

Empire State Kiwanian



Official Publication of the New York District of Kiwanis International
Volume 2025-26, Issue 1

Oct-Nov-Dec 2025

A Vision for Our District: Growing Together, Giving Back

As we embark on a new chapter in our district's journey, I am filled with both gratitude and determination. Gratitude for the incredible members who have built our legacy of service, and determination to grow our impact in ways that are bold, compassionate, and lasting. Our mission this year is clear: to build

clubs increasing our impact in communities that do not have Kiwanis, to grow our club membership, to retain and re-energize our current members, and to rally around a cause that speaks to the heart of who we are—servant leaders committed to making a difference.

member to invite one new person to experience the joy of service and show off their passion.

- Host community open houses and service days to showcase the meaningful work we do.
- Partner with local schools, businesses, and community organizations to reach individuals who are looking for purpose and a place to belong.

We are not just recruiting members—we are building passion for our organization.

The Governor's Project: Uplifting Foster Youth

This year's Governor's Project is deeply personal and urgently needed: supporting

(Continue on page 22)



Growing Our Membership: Inviting More Hands to Serve

Membership growth is not just about numbers—it's about expanding our capacity to serve. Every new member brings fresh energy, ideas, and connections that strengthen our clubs and amplify our impact. This year, we will:

- Launch a "Bring One, Grow One" initiative, encouraging each

Glens Falls Kiwanis Turns 100

On September 21 at Crandall Park in Glens Falls, the Kiwanis Club held its 34th Million Dollar Duck Drop (previously known as the Million Dollar Duck Race) and Family fun Day as part of its 100th anniversary celebration. Nearly 4,000 rubber ducks were dropped by crane on to a marked tarp. In addition to the chance to win the million dollars (which has not been won in the entire 34 year history of the event). Prizes included three cash awards totaling \$2025 and gift cards to

local restaurants. There were lots of activities for the family, including a bounce house, petting zoo and pony rides, and a piñata.

Members from several of the Key Clubs sponsored by Glens Falls handled the face painting table, as well as assisted with set-up and take-down. Proceeds from the event went to local charities including Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Southern Adirondacks, and the Kiwanis Club of Glens Falls Foundation.



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Empire State Kiwanian

New York District

District Officers

Governor Carla Ingram

Governor Elect Martin Valk

Executive Director Rich Hall

Treasurer Kimberly Davis

Immediate Past Governor Gordon Soderholm

Lieutenant Governors

Adirondack

Mary Cunningham
(Ticonderoga)

Bronx Westchester South

Nanda Chaves
(Riverdale)

Brooklyn

Richard Schweid
(Kings Plaza-Canarsie)

Capital

Virtual Lt. Gov.

Central

David Halpin
(Lake Delta, Rome)

Chemung

Sue Mower
(Elmira)

Finger Lakes

Pam Metting
(Canandaigua)

Genesee

Daniel Mammarello
(Rochester West Central)

Hudson River

Katie Landi
(Kingston)

Hudson River West

Christine Mahoney
(Middletown)

Hudson Tri-County

Virtual Lt. Gov.

Long Island North

Helene Harris
(County Seat, Mineola)

Long Island South Central

Marianne Adrian
(Levittown)

Long Island Southwest

Michael Gliner
(Peninsula, Hewlett)

Metropolitan

George Wonica
(Staten Island)

Mohawk

Peg Cassidy
(Glens Falls)

Niagara Frontier North

Tom Fontana
(Lewiston)

Niagara Frontier South

Kimberly Love
Board President
(West Seneca)

Ontario

Joseph Eppolito
(Syracuse Young
Professionals)

Queens East

Orah "Debbie" Charles
(Jamaica)

Queens West

Steve Hansen
(Glendale)

Saint Lawrence

James Reagan
(Ogdensburg)

Southwestern

Virtual Lt. Gov.

Suffolk East

Dr. Alesia Olsen
(Sayville)

Suffolk West

Roger Sirangelo
(Huntington)

Susquehanna

Katherine Newell
(Owego)

Van Rensselaer

Elissa Skeim
Board President
(Troy)



Kiwanis®

Empire State Kiwanian

Committee Chairs

Achievement Martin Valk	Disaster Relief Mike Marlark	Historian Tom DeJulio	Legal Council Sean O’Sullivan	Risk Management Roger Eltringham
Aktion Club Kevin Cooney	Distinguished Program Sue Sheehan	Human & Spiritual Values David Vail	Legion of Merit Nancy Baxter	Service Lannette Bowman
Anti Bullying Keith Cummings	Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Miles Malone William F. Risbrook	Interclubs Noreen Barrett	Membership Engagement & New Club Opening Thomas Cesiro, III	Sgt-at-Arms Mike Marlark
Basket Raffles Rebecca Ovadia	District Convention/Conference Kerrie Hanson Steve Hanson	Key Club Administrator John Goldstein	On to I-CON Joe Corace Nydia Corace	Signature Project Sandy Nagler
Builders Club Hazel Goldstein	District Foundation (Kamp Kiwanis) Thomas Poccio	Key Leader Crystal Benjamin-Brafford	Partnership Chuck Eckart	Site Selection Jason Steiner
Bylaws & Procedures Michael Marinaccio	Everyday Hero Joe Corace	KI Children’s Fund Kimberly Davis	Past Gov’s Council David Booker	Special Advisor to Governor Joel Harris Lucien Giancursio Michael Ingram
Campaign Practices Doreen Pellitteri	Empire State Kiwanian (ESK) Editor Seth J. Blau	Kiwanis Kids Administrator Kevin Kamper	Past Lt. Gov’s Council Noreen Barrett	Special Projects Michaelene Abbott-Cooper Marie Soderholm Scott Maneen
Charter III Joseph Eppolito	Finance Jimmy Yee	KPTC Albany Susan Vail	Pediatric Lyme Disease Foundation John Gridley	Technology & Webmaster Jarrod Gordon
Circle K Administrator Alison Mandel	Governor’s Executive Assistants Rev. Christine Mitchell Kim Scharoff	KPTC Buffalo Bill Schultz	Planning Jackie Goldstein Charles Cronin	Veterans Dr. Bob Borowski
Convention Registration Dean Beltrano		KPTC Long Island Joe Corace	Public Relations Seth J. Blau	Youth Protection Coordinator Ashley Wolfe
Credentials Sue Bahren		Leadership Development & Education Alison Mandel	Resolutions James Prout	



