

I-PLAN

image

*influence*

INNOVATION

THE WAY FORWARD

SERVING THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

*inspiration*

important

I am committed to my community

INVESTMENT

IMPACT

GLOBAL NETWORK OF SERVICE

Strategic Plan

*second century*

SIGNATURE PROJECT

GLOBAL ORGANIZATION

developing new opportunities

# BACK TO OUR **FUTURE**

**WE ARE ALTERING THE “SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM” EVERY DAY IN KIWANIS,  
AND WE’RE DOING IT WITHOUT A FLUX CAPACITOR.**

BY STAN SODERSTROM | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

In the 1980s movie “Back to the Future,” teenager Marty McFly travels from 1985 to 1955 via a tricked-out time-traveling DeLorean. Marty is given the gift of experiencing his community of Hill Valley as it existed for the preceding generation. The movie’s exciting race-against-the-clock ending brings Marty back to 1985, but his actions during his time “in the past” create a paradox that alters the “space-time continuum.” When he returns to 1985, Marty discovers the quality of life for the McFly family—as well as the entire Hill Valley community—is greatly improved.

Yes, it’s a metaphor for “being the change you want to see in the world.” And Kiwanis plays a supporting role. In the metaphor and the movie.

In the movie and its sequels, fictional Hill Valley is a Kiwanis community. We know this because Kiwanis signs appear in several scenes—past, present and future. We also see how the future is influenced by the past.

In Kiwanis, we’re fortunate that our organization’s foundation was built strong by the decisions, plans and actions of those who went before us. As we celebrate a history of 100 years strong in service, it’s time to get back to the future.

During the past three years, Kiwanis International has committed quite a bit of time and re-

sources to analyzing internal and external data, as well as surveying current and former members, studying other successful membership-based organizations, and conducting numerous focus groups of various demographic and geographic populations. All of this activity has been part of a patient, intentional process to create a new, innovative strategic plan that will launch our organization into its next century of service.

This plan contains strategies that all link back to community as the key building block for the organization, but at the same time focus on the rich legacy of our organization’s history. Just like Hill Valley, the condition of our Kiwanis communities of tomorrow will be determined by the work we undertake today.

So let’s create our future. We’ve named our plan for the future, “The Kiwanis I-Plan,” because so many *I* words are crucial to our plan’s focus. Words like invest, imagine and innovate. And ultimately, the accomplishment of this plan, as well as the future of Kiwanis in every community, belongs to each one of us as members. You see, each one of us is an *I* in this plan. *I* am Kiwanis. *I* am a community leader. *I* am committed to my community. *I* am committed to the children in my community.

## THE PLAN

begins with strong statements that define who we are, the vision we see for Kiwanis providing positive impact to communities around the world and the clear path that will take us there.

### MOTTO

“Serving the Children of the World”

### DEFINING STATEMENT

“Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time.”

### VISION STATEMENT

“Kiwanis will be a positive influence in communities worldwide. ... So that one day, all children will wake up in communities that believe in them, nurture them and provide the support they need to thrive.”

### ENVISIONED FUTURE

- “Our global network includes a dynamic family of clubs, individual supporters, alumni, donors, NGO partners and corporate sponsors.
- Every community around the world has an opportunity to participate in or benefit from a Kiwanis experience.
- Based upon a legacy of service, this global network is dedicated to building community and improving lives by providing opportunities for service, fellowship, leadership and philanthropy according to local needs, cultures and member interests.”

The plan continues with four important concepts.

### OUR GLOBAL NETWORK OF SERVICE

In more than 80 nations and territories where Kiwanis exists—and

in the dozens more that received the benefit of Kiwanis service impact—we are always partnering with other organizations. UNICEF, March of Dimes, Boys and Girls Clubs, scouting associations, Children’s Miracle Network and others are all partners in our work in communities around the globe.

### THE KIWANIS COMMUNITY

It’s in the community that clubs exist, members engage and that real service takes place. It’s where needs are met, children thrive and youth leadership skills are cultivated. Returning our organization’s focus to community will keep us relevant and true to our mission.

Consider what a Kiwanis community should look like: Our road signs are at the city limits. The Kiwanis name is on the local park. Service Leadership Programs clubs are active in the schools. And strong relationships exist with partner organizations.

### OUR SIGNATURE PROJECTS

A club’s reputation should be built upon an impactful, recurring project. Kiwanis International can help clubs and members identify and build partnerships and find resources to support their local signature projects.

### OUR KIWANIS FAMILY

Our Key Clubs, Circle K clubs, Aktion Clubs, Builders Clubs and K-Kids clubs have clearly earned the right to be treated as important contributors to and leaders of our communities.

The next important segment of the plan establishes four priorities.

