

# Purpose, Philosophy, and a Brief Introduction

I had the absolute pleasure and privilege of serving as the Kiwanis Family Vice President for William and Mary's CKI club from 2019-2020. In my time at W&M's CKI club, I was able to work directly with K-Kids, Builders Club, and Key Club, and I forged strong relationships with many Kiwanians that I still maintain to this day. William & Mary students are fortunate to have Kiwanis meetings a mere 2 minute drive from campus and a K-Kids program within walking distance. We were also lucky enough to have the KICK-IT program. This program pairs Kiwanians with CKI members in the hopes that Kiwanians can act as mentors and friends. My KICK-IT partner is (I would never use the past tense because we are still in active communication) a retired education professor, and his mentorship allowed me to co-author a textbook chapter and to further my knowledge in the field of education. He acted as an irreplaceable mentor to the Builders Club with me, and he was generous enough to invite me and my fellow KICK-IT friends to his home for dinner and out for a night at Busch Gardens.

Having attended DCON and having networked with various Kiwanians and faculty advisors, I have come to appreciate how lucky I was in the strong interactions I had with my sponsoring Kiwanis club. I am hopeful that this document will serve as a useful reference and resource for your Kiwanis club. Whether you have never sponsored an SLP club before or if you're looking to strengthen your relationship with SLPs, this document should have something that speaks to you.

The responses are taken from Kiwanians and faculty advisors of various ages and experience levels. All identifying information pertaining to Kiwanis clubs has been erased so as not to promote or criticize any particular clubs. The most important and noteworthy information has been bolded for your convenience.

Sponsoring an SLP is so much more than checking a series of boxes. Again and again you will see references to the importance of having a strong relationship, and the only way to forge a strong relationship is to spend quality time with the group and communicate. I urge you to invite your SLP to as many events as you can and to make your events as accessible to SLPs as you can. Youth are Kiwanis's purpose and future. We must do everything in our power to help them, especially in these difficult times.

Relationships take time, energy, and commitment, and I am confident that yours will flourish. My own e-club has virtually been attending a Key Club's meetings, and the results have been so gratifying. We are flexible and creative in our support, and we are continuing to brainstorm out-of-the-box ideas to serve our youth. What skills do you have to bring to the table? Could you serve as a career mentor? Could you provide transportation? Could you attend a service project? Could you attend a board or general meeting? Could you provide materials for a service project? Could you provide leadership training? Could you be a friend? The answer to one or more of these is most definitely a resounding yes.

I look forward to hearing about your club's future successes, and I am always available to help.

-Katie Brownfiel

With regard to the SLP programs that you assisted or were a part of, what did Kiwanis support look like? For example, did Kiwanians come to your meetings? Did you attend Kiwanis meetings or events?

- Our Kiwanis advisor was amazing. **He taught the kids and myself how to lead meetings based on Kiwanis procedures** and went above and beyond to help with any event or drive we were doing. **He attended all board and general session meetings and drove our van to the District Convention for three years in March. He also would find sponsors for our January Pancake Breakfasts. Myself and the board members attended a few board meetings and always tried to attend the general meeting where the TOY scholarship was given. However, this was difficult because it was always during AP Exams and SOL times when attending school at 7:30AM is critical.** Our current SLP is new. Last year was her first year, and she did join Kiwanis. Due to medical issues with herself and husband, she attends board meetings and general sessions when she can.
- When I was in a different school, I had incredible support. When I switched to my current school, I had a great lack of it. The difference is palpable. **Even this year, in a year in which all other clubs at my school are struggling to do much of anything or maintain any sort of roster, our Key Club is flourishing. What's the difference...well, one is new sponsorship, which helps, but I would argue that the most important difference is the inclusion of actual humans from two Kiwanis clubs. These kids are thriving off the participation from these adults.** Making Kiwanis a tangible element in their lives is making all the difference in the energy and the way in which our students approach Key Club. It has literally moved me to tears to see this difference.
- Our support was mostly financial. **One member always helped drive my Key Club to DCON.**
- Some of our Kiwanians came to our meetings, and we also attended their meetings. **We helped them with certain service projects, and they also invited us to fundraisers/social events. Our Kiwanis advisor usually came to DCON with us as well.**
- When I was in Key Club and Circle K, the Kiwanis support was so important. **I was so lucky to have great Kiwanis support and that was a major inspiration for me to join**