Kiwanis®

2025-26 CONVENTIONS

FEB. 27 - MAR. 1: MID-YEAR CONFERENCE
DESMOND HOTEL, ALBANY, NY

JUN 24-27: KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
MANILA, PHILIPPINES

AUG 6-9: NEW YORK DISTRICT CONVENTION
RADISSON HOTEL, CORNING NY

2025-26 DATES TO NOTE

**OCT
2025**

1 BEGINNING OF THE NEW KIWANIS YEAR
6-10 YOUTH PROTECTION WEEK
13-18 CIRCILE K INTERNATIONAL WEEK
14-18 KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING
24-26 KIWANIS FAMILY WEEKEND

**NOV
2025**

1 KIWANIS CHILDREN'S FUND SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE
3-7 KEY CLUB WEEK
12-15 KIWANIS CHILDREN'S FUND BOARD MTG
27 THANKSGIVING
30 DEADLINE FOR CLUB DUES SENT TO KI

**DEC
2025**

1 KIWANIS CLUB ANNUAL REPORT DUE
25 CHRISTMAS DAY
31 NEW YEAR'S EVE - YEAR-END GIFTS TO KCF

**JAN
2026**

1 NEW YEARS DAY
21 111TH ANNIVERSARY OF KIWANIS
INTERNATIONAL
21-22 KI BOARD MEETING

2025-26 CALENDAR

**FEB
2026**

15 DEADLINE FOR FILING 990 IRS FORMS
15 KCF SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE
25 KIWANIS DAY OF GIVING
27-3/1 MID-YEAR CONFERENCE

**MAR
2026**

13-15 KEY CLUB DISTRICT LEARNING TRAINING CONFERENCE
23 KEY CLUB INTERNATIONAL BIRTHDAY
27-29 CIRCLE K DISTRICT CONVENTION

**APR
2026**

14-18 KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL BOARD MEETING
15 COMPLETE CLUB ELECTIONS FOR 2026-27

**MAY
2026**

14-17 LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR TRAINING
25 MEMORIAL DAY

**JUN
2026**

1 DEADLINE FOR CLUB ELECTION REPORTS SUBMITTED IN PORTAL
24-27 KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

**JUL
2026**

1-5 KEY CLUB INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

**AUG
2026**

6-9 NEW YORK DISTRICT CONVENTION

**SEP
2026**

30 DEADLINE FOR CHANGES TO ROSTER FOR START OF 2026-27 YEAR
30 LAST DAY OF THE KIWANIS SERVICE YEAR

From Our: Governor Elect

By Martin Valk

*Governor Elect
New York District*



*H*appy Kiwanis New Year and Happy Autumn. I look forward to working with everyone on a district-wide level to take it to even newer heights! I have already met with President-Elect Hope Markes. She is aware of our abilities to build new clubs and increase our numbers.

*N*ow is also the perfect time to introduce ourselves to our sponsored youth. Invite them to a club meeting. Let them even run a meeting. Let them tell you what is happening in their clubs. Invite them to participate in your projects. Just don't forget about them.

*S*ince my October plans changed, I am now available to visit more of your clubs and projects. Please contact me if you would like me to see how you are carrying the Kiwanis banner in your cities and towns. I'm even willing to travel upstate (north of Manhattan).

I hope that all our clubs are hosting some type of installation celebration. It is important to have a specific time to honor your club's achievements and those members worthy of honor. I look forward to attending some of these celebrations in the forthcoming weeks.

*M*ake certain that you are active in your community, and make certain that your community knows that your club exists. As Rodney Dangerfield once said, "to show you how poorly I was doing in show business when I quit the first time, I was the only one who knew I quit." Don't be like Rodney – make your club important to the community.



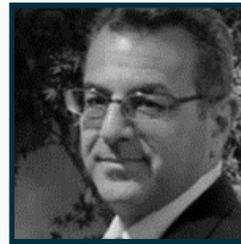


New York District Kiwanis Foundation Inc.

Kamp Kiwanis®

My Fellow Kiwanians, we are starting our third year with Daniel as our executive director and can say we are in good hands. The applications for the 2026 season are completed and posted on the web site and will be mailed to clubs. The Foundation board would like to thank every member and friends that donated to allow the children and adults to have a wonderful experience at the Kamp. Thanks to the generosity of everyone we were able to provide an experience for 9,500 plus children and 650 Adults since 2006.

