



For the Leadership of Kiwanis

September 21, 2007

Dear Kiwanis Leaders:

### **Dead Man's Hill**

When I was a child, our family spent our summer vacations at the Indianapolis Boys Club Camp. Our family of six children had the run of the camp at the end of the summer before it closed for the season. At that camp, there was a huge hill that we nicknamed "Dead Man's Hill." We called it that because it was almost impossible for us to climb and we were convinced that if you fell while climbing this mini-mountain you would surely die. Last week my sister was visiting from Portland, Oregon, and we had a chance to visit the camp. Though it had been nearly 40 years since we had enjoyed those summer vacations, both of us knew exactly which path in the woods led to "Dead Man's Hill." As we approached that scary spot, we both stopped short, surprised at what we found. The hill that haunted our dreams was no more than 20 feet tall and was easily climbed by a couple of 40-something adults in less than a minute. How was that possible? Were we in the wrong place? Did someone move it? Or maybe it shrank over time? Obviously something had changed. For any of you who have had this type of experience, you know that it was us who had changed. Forty years had passed, and we were no longer three feet tall. The hill was the same, but our perspective toward it had changed dramatically.

For the past two years, we have talked about our goal to have 1 million Kiwanis members by our 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015. For many people that goal was as scary as "Dead Man's Hill." Over time, as we grow taller, stronger, and more capable as an organization, our perspective will change. The intimidating nature of that goal will decrease as both our position and our perspective changes. So my question for you as a leader is this: What is the "Dead Man's Hill" in your life? What is it that seems impossible from your current position and perspective? Once you identify it, you will be well on your way to turning the impossible into reality. If you are willing to share your personal experience as it relates to this, I would enjoy hearing from you at [robparker@kiwanis.org](mailto:robparker@kiwanis.org).

### **Top Ten Priorities for 2007-2009**

A few months ago, I shared with you the top ten priorities the International Board and staff had chosen from our current strategic plan. In an effort to keep us focused and aligned, I offer them again for your consideration. Please consider how you might be able to assist with any of these key objectives. If you are making plans to lead this year or next, consider building your leadership goals around some of these key priorities.

1. **Improve** the member experience
2. **Grow** existing clubs
3. **Open** new clubs
4. **Develop** leaders at all levels

5. **Create** the next generation of products and programs
6. **Increase** non-dues revenue exponentially
7. **Improve** operations, support, and alignment (work smarter)
8. **Build** our brand while improving communication
9. **Leverage** technology across all areas
10. **Create** unexpected value for clubs and members

### **KI Staff Update**

Over the past few months, we have been working to align our staff to support our organizational priorities. We are making plans to roll out the Indianapolis-based portion of this plan in October. This new plan will not affect the foundation staff, or any staff from Regions III, IV or V. The Foundation Department was re-aligned earlier this year, and plans are still being developed for a new global service delivery model that will improve and enhance our service delivery in Europe, Asia-Pacific and Latin America. This new plan reduces our Indianapolis-based staff from 124 to 113, increases the number of people working on projects that directly affect our members, and redirects resources towards our stated priorities. It was designed to increase our investment in technology, growth, leadership education and marketing/branding, while also focusing on improving the member experience in increasing our service impact. Details of the plan will be shared with you through a special edition of the Kiwanis Insider on October 5<sup>th</sup>. In the meantime, please be patient with us as we make the changes necessary to improve our services and position the organization for success.

### **Capital Area to Capitalize on Technology**

This October, the Capital District will hold the first-ever (that I am aware of) growth summit using video conferencing to simulcast from multiple locations. By partnering with the junior college system in the Washington, DC area, these forward-thinking Kiwanis leaders are piloting a new way of meeting, which should allow maximum participation by their members. President-Elect Don Canaday and I will join the summit by web cast from the new Kiwanis auditorium at our headquarters in Indianapolis. Watch for more details on this as the event approaches and for the evaluation afterwards. I personally think this is a capital idea.

### **International Boards to Meet in October**

Both the Kiwanis International Board and the International Foundation Board will be conducting their fall meetings in early October in Indianapolis. The meetings will be held back to back beginning October 3<sup>rd</sup> and ending on October 8<sup>th</sup>. I will share highlights of those two meetings in a future Insider. If you have issues of concern or opportunities you think should be addressed by the Kiwanis International Board, please don't hesitate to contact me at [robparker@Kiwanis.org](mailto:robparker@Kiwanis.org) and I will make sure it gets to the right committee or task force.

### **September 30<sup>th</sup> Cutoff**

Please encourage all your clubs to send in their member adds and deletes prior to September 30, 2007, so our membership number will be as accurate as possible. Only information received at the KI headquarters by that date will be included in the September 30<sup>th</sup> count. This will give us two years of counting the exact same way, creating an accurate reflection of our growth progress.

Thanks for leading.

*Rob*