What is Kiwanis International?

Kiwanis International is a global organization of members dedicated to serving the children of the world. Every year, its members volunteer 18 million hours to service projects around the world.

Tournament of Roses Service Project

One of Kiwanis International’s larger service projects is float decorating for the Tournament of Roses Parade. During the week leading up to the Rose Parade, 7,000 Kiwanis adult and high school youth volunteers will spend 56,000 hours decorating not only the Kiwanis International float, but also several other floats, including Rotary International’s.

Throughout the week leading up to the parade, the floats come to life during the floral decoration days. Every square inch of each float has to be covered, sometimes using tweezers. The work requires meticulous attention to detail. If flower petals, beads, seeds or other materials aren’t placed correctly, they have to be redone.

It’s truly a labor of love for these volunteers, who come from all over. Last year, 26 states were represented by the volunteer corps. People volunteer because they like to have ownership and point to something they created when the floats pass by in the parade. Others come because it fulfills a dream or goal on their “bucket list,” and many volunteers, such as a father-and-daughter team, come back year after year.

History of Tournament of Roses Participation

Kiwanis entered its first float in the Rose Parade in 1921 and entered four more floats between 1921 and 1986, when its floats started to appear annually. This is the 30th year that Kiwanis has been working with Phoenix Decorating Company.

The Rose Float Club, chartered in 2000 by past Governor Tom Vildibill, exists solely to raise funds for the Kiwanis International District Rose Float Project. The Kiwanis International District Rose Float Committee, chaired by Dave Wallach for the past 15 years, coordinates thousands of volunteers that decorate the Kiwanis International Rose Float and several other floats during December, and funding of the Kiwanis International Rose Float.
What’s the theme of Kiwanis International’s 2015 float?

The 2015 Rose Parade theme is “Inspiring Stories,” and the Kiwanis float theme is “100 Years Inspiring Children.” The motif this year is a birthday cake, celebrating 100 years of service.

Kiwanians are justifiably proud of the enhancement of children’s lives, which it provides with its altruistic service for the improvement of our communities. Not only is Kiwanis saving lives as it has done through its Worldwide Service Project, but also making lives better each day, one community at a time, one child at a time.

What floats will Kiwanis volunteers decorate, aside from its own?

Some of the floats that Kiwanis volunteers will create in collaboration with Phoenix Decorating Company include:

- Honda
- Trader Joe’s
- City of Alhambra
- Armenian American
- City of Hope
- Donate Life
- Farmers Insurance
- City of Los Angeles
- Rotary International
- Lions Club

For more information about Kiwanis International, visit www.kiwanis.org.