**Kiwanis. I attended many Kiwanis events. I always appreciated free food, especially as a college student! I think the cross-generational interactions were, and continue to be, so important to bridging our connections in the community.**

- My Kiwanis Club has always been very involved in its SLPs. Other Kiwanians participated in Key Club meetings and their activities as needed. Members of CKI joined a meeting to talk about what CKI is and encouraged Key Clubbers to join. **The SLPs have always been an important part of the club's largest fundraiser. In fact, without the Key Club and CKI members, the event would not have enough volunteers!**
- Kiwanians would sporadically come in Key Club; the CKI club at my college had frequent Kiwanian support. **They came to club meetings, and we went to theirs. Also, each participated in their events, and they did what they could with ours.**
- As faculty advisor with K-Kids, a Kiwanian would attend most general meetings and officer meetings. **They would invite us to their projects and were willing to speak at our meetings.**
- Currently in my role, I've been able to attend Key club meetings and officer meetings. They've invited our club to participate in some of their upcoming service projects.
- Key Club: our Kiwanis advisor attended our meetings and some members attended our induction. **We might get invited to a Kiwanis One Day service project.**
- **CKI: Our club hosted an annual networking luncheon with our sponsor clubs. They would invite us to their big events and reoccurring street clean up. We tried to set up a tailgate but were unsuccessful.**
- My Kiwanis Club has been a strong supporter of the 7 SLP Clubs they sponsor. **All meetings are attended by at least the Kiwanis advisor. We have tried to have SLP club members attend Kiwanis lunches when they could. It is always a struggle to retain advisors for these clubs, but this is a requirement and has been successful, if not difficult at times.** There is considerable interaction between Kiwanis and the SLP Clubs in mutual support of community service, fundraising, and activity projects.
- **As a CKI member, I only remember my advisors attending our events and when we were invited to their meetings; there was always plenty of gushing done for the Key Clubs. No one really spoke to us. Our advisors were wonderful people, but I did not feel a connection to my sponsoring Kiwanis Club. They would support us financially, which was nice.**
- At the local SLP level, I can't recall a local Kiwanis Club or faculty advisor being involved whatsoever; we were kind of just left to ourselves. I do recall other officers trying to form a relationship, but it didn't really go anywhere during my 4 years there. Part of the issue was we were a 15-20 minute drive away from our Kiwanis club, but I guess with a lot of college students not having cars, it did create a bit of a distance. At the district level, I know our administrator and Kiwanians from other states were involved and would see them and talk to them but not so much at the hyper local level.
- In my old school, the support was phenomenal. **Kiwanians attended every club meeting, was active in interclub events, and supported our club financially as well as**

**in community service.** At my current school, support from our sponsoring Kiwanis was spotty. We went to their club's meetings once or twice a year, and occasionally a member of Kiwanis would come to our meetings once or twice a year. We did have a couple of years of partnership, but that quickly fizzled. **This year two Kiwanis clubs have made quite a positive impact on our club with their presence at our meetings and events. We have even done one interclub event with a Kiwanis club!**

## What are some of your favorite memories from working with the Kiwanis family?

- My favorite memories were meeting others at **DCON and my friendships.**
- In Circle K, my favorite memories were **making some amazing friends** and enhancing my college experience. **In my Kiwanis club, I love getting the opportunity to re-connect and to help plan creative service opportunities.**
- As an SLP member, I have great memories in Key Club when **we helped Kiwanis with their semi-annual paper drive.** It was a big event in our small town community. We would promote the drive, and then, on the day-of, we helped load a huge trailer with donated newspapers that people dropped off. This was a fundraising project as the amount of paper donated would equate to an amount of funds received.
- In Circle K, I volunteered weekly with a project sorting clothes for a charity shop. We had a solid group of fellow Circle K members that would attend, and we had such a fun time discovering the variety of items people donated! **We also often had a social afterwards and would enjoy 1/2 off burgers at a local restaurant.**
- In Kiwanis, I recently co-led a project for a newly resettled Afghan refugee family. My club was so supportive, and we got so much support from family and friends **to purchase items for an entire apartment setup for a family of 8.** It was so impactful to help a family who had been through so much.
- Two things immediately come to mind. First, **mentoring a CKI member through the Kick-it program has been an amazing experience. Our last two partners became like family. We actually got to know both of their families, attended their college graduations and family celebrations, and stayed in contact years after graduation.** Second was the joy of seeing incredible growth - in one short weekend - of students who attend Key Leader. **To watch the shy girl who really doesn't want to attend become an active participant and develop friendships in a matter of hours was amazing. The notes that I received from participants (which I read at home following the event) were heartwarming and very special.**
- My favorite memories were the service and opportunities to **make and maintain friends with a similar volunteering mindset.**

- **I enjoyed helping with the street cleanups because we got to split up into groups and mingle with the Kiwanians while doing service. We also got breakfast before the event**
- **Kiwanis's focus is on children. We support children in need and, through our SLP programs, try to create servant leaders among the youth. Working directly with the SLP clubs' members, there are constant, immediate feedback rewards in watching their growth and accomplishments in both service and leadership and how passionate some are in this regard. Memories remain current as many relationships are not lost upon graduation or moving on to the next level in life. I have remained in close touch with many CKI and Key Club grads. Watching a freshman progress through to senior in the SLP environment and the rise to leadership or the increased passion to serve others always provided a strong memory for several that I have watched. It validates what we are trying to do in Kiwanis.**
- **As a Kiwanian, I have enjoyed joint service projects with our SLPs. We also ran a divisional ice cream social for all of the SLPs and Kiwanis Clubs.**
- **I know Kiwanis is all about children, however, one of my favorite things at the SLP level was when we used to go to a nursing home and play bingo with some of the residents. It was electrifying, and there was hardly much to do other than just play bingo- what is not to love? There's something also about being part of something bigger and getting to know other college students throughout district events or conferences or training events. My Circle K family became more of a district family as opposed to just a local club family.**
- **For me, when Kiwanis is a tangible presence at Key Club meetings and events, it is a powerful connection. Students know when they are valued by their sponsoring club, and it makes quite a difference for all involved! I still maintain a strong connection with my original sponsoring Kiwanis Club because of the connections I made with them 11+ years ago!**

What, in your opinion, is the importance of having strong relationships between Kiwanis clubs and their SLPs?

- **It is vital, especially for communication but frustrating when your Kiwanis club tends to favor one club over the other, especially when the other club is not nearly as involved or productive.**
- **Strong relationships foster a sense of legacy and continuity.**
- **Our SLPs can really benefit from the leadership training, mentoring, and experience of our Kiwanians. It is good for them to feel supported by the adults in their**

community. It is also important for Kiwanis to be involved to encourage our SLPs to get involved in Kiwanis once they graduate.

- **Cross-generational interactions, other than family or perhaps teachers, are not very common in the community.** I think there is a lot of value in learning and growing from those interactions. If it weren't for Kiwanis, because of the many differences in views, Kiwanis members and SLP members would probably not have crossed paths. **Supporting an SLP club as a Kiwanis member helps you to keep an open mind and learn about and from the younger generation. Kiwanis members also have amazing experiences and knowledge of the local community that SLP members can learn from as well.**
- Kiwanis teaches, by example, the **lifelong lesson of servant leadership.** SLP members learn what they have the opportunity to live when participating in a Kiwanis meeting and serving side-by-side with Kiwanians.
- Strong relationships build connections to the overall Kiwanis Family. **If SLPs see involved Kiwanians and Kiwanis clubs, they may be more likely to join.**
- It allows for a stronger connection and assistance at all levels which increases the potential impact each club can have. **Key Club has a lot to learn from the older Kiwanis members, and CKI infamously needs Kiwanis funding and networking. A good experience in Key Club and CKI will help bring new life to Kiwanis.**
- First, **a requirement of a Kiwanis Club in chartering an SLP Club is to provide financial support and assure that officer training is accomplished. However, to assure that the SLP Club is really part of the Kiwanis organization, that link requires personal support and guidance. The club's leadership and membership need to know that their mentors really care.** Teamwork between the SLP Club and the Kiwanis Club is the mortar that makes the bond between the two clubs and makes the SLP club much more successful. **In serving the community, it requires connection with the organization, agency, or business you are trying to support. Kiwanians are better connected with these entities in the community and, if they are not in partnership with the SLP club they sponsor, they are of little help to the club in this regard.**
- Like any relationship, it takes effort. **Students have to understand that Kiwanis isn't there to simply write a check; they need to make an effort to attend Kiwanis events that they are invited to. Likewise, for Kiwanis, an SLP is not simply a box to check. It requires manpower and time. Kiwanis Clubs and their SLPs should be holding more joint events to develop those relationships.**
- I would say it is all about doing life with people and just being involved as there is life wisdom from Kiwanians and SLP members alike that makes it more of a community rather than just us and them. We talk a lot about service and at its heart is community transformation. **I just feel it makes more of a community when you have both young and old alike coming together and passionate about their communities.** There's also this tendency for natural reasons just to hang out with people our own ages, so **Kiwanis and SLP relationships are perfect for mixing with people from different backgrounds in a safe way which again ties back to the community transformation.**

