The print version of the February 2009 KIWANIS magazine did not provide a credit for this photo, which was published on the contents page. The image of Sesame Street star Sonia Manzano singing with a child was provided by Bronx River Alliance.

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Whirlwind tour

Make plans to experience the sights and sounds in and around the 94th Annual Kiwanis International Convention city--Nashville, Tennessee

By Joedy Isert

Music City U.S.A. ain’t all country and bluegrass. Nashville, Tennessee, rebels with rock, glories with gospel, jumps with jazz, and waltzes with Mozart. And like its musically versatile host city, the 94th Annual Kiwanis International Convention, June 25-28, promises a medley of life-inspiring experiences.

You will learn. There will be forums and discussions on how to retain and recruit members, file club reports, make meetings move, and market and publicize your club’s achievements.

You’ll make new friends. Whether they’re from the Philippines or Pennsylvania, Taiwan or Texas, the Bahamas or the Netherlands, Kiwanians will discover that while we may all speak different languages, we all understand the needs of—and our commitment to—children and community.

You’ll go home ready to lead. Convention-goers love to share their experiences and ideas that keep the organization growing, strengthening and expanding into new countries and regions.

But it’s not all business. There’s room for fun too, beginning with district dinners and Kiwanis Night at the Grand Ole Opry. So pack your boot-scootin’ boogey boots, your trading pins and your Kiwanis heart, and not just for convention.

Close by are a heapin’ helpin’ of other things to do: mouth-watering meals at top restaurants, world-famous saloons and dance halls, eye-popping parks (including a full-scale replica of Greece’s Parthenon), and, of course, the melodies of every musical genre.

Nashville may be most famous for its country connections, but make no mistake, if your appetite runs to gospel, jazz or blues, you’ll get a bellyful of musical meals.

Wherever your hotel is located—downtown, near Vanderbilt University, or Opryland in Music Valley—you’ll have plenty of choices for your

Read also:

- Fast friends
- Shake, rattle and roll
- Mission and meaning
- On track to serve
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Register to attend the 2009 Convention.
Whirlwind tour

Nashville’s LP Field is home to the National Football League’s Tennessee Titans, but the 68,798-seat facility also hosts concerts, car shows and other events.

While attending convention sessions and events at the Sommet Center and Nashville Convention Center or if you’re staying in the downtown area, you’ll be within walking distance of the Country Music Hall of Fame; the Ryman Auditorium, former home to the Grand Ole Opry; Fort Negley, a Civil War-era fort on the banks of the Cumberland River; and the Tennessee State Capitol.

When the sun goes down, the sounds and smells come up at restaurants such as Jack’s World Famous Bar-B-Que, Morton’s, and the Stock-Yard Restaurant. If you’re interested in kickin’ up your heels, wander over to the Wildhorse Saloon or B.B. King’s Blues Club.

For visitors to the Vandy (Vanderbilt University) area, there’s Belle Meade Plantation, an antebellum home and former thoroughbred farm; Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum of Art; and the replica of the Parthenon in Centennial Park. There are numerous food choices too. For those staying near Opryland in Music Valley, be sure to pack your most comfortable shoes in case you’re in the mood for shopping at Opry Mills. There’s more, including the General Jackson Showboat, the new home of the Grand Ole Opry and the Music Valley Wax Museum. Dining choices run the gamut from sports bars to simple Southern cooking to sushi. Plus, there’s so much to see and do on your way to Nashville, you’ll likely want to plan your pre- and post-convention itinerary.

In under two hours from Nashville, you could be in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Become a spelunker, exploring the underground caverns of Mammoth Cave. West of Nashville is Memphis, Tennessee, home to Graceland and all things Elvis, as well as Mud Island, the rich musical sounds of Beale Street, and the mighty Mississippi River. East of Nashville is Knoxville, Tennessee, and the Smoky Mountains. Southeast is Chattanooga, Tennessee, where you’ll find the famous Choo-Choo, Ruby Falls, and Rock City on Lookout Mountain.

Fast friends A Kiwanis convention is a great place for fellowship. South is Franklin, Tennessee, one of America’s Top 10 destinations in 2007 (and, psst, the home to...
many a country entertainer today), and farther south is Huntsville, Alabama, home to the George C. Marshall Space Flight Center, a major player in sending Americans to space, to the moon and back.

So make plans now to join your fellow Kiwanians in Music City U.S.A. See you there!

Stay in the loop: Register to receive e-mail updates about the event.
Journey for a cure

The story of one girl's struggle against cancer and the Kiwanians who tried to save her.

Story by Kasey Jackson
Photography by Kasey Jackson and Kori Hoffman

When Rashale Arana walked in the room, she clutched a doll with blonde hair and a little pink-and-yellow purse. Almost 9 years old, she wore a new purple outfit, a pink hat with ribbons, and a delicate heart on a gold chain. She stood in the center of a group of girls her age, and they all were giggling and chatting, as little girls do. Everyone but Rashale. She was very quiet. A bit shy, perhaps. Like she wasn't sure she wanted to be there—at the center of attention.

But she was. And for her to be standing there at all was the first of many miracles. A bit of shiny hope in what for her has been a darkening and frightening world. Only two months earlier, Rashale could barely stand at all. Her left leg was aching and swollen to the point she could barely bend her knee. She needed help—and fast. Problem was, she had nowhere to turn.

Rashale is from Silk Grass, Belize. She has osteosarcoma—a rare childhood bone cancer.

In Belize, cancer can be a death sentence. Doctors there—if you can even get in to see one—send some cancer patients home with a

Editor's note: On December 22, we learned Rashale had tragically passed away. • At press time, we decided there were so many reasons to move ahead and share her story with you: Because she was a courageous young girl. Because she touched so many people with her smile. Because so many caring individuals, including an inspiring group of Kiwanians who lived the Kiwanis mission by their actions, stepped up to help her because they could. Because countless people—filled with love and compassion—came together and changed her life, however briefly. And because we feel she
“painkiller,” much like Tylenol, to die. There’s not much else they can do. The country’s medical options are lacking because funds, resources and technology are lacking. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the number of cancer cases in Belize is increasing, but many cases go undiagnosed. In a country the size of Belize, WHO estimates the average number of new cancer cases diagnosed each year should be about 143 for every 100,000 people. The Belize Health System identifies only about 40 cases each year—usually when the cancer has progressed to the worst stages.

But Rashale happened to be at the right place at the right time. She’s getting a second chance—a second chance to live a long and happy life. To be a kid. To laugh and to grow up and be whatever she wants to be.

She’s one of the lucky ones.

