



Kiwanis Insider

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For the Leadership of Kiwanis

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Dear Kiwanis Leaders:

Hitting What You Aim For

I heard a story once about a man who was walking through the forest when he happened upon an archer who was practicing with his bow and arrows. As the man quietly approached the archer he saw at least a dozen trees with targets painted on them and an arrow right in the center. Realizing that this man must be one of the most talented archers in the world, he decided to quietly watch and see this man in action. He observed him carefully choose an arrow, draw back the bow, close his eyes and let the arrow fly towards the dense stand of trees. But it was his next action that was the most revealing as the archer walked up and drew a target on that tree, with the arrow right in the bulls-eye. No wonder every arrow was in the center of the target! Great leaders set goals and objectives and clearly communicate them before, during and after they are accomplished. Bold leaders step out and declare their intentions in advance and then go make it happen. Weak leaders let the arrows fly and then declare success by announcing their targets after the arrows have landed. We can't keep closing our eyes and aiming for the trees, hoping to hit something. It is only when the targets have been clearly identified that we will have any true opportunity of hitting them. As a Kiwanis leader, I would encourage you be both clear and bold about what you are aiming for, and then let it fly.

100 Women in 100 Days!

When I first heard that Florida's Division 13 had set a goal to recruit 100 women into Kiwanis membership in 100 days, I was very excited. This intentional approach to changing the face of Kiwanis is the kind of bold action that is required. Announcing this kind of goal and establishing a timeline can create a sense of urgency that can be very motivating. My understanding is that over 50 women have already been recruited and more are being signed up every day. Even if this project doesn't hit the target number of 100, by being bold and aiming high, this Division is on a path to great success! Congratulations to Lt. Governor Eddie Lee and for Governor Phil for establishing an important target and then letting it fly!

Does the Governor Have Time to Govern?

One of the most critical leadership positions in Kiwanis is the district governor. Every year, 52 talented volunteers are elected for a year-long leadership experience that is critical to the success of Kiwanis worldwide. These amazing men and women are all long-time Kiwanis members who have already served as a local club president, lieutenant governor and governor-elect. They have attended hundreds of Kiwanis meetings, club leadership trainings, divisional rallies, district conventions, midyear trainings, international conventions, and a governor-elect educational experience with their peers. Years of training and experience ready to be unleashed with a sense of urgency that comes from having a limited time to make a huge impact. Sounds like a great recipe for success...or is it?

Over the past eight months, I have been listening to hundreds of Kiwanis members and leaders share their story. When I talk to past governors, I consistently hear a story that goes something like this: *“I loved being a governor. The people and the experiences will be with me for the rest of my life. Although I put lots miles on my car, it was worth it. I just wish I had more time. By the time I made all my visits there was very little time for anything else like leading the board, motivating my lieutenant governors or providing oversight for all the projects and committees. Don’t get me wrong, the visits are valuable and fun, but I don’t know how much they actually help improve our clubs or help them grow. I think if I had to do it over again, I would do it differently.”*

The situation is very similar for lieutenant governors who also spend much of their time visiting clubs. Everyone recognizes the value and importance of face-to-face contact and meeting the people. The question is not “Should we visit our clubs?” That answer is yes. What we need to wrestle with is “How do we make the most strategic use of the limited time and resources of our volunteers to help improve our clubs and help them grow?” Recently, the governors, governors-elect, and district secretaries received some proposed position descriptions for Governor, Governor-elect, Lt. Governor, and Club President. These were prepared for consideration by the Membership Diversity Committee of the International Board, and the Committee is asking for feedback. We are at the beginning of this conversation, and everyone’s input will be important to help us get the correct end product. We have received some great feedback that will certainly result in changes. Please take a moment to review these and send in your input to Denise Parker at dparker@kiwanis.org.

Florida Experience

This weekend I am spending time with members of the Kiwanis family in Florida. When I arrived on Thursday, I had a chance to speak about the power of volunteerism to a group of parents and volunteers at our newest K-Kids School here in the Tampa/St. Pete area. Right after the meeting, I was transported by Division 13 Lt. Governor Eddie to his Kiwanis Club meeting, (the first Kiwanis meeting I have ever attended that was held in a super market) and then on to see the “Miracle League” baseball field that Eddie and the Kiwanis members in this area recently built. On Friday morning, I had the privilege of chartering our largest K-Kids program in the world, and inducted all 660 students at Sawgrass Lake Elementary School into the Kiwanis Family. A speech at lunch on Friday was followed by a quick trip to Orlando to join the 2007-08 Florida lieutenant governors for their lieutenant governor-elect training. Governor-elect Mark Taylor has recruited a great group of leaders to serve the Florida Kiwanis clubs in 2007-08 and has dubbed them his “Super Models.” Mark has asked them to model the kind of relevant and progressive behavior that will inspire others to want to be a part of Kiwanis. My time with these men and women on Saturday left me confident that Kiwanis is alive and well in Florida!

Next Week

This next week we will welcome our new Foundation Executive Director, John Sloan, to the Kiwanis family when he officially begins his duties on Tuesday, May 1st. I will be in the office in Indianapolis Monday-Wednesday, and then will be traveling Thursday to Seattle to meet the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to discuss funding and partnership opportunities. Their interest in children and world health is a very good match for us, and I am very encouraged about our initial discussions. The money that Bill Gates and Warren Buffet are investing in people is something to be admired and hopefully emulated by others. To whom much has been given...

Thanks for leading.

Rob