- **Students feel valued by their community.** They see a greater picture of their community and the impacts that can be made if we work together. For Kiwanis, it allows the organization to be an attractive factor for students when they grow up and start living independently in their communities! **If Kiwanis was there for them in their formative days, they are more likely to eventually come to be part of the organization as adults!**

## What is one piece of advice that you would give to Kiwanians interested in working with SLPs?

- **Be open to change and be flexible.** Show up and care.
- **Say less, listen more.** Be engaged and help guide the youth to prevent recurring mistakes.
- Be interested and open to what they're doing! **Ask how you can be most helpful.**
- **Meet SLP members where they are at. You will not always agree with their approaches, but give them a safe space to learn. They will grow from it.**
- Step up and enjoy the experience! Kiwanians have a tremendous opportunity to teach SLP members about giving of themselves and serving their communities. In my experience, I have received much more than I ever gave. **Working with SLPs provides an opportunity to lead by example, teach important life lessons, and maybe even change the trajectory of a young person's life.**
- **Take the time to build the relationships, be present in meetings/service projects, and show them that you care.**
- "Be the difference you want to see in the world." **Reach out to connect with them and try to build a relationship with the members.**
- **Work closely with faculty advisors to see where Kiwanis can help with the SLP club activities. Assure that the SLP club leadership is aware of all opportunities to work with and help Kiwanis in their activities.**
- **Invite them to EVERYTHING!** It shows them that you are very interested in knowing them and serving with them. **They will not be able to attend everything, but they can include you on their calendars and attend what they can.**
- There's a saying that we use in popular culture— 'go big or go home—' and my advice is to do the opposite of that. **Just start off with a phone call or an email saying hi, or if SLPs reach out, just follow-up. From my experience, little things like that make a difference as it is a bit disheartening when I even tried reaching out from a Circle K club and never heard back from anyone.** Alongside that, don't be afraid as we are all just people at the end of the day trying to go through life. **I am always learning and growing, and it's likely the same for every Kiwanian.**

- **Be patient. Schools are in such a state of flux and teachers are stretched. Sometimes Kiwanis might have to carry an SLP on its back until the right teacher can come along.** I have seen the rise and fall of Key Clubs in our area, and Kiwanis just has to learn to roll with it. Kiwanis clubs are also in flux, so that doesn't always help the SLP landscape. I do feel the stronger the presence of Kiwanis, the greater the likelihood of their SLPs to be carried on or passed on from teacher to teacher. **Meet with administrators of the school at least once a year (preferably at the start). Even consider attending staff meetings at the beginning of the school year (before students arrive) to discuss your SLP to the staff and your club's commitment to that SLP. It may not always produce positive results, but it's more likely to do something positive than not. It takes a lot of energy to start, maintain, and keep up with the SLPs, but this is Kiwanis' main reason for life, and we need to commit everything we can to them.**

## Points to consider

- I have been a faculty advisor for 8 years. I was never in Key Club as a student nor Circle K. **If my sponsoring Kiwanis Club would offer an evening time and dues exemption for faculty advisors, I would have been happy to join.** However, I teach on weekday mornings.
- Transportation can be a big issue for SLPs. **Knowing that students can not drive until their junior year and knowing that not all students have reliable transportation, it is important to be flexible and communicate with the students.** When I was in college, the sponsoring Kiwanis Club would drive a few of our CKI members to Kiwanis meetings and a few service projects. If we didn't have this transportation, we wouldn't have been able to attend.
- Many young professionals and students are not available for breakfast or lunch meetings because of their work and school schedules. **If you would like your SLP members and faculty sponsors to attend your meetings and they occur during the school day, you may need to be creative!**
- How can you support your SLPs outside of their SLP meetings? **Can your Kiwanis Club attend a football game or student production, for example?**