Thinking pink

Standing inside the lobby of the Presbyterian Blume Pediatric Hematology & Oncology Clinic in Charlotte, North Carolina, where she’ll receive her checkups and some of her chemotherapy treatments, Rashale’s wide eyes glance around the room. This place looks nothing like the doctors’ offices back home. It’s clean. It’s shiny. It’s new.

Everyone wants to talk to her about how she’s doing and how she feels and what she has planned for the day. Clinic staff ask her about the doll and how things are going at Hospitality House, where she’s staying during her time in Charlotte.

Visitors greet Rashale with “It’s so great to meet you” and “I love your hat.” She breaks out in what is quickly becoming her trademark smile and says “thank you” as she strokes the shiny, black hair flowing from under her pink hat. It’s not her real hair—hers is gone. First thing to go after chemo. “I love the hats with hair,” she says. “So many nice ladies made them for me.” She thanks “Miss Sarai” at Presbyterian for making her favorite pink one.

It doesn’t take long for Rashale to come out of her shell. After a quick tour of the new facility, she’s climbing up on the chemo treatment chairs. She’s laughing. She’s talking—quietly—with visitors and staff. But on the inside, she’s scared. She has to be. She’s far from home and surrounded by strangers. She misses her brother. She misses her friends. She’s living out a nightmare in a new, unfamiliar place. It probably doesn’t get much scarier than this.

But she’s smiling.

Rashale knows that in Charlotte she’s surrounded by her new family. Doctors meet with her on a consistent basis to guide her through her care. Child Life Specialist Angela Miller uses medical play to help Rashale Arana understand some of what she can expect on surgery day. (Hoffman)

Dr. Mark Mogul stops to chat with Rashale Arana at the Presbyterian Blume

is meant to touch even more lives.
specialists explain everything that's happening so she won't be too scared. She's been given every scenario and the corresponding action. She knows why she's here: to get better—to get rid of the tumor growing in her leg.

But right now all she wants is some ice cream—preferably pink. It's that type of attitude and her heartwarming smile that have staff from the top down at Presbyterian following her every move. And there are plenty more people interested in Rashale's story. After all, Kiwanians played a huge part in getting Rashale help in the first place.

The Kiwanis connection

Members of the Kiwanis Club of Mecklenburg, in Charlotte, North Carolina, have been working on a project—the Kiwanis Pediatric Cancer Fund—for a couple years now, and bringing Rashale to the United States from Belize is the first piece of the puzzle. The Carolinas District—which has signed on as well—feels strongly that more attention needs to be paid to children who have absolutely no chance of surviving life-threatening illnesses simply because they have no access to help. The short-term mission is to get these kids to doctors who can help. The long-term goal is to get doctors trained in areas that lack sufficient care so the kids can get help they need right in their own backyards. And the plan is for the district's Kiwanis Pediatric Cancer Fund to help make that happen.

Rashale's case is exactly what the club was looking for to kick off the project. When leg cramps kept her awake at night, her first line of defense was at a small concrete building in the middle of a field near her home. The Silk Grass Health Post, as it's called, has a doctor in-house one day a week for three hours. That's it. Most people can't imagine that. But for far too many people in this world, many of them children, that's the reality.

Rashale's next option was to meet with doctors at a private hospital in Belize City—a long bus ride of more than 150 miles. For anyone who's not feeling well, the trip can be brutal. Once at the hospital in the city, it's not much better. Even inside, the heat can be unbearable. The only room in the entire building with air conditioning is the one operating room, and even that isn't as cool as it needs to be. Medicines that need refrigeration sit out in the extreme heat. It was here that Rashale got the cancer diagnosis—and they couldn't do anything for her.

Then, by pure luck, Mecklenburg Kiwanians found her. The group was working with the International Hospital for Children (IHC)—a nonprofit organization that links worldwide pediatric surgical, diagnostic and preventative resources to heal critically ill children in developing countries—to find a child in need of their help.

"Cancer is the second most common cause of childhood deaths," says Mark Mogul, who is medical director at the Presbyterian Blume Pediatric Hematology & Oncology Clinic in Charlotte. Mogul is one of Rashale's doctors, but he's more than that; he's also a member of the Mecklenburg Kiwanis club. Mogul was a key player in establishing a relationship with the IHC—a partnership that probably saved Rashale's life. "They (IHC) arrange to get kids here," he says, "and we take
Journey for a cure

Rashale Arana goes around with her friend, 7-year-old Josie Bhamani, on a trip to the movie theater. (Jackson)

Rashale's family will never pay a dime for any of her care. Thanks to a lot of fundraising and several incredible favors, Mecklenburg and Carolinas District Kiwanians have made sure Rashale will never be billed for any of the treatments or surgeries she receives. But the Kiwanis role in Rashale's story doesn't end there. Mogul and Mecklenburg Kiwanis member Sam McMahon Jr. traveled to Belize to speak with doctors about cancer treatment and to learn more about how Kiwanis could help.

"The Belize doctors are so dedicated," Mogul says. "It breaks their hearts to make a cancer diagnosis. There are no oncologists. There are no narcotics for children. The only option these patients have is to get on a bus and drive 18 hours to Mexico to get care."

While Mogul talked with doctors and the CEO of the Ministry of Health for Belize, McMahon met with Rashale's family, teachers and friends. Everyone asked the same question: "When will she come home?"

He admits it's going to be hard to say goodbye when the time comes, but he also knows while her life is changing, she's being given the chance to change countless other lives.

"Here's Rashale—let's say she comes to us and we cure her," he says. "Then she goes back to Belize. Goes to school. She could go anywhere. She might be a doctor after all this. You never know. One can make a big difference. She could go home and change Belize.

"Maybe we can't bring an end to cancer, but we can bring an end to childhood suffering because of it," he says. And he believes it with all his heart.

Changing perceptions

Mogul pounds on his steering wheel as he tells Rashale's story. He's using terms not widely associated with the disease. Words like "cure" and "beating it." He's passionate about spreading the message that cancer can be beat.

"This is not incurable," he says. "This is 100 percent incurable without state-of-the-art therapy. But we have state-of-the-art therapy. Her chances for a cure are excellent.

"With state-of-the-art therapy, some cancers are 100 percent curable. All told, we cure about 80 percent. These are kids who would've all died."

Rashale's treatment plan is very aggressive: 10 weeks of chemotherapy to shrink the tumor, followed by surgery to remove it. Then 20 more weeks of chemo to kill any residual cancer. Mogul explains the chemo is necessary to kill any cancer in the body—it's not as simple as removing the tumor and being done with it. The worst news is evident fairly quickly to Mogul and Christine Bolen, another of Rashale's doctors.

She's going to lose the leg.

Save this leg

Mogul dropped the bomb this past September that Rashale would indeed lose her leg. Osteosarcoma is an aggressive cancer, so time is a huge factor in
Journey for a cure

treatment. She probably would have already died had they not begun treatment when they did, he says, but the opposite scenario is just as mind-blowing: Had they caught the cancer sooner, they probably could’ve saved the leg. Rashale understood her treatment plan, and faced her future with strength and courage.

“I’d rather be Rashale with one leg than no Rashale with two,” she told Mogul.

Plans were in motion for Rashale to have her tumor—and the entire left leg from the thigh down—removed on October 3. As she was lying in her bed that morning, being prepped for surgery, she finally lost it. Rashale was crying and frightened.

The wide, intoxicating smile was nowhere to be seen. Her aunt, who was about to head back to Belize that same day, whispered in her ear, “Rashale, I don’t think you should have the surgery,” before running out of the room. It was an emotional day, to say the least. Rashale drew in big letters on her leg: “Save this leg.” She wanted to make sure the surgeons didn’t take the wrong one.

Meanwhile, in a car somewhere on the highway between Winston-Salem and Charlotte, a doctor from Wake Forest was on his way to Presbyterian to perform the amputation. He, like all the other amazing doctors at Presbyterian, had offered to do the surgery at no cost. But as he drove in his car that day, his mind going a million miles a minute, he decided he couldn’t do it.

“While he was driving for two hours for surgery, he said, ‘I’ve been thinking about this,’” says Mogul. “If this were an American child, I wouldn’t be doing this amputation. There’s a better option.”

The option: rotationplasty, a cutting-edge procedure where a surgical specialist removes the tumor and the affected area surrounding it, then reattaches the leg backwards at the thigh, allowing the ankle joint to take the place of the knee joint. The results are a bit jarring to look at, but allow patients to have full use of their leg with aid of a prosthesis. Mogul says the doctor, William Ward, called him a little before 6 p.m. with the rotationplasty idea. Then he called in some favors.

“There’s a surgeon at Duke who will do this for free,” Ward said. “And the prosthetics will be free.”

Mogul and the rest of the Presbyterian team were floored. Rashale and her mom were simply ecstatic. Rashale’s smile was back. Her written plea had worked. They were going to save her leg. She was just surprised they were saving both. Doctors and staff gathered with Rashale and her mom to talk about the rotationplasty procedure.

Together, they watched a video showing a patient who had had the procedure—and that patient was able to run and play. It’s exactly what Rashale wanted.

No tears

Rashale stands on the public dock at Lake Wylie in South Carolina. Jennifer Wittmer and her husband, Larry, brought Rashale and her mom, RebaMae Arana, here for a day of fun before surgery. Wittmer, also a Mecklenburg Kiwanian, is one of the countless people who have become absolutely smitten with Rashale.

“She was laughing and so happy,” Wittmer says. “She had never been fishing. My husband showed her how to bait a worm. She was all squirmy, just like any other little girl.”
Rashale caught three fish. That night, she also stayed in a hotel for the first time and made a trip down to the hotel pool.

“This is just the best, most fun day!” she declared.

The next morning, surgery day, Rashale was her cheery self.

“I asked her to be my wake-up call this morning, so she called promptly at 6:20 a.m. and greeted me in her typical smiling voice,” says Megan Talley, public relations and marketing specialist at Presbyterian Healthcare. “She said she was already at the hospital. I asked if she was feeling brave, and she gave me a very determined ‘Uh-huh!’ I also asked her if she was going to do her own surgery, and she laughed her little girl laugh and said, ‘No!’”

At about 9:30 a.m. on October 13, RebaMae called with an update. Surgery started at around 9 a.m., and would probably last about seven or eight hours. Rashale did not cry once. She was all smiles, and when they gave her the medicine to calm her down, she was giggling. The nurses had never seen a child so happy when going into surgery.

Ice chips

Rashale’s surgery at Duke Medical Center lasted about six hours. Dr. Brian Brigman performed the rotationplasty, and was pleased with the outcome.

“A rotationplasty turns what would otherwise be an above-the-knee amputation into a much more functional below-knee amputation,” explains Brigman. “In Rashale’s case, she would have otherwise had an amputation through the hip, with little chance of wearing a prosthesis or walking without crutches or a walker.”

Rashale was a trooper throughout the entire procedure, amazing everyone at her strength. Brigman removed the tumor and said final pathology reports would reveal whether the entire tumor had been resected, and how much of the tumor was dead—dictating her postoperative chemotherapy schedule. She was ready to move out of intensive care and to a regular room in less than 24 hours. She was ready, too, for a change in her diet. When Wittmer spoke to Rashale after her surgery, she was tickled by her sense of humor.

“She told me she was hungry,” Wittmer says. “She said, ‘I have to eat ice chips.’”

Rashale was bummed.

“She just wanted her beans and rice,” Wittmer says, laughing.

Amazingly, four days later, Rashale was ready to head back to Presbyterian to continue her treatment. Wittmer drove Reba and Rashale back to Charlotte. Rashale nodded off in the car while the women talked about all that had just happened. After a while, Rashale woke up. And she was hungry.

“We asked what she wanted, and of course, she said beans and rice,” says Wittmer. But there were no restaurants around that served Rashale’s favorite dish. She’d have to settle for her second-favorite, Chick-Fil-A. She inhaled every bite of her meal, sat back and wished out loud: “I wish I could take back (to Belize) a Chick-Fil-A tree so I could have it whenever I wanted.”

Big dreams for such a little girl. That was October 17. On October 22, Rashale’s final pathology report came back. The tumor was 96 percent dead. It seemed she was on her way to a cure.
Journey for a cure
Journey for a cure
Role model

Kiwanis International CEO Rob Parker interviews Sesame Street actress Sonia Manzano

Sonia Manzano jokes about the ease of breaking into show business. After all, she walked directly from acting classes at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, onto the set of one of TV's most innovative and longest-running productions. In the role of Maria, Manzano helped establish Sesame Street as a prominent voice in the education of young children worldwide, but she also quickly became a pioneering leader in the celebration of Latin American heritage.

After addressing delegates at the 2008 Kiwanis International Convention in Orlando, Florida, Manzano sat down for a conversation on leadership and change with Kiwanis International CEO Rob Parker.

Rob Parker: When did you realize you were a leader?

Sonia Manzano: I realized I had the potential to be a leader when we were shooting the first Sesame Street movie. The situation required someone to step up and provide some leadership. (Someone had to decide whether or not Muppets could be called people!) I stepped up to the plate with some answers. Up to that point, I don't think it really had occurred to me. Some of us don't recognize we're leading until we look around and see that people are listening to our words and following us.

This is certainly true of Martin Luther King Jr. Although he was initially reluctant to lead, people kept looking to him for answers and eventually he knew he must answer the call.

These kinds of defining moments are important for us to recognize and respond to.

RP: How have you dealt with issues involving change?

SM: In order for us—either Sesame Street or Kiwanis—to be viable, we have to change. When we first started Sesame Street, I didn’t think any other Muppet would surpass Big Bird in popularity, but now Elmo has done that. Sesame Street always tried to help move people forward, even if it was just a little bit. As Kiwanis works to remain relevant in a world that is so different than what it was when you first started, you have to be willing to give up some of your old sensibilities and embrace some new ones.

RP: Are you personally involved in community service?
SM: I volunteer with a group called the Bronx River Alliance, devoted to cleaning up a river that runs through the South Bronx (New York City) neighborhood I grew up in. The river connects one of the poorest neighborhoods in America with one of the richest.

So when we have these meetings, a diverse group shows up. What ties us together is that we all want to make the river accessible to all. It’s beautiful to watch these very different people come together to work toward a common goal. It’s the essence of service.

RP: For years, Kiwanis clubs have been investing in children early in their lives, often before the age of 5. Do you see value in this approach?

SM: It’s obvious to me that if you take care of children early you can prevent many of the problems that are much more expensive to fix later on. It’s much harder to impact a young person who’s already in trouble than to make sure they’re successful from the beginning.

On Sesame Street we work to make children feel like they’re an important part of society and have something to offer. When children understand they’re part of something bigger than themselves, they’re on a path toward success.

RP: At Kiwanis we’ve been focusing on people’s strengths rather than their weaknesses and putting them in positions where they can maximize their personal gifts. Would you agree with that philosophy?

SM: Absolutely! We had a Sesame Street producer who had the ability to put teams together that could solve whatever problem we had. She had a wonderful talent of recognizing who had the potential to be a great writer, a great performer or a great musician. She was more successful than others because she was able to get people in the right position and doing things they loved to do. When you’re working in your area of strength, it really stops feeling like work. Everything is easier. I’m sure this is true for your volunteers.

RP: What would you tell Kiwanis leaders who want to make their clubs more attractive to people of Latin descent?

SM: You have to understand that there are many different types of Latin people. Although we share a common language, we’re not all the same. Once you understand that we’re all individual people, it will be easier to invite the people who are right for Kiwanis. The major error is in thinking that we’re all the same. Ultimately, you need to reach out and invite people to get involved who are different from the typical Kiwanis club member, both in cultural and socioeconomic terms. It won’t be easy—but the results will be beautiful.

RP: What are you most proud of in your career?

SM: I’m very proud to have provided some inspiration for Latin girls and women. A young newscaster once came up to me and said that if she hadn’t seen me on the screen, it never would have occurred to her to seek a career in television. This was meaningful to me because I remember watching television as a child and wondering how I’d be able to contribute to a society that didn’t seem to see me, or even know I existed. And they didn’t see me because people like me weren’t reflected on TV. I feel very privileged to play a small role
Role model

in allowing Latin men and women to be seen and appreciated.
Win-win

Kiwanis International and Boys & Girls Clubs of America team up to do more for kids. And some clubs already are ahead of the game.

By Dick Isenhour

Two organizations, both champions for the healthy development of children, have united in partnership to do more for the kids who need help most. This past July, Kiwanis International and Boys & Girls Clubs of America signed an agreement to work together. The pact promises to be a win-win-win situation for Kiwanis, BGCA, and children.

Many North American Kiwanis-family clubs already team up with Boys & Girls Clubs. Check out these success stories:

TeamTennessee

For four years running, the Blackman High School Key Club in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and the Rutherford County Boys & Girls Club have been helping kids improve eating habits and inspiring them to be active and healthy.

“The Key Club members had one goal in mind: to teach the need for living a healthy lifestyle to as many children as possible,” says faculty advisor Warren Johnson. This led them to meet with the Rutherford County Boys & Girls Club about hosting an after-school program for the children there. About 180 children, ranging from 5 to 16 years of age, attend the Key Club’s daylong High Five for Health program each year.

In addition to providing speakers on wellness, fun activities and games, the Key Club packs healthy snacks for the BGCA members, proving there are tasty alternatives to many of the fatty and sugary foods found at most fast food restaurants. Free T-shirts remind the kids to make healthy choices. The health program has spawned a partnership that is logical and positive, Warren notes. “Key Club can
Win win deliver quality programs and volunteers, while the Boys & Girls Club can provide the student involvement and structure.

Most important, after working together for many months, Key Club and BGCA members have gained a sense of trust and camaraderie.

“The Boys and Girls Club members help with many of our projects dealing with children,” Warren says, “and we’re there to help them too.”

TeamCalifornia

When it comes to protecting young bike riders, the Kiwanis Club of Santa Barbara, California, eagerly recruits partners for its helmet-giveaway project—including bike clubs and the Goleta United Boys & Girls Clubhouse.

“Our partners not only help financially, but in the best spirit of Kiwanis, they also volunteer their members’ time to ensure each helmet is well fitted to its new owner’s little head,” says Kiwanian Gary Gray.

Focusing on the kids at the Boys & Girls Club helps the Kiwanians extend their service reach and protect even more children from serious injury. “Helmets for Safety,” the club’s first opportunity to work with the city and the Boys & Girls Club, is an ongoing program aimed at teaching children to wear helmets when they are on bikes, scooters, skateboards and roller blades. More than 65 children at the Boys & Girls Club received free helmets during a morning ceremony to kick off the program this past summer.

“After the event, I saw two children riding bikes and wearing helmets we had just fitted with them,” says Kirsten Deshler, City of Goleta public information officer.

Such are the rewards of a Kiwanis-BGCA partnership.

“How can your club work with Boys & Girls Clubs? Find partnership tips, success stories, and details about the partnership.
President's message

Proud kids, proud club

By Don Canaday, President, Kiwanis International

Several things contribute to Kiwanis pride. We have fun, well-organized meetings, good fellowship and quality programs. But the No. 1 pride-building factor is knowing your club is having a positive impact on your community and its children.

How's your club doing?

If your club needs a quick image boost, I recommend an inexpensive, easy program that will have a positive impact on many children in your community: Bring Up Grades, also known as BUG.

Traditionally, schools only recognize children who excel academically. Many children lack the ability or motivation to make the honor roll. These children may do just enough to achieve passing grades.

The Bring Up Grades program motivates children to strive to do their best.

Any student who brings up at least one grade—without letting any other grades drop—wins! These children are honored for their hard work. Kiwanis members pass out awards and watch the big smiles. The children receive certificates, BUG pencils and buttons, and other prizes. The Kiwanis Family Store has a variety of BUG giveaways. Merchants and restaurants can provide winners with kids’ meals and other free gifts.

And the child can win again, just by bringing up another grade the next semester.

The school does most of the organization, and depending on the size of the school and the prizes, the annual cost usually is less than US$500. Often, the local media is eager to cover these feel-good award ceremonies.

After one inner-city school instituted Bring Up Grades, the state recognized the school for increasing students’ math scores dramatically.

If you aren’t already involved in BUG, I urge you visit www.bringupgrades.org and get started. You’ll be proud you did.
Our day to shine

Ask a stranger on the street if he or she knows what Kiwanis is, and you might be surprised at the answers you get—something like “an airline.” “A group that does pancake breakfasts.”

It’s time to step up and be noticed. It’s time for Kiwanis One Day.

Kiwanis One Day celebrates its third anniversary this April 4, when the entire Kiwanis family will join efforts to do hands-on service for their communities while spreading awareness about the organization.

Marti Marek, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Las Vegas Strip, Nevada, is a veteran of this hands-on service day. In fact, she’s been taking part in Kiwanis One Day since it began, doing everything from painting playgrounds to handing out buckets of food. Before that, she worked on similar projects through Total K Day, which originated in the California-Nevada-Hawaii District.

“Kiwanis One Day is a great opportunity to work with Kiwanians from other clubs and get to know them,” Marek says. “Taking on big projects also gives you big results, which is nice in and of itself, but also provides opportunities for publicity and recruiting. Our project to clean up and paint an entire City of Las Vegas low-income housing complex brought out the mayor as well as the media!”

Toolbox

Need-to-know
When you are part of an active, thriving Kiwanis club, there’s always so much going on.

It’s hard to keep track of what’s new and when it’s due. Simplify your life by going to www.KiwanisOne.org’s Announcements section. The announcements are updated weekly with need-to-know information including deadlines for contests, dates for Kiwanis-family events and new resources.

**Code orange**

You no longer need to search for the login page at www.KiwanisOne.org. An orange button at the top righthand column of the home page—“Login”—takes you where you need to go: to online reporting, forums in the Kiwanis community and into the Club Management system.

But if you just need to download resources, you no longer need to log in at all. Just click the “Download” button, just beneath the “Login” button. You’ll immediately find the 20 most popular files. Or you can broaden your choices by selecting the entire Downloads Library.

**The cost of courage**

At 8:20 on a workday morning in the central business district of Melbourne, Australia, a 24-year-old woman was dragged by her hair and neck from a taxi. Hearing her screams, two passersby, Brendan Keilar and Paul de Waard, went to her rescue. As they approached, the assailant drew a handgun and fired five shots. Keilar, husband and father to three young children, died on the street. De Waard survived but with long-term injuries—“as close to dead as you get without going there,” the doctor said. The woman lost a kidney but she, too, survives.

For their heroic acts, the Kiwanis International Foundation awarded Keilar and de Waard the **Robert P. Connelly Medal for Heroism**. Named for a Lisle, Illinois, Kiwanian who died in an attempt to rescue a disabled woman from the path of an onrushing train, the medal recognizes individuals who risk physical harm—even death—to help others. Keilar, a lawyer, and de Waard, a Dutch backpacker and surfer, were nominated for the medal by the Kiwanis Club of Prospect, Australia.

After the attack, de Waard set two goals: to learn to walk and return to Australia. He recently walked the streets of Melbourne again, where he was asked by news reporters if he would attempt such a rescue again.

“I wouldn’t be as strong now,” he replied. “But I’d give it a try.”

For information about the Connelly Medal, visit http://kif.kiwanis.org.

**What they say**

**How do you define courage?**

"Courage is a gift that is latent within us that we can call upon to do some impossible things."
—James Marshall, Barbados South, Barbados

“Courage is a trait where you don’t mind doing something that other people might not want to do.”—Marilyn Coleman, Plain City Area, Ohio

“Courage is something that’s outside what you normally do. It’s not more. To do more is not courage, because it’s the same line of what you always do. Courage is to do something special.”—Hans-Jörg Wirz, Zürich-Oerlikon, Switzerland

“Courage is being fearless but with experience and knowledge to know how to take calculated gambles and doing the best you can with the experience and knowledge you have.”—Ivone de Marchi, Brantford, Ontario

Shake, rattle and roll

It’s not too early to start thinking about this year’s Kiwanis International Convention, which happens June 25-28 in Nashville, Tennessee. Here are a few of the fun events already in the works.

Party in the hall

After the Opening Session, you can head to the exhibit hall for Chart Toppers Celebration, a fun-filled welcome reception honoring the noteworthy performances of Gold Key recipients and distinguished members.

Then follow the signs to the Kiwanis Hit Parade to learn more about top service projects and fundraisers from Kiwanis clubs around the world.

Dance like wild
Saturday night, join your fellow Kiwanians and guests for a special event at the Wildhorse Saloon on historic Second Avenue. This country music mecca features live music and dance lessons. Known for its three stories of fun-filled dance floors, the club also offers a buffet of barbecue, southern specialties and plenty of cold drinks.

**Keep in the loop**

Stay up-to-date on news about convention speakers, programming and special events at [www.kiwanisone.org/convention](http://www.kiwanisone.org/convention). You can also opt in for e-mail updates.

**Mission and meaning: Kent Keith**

Kent Keith has a mission “to help people find personal meaning in a crazy world.” This June, he’ll be in Nashville, Tennessee, to share his insights on ways Kiwanians can discover their potential as servant leaders.

Chief executive officer of the [Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership](http://www.greenleafforum.org) and author of *The Case for Servant Leadership*, Keith will lead a servant leadership forum at the 94th Annual Kiwanis International Convention.

[Learn more](http://www.kiwanisone.org/convention) about Keith and other convention speakers and entertainers.

**On track to serve**

Need an idea that will take your club from good to great? Or a plan that will change your community forever?

The 94th Annual Kiwanis International Convention will offer a generous assortment of forums and
workshops designed to help you, your Kiwanis club, your community and the children of the world. Pick a track and choose the workshops that best suit your needs.

Road trip!

Want to go to the Kiwanis International Convention this year, but worried about the price tag? Don't fret! Nashville, our host city, is a half-day's drive from 65 percent of the continental United States. So pack the car and motor your way to Music City.

Even if you'll be flying in from other parts of the world, consider renting a vehicle and driving through the U.S. Midwest. There's a lot to see and enjoy along the way, as you'll discover by reading “Whirlwind Tour,” pages 18-22.

Meanwhile, check out these fun and practical ways to cut costs and have the time of your life at the biggest Kiwanis event of the year.

1. **Plan in advance.** Register, pay less. Before May 1, you'll pay US$195. Wait to register on site and the rate goes up to US$250. Also, if you choose to fly, book early to secure the dates you want at a reasonable price.

2. **Go with a friend.** Travel with a fellow club member, share a hotel room, and cut costs in half.

3. **Start a tour.** Rent a bus with a group from your district, trim travel costs, and multiply the fun. Don't forget to stop along the way!

4. **Stay and play.** Turn the trip into a vacation. Spend a few extra days motoring through the Tennessee mountains with your family.

Maybe one of the new ideas you pick up at convention will help your club do more to serve kids. What could be a better value than that?

**InBrief**

**Book report**

If your club is spreading the joy of reading through Read Around the World, record your service on your online monthly report, which is available at www.KiwanisOne.org in the Kiwanis Branded Programs section (click on “Service & Fundraising,” then “Read Around the World”). Kiwanis uses these reports to measure participation and improve programs, so your input is important.

Your participation in Read Around the World is also valued—so valued that your club deserves a banner patch. Complete the online banner patch form, which is available on the same Read Around the World Web page. The patch will be sent at the beginning of October, around the same time patches for Kiwanis One Day and Young Children: Priority One participation are sent.

**Go hungry for kids**

This April, Kiwanis, Circle K, Key Club, Aktion, K-Kids, and Builders Club members will come together and help children worldwide ... while going hungry.

[Skip one meal](http://66.29.197.80/magazine/0209newsroom.asp) and donate its cost to the Kiwanis Children's Fund. These contributions enable the Kiwanis International Foundation to provide project grants that make a real difference in young lives worldwide.
Animal attraction

A popular tourist spot is open to all ages at no cost, compliments of Kiwanis

By Julie Carson

Old McDonald may have had a farm, but it had nothing on the Children’s Animal Farm in Sarnia, Ontario. A magnet for the region’s children since 1964, the farm has evolved into a popular year-round attraction and a must-see tourist stop in Sarnia’s Canatara Park. And it owes its success—and free admission cost—to both the city of Sarnia and the Seaway Kiwanis club.

“We're right on the border with Michigan, so we get a lot of visitors from both Canada and the United States,” says Seaway Kiwanis Club President Don Burnard. Thousands of people come for picnics and family reunions. But the big attraction is to laugh at the llamas, oink at the pigs, scratch the donkey’s forehead, and wonder at the peacock’s magnificent display of tail feathers—all at no charge. Other farm stars include turkeys, cattle, geese, sheep, pheasant, rabbits, guinea pigs and guinea fowl, swans, ducks, doves, partridges, chickens, bobwhite quail, pigeons, and goats.

The Seaway club by far has been the farm's largest benefactor over the years, donating more than CDN$500,000 to the facility. Cash is donated on a regular basis and stems from a variety of fundraising projects, including memorial bricks that line pathways around the farm’s aptly named Kiwanis Pavilion. The club’s TV bingo project, which enables players to enter games from the comfort of their homes via a local cable station, has collected more than $150,000 in just one year.

But club members don’t just raise funds for the farm; they get their hands dirty as well. It’s not uncommon to see Kiwanians on site helping when new buildings are erected, putting up fencing, and ensuring water and pollution codes are properly met.

“Our club has a joint committee with the city of Sarnia,” Burnard says. “Our members work with the city to maintain the farm and all of its components.”

The most popular of those components are, of course, the resident animals. And although the animals are fenced in, visitors can get close enough to reach and touch most of them.

“This place is just amazing for kids,” Burnard says. “We get a lot of buses full of kids from schools in the city—kids who have never been to a farm. Coming to this farm is a tremendous experience for them.

Catch a glimpse of the farm. —Julie Carson
Terrific Kids dress in heroic threads

Terrific Kids usually receive a certificate, recognizing them for demonstrating strong character traits, but at one Kansas school, students also may ride away on a bicycle, compliments of the local Kiwanis club. But the Dodge City Kiwanians recently enhanced their program even more while honoring four local Marines who died while fighting in Iraq.

Losing a child is a devastating blow by any measure, but club president Rebecca Escalante has taken positive steps in her grief by comparing the honorable duty of her son and the three other servicemen to the respectable achievements of Terrific Kids honorees. At the end of the 2007-08 academic year, each Terrific Kid received a T-shirt depicting the four Marines’ pictures with the slogan, “Dodge City Heroes Would Be Proud of Me.”

“I thought if we do this, people are going to ask the children, ‘Wow, where’d you get that shirt?’” Escalante says. “And they can say, ‘Well, I got this because I was a Terrific Kid.’”

Escalante notes that the Terrific Kids program is ideal for recognizing and encouraging the accomplishments of underprivileged children who struggle against life’s odds.

She tells the story of a 12-year-old boy who was selected as a Terrific Kid in 2008. His father and siblings have been in jail repeatedly, setting a bad example. But the young boy has steered clear of the lifestyle, so his teachers nominated him as a Terrific Kid.

Escalante, a professional bail/bondsman, knows the boy’s family well.

“One time, I was going to bond one of the kids out,” she says. “I went to the dad, and I asked him if he would co-sign. He laughed and said, ‘My kids think they can outdo my prison record. They’ll never outdo my record.’ And I thought, ‘Wow! What a thing for a parent to say.’ This little boy who got the shirt and the Terrific Kids award, he’s the youngest of the family. I don’t want him to go to jail and follow the same path everybody in his family has gone down.

“Our kids need a lot of praise from a lot of people, and we need to prop them up,” Escalante continues.

“When their teachers see a positive change in them or their character or their attitudes toward other people, it’s good to let other people know.”

The T-shirts were an instant hit—and not only among the Terrific Kids honorees. Schoolteachers who had taught the soldiers when they were young requested shirts, as did other Dodge City residents.

“One appreciative teacher said, ‘It is amazing how these boys gave up their lives..."
for this country, and even though they’re gone, they’re still giving to this community.”

A newspaper article in the Dodge City Daily Globe prompted an anonymous donor to give $500 for this year’s shirts, so Rebecca says the program will continue.

“Other kids will receive the shirts this year,” Escalante says. “We have to do everything we can to save our kids: promote them in a positive manner, educate them and make them leaders in our community.

“Anything we can do for our kids: That’s what Kiwanis is all about.”—Andrew McLaughlin
Showcase

Purpose-powered seniors

“Now, we have a purpose.”

It’s a simple statement, perhaps, but powerful words for senior citizens who have found fresh inspiration as members of the Brinton Manor Aktion Club. The club—located in a skilled nursing facility in Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, and sponsored by Kiwanis—is the first of its kind. Club treasurer Doris Gallup uttered those purposeful words following the club’s charter celebration this past May. She’s looking forward to life as part of the Brinton Manor Aktion Club.

“A new Aktion Club, housed in a Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, skilled nursing facility, gives residents a reason to stay active.

“Once we get going, this will be very interesting,” she says.

The Aktion Club is well on its way. Already, the dozen or so senior citizens have prepared 170 sandwiches for homeless shelters. They assembled 100 necklaces for hospitalized children.

“This program shows residents they can still be productive even when they can’t do much physically,” says Luida Shearer, a member of the Indiana, Pennsylvania, Kiwanis club.

Families and staff members have noticed that, overall, Aktion Clubbers are participating more in activities and socialization.

A satellite Kiwanis club is being planned to accommodate family and staff members who wish to serve their community—independently as well as alongside the members of the Brinton Manor Aktion Club.

“We are capturing these residents’ imaginations,” says West Chester Kiwanian Frank Werner, the Aktion Club’s adviser and an employee of Genesis HealthCare, which owns Brinton Manor. “Thanks to Aktion Club, they have more opportunities to make a positive contribution to the community—particularly in the lives of those they touch,” Werner says.--Karen Trent
People

'Angel' in the family

Darrel Oppedal didn’t know what to say when he learned that his daughter, Brianne, wanted to give her dad a second chance at life by donating one of her kidneys.

“I guess I was sort of speechless when she wanted to be tested (for compatibility match),” says Oppedal, a Brooksville, Florida, Kiwanian. “I asked her if she was sure she wanted to do this, and there was no question in her mind.”

Ironically, it was while making his own life-saving donation of blood that Oppedal, a 53-year-old restaurateur, learned something might be wrong with his own body. A family health scare from the past had come back around. Something slow but progressive: polycystic kidney disease.

“I went to give blood,” Oppedal recalls. “I liked the T-shirt they were giving away. They told me they could not take my blood as my pressure was too high—and they didn’t give me the T-shirt. It confirmed what my parents had been dreading: Up to 50 percent of my dad’s offspring could potentially contract polycystic disease—and three of four have. Ironically, my dad was one of 10 in his family and the only one who got it. His sister—my aunt—donated a kidney to him.”

The Oppedals have always been a close-knit bunch. So, it wasn’t surprising that his brother, whom Oppedal thought would be the most likely donor candidate, expressed a willingness to help. But he was ruled out because of medicines he must take. Then Brianne stepped up, more than ready to help her dad.

The kidney transplant brought Oppedal even closer to his daughter.

Undeterred by their respective surgeries, not to mention months of tests, the daughter-father duo started a new K-Kids club at J.D. Floyd Elementary School, where Brianne is a sixth-grade reading teacher and assessment counselor as well as the K-Kids club faculty advisor. Oppedal is the Kiwanis advisor.

On July 2 the kidney transplant went off without a hitch at Tampa General Hospital. Despite some surgical incision pain, Oppedal left the hospital after six days with a new hero.

“Everyone wants to know how I’m doing,” Oppedal says, “but the comment I hear most is how much my daughter is admired for what she did for me.

“In March, Brianne and I did a program for my Kiwanis club about organ donation. I had a liver transplant recipient as my guest to tell his story. Even though a few members knew about my situation, that night I announced to the club my disease and upcoming surgery. Then I introduced my daughter Brianne as my angel. It was a touching moment.”—Nicholas Drake
For more information about organ donations, visit www.organdonor.gov.
"Synergy--the bonus that is achieved when things work together harmoniously."

--Mark Twain, author

Good times for hard times

The Kiwanis Club of Chester, Virginia, inaugurated a Hard Times Festival, hoping to give residents an inexpensive way to have fun during current economic conditions. "Guests were still entering the festival as late as 7:30 p.m.," reports the club's publicity chairman, David Elswick, adding that the event was scheduled to close just half hour later. More than 800 people attended the event, raising funds to fund college scholarships at four local schools.

Be the buzzer

"Will they have meatballs?"

"Seriously good meatballs."

So goes an online conversation between "jeffersonjones" and the meatball-loving "rustaveli" after GoBlueRidge.com posted a news story about an upcoming Boone, North Carolina, Kiwanis Club spaghetti dinner.

Most newspapers encourage their online readers to comment about stories. That presents opportunities for you to create a buzz about your club by adding details or answering questions about your club's stories. Try it. You may get comments like "librarylady's" endorsement of the Boone club's dinner: "Wonderful event."

"Great event for a worthy cause," added "paulman1."

Readers' choice

We’d like your help in selecting a future story. Which of these would you like to read? Submit your vote.

- A retired Kiwanian finds success and happiness going back to work.
- Kiwanians travel to another country on a mission of education.
- A Kiwanis club donates computers to classroom serving mostly dropouts.
Snack attack

Open book test

Were you one of those kids who loved geography tests? We didn't think so. But now that you're a little more world-wise, they're a lot more fun, right? So, how much do you know about the Kiwanis world? Just for kicks, put your brain to work on these questions related to some of Kiwanis' 70-plus nations and geographic areas.

1. Dhaka is the capital of: (A) Bangladesh (B) Nigeria?

2. Hungary shares a border with: (A) the Czech Republic (B) the Ukraine?

3. Which nation has more land space: (A) Australia (B) the United States?

4. On which major body of water does Indianapolis, Indiana—home of the Kiwanis International Office—sit: (A) the Sea of Tranquility (B) the White River?

Answers:

1. Dhaka is the capital of: (A) Bangladesh.

   Nigeria’s capital is Abuja.

2. Hungary shares a border with: (B) the Ukraine?

   The Czech Republic is separated from the Hungarian border by Austria and Slovakia.

3. Which nation has more land space: (B) the United States?

   The United States’ 9.2 million square kilometers edges out Australia’s 7.6 million square kilometers.

4. On which major body of water does Indianapolis, Indiana—home of the Kiwanis International Office—sit: (B) the White River?

   The Sea of Tranquility is on the moon.

How much

Here are a few numbers associated with recent Kiwanis club achievements.

20,000

Pounds of cabbage, beets, and other vegetables raised by the Kiwanis Club of Olympia, Washington, for food banks.

233

New members added to New York District Kiwanis club over a two-day campaign this past August. 14 more joined soon after.

96

Car seats donated by Division 20 Kiwanis clubs in the Illinois-Eastern Iowa District to agencies serving new parents.
Tons of rock—along with 50 yards of sand and 100 yards of topsoil—Arlington, Washington, Kiwanians and other organizations used to construct a labyrinth for their community.