### INSPIRATION

**To build, retain and support a growing Kiwanis membership network**

Our new major initiative, The Formula, provides resources and

counselors to help strengthen club membership and to open new clubs in new communities.

Since 2012, the organization has given clubs the flexibility to create different categories of membership and the ability to use corporate memberships and club satellites as options to involve busy members in the important work of Kiwanis.

The plan also calls for developing new opportunities for young adults to fulfill Kiwanis’ mission, either through different engagement or by partnering with other organizations that already are made up of adults in their 20s and 30s.

### IMPACT

**To perform meaningful service, with service to children as our priority**

Generally, a signature project involves the entire club and its partners, and has the potential to garner significant local media attention. It can be hands-on service, fundraising or a combination of both.

Realizing that thousands of our clubs are best known in the community for their signature projects, the plan calls for a focus on building partnerships that will create additional support for those projects, thus making them more effective and successful. Knowing that more than a thousand Kiwanis clubs deliver successful literacy and reading projects to schools in their communities, for example, it made sense for Kiwanis to form a partnership with Scholastic Books to make a Kiwanis Community Reading Oasis available for any elementary school in any Kiwanis community.

Or, understanding that several hundred Kiwanis clubs have built or refurbished a playground in the past few years, the partnership with

Landscape Structures (LSI) was created to make special Kiwanis playground designs available to our clubs.

Such partnerships with for-profit and not-for-profit organizations will play an essential role in the accomplishment of this priority.

### IMAGE

#### Enhance the Kiwanis image and brand worldwide

One recurring message our members delivered during our information-gathering process was this: We're the best kept secret in town. By helping our clubs engage local media, and by providing a better communications platform, Kiwanis will strengthen its image in every Kiwanis community.

Using the 100th anniversary celebration as that platform, and making the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus our birthday gift to the world, Kiwanis has the opportunity to capture its share of the media spotlight during the 2015 year. Being the first major service organization to elect a female president (2015–16) will continue to provide the opportunity to champion Kiwanis as a global leader. But ultimately, the national and international public relations and media attention must align with and support local media messaging.

The I-Plan calls for solidifying our brand messaging, which includes a clean logo and graphics for use at all levels of the organization, clarity around brand messaging, creation and delivery of media resources to be used by clubs, and an external brand campaign in 2016 or 2017.

### INVESTMENT

#### Ensure financial viability and responsible stewardship

Kiwanis International has grown to its strongest financial position in history, yet the increasing demands

of a global organization continue to test our financial resources.

We produce materials in seven languages to support more than 16,000 clubs in more than 80 nations. As our adult membership numbers have declined, our service to youth and children has increased. We have more young people in Key Clubs, Builders Clubs, K-Kids, CKI and Aktion Clubs than ever before, and they set new membership records every year. Thus, liability and risk-management issues challenge us on an almost daily basis. We are in the final year of an aggressive fundraising campaign to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus in the farthest corners of the globe. And we haven't had a dues increase since 2003.

Our Kiwanis International Foundation has become an effective fundraising organization through The Eliminate Project, identifying and engaging donors both inside and outside of Kiwanis. We've raised our Charity Navigator rating from 0 to 3.9 out of 4 stars. With the successful completion of The Eliminate Project campaign later in 2015, it will be important to transition this effective campaign team to support new projects that benefit Kiwanis clubs in their communities—perhaps through signature project-empowerment grants.

In addition, there are more than 1,100 Kiwanis club and district foundations. Helping these foundations become stronger, increase capacities and ensure adherence to not-for-profit laws and philanthropic best practices will strengthen the entire organization.

Our plan recognizes that we won't meet our future financial challenges through dues alone, and the development of nondues revenue

sources will be an important aspect of our financial future. We have created strong business lines for our own clubs in areas of liability insurance and risk-management products, which may appeal to other associations. The plan calls for assessing new business opportunities for Kiwanis—perhaps in for-profit subsidiary enterprises.

Last, we realize our dues and many of our operational processes haven't changed in decades. Streamlining and simplifying financial processes will be necessary to make life easier for our clubs and members. A dues adjustment or a cost-of-living provision will be needed to address the past 13 years of inflation.

The Kiwanis I-Plan is a well-thought road map that guides us into our second century. It brings our focus back to the things that made Kiwanis successful from the beginning. It focuses on community. It focuses on partnerships with other organizations that care about the things we do. And it focuses on the impact we can provide to youth and children.

## IT'S 2015

We are an organization with a tremendous 100-year legacy. I'm sure that in 1915 no one foresaw what the Kiwanis movement would achieve. Conversely, in every Kiwanis community—like Hill Valley—the future will be determined by the work we undertake now.

What will our communities look like in 30, 50 or 100 years? No one can say for certain, but as author Peter Drucker says, the best way to predict the future is to create it. I invite you to join me in that challenge. ☺