year and they did that by opening 20 clubs in the month of October. Building on the success experienced by our Kiwanis Districts in Europe and Asia this past year, Governors, Lieutenant Governors and Growth Team Volunteers are busy filling in the white spots on the Kiwanis map. Your KI staff stand ready to support these growth efforts any way we can, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

Finance Update

The past month has certainly been challenging for the worldwide financial markets. As I have talked to Kiwanis members around the globe, it seems that some level of pain is being felt almost everywhere. Thanks to those of you who have expressed your concerns about how this situation might be affecting the finances of our international office. While we are certainly monitoring the situation closely, I am pleased to report the financial health of your international office is the best it has been in years, and possibly the best in our history as an organization. Over the past two years, your KI board and staff have embraced some very responsible and conservative spending habits that have allowed us to increase our investments in growth while building our reserve funds. We have improved our cash position significantly and eliminated the need for a revolving line of credit we had used in the past for low cash seasons. Although we experienced a loss in our long-term investment funds consistent with the market, we remain very confident in our balanced investment strategies. The Finance Committee of the International Board of Trustees is the group that oversees these investments and they are monitoring this very closely. I am very proud of the financial discipline practiced by our leadership that has put us in this positive position. If you have any feedback on how this financial crisis is affecting either your district or your local club, send me an e-mail at robparker@kiwanis.org.



It is not too early to begin making plans to join 5,000 of your fellow Kiwanis leaders in one of America's most exciting convention cities. Mark your calendar for June 25-28, and visit www.kiwanis.org/convention for details. This year we are launching a new effort to get as many of our 2009-10 leaders as possible to attend. (Governor, Lieutenant Governors, Club Presidents, Board Officers and Members.) A special training track for these leaders is being developed and we need your help to get them there. Any ideas you might suggest regarding strategies or incentives that would increase participation by these important groups can be sent to me at robparker@kiwanis.org and I will make sure they get in the right hands. Special thanks to Carolians Kiwanis member **Stan Perry** for his efforts as chair of the convention marketing committee.

Classic Refresh

While we all agree that Kiwanis has a rich history of service and leadership, most of us also recognize the world has changed dramatically since our founding in 1915. Although Kiwanis has adapted to some of these changes, our decline in membership over the past 20 years would suggest that we still have some changes to make to remain relevant to both this generation, and the next. While the development of Kiwanis NEXT is an ongoing process, there are also some things we are working on to "refresh" our classic model of Kiwanis. Leaders and members from all over the Kiwanis world are sharing their ideas with us in answer the following question: "If you could change anything about Kiwanis, what would it be?" Following is a brief summary of what people have telling us:

1. Decrease the frequency and length of meetings.
2. Create a fun atmosphere that makes people want to come back.
3. Design the meeting with a focus on interaction between the members and planning our service projects, rather than around a program/speaker.
4. Reduce the reporting requirements and make things simpler.
5. Focus service efforts on fewer things that will have a greater impact.
6. Stop promoting district and international fundraising projects so often.

The Kiwanis International Board Committee on Global Membership is considering a number of ideas that will provide local clubs with the flexibility to organize themselves new ways. In my next Kiwanis Insider in December, I will share some thoughts on a new model that we are simply calling: 1-2-3. This concept addresses many of the suggestions listed above and is designed to cause people to "want to" attend their Kiwanis meeting rather than feeling like they "have to." I look forward to sharing this with you next month and to getting your feedback.

Thanks for leading.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Rob" or "Rob Parker".