Our grant committee lead by Scott Maneen (Central Division) has been doing a great job with securing \$171,769.00 this year. The committee has already started looking at new grants. If you would like to help and be on the grant committee please reach out to me or Committee chair Scott Maneen (scottmane62@gmail.com). Michaelene Abbott-Cooper has been appointed to the board and is



By Tom Poccio

Foundation President

joining the grant and fundraising as a matching funds chairperson. Welcome Michaelene.

As many of you know we instituted a new fundraising platform that allows us to receive 100% of the donations with out any fees. You can donate to our monthly giving or one time donation, Kaiser



program, brick program, wish list etc. The Out Reach program is a program asking every club for a donation of at

least \$ 5 per member to support the foundation. These funds are used in cases like storms and trees falling that need to be cleared or cut down in emergencies like what occurred this past season.

We know that with the help and continued support that the Kamp will once again house over 500 plus Kamperships per season. IPG Lucien is the Foundation chair for the military. Lucien will be sending information out shortly to the district.



Remember the New York District Foundation is YOUR foundation. The Kamp is YOUR Kamp.

As always, I look forward to working with every club and Kiwanis member. If anyone has any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me at boardpresident@kampkiwanis.org.





New York District Kiwanis Foundation Inc.

Kamp Kiwanis®



By Daniel Trader

Executive Director

Kamp Kiwanis

Hello Greetings, NY District Kiwanians!

As we jump into the start of another Kiwanis year, here at Kamp Kiwanis we are also able to reflect upon another successful summer.

In 2025, we had the privilege to serve 414 kampers consisting of 38 adults, 71 military kampers from Fort Drum and Hanscom Air Force Base, and 305 additional child kampers. These kampers were provided a fantastic outdoor experience filled with



games, songs, laughs, exploration, and new connections and friendships with others near and far from where they live. An experience that would not be possible without

the dedication and donation of numerous Kiwanians, donors, and supporters.

We were even able to bring archery back from a brief hiatus to the excitement and great acclaim of many kampers. Through the hard work of the

Foundation's Grants Committee we were able to gain the support of many grants to revitalize the sports equipment, subsidize



transportation costs, replace aging kamp vehicles, and tackle needed maintenance projects.

With the cabins and fields now quiet, we begin shutting the water off in preparation for the approach of winter. Work and plans are already well underway for 2026.

We continue to seek out funding sources and grants for the



next round of maintenance and program improvements so that we can continue to take Kamp Kiwanis to the next level of success.

The Foundation recently approved maintaining the same rates for next summer with the only exception of raising transportation for adult kampers by \$50.

This means that rates for summer 2026 remain:

Child and Military Kamper - \$900

Child Bussing - \$250

Adult Kamper - \$1250

Adult Bussing - \$400

However, don't forget you can save \$75 per kamper by providing non-refundable prepayment for kamper spots by January 15. Reservation Sheets and Applications are already available at: <http://www.kampkiwanis.org/application-and-forms/> so lets get an early start and achieve record numbers of kampers and families served this summer.

KIWANIS PEDIATRIC TRAUMA CENTER FOUNDATION (LONG ISLAND)



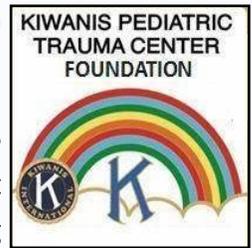
DPG Joe Corace
President
KPTC Foundation

Since our last report thanks to our board members creating fundraisers and Kiwanis members and clubs supporting them, we continue to successfully raise funds for both our level one Trauma Centers. The Comedy Club, the Golf Outing, the Duck's Baseball Game, the Yankee NY District Game and the additional new Flower Design fundraisers were all a success and let's not forget the Five Towns Super Bowl Pool.

On September 26, 2025, close to 400 Kiwanis members, friends and families celebrated the 29th KPTC Black and White Ball. This year the Foundation decided to honor both Level One Pediatric Trauma Centers, Cohen's Medical Center and Stony Brook Children's Hospital. The event was highlighted with the addition of over 20 new KPTC Fellows inducted. The Fellowship is a donation of \$1,000 and is a mainstay of our Foundation funding. Several Diamond and Multiple Diamond Fellows were also awarded. We look forward to our 30th

Black and White Ball on September 18, 2026.

This year we will continue as we've done in the past to have fun and fundraising events as our way to raise funds. Our next fundraiser is a Murder Mystery on Sunday, January 25, 2026, at Leonard's of Great Neck.



The Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Center Foundation will host a KPTC Mini-Conference with Stony Brook Children's Hospital on November 8th, 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. Come learn what your funding does for the kids in our community. It will be free and breakfast is on us and full of great information.

Flyers have been sent to each member in the downstate area for both events. Any additional information needed please call President Joe 917-282-9498.



KIWANIS PEDIATRIC TRAUMA CENTER FOUNDATION (BUFFALO)



C. William Schultz

KPTC District Chair

Oishei Children's Hospital Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center serves the entire Western New York region, including referrals from northwestern Pennsylvania.

The Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Program and Hospital Team initially approved a 2025 budget of \$141,000. Additional funds may be considered if needed. The KPTC budget supports injury prevention initiatives, community outreach, education and simulation training, public awareness, and essential financial resources for these areas.

The Buffalo Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Team & Children's Team want to thank all Kiwanians, Kiwanis clubs, and friends who have supported the Pediatric Program since 1987. We also would like to acknowledge and thank the WNY Kiwanians, Kiwanis clubs, and friends who donated over \$26,000 in 2024 to the Oishei Kiwanis Pediatric Program.

The Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Liaison Committee is comprised of:

Leandra Collesano, NFN Lewiston Kiwanis Club

Christopher Lukowski, NFS Buffalo Kiwanis Club

William J. Reece, NFN Amherst Kiwanis Club

C. William Schultz, NFS Buffalo Kiwanis Club



Kiwanis Pediatric Lyme Disease Foundation



By DPG Joe Aiello

*President
Kiwanis Pediatric Lyme Disease Foundation*

I want to congratulate all the new officers of the NY District for 2025-2026, I know that you will do a great job.

As the new President of the foundation, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Joseph Aiello, Past Distinguished Governor 2013-2014.

I have been a member of the foundation for over ten years. We have great and aggressive, passionate board members.

I'm going ask the Division Lt..Governors and Club Presidents to do something for the foundation? I would like if you can do just one thing. Ask all your clubs to have a fundraiser this year. It doesn't make a difference how much you raise. It's something to help children.

I'm aware we have other Foundations that you support. Those foundations are fabulous. All the foundations have a lot in common its about the children. Our foundation just

approved a grant for 10,000 dollars for a child that has Lyme. For every 10,000 dollars grant, we must sell 20 Britney's at 500.00 dollars. So, I'm asking for your help please do you best and support our foundation. If you have any questions or ideas, please contact me at ioa9014@nyp.org or (516) 828-6304.

Thank you again for all your support
KINDNESS MATTERS



NEW YORK DISTRICT HISTORY



Celebrating the Century of Key Club International:

New York District Key Clubs Recognized Through the Century



PIP Thomas DeJulio
District Historian

Key Club International just released the 128-page book entitled "A Century a Service: Key Club International 1925-2025" that highlights the transformative service rendered worldwide by Key Clubs over the past 100 years.

Featured in this historic volume are photos owned by University Library/Ruth Lilley Special Collections and Archives. The following is a select number of accomplishments and projects undertaken by six (6) New York District Key Clubs.

1951: Baldwin HS Key Club



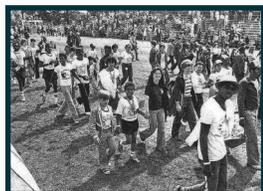
This is the Key Club officer installation ceremony overseen by Lt. Governor Ray Caldiero (seated right) of the Long Island Central Division.

1958: Union-Endicott HS Key Club

Students built small, electrically powered cars for a game at their school's Annual Carnival to help raise funds for student scholarships.



1968: Staten Island Key Club



Members joined cheering crowds to support a Special Olympics event and to award medals.

1982: Stepinac HS Key Club

Members in White Plains present a large check to the renown "pie in the face" comedian Soupy Sales on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation.



1996: East Meadow HS Key Club



Members realizing that kindness knows no age barriers, served senior citizens at their club's Annual Thanksgiving dinner

2024: Fordham Prep Key Club (Bronx)

Just one of thousands of Key Clubs that got involved in "Trick-or-Treat" for UNICEF, a partnership that began in 1994. Most recently in 2024, their members hosted a pumpkin-decorating contest to help young children in Zambia.



In summary, please honor, support, and build your sponsored clubs in the new Kiwanis Year 2025-26. You never know how many young lives are changed by the service they render to others, and most important of all, how their good deeds have changed them, too.



Here's one "personal" example from Mt. Vernon HS Key Club when a very shy young student (center) was installed as Club President in June 1968.

Legion of Merit

Celebrate Service and Commitment: The Legion of Merit and Legion of Honor

One of the most powerful ways a Kiwanis club can celebrate its members is by recognizing their years of dedication and service. Every hour volunteered, every project led, and every child helped tells the story of Kiwanis—and those stories deserve to be honored.

The New York District's Legion of Merit program offers clubs a simple and meaningful way to recognize members who have reached 5, 10, 15, or 20 years of Kiwanis service. Presenting these recognitions during a club meeting or special event not only honors the individual but also inspires others and reinforces the true spirit of Kiwanis fellowship.



Costs:

- Pin is \$5.95 each
- Certificate: \$1.00 (free if emailed)
- Shipping: \$3.00 flat fee.

Please make checks payable to New York District Kiwanis and send them along with the completed forms at least 4 weeks in advance, but in most cases orders are filled within a week. Mailed to:

Nancy Baxter
3754 Oceanside Road East
Oceanside, NY 11572

For questions, contact me at (516) 972-8011 or baxtamom9@aol.com.



By SDPLG Nancy Baxter

*Legion of Merit
District Coordinator*

For Kiwanis members who have completed 25 years of service or more, Kiwanis International offers the prestigious Legion of Honor. These recognitions are given in 5 year increments (e.g., 25, 30, 35 years, etc.), and may also include special pins for service in key roles such as Past President, Past Club Secretary, Past Lieutenant Governor, as well as various District positions.

Members who have 25 or more years of Kiwanis service do not have to be consecutive, and can be accumulated in more than one club. A member is eligible for each when he or she is within six months of reaching that milestone.



Legion of Honor Costs:

- Certificates: \$6.00
- Pins: \$13.00

Shipping costs as outlined on the KI website. Orders must be made at least 2-3 weeks in advance. More information for the Legion of Honor can be found on the Kiwanis International website at:

[Kiwanis Legion of Honor.](#)

Recognizing member longevity is more than a formality—it's a celebration of the heart of Kiwanis. These presentations strengthen club pride, connect generations of members, and remind us all that lasting impact begins with dedicated individuals who choose to serve year after year.



