

Kiwanis

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Can Your Community Find Your Kiwanis Club?

The following is from the Illeiwon, the bulletin of the Illinois-Eastern Iowa District of Kiwanis International. It was written by Jea Nae Remala, executive director of the I-I District. Used with permission.

Every week I get phone calls from community organizations, schools, parents, perspective members, perspective speakers and the general public who are trying to contact their local Kiwanis club. I explain to them that all of our club leaders are volunteers; that our clubs do not have offices or phone numbers, but rather the members just use their own personal contact information, and as a result, it's not published under the name of Kiwanis.

Every time I get one of these calls or e-mails, I think *how difficult we make it to find Kiwanis*. How can we be the "best show in town" if we are the "best kept secret" in town? It amazes me how many Kiwanis Clubs put out flyers on events, put ads and articles in local newspapers and distribute information to schools and other organizations without including the full name of the local Kiwanis Club and contact information for that club.

How does your club get the word out in your community? Here are some ideas I've come up with that you may want to consider.

Club Address: Open a PO Box in the name of the club so that the official club address remains consistent from year to year and you can be found by the US Postal Service. Use this address on your website, club letterhead, in press releases, club brochures, etc.

Club Phone Number: Many of our officers and members have cell phone plans that have "Friends and Family" packages that allow them to add an additional line for \$10 per month. Consider having someone add a line for Kiwanis (and reimburse them each month for this) and have the club purchase the cheapest phone available or use a phone no longer used by another member.

Set-up the voice mail and give the phone to a member who can check the messages frequently. Or, consider purchasing a pre-paid phone (typical cost of \$30 or less) and use it for this purpose. The phone number for the club can then remain consistent from year to year and can be used in all club publicity.

Club Website: Does your club have a website? It's expected by the public that all organizations have an internet presence these days. An easy, inexpensive way to set-up a club website is through Club Resource, a company created by and run by Kiwanians. We've used this source for several years for

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my home club and we now use it for the district website. It's very easy to work with. Check them out at www.clubresource.com

Facebook page: Social media is the way of the future! Make sure to set-up a Facebook page designed for organizations/businesses as opposed to a personal facebook page. In your web browser search "facebook pages for organizations" for more information.

Club Brochure: Does your club have a brochure that provides general information on the SLP Clubs you sponsor, your major service projects and major fundraising efforts, when and where your club meets, how to contact your club? Kiwanis International provides a printed, standard brochure that can be purchased and meeting information can be filled-in. Or, they provide blank brochure stock that can be used to create a customized brochure for your club. My home club does this and we list the over 30 local organizations we support either monetarily or with hands-on-service, in addition to a list of all of our SLP clubs. We also update it frequently to include a list of all of our members and officers. We use this as a recruitment tool, to distribute to the public at Chamber events, to give to parents at SLP events, etc.

Membership in Your Local Chamber(s) of Commerce (for all communities in which

you serve): Chambers usually offer low cost annual membership fees for not-for-profit/service organizations. This gets your club listed in the Chamber of Commerce member directory and on their webpage. You'll also then be able to participate in Chamber events promoting local organizations to the public. Most importantly, the Chamber knows how to get in contact with your club!

Locally, our county has a directory of not-for-profits and service organizations; maybe your community has one too that would include your Kiwanis Club? Many local newspapers include a weekly listing of all meetings and events of service organizations that we clubs use for free to promote meetings, fundraisers, and service projects. Does your club have current, accurate contact information on file at every school in your community that is updated at the start of each school year? How about contact information on file with your local Salvation Army, Food Bank, Homeless Shelter, Crisis Shelter, Day Care Centers, Senior Centers, Blood Bank, etc.?

Make it easy to be found in your community — and I bet this will help make it easier for your club to grow too!

Happy summer and I hope to see many of you at International Convention, District Convention, Circle K Summer Social and CLE! - *Jea Nae Remala*