

Dear []:

As discussed, the following outlines a concept that I believe [client] would do well to consider implementing – for a variety of reasons described below.

The Idea Itself

I propose that the [organization] develop a counterpart to its [product], namely a report that would begin to answer the question “What values and experiences inform, motivate, and drive America’s emerging civic leaders?”

[Client] could do this by tapping national organizations (and their local chapters) that highlight and encourage dedication to service among young people through scholarships and other established recognition programs. Working with these groups, the students who have received such awards in years past would be identified and surveyed; some portion of these young adults would be personally interviewed as well. The goal would be to ascertain, among our nation’s emerging leaders, the key elements that inform and motivate their continuing volunteer and civic involvement. Questions to be posed could include the following:

- When did volunteer or community service become important to the individual?
- What activities do they look back on as a spur to continuing involvement?
- Did someone serve as their mentor or as a model of community service and civic mindedness?
- What educational courses (across elementary school, middle school, high school, and college) stand out as providing important insights or motivations?
- What is the person doing now – professionally, educationally, and voluntarily? Is s/he still active in community or volunteer service?
- Has s/he they considered government as a career? Why or why not?
- What would the person say are the top 3 factors impelling them to continued service?
- What are the top 3 factors that might dissuade someone from community service?
- What fields seem to need the voluntary contributions of young people more than ever?

Benefits to [Organization]

[Client] stands to realize several concrete benefits from this project. These will be discussed further on, but the salient points are:

- 1) The project will put a “face” on the concept of citizenship and the data conveying America’s civic health.
- 2) By focusing on up-and-coming civic leaders, the project will appeal to young people and encourage their own community involvement.
- 3) The project will identify factors currently encouraging (or discouraging) civic participation.
- 4) It will interest as sponsors a variety of organizations that work to advance citizenship.
- 5) It will reach into communities who naturally take pride in their young people, serving as a springboard for [client] to establish an ongoing relationship with local leaders.
- 6) The project will gain [client] additional name recognition and media exposure.

Alliance Opportunities

Given [client’s] aim to expand its partnerships to 100 communities (and every state), this initiative would offer an additional means of becoming known in particular communities through a cooperative effort with well-known civic organizations. These include:

- Kiwanis International
- Rotary International
- Optimist International
- Daughters of the American Revolution
- United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees).

Each of these groups sponsors scholarships and similar programs recognizing and encouraging good citizenship among our nation’s young people. Many of the organizations run alumni programs; for others, it would presumably be gratifying (and not too difficult) to contact the parents of previous award winners to learn where they are now living and sound them out. These 5 groups (and potentially others) would surely see the value in profiling key factors and trends affecting voluntarism among the students they have previously recognized. The organizations would be expected to fund the project in return for the favorable publicity and insightful information that results.

Based on the fact that many of these scholarships and award programs are long-standing, it would be useful to assess the results of the surveys by age bracket, i.e., what are the salient differences among the responses of young people aged 17-22, 23-28, and 29-34 (or whatever age brackets [client] wishes to examine).

Community Involvement and Product Rollout

Alliances (if not actual dollars in these hard-pressed times) could also be formed with communities whose leaders are naturally inclined to tout the participation and accomplishments of young people who are their foremost “home grown talent.” Perhaps 25 localities across the nation could initially identified, i.e., 25 communities in which a certain number of the surveyed young people grew up. The project could be shifted to 35

more localities the next time the project were undertaken (I suggest 5 years hence), expanding to additional 40 the next time. Within ten years, 100 communities would be counted, with the organizations funding the effort and participating as cosponsors expanding each time.

Survey results could be rolled out via a national press conference as well as a series of local ones. Board and Foundation members of the Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist, DAR, and Jaycee organizations would be on hand – as would young people prominent among those surveyed, who would no doubt provide compelling “color” for interviews by national and local reporters.

Newspapers in many communities may wish to profile former students who have brought credit to their homes, schools, and neighborhoods through their evolution as active and committed citizens. Similarly, schools at all levels may wish to feature their alumni who participated in the study as speakers at graduation events. Local chapters of the Kiwanis, Rotary, Optimist, DAR, and Jaycee groups will undoubtedly wish to feature some of these individuals as speakers.

To Summarize

The unique, *longitudinal* aspect of this project would provide a vital, personalized counterpoint to the measures presented in [client’s existing product]. The effort will put a “face” on the concept of citizenship and the data conveying America’s civic health. Along the way, the project will appeal to young people...garner ongoing visibility for [client]... build alliances with like-minded national organizations...and reach into local communities where [client] aims to establish a foothold.

The emerging story of how our nation’s young people are growing into committed citizenry will, no doubt, be a fascinating one with far-reaching lessons for the future as well as the present.

A Starting Point: Five Organizations with Established Service Recognition Programs

In no particular order, excerpts from the websites of the 5 groups noted in this proposal are offered here to document the sorts of programs that would serve as the basis of this new product.

❖ Kiwanis International – Key Leader Program

<http://sites.kiwanis.org/Kiwanis/en/discover/Our-work/key-leaders.aspx>

Key Leader changes lives! Key Leader is a program for today’s emerging leaders. This life-changing event focuses on service leadership as the first, most meaningful leadership development experience. A Key Leader will learn the most important lesson of leadership— leadership comes from helping others succeed.

Participation in the program begins with attending a Key Leader conference, which is a weekend retreat for teens ages 14-18. Workshops, lectures and team building activities take place over the course of the weekend. An opportunity to learn skills that can be

taken back to the school community is an essential element of the program, as is development of ongoing interaction with other Key Leader participants. Positive interaction with other Key Leader "graduates" can offer continuing reinforcement, encouragement and growth of leadership skills.

Since 2005, there have been more than 11,000 graduates throughout the United States, Canada, Grand Cayman, Brazil, El Salvador and Malaysia.

❖ **Rotary International – Youth Leadership Awards**

<http://www.rotary.org/en/StudentsAndYouth/YouthPrograms/RotaryYouthLeadershipAwards%28RYLA%29/Pages/ridefault.aspx>

What would it take to change the world? Rotary's 1.2 million members believe it starts with a commitment to Service Above Self. In more than 34,000 clubs worldwide, you'll find members volunteering in communities at home and abroad to support education and job training, provide clean water, combat hunger, improve health and sanitation, and eradicate polio.

Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) is Rotary's leadership training program for young people. RYLA participants can be ages 14-30, but most clubs and districts choose to focus on a narrower age range, such as 14-18 or 19-30. RYLA emphasizes leadership, citizenship, and personal growth, and aims to:

- Demonstrate Rotary's respect and concern for youth
- Provide an effective training experience for selected youth and potential leaders
- Encourage leadership of youth by youth
- Recognize publicly young people who are rendering service to their communities

Each year, thousands participate in Rotary's educational and youth programs, all known for fostering international understanding and friendship. But the experience doesn't have to end when the program is over. Participants chose Rotary because of its commitment to world understanding. As alumni, they have an extended network of people who share a common bond. They'll always be part of the family of Rotary.

(Individuals can join the Rotary Foundation Alumni group on LinkedIn and learn more on Facebook through the Rotary Foundation Alumni page -

<http://www.rotary.org/en/StudentsAndYouth/Alumni/Pages/ridefault.aspx>).

❖ **United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees) - Ten Outstanding Young Americans Project**

<http://www.usjaycees.org/index.php/ten-out-young-americans>

The United States Junior Chamber (Jaycees) gives young people between the ages of 18 and 40 the tools they need to build the bridges of success for themselves in the areas of business development, management skills, individual training, community service, and international connections.

The Ten Outstanding Young Men program was officially adopted in 1938 and has been conducted annually since 1940. In 1984, the US Junior Chamber admitted women as members and, in accordance with this change, reorganized this awards program to reflect the organization's membership. In 1985, the program was officially changed to Ten Outstanding Young Americans, recognizing the accomplishments of young people.

Winners are selected on their achievement or contribution in at least three of the following areas: personal improvement or accomplishment; financial success or economic innovation; social improvement to major contemporary problems; philanthropic contribution or voluntary service; politics or government service; scientific or technological contributions; legal reform; cultural achievement (literature, history, education, arts); academic leadership or accomplishment; moral and religious leadership; athletic accomplishment; success in the influence of public opinion; any other important contribution to the community, state, or nation.

Copies of all entries are sent to screening judges who independently select and rank the twenty semi-finalists. The entries of the semi-finalists are sent to finalist judges who independently narrow the selection to the ten men and women selected as honorees.

Of the more than 600 young Americans honored, many were recognized before the achievements for which they are now known: John F. