Kiwanis International Update

May 2009

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Around the world in One Day

Take an around-the-world **tour** of Kiwanis One Day events.

**Kiwanis stories**

Honoring heritage

The Kagoshima Prefecture of Japan has a rich history—a heritage the Kiwanis Club of Kagoshima hopes to preserve among future generations.

To sustain the region’s links to the surrounding Yellow Sea, the club conducts sailing experiences for the region’s children.

To connect youth with their community’s agricultural traditions, the club invites children to participate in hands-on rice-planting demonstrations.
When Norwegians met Albanians

A pirate ship sails across the floor of the The Door’s Social Center kindergarten in Shkodër, Albania. Its young captain fends off envious classmates who’d like some playing time with the toy boat.

Ironically, the toy’s adventure parallels the story of a real ship, hijacked more than 15 years ago in the Adriatic Sea. The dramatic incident brought to light the horrific living conditions in Albania and inspired a group of Norwegian Kiwanians to launch an international mission of goodwill.

By 1992, most eastern European nations already had traded communism for democracy. One holdout was Albania. Amid the tension of that time, a group of Albanians captured a ship in the Adriatic Sea and set a course for freedom and jobs in Italy. Italian police intercepted the ship and sent the hijackers back to Albania.

TV news reports about the ship’s flight inflamed a curiosity among a group of Norwegian Kiwanians.

“Albania was absolutely closed during the communist period,” remembers Øivind Strømnes, a Sarpsborg, Norway, Kiwanian and vice president of the Albanian Aid project. Only members of the left wing communist party could enter, and even then, visitors had to follow the official government tourist route. “So when we watched the news about this Albanian ship,” Øivind says, “we were curious about conditions there.”

After Albania opened its borders, the Kiwanians sent a representative—a nurse—to visit the long-isolated country and determine how Kiwanis clubs could help.

“She brought back pictures, horrifying pictures, about the conditions in homes for people with disabilities, maternity hospitals and psychiatric wards,” Strømnes says.

In cooperation with other aid organizations, the Kiwanians initially decided to help institutions like the poorly equipped facilities they saw in the nurse’s photos. They sent beds and medical equipment to hospitals and blackboards and desks to schools. Such large items, however, proved expensive to transport. Plus, European governments began helping the schools, medical facilities and other institutions.

Little, however, was being done to help families, especially those living in remote mountain villages.

“We decided to focus our efforts on sending boxes of clothing, shoes, toys and household items to families in true need,” Strømnes says. “These boxes have proved very popular. It’s not unusual for us to visit a village and we’ll get a hug from someone who says, ‘You gave my family one of your boxes two years ago. Thank you.’ Or we’ll be walking down a street and see a man wearing a shirt from a shipment we delivered five years ago.”

Norden District Kiwanians still support institutions—just on a smaller, more transportable scale. Recently, for example, they were given access behind the locked doors of a psychiatric facility to distribute candy and other supplies.
And they hauled an extra large box of toys into the Social Center kindergarten classroom, where the contents quickly were spilled across the floor. Arms cuddled dolls. A plush bear was swaddled in blankets and nestled in a plastic crib. A musical cell phone sent pretend messages across the room. A teacher used a pull-along turtle to help one child learn colors.

And one pirate ship embarked on a carpet-faring adventure.

Capture more about the Norden Kiwanians’ Albanian project in the June 2009 issue of KIWANIS magazine.

Mastering disasters

Kiwanis clubs often come together to comfort those whose lives have been disrupted by chaos, and it’s even better when clubs maximize their impact by teaming up with an established emergency organization like the Red Cross.

“For the Red Cross, being prepared for a local, large-scale disaster is a No. 1 priority,” says Lynn Cook, director of communication and marketing for the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus, Ohio. “We need to have volunteers ready to assist in the relief efforts immediately.”

That’s why the Kiwanis Clubs of Asheville and Circleville, Ohio, joined forces to participate in a Red Cross volunteer training program called, “Ready When the Time Comes” (RWTC).

Through corporate sponsorship, RWTC trains volunteers what to expect and how to care for those displaced after disasters. In Gahanna, Ohio, the Kiwanis members not only gained skills through the hands-on program, they also assisted with the event by posing as victims and volunteers in a disaster shelter simulation.

“Both of our clubs had already worked with the Red Cross blood drives, and we knew the Red Cross to be a good organization,” says Rodger Southward, secretary of the Asheville club. “We felt it was important to have this training, because you never know when something is going to strike your area. We wanted to be prepared.”

“Getting the Asheville and Circleville Kiwanis Club members involved in the program allowed us to train 25 new disaster response volunteers,” Cook says. “These are 25 volunteers who have been trained in mass care and/or shelter operations, allowing our chapter to be better prepared if a disaster does occur.”

She adds that some Kiwanis members already have put their RWTC skills into practice, assisting after several recent disaster situations. Southward, for example, served meals at a relief center after Hurricane Ike’s winds knocked out power for days. Circleville Kiwanians answered the call to help after fire ravaged their town.
“Kiwanis members are wonderful volunteers,” Cook says. “They’re eager to learn and get involved and are a lot of fun to work alongside. It’s our hope to get more Kiwanis clubs in the Central Ohio area involved in RWTC.”

Southward notes that besides being trained in invaluable volunteer skills, working with the Centerville club through RWTC and many other projects allows the clubs to serve beyond their local communities. Plus, he says, it brings an element of fellowship into the mix.

“It’s a great opportunity to learn more about (other Kiwanis members) and be involved with other clubs and members outside division meetings and Kiwanis business,” he says.—Amy Wiser

Kiwanis sending aid to Italy

Thousands of families have been tragically affected by the earthquake that struck L’Aquila, Italy, on Monday, 6 April 2009. The Kiwanis International Foundation and the Kiwanis International European Federation are asking members worldwide to support efforts to provide short-term help to the families, and to announce that proceeds from the Kiwanis International Disaster Fund will be used to aid children left homeless and in need of help by the devastating quake.

The foundation will work through Kiwanis clubs near L’Aquila and the Italy-San Marino District team to ensure that funds are available and directed to children with the most critical needs.

You may send your support to the Kiwanis International Foundation, mentioning the Disaster Relief Fund. Donations, to:

    Kiwanis International Foundation
    Disaster Relief Fund
    3636 Woodview Trace
    Indianapolis, IN 46268
    USA
Announced candidates

The following Kiwanis members have announced their candidacy for the Kiwanis International Board. Officers and Region I positions will be elected at the 2009 Kiwanis International Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, June 25-28.

**President**
Elect one.

- Paul G. Palazzolo, Illinois-Eastern Iowa District

**President-elect**
Elect one.

- Sylvester “Syl” Neal, Pacific Northwest District

**Vice president**
Elect one.

- Michael R. Anderson, Rocky Mountain District
- A. Alan Penn, Ohio District
- Stan L. Storey, Florida District

**Trustees**

**Region I—United States**
Elect three.

- Pam Fleming, Alabama District
- George Francis, California-Nevada-Hawaii District
- Mark Garman, Kentucky-Tennessee District
- Jerome E. Peuler, Capital District
- Stewart Ross, Minnesota-Dakotas District

**Region II—Eastern Canada and the Caribbean (ECC) and Western Canada districts**
(Elected at 2008 ECC District convention)

- John Button, Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District
Region III—Europe
(One to be elected at 2009 Kiwanis International-European Federation Convention, June 6-7, in Gent, Belgium)

- Karl Heinz Berger, Austria District
- Jean-Pierre Berton, France-Monaco District
- Piero Grasso, Italy-San Marino District
- Göran Hurtig, Norden District

Read more

Reading is more fun than ever with a new Kiwanis Read Around the World kit. Kiwanis International has revised the materials into a year-round package:

- A helpful brochure with project suggestions and a monthly planning calendar.
- A charming bookmark to print and distribute as a gift to children.
- A bookplate that can be customized with your club's name, printed as a sticker and pasted inside a book's cover to remind a child that their book was a gift from Kiwanis.

President’s Message

Make May your membership month
By Don Canaday, president, Kiwanis International

While membership should be a focus for us every month in Kiwanis, I call on governors to place a special emphasis on membership in May, membership month for Kiwanis.

We need to grow and the children and communities we serve need us to grow. So I challenge you to think about how you recruit members. Are you talking with school principals, administrators, church leaders, mayors, friends and neighbors? Do you follow through with prospective members?

I challenge you to look for people with Kiwanis hearts, men and women willing to share their time, talent and treasure for the benefit of others. There are millions of them out there who just need us to invite them to become Kiwanis members.

I challenge you to think about building loyalty. In these busy times, what is your member-retention strategy? Do you have one?

I challenge you to renew your members. Are your meeting times convenient? Are meetings interesting and fun? Are your service projects relevant and do they make a difference?
I challenge you to raise funds so you can help children in need. In times such as these, we need to continue to find ways to give more, and more often.

I challenge you to use every tool in your membership toolbox, and to think about other things you can do. Invite a potential member to lunch, or plan a cookout for a few of your Kiwanis friends and invite people you think would be outstanding Kiwanians.

The challenge belongs to us all to grow Kiwanis so we can keep the promises for children and communities today and tomorrow.

Keep the back door closed

Keeping Kiwanians active means more hands are available to serve children around the world and in our own communities. Here is a list of membership retention ideas, gleaned from a program developed by the Kiwanis International-European Federation:

**Appoint a committee**

- Oversee your club’s retention efforts
- Resolve issues that may influence members’ decisions to leave.

**Establish good habits**

- Welcome new members in style. An induction ceremony should be important and memorable
- Get members involved—in service, leadership and social activities.
- Encourage members to suggest new ideas.

**Be friendly**

- Get to know members’ families; remember birthdays and anniversaries when culturally acceptable
- Call or visit missing members when culturally acceptable.

**Lead well**

- Attend leadership-training sessions
- Keep communication channels open
- Show tolerance and respect for others.

**Have great meetings**

- Emphasize fellowship.

You’ll find more retention ideas in the June 2009 issue of KIWANIS magazine, which will arrive in early June.
Dates to remember

- **June 4-6, 2009**, The [42nd Annual Kiwanis International-European Federation Convention](#) in Ghent, Belgium.