



WIL BLECHMAN, M.D.
PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT (1990-91)
5250 SW 84th Street
Miami, FL 33143-8434

February 24, 2020

Ashleigh Q. Gore, Governor
Australia District
9 Bernhardt Cres.
Hahndorf SA 5245
Australia

Dear Governor Ash,

You've made it beyond 4 ½ months of your Governor's Year. I hope it has been both highly successful and very enjoyable, and that the remainder of your year will be also.

I am writing you as Co-Chair of the International Committee on Young Children, a committee listed in the Kiwanis Directory as "STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY: COMMUNITY IMPACT." Our committee focuses on children from before birth to age 8, a developmental time of childhood, the importance of which is too often underestimated. This is especially true for the earliest years (before birth to age 3) when the basic foundation of the human brain is being created. The stronger that foundation, the greater the chance for that child to succeed in school and throughout life.

There are multiple ways that Kiwanis Clubs can support that initial development as well as during the years that follow it, but too often members tend to think of the needs for older children rather than during this early phase of life. Both are important, but the earlier we can support children, the greater the chance of preventing problems later on.

Kiwanis depends on leadership at all levels to encourage member/club activity. When an International Committee is established, the ability to get its messages across is greatly enhanced by establishing within the districts a specific district coordinator/chairman position to communicate with club/division/district leadership. Our International Committee is then better able to provide examples of successful projects focused on the 0-8 age group and, equally important, to learn of and forward successful projects that the district's clubs are involved in. The role also envisions the individual actively promoting the program within the district.

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By way of this letter, I am requesting the naming of a district chair/coordinator for your district. Jeri Penn and Alan Penn, members of our committee will be the contact working with the person you name.

I have an additional request. Please read the attached article from the Journal of the American Medical Association regarding the American Heart Association and concerns about vaping. Every Kiwanis member should be made aware of this and urged to make the information available to friends and family with children of all ages; indeed, children and young adults. Personal opinion: I feel our clubs should get in touch with their local Heart Association and look for ways to collaborate with them. From our committee's perspective, this is only likely to affect children in the womb. However, from a societal standpoint, this is an important issue which must be addressed, and from everything I am hearing it is not limited to the U.S.

Best wishes as you continue leading The Australia District this administrative year.

Sincerely,



Wil Blechman, M.D.

cc Jeri Penn, Committee Member
Alan Penn, Committee Member
Barbara Day, Committee Co-Chair
Daniel Vigneron, President, Kiwanis International
Arthur Riley, President-elect, Kiwanis International