

Key Club History

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What is Key Club?

Key Club is a service leadership organization for high school students, operating under school regulation and drawing its membership from the student body. Key Club is unique because it is jointly sponsored by a local Kiwanis Club, composed of the leading business and professional people of the of the community and a school (or in some cases, a community-based organization may act as a school).

Key Club's objectives is the development of initiative, leadership ability and good citizens practices. Key Club exists as a student led organization on the club level, on a district level (state/ province), and the International level. This highly developed structure provides service and leadership development programs, and the opportunity for teenagers to relate to their peers around the world.

History of Key Club International

The first Key Club was created in May 1925 at Sacramento High School in California by the Kiwanis Club of Sacramento. The original concept was to develop a vocational guidance programmed aimed to combat the problems of student fraternities. From this evolved the idea of a youth service organization for the home, school and community.

The idea slowly spread throughout the United States, and by 1939 Florida had a sufficient number of Key Clubs functioning to hold a state convention and form a district. Other districts followed Florida's lead, and finally in 1943, a national organization was started. In 1946, the first club in Canada was formed.

Today, Key Club International is a student led organization existing in 30 nations around the world. It has its own Bylaws and is governed by its own board of 13 student leaders.

History of the I-I District

The year is 1946, in a small town called St. Francisville, Illinois. In a dedicated Kiwanis Club, which played such a vital role in community life, they would embark on a new idea of a young men's high school service organization patterned after Kiwanis International.

Samuel Gray, a member of the St. Francisville Kiwanis Club, had returned from a recent Kiwanis International Convention where he had heard to others talk about the success of these you men's organizations. Within weeks, Gray was speaking with the principal and students of the St. Francisville High School. On October 23, 1946, the St. Francisville High School Key Club received Charter Number 0177, making it the first club in the state of Illinois . This would eventually be the start of the Illinois-Eastern Iowa District of Key Club International.

By early 1950, the foundation had been laid for the Illinois-Eastern Iowa District and a district convention was called for in March, 1950, in Springfield, Illinois. During the convention, John Greene of Peoria Central High School was elected the first governor. At this time there were no Lieutenant Governors serving on the board. Despite this face, however, six new clubs were formed under the John Greene Board.
