

# Minnekotan



## A Message from the Governor

April is the month that you should start formulating plans for your Club's Annual Meeting. Within this preparation, look at your Club's membership and ask what members might be good officers for the coming year. Then encourage them to move forward. Very seldom do we find people who automatically volunteer. So some form of "push" is usually needed.

The next step within the Annual Meeting planning is to begin discussions as to what a Club wants to do for the next year. It should be an open discussion. Ask the "hard questions". Do you want to add a program or eliminate one? Is something no longer working but may only need refinement, etc.?

At the end of your Annual Meeting you should have elected a full slate of officers and prepared a program draft for your Club's upcoming year.

Make sure that you do the housekeeping requirements by adding your new officers into Engage. Additionally encourage your new officers to attend the KI training programs. This participation helps assure

Minnesota Dakotas District of Kiwanis International  
**April 2026**

that they have the proper education needed for a very successful year.

Wishing all of you a great "new Club year!"

## The Ben Franklin Builders Club at it again!



Submitted by Advisor Kerri Lee

February 9th was National Toothache Day. To

help battle dental disease in children, the Ben Franklin Builders Club sponsored a Dental Hygiene Drive.

Thanks to generous donations from Ben Franklin families and Fargo-Moorhead dentists, the small but mighty club collected enough toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and other related toiletries to make dental hygiene kits for all 55 of their classmates who receive weekend food bags.

These weekend supplies are assembled and delivered by fellow volunteers in the Fargo North Key Club. Additionally, the Builders Club was able to provide a brand-new toothbrush and card of encouragement to all kindergarten students at two of their neighborhood elementary schools.

Remaining donations were used to stock the Ben Franklin "Liz's Closet" where students can get personal care items when they are in need.



## A Message from the Secretary Treasurer

Is it Spring yet? It should be but we are expecting snow this weekend for Easter. Oh well, that's spring in Minnesota. I hope things are better where you are.

As we are getting closer to our 2026 District Convention in West Fargo this summer, my thoughts are turning to, what for me, are the highlights of our convention. Of course, it's a great time to see and catch up with old friends from around the district. I also enjoy meeting new friends. It's easy to be "friends" with Kiwanians because we share the same values and love of service.

Another highlight for me every year is the presentation of the Division Star Awards. A Division Star is the person in your club who is always "there." They may never run for office, but they show up for every project whether it's service or fundraising. They may be the person who sets up the room for meetings and greets everyone who comes through the door.

Is there someone in your club like that? Probably. If so, think about submitting their name to your Lt Governor to be considered for this award. They are currently seeking applications from clubs. The [application](#) can be found on the district website and is a great way to recognize those "unsung heroes" in your club.

I am very proud of our district so that's why I have to brag a little bit. I recently learned that the MinnDak Key Club District is one of 8 district worldwide who have already exceeded their membership goals for this year. And it's not because it was a small goal. Maybe we could learn something from them to help us grow our Kiwanis membership.

I also learned our MinnDak CKI district has a new club at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. They are doing great things and I brag to other districts every chance I get.

### Some business items:

- Still thinking about going to the International Convention in Manila? **Registration closes April 13<sup>th</sup>**. There are also some international travel requirements to be aware of. Here's the link to all of the information and preliminary schedule of events: <https://www.kiwanis.org/members/kiwanis-international-convention-manila/>
- I am still seeing clubs that don't have monthly reports filed. It seems that the numbers are higher since the transition to Engage. If you are having issues with the new platform, let me know. I can help.
- It's never too early to start planning for our 2026 District Convention in West Fargo, ND August 7-9, 2026. I would love to see every club represented this year.
- Do you have a great service project your club is dying to share? Watch for information about the Service showcase that is being planned for Friday night August 9<sup>th</sup> at district convention.

As always, I'm here to support clubs and members. Contact me before you get too frustrated. I can help!



