

### Kiwanis Education

By Richard Wongsam, District Chair, Education

The Florida District of Kiwanis International has always been the leader when it comes to Kiwanis training and this year is no different. This is the busiest time of the year for all Kiwanis members and leaders. We have just completed our Zone Conferences throughout the Florida District and the Lt. Governors, District Chairs and volunteers instructors all did a great job in getting Kiwanians from all over the District to attend. We had a phenomenal turnout in St. Petersburg during the Super Bowl weekend and I believe that everyone took some knowledge away with them from the various Zones. It is always a great opportunity to meet other Kiwanians and share ideas and thoughts about Kiwanis. This year you had the opportunity to speak with the candidates for the office of District Treasurer and get to know them a little better so that you can make an intelligent decision as to which candidate you should support. We strive to bring these programs a little closer to you and we certainly hope that you learned something in the sessions that you attended. Our District Officers, District Staff and District Chairs have travelled many, many miles to attend these sessions and they should be thanked profusely for their efforts.

As all of this is happening, we are also gearing up for Kiwanis year 2009-2010. On May 1st – 3rd we will be training the Lt. Governor Elects for the 2009-2010 Kiwanis year. If you are a Lt. Governor Elect, I hope that you are ready and excited about the upcoming role that you about to play in the success of your Division. You will be the CEO of your Division, the leader and the motivator. Your success will be measured by the success of the clubs in your Division. I have heard it said many times and I can tell you from personal experience that being Lt. Governor of a Division is the best year one will have as a Kiwanian. So hop aboard and let's get to work and have some fun! See you in Orlando for training.

District Chairs will be having their training on May 30<sup>th</sup> at the District office. All District Chairs will attend this training and should be preparing their presentations and handout for review. Please note the date and plan to be there. Club Leadership Educators (CLE Trainers) were already trained on March 21<sup>st</sup> and are ready to share their knowledge with all the club leaders.

In June we will be scheduling mandatory Club Leadership Education (CLE) training for all Presidents and Secretaries. Other Kiwanians with some thought of holding a higher club office may also attend. Please contact your Lt. Governor or your CLE trainer for more information as to the exact date and location of your CLE training. This training will play a significant role in your club's success so please plan on attending.

For more information, Richard may be contacted at 954-389-0063 richard@wongsamgroup.com.



### Every Child A Swimmer

By Don Bitting, District Chair, Every Child A Swimmer

Congratulations to the following 2008 Every Child A Swimmer award winners - G. Harold Martin Trophy - Kiwanis Club of Seminole.

Gold Winner - Panama City

Honorable Mention - Lauderdale Lakes, Bradenton

Orange Winner - Winter Haven

Honorable Mention - Stuart, Engelwood-Cape Haze,

Niceville-Valpraiso

Blue Winner - Westside-West Palm Beach

Honorable Mention - Fort Myers Beach, Coral Springs -

Parkland, Fort Lauderdale

White Winner - Gulf Beaches

Honorable Mention - Destin, Weston, West Orange

Each year nearly 8,000 people are victims of drowning in the United States alone and more than 80,000 near-drownings occur yearly in which victims are severely injured, sometimes suffering permanent brain damage or paralysis. It is estimated that 70% of all 4th grade students do not know how to swim. Once children learn to swim, they enjoy years of safety in and around water while at the same time practicing the finest of physical fitness activities.

The Every Child A Swimmer program is a "learn-to-swim and water safety" project sponsored by Kiwanis International and its two sponsored youth organizations, Key Club International and Circle K International. Every Child A Swimmer is a tested and proven program, recognized by the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

But it's not meant to replace Red Cross, Y or city recreation department programs. It is designed to supplement and work alongside these organizations. It is a program utilizing a station method to teach groups of children how to swim.

The involvement of K-family members in this program should take on the form of volunteers and assistants. They are not expected to take any responsibilities of actually teaching children how to swim. This should be handled only by certified instructors. Volunteers would serve as "in-water" assistants to these instructors. Teaching thorough safety rules is emphasized in all ECAS programs.

