

KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Aktion Club in your Community



where development has no disability



A Kiwanis Family Member

Aktion Club

Core Values

Core values serve as guiding principles for an organization and its membership. All projects and activities should point back to one of these values in order for any organization to be true to its mission.



Character Building
Inclusiveness
Caring
Leadership



To develop competent, capable, and caring leaders through the vehicle of service.



Aktion Club provides adults with disabilities the opportunity:

- To develop initiative and leadership
- To provide experience in living and working together
- To serve the community
- To prepare for useful citizenship

This is

Aktion Club

where development has no disability

An Aktion Club is a community-service group composed of adult citizens who live with disabilities. A Kiwanis club, composed of leading business and professional people of the community, serves as the Aktion club's sponsor.

Aktion Club can address many needs of the community and the supporting agency. Kiwanis members address not only the social and emotional needs of the clients through Aktion Club, but they also help the agency purchase materials and equipment.

Aktion Club members strive to return to their communities the benefits, help, and caring they have received, while at the same time developing important skills.

Members receive many benefits from participating in Aktion Club.

Included are:

- Participating in the active life of the community.
- Contributing to the community.
- Developing mechanical, creative, and intellectual abilities.
- Developing social interaction awareness.
- Improving self-esteem.
- Developing leadership skills.
- Achieving personal and service goals.



Aktion Club

Kiwanis Family Member

Aktion Club is a Kiwanis sponsored program and, therefore, a member of the Kiwanis family, which includes:

- K-Kids (elementary school students)
- Builders Club (middle/junior high school students)
- Key Club (high school students)
- Circle K (university students)
- Kiwanis Junior (young adults in Europe)
- Kiwanis (adults).

Aktion Clubs accept the same ideals adopted by Kiwanis.

The Kiwanis Objects:



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

Aktion Club

Sponsorship

An Aktion Club is sponsored by a Kiwanis club in cooperation with a local agency supporting citizens who live with disabilities. An Aktion Club may be sponsored by a group of clubs or a division (Kiwanis clubs within an area), or a Kiwanis club may wish to co-sponsor an Aktion Club with a Key Club (high school students) and/or Circle K club (university students).

Sponsoring an Aktion Club is an ongoing responsibility that requires continuing support from both the sponsoring Kiwanis club and the supporting agency.

The Kiwanis club and co-sponsoring club agree to the following **Annual Requirements of Sponsorship**:

- Form and educate a committee on Aktion Club consisting of 4 to 6 Kiwanis members.
- Ensure Kiwanis members attend every Aktion Club meeting.
- Maintain an expense line item in the Kiwanis club's service account to support the activities of the Aktion Club.

- Meet with the supporting agency before the beginning of the Kiwanis administrative year.
- Ensure that member fees are paid for every member of the Aktion Club.
- Hold a planning session involving the leadership of both clubs.
- Host or participate in two joint activities involving the membership of both clubs.

The supporting agency agrees to provide a staff coordinator to attend Aktion Club functions and advise Kiwanis members.

Co-sponsoring an Aktion Club

An Aktion Club may be sponsored by a group of clubs or a division (Kiwanis clubs within an area). A division effort relieves one Kiwanis club of shouldering all responsibilities. The steps involved in co-sponsoring an Aktion Club are explained further in the Aktion Club Chartering Checklist available as a downloadable document from the Aktion Club Web site at www.aktionclub.org.

Club Membership and Structure

The requirements for Aktion Club membership are set forth in the Aktion Club Standard Form for Club Bylaws. Specifically, membership is open to any adult client within the agency who desires to become a leader in his or her community and wishes to provide service to others. Regrettably, not all of the agency's clients will have the behavioral stability or intellectual capacity to participate in Aktion Club. Potential members should:

- Have the ability to participate in club activities.
- Benefit from participating in Aktion Club activities.
- Have the potential to grow as a member of Aktion Club.

The agency is asked to appoint a staff coordinator. The agency staff coordinator attends Aktion Club functions and advises Kiwanis club members regarding club activities.