## Why Sponsor a Kiwanis Club?

**Sponsoring a new Kiwanis club** is a strategic move to ensure that more kids receive the service and mentorship that Kiwanians provide. By sponsoring a new club, your club not only expands its influence but also strengthens the leadership of the new club. Let's collaborate to ensure that the new club thrives, enhancing the legacy of your club and contributing positively to our district.

Every sponsoring club benefits significantly from having a Kiwanis certified coach. These coaches bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise, ensuring that club activities and projects are conducted effectively and have a meaningful impact on the community. Your training and certification mean you are well-equipped to guide and support club members,

**Click the registration link** for the training you wish to attend.

**New Club Opening** – Monday, April 13 at 7 p.m. Central [Register](#)

**Club Coaching** – Tuesday, April 14 at 7 p.m. Central [Register](#)

**May is Membership Month**, a prime time to highlight the impact of Kiwanis in your community and to welcome potential new members. To maximize this opportunity, we recommend organizing a preparatory meeting in April. This will allow your club to strategize on how best to engage the community, showcase the valuable work

you do, and extend invitations to join. This proactive approach will help ensure a successful and enriching membership drive.

### Review Your May Calendar

Look at your club's meetings, service projects, fundraisers and social events. Invite guests to attend! If scheduling conflicts arise, select an alternative month now and begin planning early.

## Pierre - Fort Pierre Kiwanis celebrates 50th annual Pancake Feed



Submitted by Jeff Mammenga

Members of the Pierre-Fort Pierre Kiwanis Club celebrated their 50th annual Pancake Feed on March 24. There was a fantastic turnout for the event, which raised \$2,098 that Kiwanis can give back to the communities in the form of college scholarships and other donations.

## Meet Your Governor Elect Candidate for 2026 - 27, Jad Lageson



I joined Kiwanis 25 years ago. I have always loved participating in service projects. Currently, I belong to two clubs, the Mankato Kiwanis Club and the Metro/McGregor Club in Fort Myers, Fl.

During my time in Kiwanis, I have served as the President of the Downtown Kiwanis, chair of Membership and the Student Leadership Programs. I served on the Board of Director for the Mankato Kiwanis Club, and am currently serving on the Board of Directors for the Metro/ McGregor Club. I was also the Lt. Governor for Division 6 during the 2023-2024 term.

Several people have commented that I am a serial founder. I see a need and want to fix it. I founded the RiverBend Academy Charter School in 2000 and helped found Twin Rivers Center for the Arts 2010. I was also one of the founders of Kiwanis Holiday Lights in 2012.

I believe I would be an asset to the MNDK Governor team. I am looking forward to serving the district in that capacity.

Sharon Scudder  
District Leadership  
and Development  
Coordinator



## Spring Has Sprung

Put a spring in your step by Learning the many opportunities that Kiwanis International and MNDK KIWANIS will be providing in April. MAY 11th, AMPLFY BEGINS. Registration is open until April 30<sup>th</sup>, so there is still time. Enjoy the sessions and experience a great time of learning and growth development. [Register here.](#)

Lt. Governor Training will begin April 11th from 10-12 MT. and April 25th 10-12 MT. Agendas will be sent out prior to training dates to all 2026-2027 Lt. Governor Teams. KI will be presenting new training material and additional resources to the Leadership Development Coordinators on April 14<sup>th</sup> so we can include that in some of our training.

Although our training will begin April 11th, we will keep you updated on all new or changed material thereafter. However, you can be assured District Convention in Fargo will be filled with all the new material plus special Speakers in August.

**CLUB LEADERSHIP EDUCATION (CLE) WILL ALSO BE PRESENTED IN FARGO,** however, we really would prefer each Division set up CLE training in their own area to provide new officers the opportunity if they are not able to attend the District Convention. CLE slides and resources will be available by April 1st.

Spring has sprung and Learning has begun. Enjoy your month.



## A Message from Kiwanis International Children's Fund

By Kathy Welle

Anxious for Spring to arrive!! Arrive and stay! The past week or two has been a whirlwind of warm temps, then back to cold.