This program is directed specifically towards teaching children to swim not later than the 4th grade. Experience shows that generally children 5-10 years old are the most receptive to swimming lessons. They generally do not have a fear of the water and are able to comprehend the lessons being taught in each station.

Why not start an Every Child A Swimmer program in your Kiwanis Club or partner with another community organization? For more information and a copy of the new Every Child A Swimmer District Final Report Form contact Don Bitting, ECAS Florida District Chair at [dbitting@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dbitting@tampabay.rr.com) or 727-595-6693.

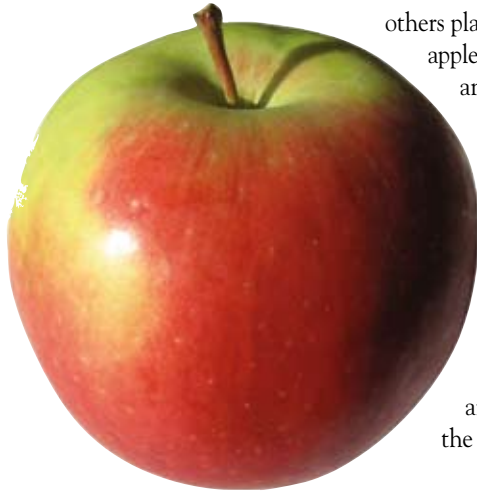


## Apples for Teachers

By Judy Becker, District Chair, Apples for Teachers

As a professor of mathematics, I like equations. Here is one of my favorites: Apples for Teachers = Teacher Appreciation. How can Kiwanis clubs let teachers know they are valued?

Many Kiwanis clubs in the Florida District give an apple to the teachers in some or all of the schools in their area. Some clubs deliver apples personally to teachers in their classrooms while others place the apples in the teachers' mailboxes. Some stores will provide apples or give you a reduced price. In my club, the AKtion Club polishes and places labels on each apple. Other clubs have their K-family members escort them to the classrooms.



Some clubs give welcome back packages in the fall. Some clubs give each teacher a ream of paper. Other clubs give bookmarks or thank-you cards.

Last spring my Kiwanis club was delivering apples and placing a sticker that said "A+ Teacher" on each teacher. We had been to most of the classrooms when one of the guidance counselors who had not been in her office when we went by caught up with us. She said, "I don't care if I get an apple, but I really want one of those stickers!"

So if it's an apple, a pencil, a card, or a sticker, let's show our teachers how much Kiwanis appreciates them. Teacher Appreciation Week is the first full week of May (May 4-8) and Teacher Appreciation Day is Tuesday May 5, although a project can be done at any time of the year.

For more information or for samples of labels, letters, cards, or bookmarks, contact me at 904-782-3502 or becker2000@gmail.com. I would also like to hear what your club does to show appreciation for our teachers.

# 2008 FLORIDA DISTRICT CHAIRS 2009

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## Kiwanis Family Recruiting

By Vickie Jones, District Chair, K-Family Recruiting

The average Kiwanis Club puts countless money, energy and time into their Service Leadership Programs. It's Kiwanis. It's what we do. And it is one of the best things that we do. The sponsored youths get priceless leadership skills, networking opportunities, and lifelong friendships and memories. But, Kiwanis has the opportunity to get a lot out of it too! We can get new, active, enthusiastic members that can bring energy into the club.

At the end of youths' Service Leadership Programs, whether it be K-Kids, Builders, Key Club, or CKI, they typically do not join Kiwanis. There is a disconnect in what should be a smooth transition from one branch of the K-Family into the other.

It is our responsibility as advisors to these sponsored youths to encourage them and push them to join Kiwanis directly out of Key Club or CKI. They need to know it is expected that when they leave their schooling, it is their turn to become the mentor and advisor. It is our

job to show them that community service doesn't end with graduation.

