**OBJECT LESSONS: Making the World a Better Place Through Kiwanis**

*In 2024, Kiwanis International will celebrate the centennial of its Six Objects of Kiwanis at the International Convention in Denver, Colorado.*

In 1924, with Kiwanis clubs sprouting all over the United States and into Canada, a desire arose to delineate specifically what behaviors and priorities every Kiwanian and Kiwanis Club should display to the world. What should Kiwanis bring consistently to communities wherever they are? What beliefs and values must drive our work? What must be our unique overarching goals?

During the 9th Annual International Convention in Denver, Colorado, 3,363 delegates approved six high-level value statements to guide all Kiwanians in their club activities and partnerships. Very few things last 100 years, but amazingly those six statements remain virtually unchanged since their adoption in 1924.

Throughout KI’s rapid international expansion, the Objects remained the Objects. In hard economic times and booming times, in war and in peace, and even today Kiwanians still are guided by six permanent and comprehensive guidelines that describe our unique value proposition to each community we serve.

**WHAT ARE THE OBJECTS?**

The Objects of Kiwanis answer two questions for all to know. What do Kiwanians do? And for what purposes do we do them?

* We give primacy to the human and spiritual, rather than the material, values of life.
* We encourage the daily living of the Golden Rule in all human relationships.
* We promote the adoption and the application of higher social, business, and professional standards.
* We develop, by precept and example, a more intelligent, aggressive, and serviceable citizenship.
* We provide, through Kiwanis clubs, a practical means to form enduring friendships, to render altruistic service, and to build better communities.
* We cooperate in creating and maintaining that sound public opinion and high idealism that make possible the increase of righteousness, justice, patriotism, and goodwill.

**WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?**

My good friend and longtime Kiwanian **Tom Marini** pointed out to me some years ago that every Object of Kiwanis starts with an action verb. These are action statements.

*We give. We encourage. We promote. We develop. We provide. We cooperate.*

What differentiates Kiwanis International from other service organizations is what we do AND why we do it. As Past Governor **Brad McKenzie** emphasized throughout his term, clubs and members must BE Kiwanis to be effective community servants to the children of the world. We must be committed to the Kiwanis mission and vision, both here and around the world, for that is who we are. Everything we do starts with Being Kiwanis for kids. Oh, how the TX-OK District needed that message from Governor B as we emerged from the pandemic!

Once we understand and commit to BE Kiwanis, the Objects remind us to now go out and DO Kiwanis! We make every community a better place only by Doing. We improve the lives of children only by Doing. We develop future leaders only by Doing.

Being *and* Doing (like faith *and* works) are necessary to bring our unique value to the communities we serve. Actions speak louder than hashtags and mottoes. We get that #KidsNeedKiwanis. But then the Objects will launch us, motivate us, and drive us to meet kids’ needs in a lasting, impactful, and meaningful way.

**WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE OBJECTS?**

Everything Kiwanians do should move us toward the ultimate goals expressed in the Objects. It may surprise you to know that supporting leadership programs, easing food insecurities, battling childhood illiteracy, or improving childhood healthcare are NOT the ultimate goals of Kiwanians.

All those beautiful and vital activities are only how we use our hands to enable the higher desires of Kiwanian hearts. The higher desires of a committed Kiwanian’s heart are … better people … better relationships … better partnerships … better citizenship … better communities … and better societies. Those are the loftier goals we seek, according to the Objects.

Simply put, the Objects form the pathway to a better world through Kiwanis. That makes you look at that pancake breakfast or K-Kids Club a little differently now, does it not?

Every Kiwanian should understand each Object and how to work out each Object in their club service. Every Kiwanis Club should use the Objects as their guide for planning every project and every activity. Let the Objects empower you to meet the needs of local children and families.

Kids need Kiwanis. Kiwanians need the Objects.

**THREE QUESTIONS**

* How is your club using the Objects of Kiwanis as a guide in planning its service projects, leadership programs, and fundraising activities?
* How effectively are you communicating the Objects when onboarding new members?
* How well is your club addressing the goals embedded in each object? For example, what are you doing to develop a more intelligent citizenship? How are you maintaining sound public opinion to make possible the increase of justice?