**#KiwanisDayofGiving**

## A SPECIAL MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE

The Kiwanis Children's Fund is pleased to **thank everyone who participated in our fourth annual Kiwanis Day of Giving**. The work we do to help kids around the world through our grants cannot be done without support like yours.

On February 25 and 26, **Kiwanians came together to raise US\$156,663**. Surpassing our goal of \$125,000 – **and it will help Kiwanis reach nearly 70,000 kids around the world.**

On this inspiring occasion, we are proud to present [a special message of gratitude](#) from 2025-26 **Kiwanis Children's Fund Trustee Jeffrey Wolff.**

**Grants Approved** – March 2026

**Congratulations to Kiwanis Club of Pierre-Fort Pierre.** Award \$3,250.00.

Project name: Story Walk.

Children impacted 3,500. KCF grant will fund purchase of metal posts and frames to hold and display each book along the Story Walk path.

Clubs lift each other up getting together to do great service projects.

*Yours in Service*

**#KidsNeedKiwanis**

## Final Act of Service

Submitted by Laura Tjomsland

A long time member of the Austin Noon Kiwanis Club, Donald "Don" Barnes, passed away on Feb. 4, 2026 weeks after he celebrated his 99th birthday!

His Son asked me to help to honor Don's commitment to Kiwanis by having memorials directed to the Possibility Project. His obituary was posted in the Austin Daily Herald stating; "Memorial donations can be made online to the Kiwanis Possibility Project.

A few weeks after the funeral I got a message that \$435.00. What an awesome gesture and beyond that we remember Don as the Division 6 Star Award winner in 2022!!



## Your Donations Go Far

Submitted by David Odette, Trustee

The District Education Foundation board members and other volunteers for the past month of March have been busy grading scholarship applications to award this year's scholarships. In reviewing applications, I take note of the local sponsoring Kiwanis Club to see if I might know any members of the Club. I also find there are many Clubs not having their local high school seniors applying for a scholarship.

Each November all Clubs are invited by a District Educational Foundation email to the Club President and Secretary asking them to distribute the attached scholarship forms to their local high school(s). It is easy to get your high school involved by delivering the applications to your local high school counselor and request they distribute them.

The Club prints off three complete copies of the application package, fills out the Club information at the top of the forms, Club president or secretary signs each of the three scholarship packages and delivers them to the high school counselor. The scholarship package has a complete instruction sheet for the club, school counselor and student with the application due date in late January.

Clubs promoting the District Education Scholarships to their local high schools have an additional Kiwanis Scholarship to their high school, gives seniors another opportunity for potential scholarship assistance in their educational journey and promotes the local club.

If your Club has not been promoting the Minnesota-Dakotas Educational scholarships yet, plan on giving your high school seniors the opportunity to apply by taking the application package to your school counselor next November. November is several months in the future so add a "To Do" in your yearly Club calendar that November is the District Educational Foundation scholarship application month. If your Club has been always promoting the scholarship program, Thank You!

For more about the District Educational Foundation as well as scholarship applications information go to [Minnesota Dakotas Educational Foundation – Kiwanis Minnesota Dakotas District](#)

## MNDAK District Openings

The Lt Governor position for Division 3 in NE Minnesota is currently vacant. If you are interested in moving into this leadership position, please contact Cindy Braseth at [kiwanisdistrict.mndak@outlook.com](mailto:kiwanisdistrict.mndak@outlook.com) or call 701-740-8121

We are also recruiting for Lt Governor Elect positions for 2026-27 in Divisions 1, 2, and 3. If you are interested, contact your Lt Governor or Cindy Braseth. The Leadership Directory with contact information can be found here: <https://k13.site.kiwanis.org/leadership/>



**Katie  
Landwehr  
District Public  
Relations  
Coordinator**

Greetings  
Everyone,

We are actively preparing for our District Convention this year, which is August 7th-9th, 2026 in Fargo, ND. As part of the District Convention, we will be hosting an outreach fair at the hotel for the Fargo community to come and check out what Kiwanis is all about. As part of this, we are asking each club to prepare to have a table where they can talk about their club. We would like to ask clubs to put together a photo display on a medium of their choice (trifold, poster board, running PowerPoint, etc) to have on their table to demonstrate what their club does.

