

## **We Sponsor a Key Club-- “What Does That Mean??”**

David L. Harris  
RMD Key Club Administrator

One of the most gratifying and rewarding experiences a **Kiwanis** club can do is sponsor a **Key Club**. It is very rewarding to work with young adults and see them grow and mature through service leadership into responsible, productive, hard working community leaders. Our Key Clubbers in the Rocky Mountain District (RMD) have done some incredible things; **Books for Boredom**, **Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF**, **Read and Lead**, **March of Dimes**, local service projects, assisting with the **JungleMobile** and **KPTI**; not to mention building a school in Vietnam through Children of Peace International (COPI). It's quite a list of impressive accomplishments, and we get to claim them as part of our **Kiwanis** family. We truly are the lucky ones.

Key Clubbers are wonderful people and we, as **Kiwanis** members, get the opportunity to help mold them into future leaders. In addition to all the fun with a **Key Club**, there are some other important aspects to sponsoring a **Key Club**. When taking on the responsibility of sponsoring a **Key Club**, there are a number of expectations the **Kiwanis** club should be prepared to meet. In agreeing to sponsor a **Key Club**, the **Kiwanis** club commits to the following requirements:

### **1) Appoint a Kiwanis advisor to the club and ensure he/she receives adequate orientation.**

The Kiwanis advisor acts as a liaison between the Kiwanis club and the Key Club. The time commitment can be between 2-3 hours a week depending on how often a Key Club meets. While it may not always be possible, the Kiwanis advisor should attempt to attend each Key Club meeting. Kiwanis International and Key Club International has a number of publications that can assist a Kiwanis advisor. If you have questions, you can contact the Key Club District Administrator.

### **2) Ensure Kiwanis members attend every Key Club meeting.**

The sponsorship is the responsibility of the entire Kiwanis club; not just the Kiwanis advisor. If the Kiwanis advisor is unable to attend a Key Club meeting, an attempt should be made to find another Kiwanis member to attend. Guests are always welcome and sends a message to the Key Club members that all Kiwanians are interested in the health and well being of them and their Key Club.

### **3) Maintain an expense line item in the Kiwanis club's service account to support the activities of the club.**

The amount of money a club budgets to support its Key Club should be proportionate to its ability to support the club. It is suggested that Kiwanis clubs provide the following support to Key Clubs:

- § Financial support to attend the Key Club district and International conventions and leadership conferences (i.e. transportation, registration, and lodging). Oftentimes, Key Club members are encouraged to use the “*One-third Rule*” where the Key Club and/or school pay for 1/3 of the cost, 1/3 of the cost is paid by their Kiwanis club, and 1/3 by the Key Club members themselves. Sometimes this doesn’t work and another course of action needs to be found.
- § Pay the entire cost of faculty advisor and chaperone travel, registration, and lodging at conventions and conferences.
- § Awards and recognition.
- § Some clubs sponsor scholarships for graduating seniors.
- § Share costs with the Key Club to fund service projects.

Some clubs provide the Key Club with a set amount each year, allowing its board to budget the expenditures through the club’s budgeting process. Other Kiwanis clubs provide the Key Club the money it raises through joint fund-raising projects. Others fund special projects and events. **Funds provided to the Key Club may come from the Kiwanis club’s service account** as it is considered a student leadership activity.

**4) Meet with the school principal (or their representative) before the beginning of the school year.**

It is always good to keep the principal informed of what the Key Club is doing and planning. Suggested topics:

- § Introductions (especially with a new principal).
- § Plans for the upcoming year.
- § Key Club attendance at Kiwanis meetings and functions
- § Kiwanis club commitment for support
- § Kiwanis understanding of school regulations for student attendance at conventions, leadership conferences, travel, etc.; as well as Kiwanis members attending club meetings and functions at the school.
- § Invitation for the principal to present a program at a Kiwanis meeting (and join the club).
- § Maintaining communications.
- § “What can the Kiwanis club do for the school?”

**5) Ensure that dues are paid for every member of the club.**

Key Club International dues are \$6.50/year and RMD dues are \$5.00/year for each member. Dues invoices are generated online. Instructions and passwords are sent to the schools every September. Dues provide *KeyNoter* magazine, membership pin and card, Club and member benefit programs, coverage under the Kiwanis insurance program, and ability to participate in conventions, conferences, and scholarships.

Key Club members should pay their own dues to provide a sense of ownership in the organization. A Kiwanis club should not pay the dues for the youth members; however, in

hardship, the Kiwanis club may choose to assist the Key Club and its members.

**6) Ensure club officers receive proper training following election.**

Officers should be elected in February and training sessions are held at the district convention in March or April.

**7) Hold a planning session involving leadership of both clubs.**

This usually should occur in June and should include the elected officers of both clubs. Topics should include evaluation of the previous year, goals for the next year, budget for the upcoming year, fund-raising, joint projects and activities, and calendar items.

**8) Host or participate in two joint activities involving the membership of both clubs.**

These can include service, social, recreation, and fund-raising activities.

**9) Invite members to attend regular Kiwanis meetings.**

If it occurs during the school day, it should be approved by the school principal. Key Club members should alternate from meeting to meeting and provide the Kiwanis club with a brief report of what their club is doing. Meals are paid by the Kiwanis club and may be paid from the service account. As Teo Nicolais, Past RMD Key Club Governor and Key Club International President (2001-2002) often said, “**Kiwanis, feeding the children of the world.**” Let’s face it, they do add youth and vitality to our meetings.

**10) Ensure members attend conventions and conferences.**

District conventions occur in March and April and Key Club International conventions are in late June or early July. Conventions offer educational forums and workshops, officer elections, contests and awards, and social events. Other activities could include Spring and Fall Rallies, President’s Council Meetings (PCM’s), Kiwanis District Convention and Mid-Winter Conference, leadership conferences such as **Key Leader**, as well as other student leadership events.

Key Club members oftentimes find conventions an incredible opportunity to learn about other service opportunities they hadn’t thought of before. They return from the conventions energized and excited about Key Club.

Those who are involved with Key Club and its members find it to be an incredibly rewarding and exhilarating experience. These are the young adults that we hope to attract to Kiwanis in the future. They need to know that we love, appreciate, and support them. Let’s show them that we do. When you get out there and get involved with the kids, you will find it to a very fulfilling experience. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the RMD Key Club Administrator, David Harris, 303-989-7994, [RMDKCA@aol.com](mailto:RMDKCA@aol.com)