When you look around your club, who do you see? How many past sponsored youths are in your club? When you look around the District, you will see many past district leaders of CKI and Key Club that are leaders in their clubs and districts, but there are so many more previous sponsored youths that are slipping through.

Please, stay in touch with those that you have seen grow up through the K-Family. They still need guidance and mentorship, but they also need a way to continue giving back to their community. Often, all it takes is an invitation.

For more information, Vickie may be contacted at [vicki1981@aol.com](mailto:vicki1981@aol.com).



## Leadership Key to Membership Growth and Retention

By Eddie Lee, District Growth Coordinator

Transition, perhaps best describes the state of Florida Kiwanis. Tax cuts at every level of government have caused communities to slash human services budgets. Compounded by the struggles in the private sector, less and less money is available to spend on children's programs and communities turn to us to bridge the gap. As we look to our future, it might be productive for us to visit our past.

Kiwanis International membership only weeks prior to the 1929 stock market crash stood at 101,465. After plunging to 74,577 in 1934 it rebounded to 108,900 two months before Pearl Harbor. By 1946 it stood at 152,110. The point? As an organization, we have faced tougher times and prospered! One can only imagine the commitment to success the leaders of Kiwanis demonstrated as they navigated through the Great Depression and a World War. What dedication at all levels it must have taken, what passion. What leadership!

Adding new members and keeping the ones we have is about leadership. Kiwanis International and the Florida District have done a reasonably good job of developing growth tools and educating leaders how to use them. Remember; 4 under 40, Six Pak, Growth Revolution, Operation Bring Em Back, IRS, Sponsored Youth Parents, Kiwanis Family Expansion Program, Rebuilding a New Club, Elevator Speech, 100 women in 100 Days, 4=1, TAG or Special Guest Days? These are well thought out programs, that if implemented, typically will increase membership and improve your clubs retention rate. It would hardly be fair to say that you don't have the tools for growing and retaining members. How to classes are held on a regular basis at the District, Zone and Division level. District Chairs are available to come speak to your club and help you structure a growth strategy. Trainers, who will travel to your club, are available to teach your members how to identify, recruit and retain new members.

What then is keeping us in this annual frenzy of recruitment? Recruitment, that at the end of a typical year sees us lose yet another 300 members, net? Perhaps it is a shared responsibility. Perhaps at the Florida District level we need to refocus, develop a long range strategy, and through our actions redirect ourselves to our primary purpose of community service. Few have traveled to as many Divisions and clubs as I have in recent years, and my experience is that clubs for the most

part are worn out with the cry for more members, more members. The other view I have gleaned from these clubs is that with some exceptions most clubs have no functioning growth committee, don't quickly follow-up when members stop coming to meetings, seldom invite guests to their meetings, and have no plan in place to participate in any of the recruitment events mentioned above.

Leaders at all levels need to rethink and rededicate. We need to find a middle ground where service is held as our primary object, yet respect the notion that if we don't retain the members we have and continue a steady growth pattern, we could one day become irrelevant in our communities. This means leaders at the local level must begin the process of bringing a culture of growth to their clubs. Reasonable goals need to be set and members held accountable. The Four = One program introduced this year is an ideal place to begin. Teams of Four are asked to recruit one new member from the beginning of the year to August 1, 2009. Every club in the Florida District should already have these teams in place. Many do and results are encouraging.

For three years in a row the Florida District has been selected the number one District in Kiwanis International. There is a reason for that, Leadership. It is time once again for the leaders at every level in the Florida District to step up. We are in an era where decisions we make about the level of commitment we will bring to growing our organization, in an ever changing environment, will resonate for years to come. With confidence I predict we will look back on this time and say to ourselves...Well Done!

We all know the dilemma. The time for talking has passed. This is our Kiwanis. This is our time. For the future of the Florida District of Kiwanis and the future of the 4 million children who live there, now is the time to grow your clubs, now is the time to adopt a strategy designed to retain your members, NOW is the time to lead.