Additionally, I would like to put together a video highlighting each club. I know that technology can scare people but what I am asking doesn't have to be scary.

I am requesting each club put together a short 1 minute video highlighting something special about their club. Be creative - some ideas would be filming something in your city that your club supports (ex. a park that your club sponsors), an ongoing project that your club works on regularly (ex. volunteering at a food shelf, serving meals for the homeless), a joint project with your club and a sponsored circle K/key club/builders club/k-kids/or aktion club, or just a member(s) explaining briefly some key highlights about your club.

This video does not need to be done on a fancy camera - a cellphone camera will do. If you have questions regarding this, please let me know at [katesland2@aol.com](mailto:katesland2@aol.com).

You can upload your video to the google folder: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/111k1FGEEEWB-CaKSYaH\\_eGKaxcLzIEnf?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/111k1FGEEEWB-CaKSYaH_eGKaxcLzIEnf?usp=sharing)

Please have your video uploaded by June 15th.

Thank you!

## Annual Division 7 One Day Service Project



Division 7 gets together and builds dressers every year for One Day of Service. Attending this year were 2 Key Clubs with 19 members and 8 Kiwanis Clubs with 40 members plus our *Lt Gov, Janet Cederholm*, and our *District Governor, John Rheinberger*, and *Past Lt. Governor, Katie Landwehr*.

# MinnDak CKI Update

Submitted by Parker Smith



Hello MNDK Kiwanians!

My name is Parker Smith, and I have been elected MinnDak CKI District Governor for the 2026-2027 year. I wanted to introduce myself and the rest of the 2026-2027 District Board! I'll start with myself. I attend the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, and my major is Science, Technology, and Society.

Olivia Ellstrom is the Secretary-Treasurer, and she also attends South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. Our Lieutenant Governors are Shelby Mennis for the Rolling Plains division (North and South Dakota) and Ethan Clites for the North Star division (Minnesota). The Bulletin Editor is Sydney Kamin. Shelby, Ethan, and Sydney all attend Dakota State University. We also have two committee chairs, Charlie Sween who chairs the Recruitment Committee and Camden Jundt who chairs the Events committee. Charlie attends Minnesota State University Mankato, and Camden Jundt attends South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. I can personally attest to the strengths of my fellow board members and can assure you that we are very excited to work hand in hand with our MinnDak Kiwanians!

I also want to inform you that we recently welcomed a new CKI club into our district! The University of Minnesota – Crookston expressed interest earlier this year about chartering a club on their campus, and we recently were able to make it official! We are very excited to start working with them, and we hope Kiwanis welcomes them as well.

We have many goals for this upcoming year, and I want to share some with you. As you know, membership is a struggle for many clubs (not just K-Family clubs). While I believe it is important to focus on gaining new members, I also believe that current members should be celebrated just as much as new members. Highlighting individuals who stay in clubs throughout the tough times (when only 3 people show up to meetings) not only shows appreciation for them as a member but sets a standard for how we acknowledge commitment.

As you know, the pandemic was a hard time for lots of K-Family clubs. Many lost most if not all of their members, and I can see that reflected in the recent past of this CKI district. I want to revitalize MinnDak, and to do so I hope to recharter one club. I know it sounds like a small goal, but making the first move will help the momentum of this district to return to a larger, more connected MinnDak.

I will hopefully join you at your District Convention in August, and I look forward to connecting with all of you throughout my year of service. I hope that you have many successes in the coming year, and I look forward to working together as a Kiwanis Family. Thank you for your support of MinnDak Circle K International!