



Kiwanis Insider

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Private and Confidential for the Board Leadership of Kiwanis

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Dear Kiwanis Leaders:

This update is being written late in the evening on a night flight from Los Angeles to Indianapolis. The lights on the ground 30,000 feet below remind me of a conversation we had as a board back in October. At that meeting, we agreed that the work of the board would often require us to get as much altitude as possible so that we could rise above the noise and lights to see the big picture. This is important for all of us to keep in mind while we are back home in our individual districts and clubs. Often the conversations that people engage us in at this level are focused on the challenges and obstacles that we are facing, rather than the possibilities. My encouragement to you is to listen thoughtfully to the concerns of individual Kiwanis members, but never lose sight of our vision of the future that includes a million members, serving millions of children.

K-University

While in California this weekend I had the opportunity to participate in my first K-University...and what an amazing experience it was! Steve Siemens and a crew of International staff members delivered a day-long event that was packed with education, inspiration and practical application. Because of my confidence in Steve and the team, I cannot say I was surprised that they delivered such a high quality event. What did surprise me was the total engagement of the nearly 200 Kiwanis members from all over Southern California. These people arrived early and remained fully engaged all day, right through the graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the event. If you have not attended a K-University, words cannot adequately describe the experience, and I would encourage you to take the next available opportunity to attend.

Through the Eyes of a New Kiwanian

One of the highlights of the event for me was the fact that my 78-year old father was able to attend. Dad has only been a Kiwanis member for six weeks but he was totally captured by the vision of what a million members could mean for the children of the world. As I was driving him home from the event, he shared with me his desire to live to at least 2015 so that he could celebrate the million members with us. I am sure the members of his Kiwanis club are in for a surprise when Dad returns to their club next week with a handful of new resources for the club leadership and a mandate to "grow or die"! Dad will be 86 when Kiwanis turns 100, and I would not be surprised to see him on the front row of our victory celebration.

Why the 4th of July?

One of the things I enjoy doing when I am with Kiwanis members is to do an open forum where members can ask any questions that are on their minds. One member asked us why the International Convention was held over the 4th of July and what it would take to get that changed. She received such loud, resounding applause that we took an informal poll to see if there was consensus of the group.

In answer to the question, "Would you be more likely to attend the International Convention if it was not held over the 4th of July?" all 200 people raised their hand. I will ask our staff to do some additional polling and determine if this is something that we need to change as we work to make our convention more desirable to our members.

Foundation Executive Director Search

As I shared in my last update, Tryon and Heideman LLC, has been engaged to conduct the search for the Executive Director of the Kiwanis International Foundation. It would be ideal to find a man or woman with Resource Development experience who is also a Kiwanis member. We would appreciate any referrals that you may have. You can send those to me by e-mail, or you can refer them directly to Tryon and Heideman at 816-822-1976 or KIF@tryonheideman.com. An interview team is now being formed and will include representation from the KI & KIF Boards.

One Million Leaders?

In recent meetings with Edelman, our public relations agency, the recommendation was made that we consider several steps to begin positioning ourselves as experts in the leadership arena. Included was the suggestion that we embrace the goal of recruiting one million leaders as a more externally focused goal than our current million member goal. One million leaders recruited and prepared by Kiwanis to reach their communities around their world is a very powerful image. Preparing Kiwanis members to serve as leaders in their local governments, schools, churches, businesses and in the non-profit sector would not just be a great marketing position, it would multiply our impact around the world. I would be interested in hearing from any of you who have a reaction (positive or negative) to this suggested approach.

This week we received our first real snow of the winter season here in Indianapolis, resulting in the building of a proper snowman in our backyard by my wife and daughter. For several months I have tried to ignore the cold and have not purchased a winter coat. Some of the staff started a poll on how long it will be before I give in and buy one. A few more days in the low teens and I may have to join the shivering masses who are smart enough to protect themselves from the elements. Until that day, I will keep telling myself that spring is right around the corner.

In closing, I wanted to encourage you that our goal of recruiting a million leaders/members is something that is not only possible, it is well within our ability to achieve. Any dream worth pursuing will include some difficult days, but the pay-off in 2015 will be well worth any struggles we endure.

Thank you for your leadership and for your passion for Kiwanis.

Rob