

# NYC Young Professionals Hold Key to Your Future Day

The Kiwanis Club of **NYC Young Professionals**, Metropolitan Division – held one of their signature projects – their second annual “Key to Your Future Day”, according to Immediate Past President Kevin Dean. The project is patterned on Circle K’s successful “Key to College Day” project where Circle K members speak to Key Club members about college, but takes it a step further. The Key to Your Future Day event is a combination of presentations, workshops and one-on-one discussions among the Kiwanis members and members of its three sponsored Key Clubs. Attendance was also opened up to other Key Clubs sponsored by neighboring Kiwanis Clubs. Approximately 50 students attended the event.

The day, which included lunch for the attendees, began with remarks by Kiwanis Governor David Rothman who commended the young professionals for their commitment to his Governor’s Project “Mentoring Kids,” and advised the attendees to continue to develop their relationships with their Kiwanis sponsors and to remain active in the Kiwanis family throughout their lives. Guest speakers also included representatives from two local colleges, one also on mentoring, and the other on the college admissions process. Workshops followed on topics such as “Writing a Winning College Application Essay,” “Financing Your Education,” “College & Employment Interviewing,” “Employment in Accounting & Finance,” “Résumé Writing,” “Key Club Leadership Opportunities and Life Outside Your Club,” and finally “Employment in the Arts & Media,” all with the Kiwanis members as panelists. Attendees were given information in advance and were



**Kiwanian Kevin Dean outlines the day’s events at the beginning of the session.**

required to sign up for the workshops. In order to maximize attendance and make the event interesting for as many attendees as possible, the workshops were delivered in three repeating sessions with the different topics offered in varying combinations. The day finished with an open time of refreshments and mingling where the attendees got the opportunity to speak directly with the Kiwanians. Nearly all of the young professionals’ membership took part in some way, and the club calculates that over 300 service hours were involved, from planning to fruition.

The event was held in the conference center of Ernst & Young’s Times Square office tower. The club is lucky to have six members who work at Ernst & Young, and the company was very supportive of this effort, including donating the space and providing supplies. The club believes that holding the event in such a professional environment provides a unique opportunity for these students to which they might not otherwise be exposed, and also lends a sense of substance and polish to the proceedings. As with the first event a year ago, the attendees’ response has been overwhelmingly positive, and the club plans to continue this annual project.

According to Charlotte Owens, chair of

the young professionals’ Sponsored Youth Committee, “The idea wasn’t to hold ourselves out as experts on any of this subject matter. It was to pick subject matter that was relevant to the students, and then to present it from our own individual perspectives. We thought this would generate an atmosphere of inquisitiveness and curiosity, and we were right.”

Immediate Past Key Club Governor Kristin Kramer, who was a guest panelist at the event a year ago observed, “Key to Your Future Day was absolutely fantastic. From the professionalism and the eagerness of the Key Clubbers to the down-to-earth nature of such distinguished Kiwanians, I was impressed and invigorated everywhere I looked. Key Clubbers were able to learn from their Kiwanis sponsors about college, the corporate world, opportunities in public



**Attendees at the Kiwanis Club of NYC Young Professionals’ Key to Your Future Day II Event.**

service, and even how Key Club can play into all these things through unique leadership opportunities. Learning from one another in a forum such as this truly exemplifies what it means to be a Kiwanis family.”

The club believes that although certain ideal circumstances may have been unique to them, any Kiwanis club could easily undertake this project – an outstanding illustration of Kiwanis International’s recent partnership with the United States Department of Education, “Take the Lead in Preparing America’s Future.” Additionally, although the club does not yet formally sponsor a Circle K club and is actively pursuing that opportunity, with minimal tailoring the project would be just as successful to a college-level audience. A formal event-style program is not required in order to establish this kind of a relationship with youth. Dialog can be held at club meetings, or more ambitious clubs can open up the program to students outside of sponsored youth, such as an event at a community center or at a high school. The beauty of the event is that it is scalable; it can be tailored to the needs of the Kiwanis club and still be successful.

Dean summarized, “As Kiwanians, we often say that the sponsored youth are the future of the organization. We can better ensure that future by treating youth as equal partners in our common mission, thereby making it obvious why they should stay involved with us after they graduate. Through projects like Key to Your Future Day,



**Attendees participate in a roundtable discussion in the Ernst and Young boardroom with the Manhattan skyline visible in the background.**



**New York District Governor David Rothman addresses sponsored youth and Kiwanian attendees.**

we show them that we care and want not only to help but also to learn from them, and as a result we believe they will be more interested in continuing their participation with the Kiwanis Family.”

The club has been approached by IPLG Eric Shivrinarain, Queens West to assist him in holding the project in that area, and Dean encourages all Kiwanis clubs to consider holding such a project this year. Questions on the project may be directed to Dean, Chair of the NY District Young Professionals Committee for 2005-06.



**Key Clubbers, Kiwanians and Guest Speakers.**

## Tips for Holding a Key to Your Future Day

1. Review the Circle K Key to College outline and presentation available online at [www.circlek.org/circlek/lit/ck8.pdf](http://www.circlek.org/circlek/lit/ck8.pdf) and [www.circlek.org/circlek/lit/k2cpresent.pdf](http://www.circlek.org/circlek/lit/k2cpresent.pdf) for a sense of structuring.
2. Plan early! Discuss it with your Board of Directors and form a committee to handle the details. No matter whether your event is simple or complex, you need to make sure that you’re well organized.
3. Don’t patronize the attendees. Make it clear you are there not only to give them information, but also to learn from them about how to be better sponsors, if your attendees are sponsored youth, or about how to make the Kiwanis Family a more attractive prospect, if they are not.
4. Get a sense somehow of the magnitude of the event. Require advance signups, do an informal survey, inquire of related parties, etc. Volume is important. You don’t want to over-design the event, or be caught by surprise with a larger than anticipated group.
5. Don’t be discouraged if the youth don’t seem interested. Select compelling subject matter, tell them about it early, and tell them about it often. They will come. They don’t plan ahead as far as we do.
6. Encourage them to participate. Ask for their questions, involve them in the planning, solicit their contributions, and seek their feedback after the event.



## Young Professionals

Kevin Dean

What is a Young Professionals Kiwanis club? This is a question that many people have asked over the past few years. As 2005-06 Chair of the Young Professionals Committee, along with committee members Rich Hall, Alison Mandel and Diane Taranto Horan, our goal is a simple one: to eliminate the need for that question by expanding the scope of Young Professionals clubs in the New York District by at least double its current status.

First and foremost, Young Professionals are Kiwanians. A common myth is that such clubs are transitional clubs, meet only on the Internet, or are otherwise not full-fledged members of our organization, and nothing could be further from the truth. Presently New York boasts two active Young Professionals clubs – New York City and Nassau County. Both clubs were formed in 2001 and have continued to grow and perform additional service hours since their inception. The NYC club currently sponsors three Key Clubs and is pursuing co-sponsorship of two Circle K clubs, and both Young Professionals clubs are made up primarily of former members of sponsored youth organizations, including club members and officers, as well as district and international officers of both Key Club and Circle K.

Kiwanis International formed Young Professionals clubs several years ago as an outlet for generating membership interest in Kiwanis by younger citizens. Through the years it has become clear that the model is more viable in cities and suburban areas where there is a substantial enough population of young professionals for potential members. Although not always, Young Professionals members are generally just that, in their 20s and early 30s, and many of them are still in college or graduate school, or in the first jobs of their careers. Thus, although they may be extremely interested in performing service to those less fortunate than themselves, they often do not have the time or resources to belong to a more traditional Kiwanis club.

Young Professionals clubs may meet less frequently than once a week, and may not have meals with their meetings. The concept is that the club conforms to the schedules and needs of its membership (within the confines of the Bylaws of Kiwanis International) in order to maximize their ability to perform service and to promote membership growth. However, Young Professionals clubs pay dues and perform thousands of hours of service annually. For example, the NYC Young Professional club, which currently has approximately 35 members, performed over 2,000 hours of service in the 2004-05 administrative year, equating to more than one hour per member per week.

Most recently, a club was chartered in Washington, DC with approximately 35 new

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