Aktion Club

Service

Through suggestions from the agency executive director, agency coordinator, club members, and sponsoring Kiwanis Club committee, the Aktion Club will adopt and plan appropriate projects for the agency and community.

Every Aktion Club has the authority to select its own service projects. There usually are many more service needs in a community than there are service clubs and agencies to meet them. To determine a specific need within the community, Aktion Club members are encouraged to conduct a Project Survey. The Aktion Club Department at Kiwanis International has a Project Survey Interview Guide to assist Aktion Club members with interviewing leaders within the community to determine current community needs.

Possible service projects include:

- Visiting with nursing home residents
- Painting benches in the park
- Landscaping community grounds
- Recycling aluminum cans, glass jars, etc.
- Planting trees and flowers
- Distributing anti-litter stickers
- Providing yard maintenance for elderly citizens
- Distributing food baskets during the holidays to families in need

Suggested project ideas and the Project Survey Interview Guide are available as downloadable documents from the Aktion Club Web site at www.aktionclub.org.



Developing Partnerships and Discovering Service Projects and Programs

There are many opportunities for developing service projects and special programs by working with one of Kiwanis International's Priority One Advisory Council members. The Priority One Advisory Council includes more than 40 child-serving organizations that collaborate with Kiwanis International

in developing Young Children: Priority One initiatives. Council members include: Children's Miracle Network, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, United Way of America, YMCA of the USA, and the list goes on.

For information about the Priority One Advisory Council and a complete listing of its members, visit the Kiwanis Web site at www.kiwanis.org.

Aktion Clubs also can look to Key Club and Circle K for information on becoming involved in service projects or special programs. Key Club International has developed a Major Emphasis Program titled, "Children: Their Future, Our Focus."

Through this service effort, Key Clubs plan and implement special projects for children. The program provides focus on specific areas of child growth, including personal development and social interaction.

Learn more about Children: Their Future, Our Focus by visiting the Key Club Web site at www.keyclub.org.

Circle K International has adopted a Service Initiative designed to educate all Circle K members about the problems and issues that face children ages six to 13 worldwide. Aktion Clubs should consider contacting a Circle K club to co-sponsor a service project or to conduct a special program in conjunction with the Aktion Club.

The emphasis areas of Circle K International's Service Initiative are:

- After-school Programs: Turn Off TV, Turn on to Life
- Economically Disadvantaged Children: Building a Force for Change
- Educating Children: Open a Book, Show Them the World
- Life Skills Training: Supplying the Tools for Life
- Health and Safety Issues: On Call for the Future

Learn more about Circle K International's Service Initiative by visiting the Circle K Web site at www.circlek.org.

Frequently Asked Questions?

Kiwanis

The Kiwanis family is composed of more than 600,000 Kiwanis-family members in almost 15,000 clubs worldwide.

Kiwanis International is a worldwide organization of men and women whose clubs serve children, develop youth leadership, and provide for social and business networking. More than 5,100 Kiwanis clubs sponsor K-Kids (elementary students), Builders Clubs (junior high/middle school students), Key Clubs (high school students), Circle K clubs (university students), Aktion Clubs (adults with disabilities), and Kiwanis Junior (young adults in Europe). These are known as the Kiwanis "Sponsored Organizations and Programs." Kiwanis International provides office, staff, and program support for each of these at its International Office in Indianapolis, Indiana. Literally thousands of adult volunteers provide counseling assistance to Kiwanis clubs and Kiwanis-sponsored program clubs in almost every community.

For more information about Kiwanis International, visit the Kiwanis Web site at www.kiwanis.org.

Membership fees



Aktion Club has an annual membership fee, payable beginning October 1 of each year and becoming past due on December 1 of the same year. For the current membership fee, please visit the Web site at www.aktionclub.org.

A club level membership fee is an option open to Aktion Clubs. This should be decided by the club as a whole.

Every Aktion Club is encouraged to collect the membership fees from its members and not look to the sponsoring Kiwanis club to pay the fees for them. This provides a special level of commitment and ownership of Aktion Club by each member.

