

Membership Growth and Vitality: The Missing Piece

Joe Weiss, Chairman
Membership Growth and Vitality

Many of us give our all for Kiwanis and each of us gives in the best way that we can. Our giving is in many directions. We give money, we give time, and we give ideas. We give so much that Kiwanis makes an incredible contribution to our communities and to the world. I am proud to be a part of this incredible organization, and have been captivated by the attitudes of our outstanding membership as I have traveled through the state in my last two years as a District Chairperson.

We fundraise our hearts out and then we give our money and labors throughout our communities. We give until it hurts and then still wonder how we can give more. We spend hours helping in the community without thought of personal gain. Yet, many of us are missing our most important role in Kiwanis.

To define this role, I would like to first review the 3 missions of being a Kiwanian (in my opinion). First, we must fundraise to have a foundation of money to give out in our community. Secondly, we must find ways to help in our community with both collected monies and our labors; looking for appropriate causes for our dollars and our work. Finally, the third mission is that we must develop our clubs in strength and size.

This third responsibility of being a Kiwanian is often overlooked and frequently under done. A missing piece, the mission of helping our clubs to grow. A club that is not continuously adding membership each year becomes less and less effective and reduces its ability to help in the community. A club that is growing continuously increases its ability to be of assistance in the community. This basic fact may not be surprising to most but there is more to the story. A club that stops growing begins a slow death as its members become fewer and older. Older clubs statistically start a faster decline in membership totals and this decline can become fatal as the membership ages out. Growing clubs bring fresh leaders, fresh ideas, and new and increasing growth.

Clubs that are growing statistically continue to grow faster and stay alive. Growing clubs also help the district and Kiwanis to grow in many ancillary ways. Growing clubs have found "The Missing Piece"

Simply put, a growing club will do more in the community and will be around for a longer time. A stagnant or declining club will ultimately get so small that it either dies or substantially loses its ability to support its community. Sometimes, members even

exacerbate the problem by unconsciously trying to keep the club at "status quo" without realizing that they are causing their club to become "status dying". Do we really want to kill our clubs in order to keep them the way they used to be? Of course not. We rarely even realize that it is happening because it is a slow decline. Do we want our legacy in Kiwanis to continue or do we want it die? Of course, we all want our clubs to continue on in the future, but to accomplish that some of us need to

take a new and fresh look at our this missing commitment to our club needs. We need to think carefully about the legacy that we will be leaving behind in Kiwanis. Then allow and support some changes to happen.

The job of helping your club to grow becomes even more important in these times where we have nationally decreasing memberships. Volunteerism is declining in

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Patchogue Kiwanians are Flipping Flapjacks



Pictured right: the Patchogue Club is shown advertising its annual Pancake Breakfast at the Patchogue Firehouse on Jennings Avenue. Holding the sign is (from the left) President Angelo Tarantino, Breakfast Co Chairman Ed Hughes and President Elect Glen Charvat. Each year the club invites its two key clubs and Venture Crew to participate and jointly raise funds for the club's sponsored youth initiatives.

Plattsburgh Kiwanians Presents Third Graders With Dictionaries



The Kiwanis Club of **PLATTSBURGH NOON**, Adirondack Division – Every year the Plattsburgh Noon Kiwanis donates about 300 dictionaries to the following area schools: In Plattsburgh – Oak Street School, Momot Elementary School, Seton Academy, and Lakeshore Christian School; Morrisonville Elementary, in Morrisonville and the Saranac Elementary, in Saranac, New York.

The club receives such a positive response from the children and they always are so delighted to receive the dictionaries that Plattsburgh wanted to share the idea with other Kiwanis Clubs. Thanks!

Free photo downloads help tell the Kiwanis story

Clubs wanting a few good images showing children or adults helping children to use in their club print material or on their Web site are in luck. Go to www.KiwanisOne.org/images for full-color, print-ready professional images in jpeg format ready for download. Bonus: these images also are within Kiwanis graphic standards and photography philosophy.

Most images are about 9.5 inches x 14 inches, and easily cropped or reduced to smaller size for use in various collateral pieces or on the Web. The images are hand-selected by the Kiwanis International design team and supplied to clubs for promotion of their service projects. You, or a vendor working on your behalf, have permission to use this image for club promotional purposes mentioned. The select images will be rotated out at least once per year with new options, so bookmark www.KiwanisOne.org/images for new design resources next year.

The Image Library in www.KiwanisOne.org's Downloads also contain photos for use in promoting Key Club. Photos for promoting the other Service Leadership programs will be coming soon. Check back in April or May for CKI photos.

Kiwanis
Convention 2009

Nashville
June 25-28

New York District Website
www.kiwanis-ny.org