By DPLG Noreen Barrett
New York District, Interclub Chair

Celebrate the Kiwanis Spirit — Through Interclubs!

As we embark on a new Kiwanis year, it's the perfect time to rekindle the Kiwanis Spirit—that sense of fellowship, teamwork, and shared purpose that connects us across clubs, divisions, and communities.

One of the best ways to do that is through interclubs. Interclubs are about more than just visiting another club's meeting—they're about building friendships, sharing ideas, and celebrating the impact we make together. Whether it's over a meal, at a fundraiser, or while rolling up your sleeves for a service project, interclubs remind us that we're all part of something bigger.

So why not plan a visit to another club in your division? Bring a couple of fellow members and experience what makes their club unique. You might discover a new project idea, a creative fundraiser, or simply enjoy good conversation with fellow Kiwanians.

Let's make this year one filled with connection, collaboration, and community. Interclubs are a simple way to strengthen the bonds of Kiwanis—and have a lot of fun along the way! Please reach out to me with any questions at: lgbarrett3@nycap.rr.com.

Here's how your club can officially qualify for an interclub:



New York District Round Robin Program

“Visit” all clubs in your Division!

- ◆ **Clubs 30 or more members - 4 Members visit**
- ◆ **Clubs 20-29 members - 3 Members visit**
- ◆ **Clubs 19 or less members - 2 Members visit**



Kiwanis®

Membership & Club Openings New Club



By SDPLG Thomas Cesiro, III

*District Chair
Membership & Club Opening*

As we start our new Kiwanis year under our new International President Michael Mulhaul and our new District Governor Carla Ingram I want to remind everyone of the Kiwanis Membership Initiative:

BUILD, NURTURE, AND RETAIN

Build – With the help of our current NY Kiwanis International Counselor Scott Sims we are working on a project with our board of Lieutenant Governors to attempt to open new club every division. Can you imagine that impact on our District by opening 27 new clubs with a minimum of 15 new members for each club. 27 new clubs helping 27 new communities and their children. This is a very aggressive approach, and we hope that we will have some great success stories.

Nurture – To help existing clubs to reach Charter Strength – 15 members in total. Our District has many clubs that fall below this level, and they need our help. We need to establish a membership growth plan and by working together we can accomplish this task. We should also be helping the clubs that are between 16-20 members to reach the average club size of 25 members. It's important that each club establish a membership growth target. It's not just the club presidents' job to get new members its EVERY member's job to bring in a new member. I ask you when was the last time YOU asked someone to join your club?

Retain – this is the hardest part holding onto the members you have. We need to do a better part in making sure our membership feels included. Do you

have a sunshine committee – send out Birthday cards, get well cards. Does your club celebrate membership? Do you give out Legion of Honor or Merits pins? Do you recognize a member sponsor?

If the members does not feel like a part of our Kiwanis Family, why would they stay a member?

This year part of the NY District membership team is Past Lieutenant Governor Mary Capobianco who will be heading up the New Club Opening portion and Past Lieutenant Governor Melissa Verdi-Montes handling the club growth. Please feel free to reach out to any of us.

NY District's Top 5 Clubs Net Increase 2024-25:*

Clubs that Lead the Way

- Glens Falls (Mohawk) - 38**
- Community Care, NYC (Metropolitan) - 15**
- Shawangunk Valley, Ellenville (HRW) - 10**
- New Scotland (Capital) - 9**
- Ridgewood, NY 3-2-1 (Queens West) - 8**

*End of Year data from KI.

Public Relations/Branding:



Kiwanis “In Action”

Short Video & Reels Challenge

Show how your club makes a difference — one story at a time.

This challenge is to encourage Kiwanis Clubs across the New York District to tell their stories through engaging short videos or social media reels — showcasing community impact, teamwork, and the Kiwanis spirit.

The purpose of this challenge is to:

- Increase online visibility of Kiwanis and local projects.
- Encourage creativity and club/community pride.
- Build a shared library of district-wide promotional content.

Clubs can submit short one video or reel (30–90 seconds) for each theme that highlights how your Kiwanis Club makes a difference.

The videos will be judged on:

- Best Storytelling
- Most Creative Presentation
- Best Use of Themes (listed to the right)

Videos may be produced using phones, tablets, or simple editing tools — professional equipment is *not* expected or required.

Kiwanis “In Action” Themes	
Categories	Description
Kindness in Action	Showing how small acts of kindness add up to big difference.
Serving with Heart	The compassion and commitment behind every project.
Creating Hope	Uplifting people and strengthening communities.

All entries must be created during the 2025-26 service year and submitted by August 31, 2026.

Aktion Club

By Kevin Cooney



*Aktion Club
Co-District Administrator*

Downstate Aktion Club Convention

A Downstate Aktion Club Convention took place on September 20, 2025. The event was held at Camp Anchor in Lido Beach and attended by over 100 Aktion Club members.

- The attendees took turns describing their favorite Aktion Club projects, watched Club videos, and reviewed club scrapbooks.
- The group did a service project of making Veteran's Day cards for the participants at the Veteran Service Agency Food pantry, located in East Meadow. They will be distributed to thank them for their service.



Aktion Club members waiting for festivities to begin.

