



The Start of an International Organization

Two high school administrators in the Sacramento Kiwanis Club approached their club with the idea of a junior service organization in high school patterned after Kiwanis, have its own classification based on high school interest, and hold luncheon meetings. This vocational guidance that Kiwanis hoped would first be performed on boys who had decided upon their future occupation and then to the entire school. The Kiwanis Club President appointed a committee to look into the matter. The principal of the high school assisted in finding boys interested in joining such a group. The plan was then presented to the Board of Education upon the principal's request, and the first Key Club meeting was held early in May 1925. Evidence of the value of this group and its program is found in the fact that the Sacramento High School Key Club is still flourishing today. The club held weekly luncheons in the school where Kiwanians came to speak to the group on various vocations. Key Club members attended Kiwanis membership by bringing high school students into constant contact with the business and professional men of the community. It also offered a social program to balance its service activities.

Through contact with Sacramento Key Club and Kiwanis Club, other Kiwanis groups soon became interested in the activity and sponsored similar organizations in their own communities. One source of expansion during these early years came through high school principals and other educators. The schoolmen responsible for the Sacramento Key Club talked of it with their colleagues and wrote of its activities in various articles. This resulted in many requests for information sent to the Sacramento Kiwanis Club concerning Key Club. Such information was sent, and principals in various parts of the country were responsible for organizing similar groups in their own school with the help of their local Kiwanis Clubs. Practically all Key Club expansion that took place during the next fifteen years was in California, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington.

In 1939 the first plan for combining individual local Key Clubs into confederated groups was developed in Florida. The purpose of the state association was to promote an exchange of ideas concerning the Key Club activity and to expand the number of Key Clubs. Conventions were held each succeeding year, and when the International Constitution and Bylaws were adopted in 1946, the Florida Association became the first Key Club District. Florida was instrumental in promoting the formation of an International Association of Key Clubs to perform for the entire country what the Florida Association had done for the Key Clubs in that state. In 1943, at the invitation of the Florida members, Key Clubbers from clubs in Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee were in attendance at the annual convention of the state association held in Sanford. The representatives voted to form the International Association of

Key Clubs and elected Malcolm Lewis of West Palm Beach, Florida, as the first President. Three Key Club International organizations were drawn. Lewis served one year and was followed into office by Eddie Richardson of Ft. Lauderdale, and he by Roger Keller of New Orleans. Keller presided over the third annual convention in New Orleans on April 27, 1946, at which time delegates from all parts of the country approved the constitution and bylaws officially launching Key Club International.

In 1946, the first Key Club was built in Canada. In 1942 the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees recommended the movement to all clubs and directed the boys and girls work committee to undertake the sponsorship of these clubs as an activity for high school age. In 1944, a special Kiwanis International Committee on sponsored youth organizations was formed to look after Key Club work. Finally, in 1946 a separate Key Club department was created in the general office of Kiwanis International. It serves as a clearinghouse for Key Club information, keeping the records, and handling correspondence. It also provides an effective liaison between Key Clubs and Kiwanis and conducts the annual International Convention. Also added to the duties of the Key Club department was a monthly publication, the Keynoter, which was first issued in May 1946. The Kiwanis International Committee on Key Clubs was formed on January 1, 1949, and is now responsible for all Key Club activities.

After over eighty Kiwanis and seventy Key Club years, the International organizations are still going strong - each doing their best to make the world a better place in which to live.