Kiwanis, Kiwanis, everywhere.

The October issue of Kiwanis magazine wondered where there might be Kiwanis streets. It turns out, they're everywhere.

There are Kiwanis streets in Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia. We have avenues in Ohio, Florida and even Washington. Michael Flavel says Kiwanis Court runs through the domain of his Tea Tree Gully Kiwanis club and that of the neighboring Modbury club in Australia. And the Andalusia, Alabama, Kiwanis Club Foundation has a 40,000 square foot community center at 20096 Kiwanis Drive. So says club secretary Harry Hinson.

Here's the list so far:

- The Kiwanis Club of Fountain Hills Sunset, Arizona, meets in a club house the members built. The Sunset Kiwanis Activity Center is located at 16957 Kiwanis Dr., Fountain Hills, Arizona.
- Kiwanis St, Sikeston, MO 63801
- Kiwanis Ave, Huron, Erie, OH 44839
- Kiwanis St, Ahoskie, Hertford, NC 27910
- Kiwanis St, Montgomery, Montgomery, AL 36110
- Kiwanis St, Dillon, Dillon, SC 29536
- Kiwanis St, Pocahontas, Randolph, AR 72455
- Kiwanis St, East Stroudsburg, Monroe, PA 18301
- Kiwanis St, Hampton, Hampton, VA 23661
- Kiwanis St, Omro, Winnebago, WI 54963
- Kiwanis St, Missoula, Missoula, Mt 59802
- Kiwanis Ave, Sioux Falls, Minnehaha, SD 57107
- Kiwanis Ave, Sikeston, Scott, MO 63801
- Kiwanis Ave, Huron, Erie, OH 44839
- Kiwanis St, Ahoskie, Hertford, NC 27910
- Kiwanis Ave, Morgantown, Monongalia, WV 26505
- Kiwanis Ave, Lakeland, Polk, FL 33801
- Kiwanis Ave, Fayetteville, Lincoln, TN 37334
- Kiwanis St, Hampton, Hampton, VA 23661
- Kiwanis Ave, Battle Ground, Clark, WA 98604
- Kiwanis Dr, Bowling Green, Warren, KY 42104
- Kiwanis Ct, Mullins, Marion, SC 29574
- Kiwanis Ct, Freeport, Stephenson, IL 61032
- Kiwanis Ct, Virginia Beach, Virginia Beach, VA 23456
- Kiwanis Ct, Bradford, McKean, PA 16701
- Kiwanis Ct, St John, St John County, NB, Canada

E-mail your town's missing Kiwanis street.

New clubs and sponsors
These clubs were organized by the sponsoring clubs listed:

**Flagler County, Florida**—Flagler, Palm Coast, Florida

**Las Vegas, Young Professionals, Nevada**—Las Vegas; Glitter Gulch
Southern Nevada, Nevada

**White River Valley, Arkansas**—Springdale; Fayetteville Sequoyah, Arkansas

**Rogersville Area, Missouri**—Springfield South, Missouri

**Lincoln County, Arkansas**—Pine Bluff, Arkansas

**California’s Global Friendship, California**—Kiwanis clubs of the California-Nevada-Hawaii District’s Division 36

**Manor, Texas**—Cedar Park, Texas

**Decatur, Georgia**—Metro Atlanta; Metro DeKalb, DeKalb; Airport Area, Atlanta; West End Atlanta; Druid Hills, Atlanta, Georgia

**South Surrey, British Columbia**—Golden Ears, Maple Ridge, British Columbia

**Princeville, Illinois**—Dunlap, Illinois

**New Jersey Young Professionals**—Edison, New Jersey

**Simi Valley Kiwanisonline, California**—Simi Valley, California

**Rensselaer, Indiana**—North Manchester; Lakeland, North Webster, Indiana

**Gloucester, Virginia**—Grafton; Williamsburg, Virginia

**Raytown Three Trails, Missouri**—Lee’s Summit, Missouri

**Pennridge, Pennsylvania**—Lower Perkiomen, Pennsylvania

**Franklin-Somerset, New Jersey**—New Brunswick, New Jersey

**West Saint Louis County, Missouri**—Maplewood, Missouri

**Southern Vancouver Island K-Now Canada, British Columbia**—Victoria, British Columbia

**Ann Arbor-Morning Edition, Michigan**—Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Howell, Michigan**—South Lyon; Greater Whitmore Lake Area, Michigan

**Sierra Nevada, Nevada**—Carson City, Nevada
Leadership Matters

Risk's rewards

Rob Parker, CEO, Kiwanis International

Quotable

Courageous leaders, by their very nature are often controversial. Here’s our short list of leaders of courage.

Share yours.

Martin Luther King Jr.
“A right delayed is a right denied.”

Nelson Mandela
“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

Winston Churchill
“We shall never surrender.”

Helen Keller
“Life is either a great adventure or nothing.”

Mother Teresa
“One of the greatest diseases is to be nobody to anybody.”

History is replete with examples of bold and courageous leaders who sacrificed greatly to make a difference. From 1789 to 1833, William Wilberforce served as one of Great Britain’s most zealous advocates for the abolition of slavery. Though Wilberforce dedicated his entire life to serving others, it was his unrelenting battle against the evil of the human slave trade that nearly cost him his life. Against overwhelming odds he battled political and economic forces to convince Great Britain to embrace the ideal that all men are created equal.

He used every weapon at his disposal to convince a country that had built its economic strength on the backs of slaves to end human trafficking. At great personal risk he campaigned for something that everyone wanted to ignore, and, ultimately, he and his fellow abolitionists prevailed.

As I consider this example of courageous leadership, I can’t help but wonder what I personally am willing to risk to make the world a better place.

What higher purpose is worth risking my economic security, and even my life? It is tempting to dismiss this with the thoughts that those were different times and that slavery does not even exist anymore.

The problem with that thinking is that it is just not true. Despite the progress that has been made in human rights worldwide, there are still millions of women and children right now who have been sold into the slave industry. In this day and age, how is that possible, and who is the William Wilberforce who is going to change it? Is it you? Is it me? Is it your child, or possibly one of mine?

Each of us as leaders should examine whether we are taking bold action to improve our corner of the world. Every Kiwanis nation has its share of downtrodden and disadvantaged children. Are we boldly working to make a difference? While you may not feel a calling that is as dramatic as William Wilberforce, it is never too soon, or too late, to discover your leadership purpose and passion … and then to pursue it with boldnessand courage. That is what Kiwanis leaders do.

“Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better.”

—Harry S Truman, United States president