Anchor Aktion Club Garden

- The members enjoyed playing games and winning prizes, a morning breakfast and a delicious lunch.
- We closed out the day with dancing to the DJ, Aktion Club members shared ideas and made new friends. Several members told me how happy they were to meet Aktion club members from other clubs. Financial support for the event was provided by Peninsula Kiwanis. The left over food went to the soup kitchen at St. Mary of the Isle Soup Kitchen.

The Anchor Aktion Club worked on their garden this past year. They planted garlic, vegetable seedlings, herbs and vegetables such as: basil, garlic, peppers, squash & tomatoes.. Vegetables were donated to the food pantry at the Long Beach Soup Kitchen.



Aktion Club members harvesting the garlic from their vegetable garden for donation to a local food bank.



Aktion Club attendees standing in front of stage waiting for the DJ to start during Convention.

#KidsNeedKiwanis

#KidsNeedKiwanis



Circle K International

By Alison Mandel

Circle K
District Administrator



School is back in session and Circle K is up and running for 2025-2026. Governor Sofie Melledy has been hard at work encouraging growth within the existing clubs as well as trying to reactivate those clubs that have become inactive over the past few years.

We are thrilled to announce that NY District has 3 new Circle K charters as of September 30 - SUNY Brockport, Hofstra and Touro - Middletown! Welcome to NY District Circle K! With the inclusion of the three new charters, we will be over 400 members and growing!

Just as exciting is that we also have three more colleges that are almost chartered - SUNY-Canton, Vaughan, and SUNY Cortland. We currently have at least one prospective Circle K club in each division.

NY Circle K had their first events of the school year with the two K-

Family Picnics - downstate in Central Park on September 27 and upstate in Thornden Park in Syracuse on October 5. Both were successful events with members from all three branches in attendance! The two picnics raised \$1000 for Kamp Kiwanis.

Circle K's are busy now collecting dues which were increased this year to \$44 per member: \$36 for International and \$8 for District. Please feel free to help the clubs if they come to your Kiwanis club for help. I do believe that they need to pay a portion of the dues so utilizing the 1/3 rule with the students paying 1/3, Kiwanis paying 1/3 and if they get a school budget for the other 1/3 or fundraising for the balance.

Circle K's first conference of the year is coming up on November 7-9 at the Georgian Lakeside Hotel in Lake George known as NY Speaking! We are hoping for a good turnout this year! Kiwanians are welcome to attend and I know you will be impressed by the way the students run a convention. There will be workshops, service projects, a talent show

etc. This conference celebrates the Fellowship tenet of Circle K.

Circle K's Governor's Project this year is Stand with Trees - working to plant trees in 14 different forests and the district project is the Trevor Project - Focusing on mental help support in the LGBTQ community.

I encourage all of you to work with the Circle K clubs in your area, not only to help them out monetarily to attend conventions but they are eager to help with your service projects and fundraisers. Even if you are not a sponsor of a Circle K club, if you have one in your division reach out to them and offer your support! We have seen a large increase in Key Club members joining Circle K and hopefully that will lead them to join Kiwanis when they graduate.

Please mark your calendars for the NY Circle K's District Convention which will be March 27-29 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at alison.mandel@nycki.org.



#KidsNeedKiwanis

#KidsNeedKiwanis



Young Leaders Helping Others



By Kevin Kamper

K Kids
District Administrator

LAUNCHING OUR WORLDWIDE SERVICE PROJECT: MAKING COMMUNITIES BEAUTIFUL

Welcome to an exciting new year with Kiwanis K-Kids! As we begin 2025, we are thrilled to introduce our worldwide service project: "Making Communities Beautiful." This year, we'll work together to help our neighborhoods shine, grow, and become better places for everyone. Let's make a difference—one project at a time!

This year's theme is all about transforming and caring for the spaces we share. There are so many ways your club can help:

- Create or improve public spaces, like parks or courtyards
- Organize community cleanups at schools, neighborhoods, or local parks
- Restore playground equipment to make it safe and fun for everyone
- Build and care for community gardens

We encourage you to dream big and come up with your own creative ideas! Every club is unique—what will your community beautification project look like? Remember to include lessons and conversations about why keeping our communities beautiful is important for everyone's well-being and pride. For more info on our worldwide project, check out the video posted at <https://www.kiwaniskids.org/globalkickoff/> and be sure to share with your Kiwanis K Kids members.

To help you plan and carry out your projects, be sure to use the IDEA toolkit available on the K-Kids website. The toolkit will guide you step by step, from brainstorming and organizing to putting your ideas into action and reflecting on your impact. It's a great way to make your project successful and fun!

Don't forget to share your projects with Kiwanis International as well as myself! Your club's work could inspire others and may be featured in future articles. Plus, get ready for our upcoming essay contest, where you can share your thoughts and experiences on the theme of community beautification. We can't wait to hear your stories and see your creativity in action!

Kiwanis and faculty advisors play a key role in supporting K-Kids clubs. We encourage all advisors to communicate regularly and work together to guide, encourage, and celebrate your members. Together, we can make this year's service project a huge success and help every club member grow as a leader and community helper.

Being part of K-Kids means more than just helping others. Members develop important leadership skills, build friendships, grow in confidence, and learn how to work as a team. Surveys have shown that the top skills learned as Kiwanis K Kids members are teamwork, communication, including others and caring. You'll also discover how giving back can make you feel good and help your community become a better place for everyone.