Fees provide an annual membership card, literature, member handbook, club and member benefit programs, and liability insurance coverage.

What kind of service projects can an Aktion Club undertake?

There are some limits as to projects in which adults with disabilities may choose to participate. The agency and Kiwanis advisor are available to assist members with choosing realistic and manageable service projects. The Aktion Club Web site offers many ideas for fun service projects. Aktion Club members are encouraged to utilize the Aktion Club Project Survey Interview Guide to interview agency staff and community leaders. Club members will find ideas for service, programs, and development of partnerships by talking to these individuals. There also are opportunities to develop partnerships with local Kiwanis-family members, such as Key Clubs (high school students) and Circle K clubs (university students). Aktion Club members are encouraged to explore partnerships with these organizations, which have developed specific service initiatives focusing on issues facing young children.

Are there any minimums for involvement in an Aktion Club?

Club meetings should be conducted at least two times a month at the same scheduled time and place. Aktion club members are asked to be present at every meeting.

Is there a cost to members to join Aktion Club?

Yes, there is an annual membership fee that each member is asked to pay. Please visit the Web site at www.aktionclub.org for current membership fees.

How many members are needed to start a new Aktion Club?

There is not a set minimum number of members, but it is suggested that 15 adults participate.

How do I receive assistance in organizing an Aktion Club?

Contact the Aktion Club Department at the Kiwanis International Office at 1-800-549-2647, ext. 390. Helpful information is also available on the Aktion Club Web site at www.aktionclub.org.



Notes on Working with Citizens Who Live With Disabilities



Kiwanis members who are not accustomed to working with people who live with a disability should realize that an Aktion Club member's ability to comprehend and follow instructions might be inconsistent. Members sometimes will need assistance and guidance with elementary tasks yet may easily carry out more complex instructions. A gentle hand and patience is required.

By the same token, don't underestimate their abilities. If you expect too little, you may not challenge them enough. An important aspect of Aktion is to react to the members as "everyday" people and not as people with disabilities. Don't coddle the members or over-assist them. Be judicious in your praise; don't exaggerate. At the same time, always recognize small victories. It's a fine line to walk, so be open to advice from the agency coordinator and enjoy this rich learning experience.

As an Aktion Club sponsor, you should encourage integrated activities for the Aktion members. This means activities in which people with and without disabilities participate together as equals. Many experts in the field consider non-segregated activities to be one of the most important ways of promoting high self-esteem and stimulating development.

As your Kiwanis club's Aktion Club program progresses, you will find that the Aktion members are capable of making sound decisions about a variety of issues, such as which projects to support and how to conduct projects. This might not be true in the beginning, but as their individual and collective self-confidence grows, as well as their knowledge of community service, they will begin to discover and utilize their abilities.

Karen never used to get out much. She wanted to, but even though she was 50 years old, she wasn't allowed . . . until the "club people" started coming around.

Karen's in a hurry today. The "club people" are driving her friends downtown again. They will be arriving at the center very soon, and she needs to be ready. Despite her eagerness, Karen's hand moves with deliberate care to glue the last fitting on her ceramic masterpiece: a Christmas cottage scene complete with people, animals, trees, and lights. Its intricacy is magnificent, and it's already sold. The money will go to help sick little kids. She's very proud. "I can do lots of neat things," Karen muses, admiring her work.

Karen is luckier than most of the millions of people in the United States who live with a disability. She belongs to an Aktion Club, which gives her the opportunity to prove she can do "lots of neat things."

And like Karen, every person deserves the opportunity to play a productive and meaningful role in society, to pursue a happy and fulfilling life, and to develop a sense of self-worth. Unfortunately, many citizens who live with a disability live in a vacuum of low self-esteem, dependency, and isolation.

These citizens can become capable of achieving much more than they usually do if they're given the chance to blossom. They need an outlet that helps them exercise their abilities, learn new ones, and apply them. They need to interact with society and build confidence; to belong and feel a part of something; to have a sense of meaning and purpose. Like other human beings, they need a chance.



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