

Suggestions for Inactive Clubs

Why do clubs become inactive?

Participation, involvement, and communication are keys to a successful K-Kids. Faculty advisors, school officials, committee members, Kiwanians, and K-Kids members must all play an active role in the program for a K-Kids to survive. When one of these groups loses interest, the K-Kids may become idle and eventually inactive.

Is everyone a part of the planning?

The structure of the K-Kids program resembles a chain, and each person, or group of persons, represents a link in that chain. When each role is functioning proficiently, the chain is efficient, sturdy, and reliable. Too many times, however, a link in the chain breaks. Interest drops, participation becomes low, membership decreases, K-Kids coordinators lack the time, and sponsor obligations go neglected.

If these things are happening in your K-Kids, relax. It is not too late to make a final effort to revive it. Recognizing that a problem exists is the first step!

Step 1 – Find a link.

A weakness can exist in one or more of the “chain links.” The Kiwanis club president, school principal, faculty advisor, K-Kids committee, and K-Kids members no longer may have the time or interest needed to support, participate in, or direct the club. Ask yourself the following questions when “trouble-shooting”:

Is the Kiwanis club president doing everything possible?

The Kiwanis club president must be willing to dedicate time and effort to the K-Kids’ success. He or she must assign a willing and interested K-

Kids committee, support the club financially, and involve K-Kids members in Kiwanis activities. The Kiwanis club president should promote joint service projects and Kiwanis-family relations. He or she should encourage Kiwanis members to take an active interest in K-Kids and donate their time and ideas to the program. The president also is responsible for meeting the K-Kids’ needs and addressing necessary requests.

Is the school principal truly interested in the program?

This school official has the ultimate authority in determining whether or not a K-Kids may exist in the school. If he or she is not in total support of the program, it may be more difficult to organize club meetings, carry out projects and fund-raisers, recruit new members, and build interest in K-Kids throughout the school. Remember, he or she may not completely understand the program. It is the responsibility of the Kiwanis club president to provide the principal with all the facts about K-Kids. Only then can he or she take on some demanding responsibilities and support the club in any way necessary. Making the club attractive to potential members, creating fun and exciting activities, showing an overall interest in the members and their projects, and promoting the ideas of K-Kids directly impact the club’s membership and participation rate.

Is the faculty advisor working for and with the K-Kids members?

The faculty advisor has perhaps the most demanding and crucial job of all. The advisor must donate his or her time to directing club meetings, overseeing and organizing club projects and fund-raisers, advising the club



members on necessary decision-making, and acting as a positive role model for members. If the club isn't getting the attention and time that it requires from the faculty advisor, perhaps he or she no longer is interested in advising the club. It may be time to seek a more enthusiastic and "less consumed" member of the staff. Contact the school principal and ask for a more willing faculty advisor. There may be some new faces in the school staff who have yet to become involved with an extracurricular activity.

Ask questions:

- ◆ What sorts of activities have been successful in the school?
- ◆ Is the K-Kids program well known and publicized?
- ◆ Are counselors and teachers aware of the program?
- ◆ Is there an interest in helping?

Let the principal know exactly what you're looking for in a K-Kids faculty advisor.

Make a presentation at the school's faculty or staff meeting. Some counselors and teachers may be unfamiliar with K-Kids, or they may have heard the name but are unaware of the program's objectives. An opportunity such as this could be educational.

Describe the relationship between Kiwanis and K-Kids. Stress the importance of role models and Kiwanis-family involvement.

Discuss some of the great projects in which K-Kids members can participate.

Outline the advantages of K-Kids: acquiring leadership skills, working as a team, learning to give, being creative, and gaining confidence through success.

Is the Kiwanis club supporting the K-Kids club?

The Kiwanis club president, school principal, and faculty advisor cannot take full responsibility for a failing K-Kids. Often, it is the sponsoring Kiwanis club that is no longer willing to show interest or participate in the K-Kids, or the Kiwanis club is disbanding. If this is the case, there are alternatives to "calling it quits!"

It is the Kiwanis club's responsibility to find another willing Kiwanis club to take over

sponsorship of the K-Kids: Make contacts at Kiwanis club functions, contact the lieutenant governor, the K-Kids district administrator, and make phone calls to other clubs that do not sponsor a K-Kids or are interested in sponsoring another. When a new sponsor is found, the procedure for a sponsorship change is simple. The Kiwanis International Office requires only a short letter indicating the change and acceptance of sponsorship. Presidents of both Kiwanis clubs should sign the letter, showing consent of the change.

Step 2: Promote membership recruitment

If morale is low among the club's surviving members or if membership is nonexistent, it's time to focus on promotion:

- ◆ Set up a promotional table in a busy area of the school or conduct a special introductory meeting after school. Kiwanis International offers a K-Kids video that may be shown to potential members (available spring 2001). K-Kids tri-fold brochures also may be ordered and distributed to interested students.
- ◆ Create decorative display cases, posters, and banners to hang on the school grounds. (This would be a great project for a co-sponsoring Key Club or Circle K.)
- ◆ Invite co-sponsoring Key Club and Circle K members to the school to perform skits enacting the deeds, challenges, and leadership roles of a Kiwanis-family member.
- ◆ Ask teachers to invite five "key students" to each initial K-Kids meeting.

Remember that the K-Kids program has no minimum number of required members. Only a handful of students is needed to get the club up and moving.

Step 3: Build interest and participation.

Recruiting new members is the easiest part of reactivating an idle K-Kids. However, holding student interest and participation is a never-ending endeavor. Consider these "get-up-and-go" projects:

- ◆ Kick things off with a reactivation party, dance, or dinner.
- ◆ Plan a school clean-up project.

- ◆ Start a long-distance pen pal project with other K-Kids members, perhaps through the K-Kids Web site at www.kkids.org.
- ◆ Organize school or community auctions or rummage sales.
- ◆ Focus on disaster relief projects.
- ◆ Advertise dance-athons, walkathons, or service-athons.
- ◆ Visit children's homes or retirement homes.
- ◆ Work the school concession stand.
- ◆ Sell holiday treats, flowers, etc.
- ◆ Join co-sponsoring Key Club and Circle K club in picnics or joint service projects.

So, it's not a matter of replacing any of the "weak links"? The magic is gone, and the students just aren't interested. What's next, you ask?

Some clubs find it easier to let a K-Kids be placed on suspended status, instead of making the extra effort to reactivate the club. Don't get discouraged and take the easy way out!

- ◆ If the club is placed on suspended status, the club has until September 30 to recruit new staff leaders and plan for a new year of success.
- ◆ Recruit new group of students who will be entering the school, and these students could be looking for a challenging activity. K-Kids might just be it.
- ◆ Re-examine the Kiwanis club's goals and interest in the K-Kids program. If looking for a new sponsor, the club can make a more timely decision in choosing a reliable and enthusiastic Kiwanis sponsor.



Other helpful K-Kids Literature:

- ◆ KK # 1 Suggested Projects
- ◆ KK # 7 Kiwanis Committee Program Sheet
- ◆ KK # 8 Suggestions for the Committee Chairman
- ◆ KK # 18 K-Kids Faculty Advisors Manual
- ◆ KK # 25 Kiwanis Sponsorship Resource Guide