If you have questions, need support, or want to start a new K-Kids club, visit our website at www.kiwaniskids.org for resources, guides, and contact details. I am also available by email at knkamper@gmail.com.

Thank you for your energy, ideas, and passion for service. Let's work together to make 2025 a year of growth, learning, and community pride. We can't wait to see the beautiful changes you will create!

#KidsNeedKiwanis

#KidsNeedKiwanis

Suffolk East Division

The Suffolk East Division of the New York District Kiwanis proudly celebrated the chartering of the Kiwanis Club of Smithtown–Saint James on October 6, 2025, at Napper Tandy’s in Smithtown. Under the leadership of Charter President Al Lindsey, the club has quickly begun making an impact by sponsoring both the Nesaquake Middle School Builders Club and the Smithtown K-Kids Club, fostering youth leadership and community service in the Smithtown and St. James areas.



As the holiday season approaches, Suffolk East clubs are also gearing up for two major events — the Patchogue Kiwanis Santa’s 5K Toy Trot on December 7 and the Islip–Bay Shore Kiwanis Brunch with Santa on December 13 — both dedicated to bringing joy and support to children and families across Long Island.

Save the Date

THE KIWANIS NEW YORK DISTRICT

Mid-Winter Conference

February 27- March 1

Friday, February 27 – Board Meeting

Board Members, Lt. Governors and Governors attendance requested; however, all members invited

The Desmond-Crowne Plaza

660 ALBANY SHAKER RD, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12211



- ❖ 2025-2026 District Board Meeting
- ❖ Workshops
- ❖ Fellowship
- ❖ Governor’s Dinner and Awards Gala- Honoring Immediate Past Gordy Soderholm and the 2024-2025 Service Year
- ❖ Club Awards



In Support of Gov. Carla

I met Carla in 2000 when I was Lt. Gov. for the Central Division. It was my second year as Lt. Gov, and I was looking to open a new club here in the Mohawk Valley. Things didn't go to well the first couple months then one day I received a call from the long time Kiwanian Joe Eppolito. He said, “Greg there is a woman I know that has moved in the area that is looking to join a Kiwanis club.” It was Carla Ingram.

I called Carla and set up a meeting at my church. She told me her background and from that point

on I found someone that would be a big help. I knew a lot of people, but she was the glue that made it all happen. A year later we had a new club Mohawk Valley Central. And for Carla that was just one of her accomplishments.

Carla is a 36-year member of Kiwanis served 10 times as Lt. Gov. in St Lawrence and Central Divisions. A current key club advisor and past advisor for K-Kids, Builders club, Key Club and circle K for the past 20 years. Committee Chair for KI Heritage Society, formula team member, Key leader

Program supporter, George E. Hixson Fellow recipient, Distinguished Lt. Gov. and now Governor of New York District. Carla will be an excellent Governor for the 2025-2026 year and her work ethic is unparalleled. Please fellow Kiwanians give Carla all the support she needs. Thank you, Carla, for your now 37 years of service, people like you help this world in a special way.

Your Good Friend,
Gregory Riddle
MVC Kiwanis

Gov. Carla's Vision for the NY District

(Continued from page 1)

foster children in our communities. A recent report revealed that more than 154,000 public school students in New York City experienced homelessness last year. That's more than 154,000 young lives navigating uncertainty, instability, and often, invisibility. Not all are foster children, but all need our help.

Our clubs will work together to:

- Assemble and distribute "blessing bags" with items our children would cherish as they enter foster care.
- Partner with local agencies to provide mentorship, tutoring, and life skills workshops.
- Advocate for policies and programs that support

housing stability and educational access for foster and homeless youth.

Send foster children to Kamp Kiwanis for the 2026 camping year.

These children deserve more than sympathy—they deserve our action.

Re-Igniting Passion: The Heartbeat of Retention

Retaining members is about more than keeping names on a roster—it's about keeping hearts engaged. To spark the passions of our members, we must:

- Celebrate the stories of impact that remind us why we joined.

- Offer meaningful, hands-on service projects that align with members' interests.

- Create leadership and learning opportunities that empower members to grow personally and professionally.

Foster a culture of inclusion, appreciation, and fun.

When members feel seen, heard, and valued, they stay—and they shine. It takes just one spark to create this.

Together, We Rise

This year let's be bold in our outreach, compassionate in our service, and intentional in our connections. Let's grow our family, lift up those who need us most, and reignite the spark that brought us here in the first place.

Ask yourself "what brought you to Kiwanis." Can you provide that to another person?

Because when we come together with purpose and passion, there's no limit to the good we can do.





CHALLENGERS
DEFYING THE ODDS

Building a Future for
Foster Children

- **Blessing Bags** - provide any type of luggage (back pack, suitcase, etc) with children's items like socks, underwear, books, games, notebooks, crayons, markers, etc.

For More Information Contact:
Bob Monahan
Ph: 917-294-1783
E-Mail: bmonahan@theyryc.org

- **Sending Children to Kamp Kiwanis** during the 2026 camping season or donating to Kamp Kiwanis for this purpose.

For More Information Contact:
Susan Vail
Ph: 518-369-1080
E-Mail: svail76@gmail.com

- **Contacting local Agencies** - like your local Dept. of Social Service or community foster care program to work with them on their needs.

For More Information Contact:
Donna Zobre Baxter
Ph: 518-810-4962
E-Mail: dizzybee04@gmail.com







Extra Extra! Talking with... MARIE SODERHOLM



Marie Soderholm served as the New York District First Lady during the 2024-25 service year. She wanted to set the record straight as to exactly what a District First Lady does:

How I should address you? Your Highness, Your Majesty O wonderful One?

My first name would be perfect! "First Lady" was used on official documents, but not in casual conversation.

How did you get to be First Lady?

Well there is no election or anything. My husband became Governor of the NY Kiwanis District, as his wife I became First Lady.

Was that a shock or a difficult decision for you?

I was thrilled that my husband was going to be able to reach one of his life goals. That was very exciting! It all happened so fast. Then I started to think about the long list of incredible First Ladies/Gents/Partners the NY District has had. I had a few moments of "O my gosh, can I do this?" I knew that each of my predecessors had carved out a path for themselves and had been very successful. I had a huge challenge ahead of me! As the time grew closer I spoke to many of them. They inspired and encouraged me. My plans came into focus. I was ready to jump in and do my best.

So you read the official First Lady's Book of Do's and Don't's cover to cover?

HAHA!! There is no such thing. Every First Lady blazes her own way. This

can be to have her own project, plug into the Governor's project, or dedicate her time to the District in other ways. Often it is a combination of all the above. My job involved working closely with our scheduler to make sure we could get to all the Divisions for our visit. I was also the navigator on the road, the packer of suitcases, snacks and water. I was the person members contacted if they couldn't, reach the Governor. I am also the listening ear and shoulder to cry on, when necessary.

That's quite a job description!

It is! Always had my calendar in my bag!

Did you have a project?

Yes. While it was not a necessity, I feel strongly on a personal level about an issue. And I love public speaking. I was fortunate to be given a few minutes to speak from the heart after the Governor. I have tried to make an acceptance difference, little by little.

What was the best part of your job ?

Hands down it was meeting so many incredible Kiwanians from all over the state. Hearing about all the activities and events happening in Kiwanis communities is inspirational. Everyone was so welcoming, kind and generous.

Did you get to wear a tiara?

NO! But I do have one. Maybe at Mid-winter?

Was there a bad side to being a First Lady?

This is not a complaint but the days we were home were for laundry, unpacking and packing suitcases, revising speeches and writing thank you notes. Things like dusting or Spring cleaning , going to the gym all have to take a back seat for now. O and being in all those pictures..YIKES!!

Is there one memory that stands out?

There are a million!! But at DCon last August during the slide show a song by the Beach Boys was playing. Everyone was singing, even the International Trustee! I will never forget that moment!

Any last words or advice?

Being First Lady was a huge honor. I will forever be a Past First Lady. I will take my place in that distinguished line, that unique club. No one should see this as too big a burden. Jump in! Have fun! Of course there are things you will miss out on during the year. But you will gain so much. You will have a unique perspective and forever friends. I am and always will be proud to represent the New York Kiwanis District in any way.

Reflecting on last year is very bittersweet. Can I now put away my suitcase? Reintroduce myself to my vacuum cleaner and neighbors? Will I have to stop going to Macy's? Ahh...only time will tell...Wait a minute...where is my tiara?

Empire State Kiwanian



From your Editor:

A new Kiwanis service year is here, and with it comes renewed energy, new ideas, and countless opportunities to serve children and communities across the New York District.

I'm excited to continue as ESK Editor for the 2025-26 year, and I'm especially pleased to welcome and congratulate Governor Carla as she begins her term. Her passion for service and her commitment to Kiwanis will surely inspire us all as we move forward together.



As we start this new year, I encourage District Chairs, Foundation Presidents, and Kiwanis Clubs throughout the District to share your stories and successes in the Empire State Kiwanian. Every article you submit helps highlight the impact of Kiwanis service — and may spark ideas and inspiration for others!

Tips for Submissions

Email articles and photos to me.

Articles: Submit original content only. Articles must be written specifically for the ESK. Previously published content (print or online) may not be used unless written permission from the original author is provided.

Please ensure your article answers the 5 "W's":

- Who participated/benefited?
- What was the project/event?
- When did it take place?
- Where was it held?
- Why was it meaningful or impactful?

Articles should be clear, concise, and proofread for both content and grammar. In addition, please be sure to provide context - please don't submit just one sentence or a vague summary. Even brief articles should tell a story.

Photos: Please send all photos as separate email attachments, not embedded in the article. High-

resolution images provide for best print and digital quality.

As for the content of the photos, please submit action shots that show members engaged in service are encouraged — these tell the story of Kiwanis in action! And please avoid posed "grip-and-grin" photos, unless they include a banner, citation, or are part of a formal presentation.



The ESK is published quarterly. It is important that all submissions are received prior to the stated deadlines—the 10th day of the month that it is intended to be published:

- Oct. 10 deadline for Oct.-Dec. issue
- **Jan. 10 deadline for Jan.-Mar. issue**
- Apr. 10 deadline for Apr.-June issue
- July 10 deadline for July-Sept. issue

Please do not miss the deadlines!

Just to clarify, the deadline for the next issue of the ESK is **January 10, 2026**.

Please note: the Editor reserves the right to make the final decisions regarding edits and inclusions of submitted content.

Every submission is truly appreciated as they help showcase the energy, passion, and impact of Kiwanis across the District. Keep those stories coming!

If you have questions or are unsure about a submission, feel free to reach out.

Yours in Kiwanis Service,
DPLQ Seth J. Blau
esk@kiwanis-ny.org
#KidsNeedKiwanis

