

## Public Relations

Nodia Chambers



This year Kiwanians globally is celebrating 100 years of serving the children of the world. As we do our personal reflections, a tradition observed at this time of year, let us extend it to our clubs and at your next meeting take a few moments to share your Kiwanis moment.

At this special reflection meeting challenge each member to invite a friend, neighbor, co-worker and don't forget family. Wait a minute -- this is getting exciting. How about inviting your local media? Oh, what was that ... a brilliant idea you say? Aha, now the excitement is catching on. Are your members celebrating a major milestone such as 10, 20, 30 years in Kiwanis?

Celebrate their journey with a Legion of Merit pin, plaque or certificate.

This may sound like what many of us already do and that is excellent. Did anyone take photos? But there were so many cameras. How many times do we find ourselves asking the same question a day, a week, a month after these very worthy events?

As Kiwanians our focus is assessing the needs of our communities and finding ways to fulfill those needs through fundraisers and partnerships with other non profits. Our Pancake Breakfasts, Spaghetti Luncheons, Theater Afternoons, Bowling Nights and Dinner Dances allow us to support needy families at Thanksgiving, provide treats for children at Christmas, provide life saving education through our Pediatric Trauma Centers and tackle global issues such as the elimination of Iodine Deficiency as well as our current fight to rid the world of Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus.

Let us not spend the next century being the best kept secret in town. In-

clude a Public Relations committee in your club with a dedicated chair responsible for publicity, media relations and memorializing your events or meetings with photos or videos, create a web presence through a traditional website or social media.

A major element of Governor Eric's vision this year is for us to forge stronger ties with our Service Leadership Programs. Ask for their help in creating a social media presence, nobody does it better than they do. Make a project of it. Invite the media to your governor's visit. The message he shares could be the catalyst your club or division needs for membership growth.

Do you have an idea but could be a sounding board to validate or enhance it? Would you like to be that sounding board for others? One thing that we all have in common is our love for this organization and our efforts in improving our communities one child at a time. To share ideas for publicity or to be a part of the Public Relations Committee email [kiwanisnodia@gmail.com](mailto:kiwanisnodia@gmail.com).

## Autism Acceptance

Kevin Kamper



Thank you for your participation during the 2013-14 Governor's Project for autism awareness. For the 2014-15 year, our attention has evolved into autism acceptance.

Let me try to explain the difference. Autism acceptance is about accepting autistic individuals for who they are and not what you perceive them to be. Accept them for what they can do and do not discriminate against them. Currently there is a campaign for making information easily understandable to foster participation, choice and protect human rights.

Here are some tips to share, taken from the article "Ten Tips to Support Me" written by Dr. Joaquin Fuentes and published in the November, 2014, issue of the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry:

1. I am not "autistic". First and foremost I am a person who has autism. The term autism should not be used in a negative way. I deserve to be respected.

2. I am an individual. Having autism does not make me the same as other people with autism. Make an ef-

fort to know me as an individual.

3. I belong with other children. Do not separate me from them. I should be placed in regular settings and special support should be provided as needed.

4. I belong in society. Engage me in vocational training. I want to contribute. The services needed should be guided by inclusion in all activities in my community. The goal should be to adapt the environment and attitudes I have to face.

5. I belong in the world and I have a role to play.

Think of autism not as a tragic epidemic but as a part of life with both challenges and abilities that deserve to be accommodated.

Please share this information at a club meeting. You can help by supporting efforts for inclusion in job training and job placement. By doing so you can make a world of difference.

In December, I had the opportunity to attend the premiere screening of

the documentary "Autistic Like Me". The documentary provided a unique look at the father's perspective for raising and caring for children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. To say the least, this documentary really hit home. It is the first of its kind that shows the father's emotional aspect of having a child with autism.

At first the father blames himself for his child's condition but as time goes on he comes to terms with the situation. This documentary really opens your eyes towards the father's perspective. Please check out their website at [autisticlikeme.net](http://autisticlikeme.net) and hopefully it will be available for screening soon. Thank you to writer and director Charles Jones for making this film and to Past International President Tom DeJulio for arranging the screening in New York.

Please feel free to contact me at [knkamper@gmail.com](mailto:knkamper@gmail.com) for any further information and thank you for your support.

## Monticello Club Supports Toy Project

Instead of exchanging gifts for the holidays, the Monticello Kiwanis Club members brought an unwrapped toy or game that would be donated to United Way of Sullivan County for local children in need.

In addition the club and individual members donated money to be used by the Robert J. Kaiser Middle School Builders Club for purchasing items for the United Way Project Care Program.

The Builders Club members donned Christmas caps and reindeer antlers and went Walmart where they picked out items that someone in their age

range (12-14) would enjoy. They were accompanied by Builders Club Advisor William Oefelein, Kiwanis Club President and Builders Club Liaison Jane Sorensen, and Kiwanis members Sheila Lashinsky and Pat Monteverde.

Kaytee Warren of the United Way was thrilled to receive both the toys. The Builders Club members were thrilled to pose for pictures with all their donations and to enjoy birthday cupcakes and beverages. Ms. Warren thanked everyone for their generosity to assure that no child is forgotten during the holiday season.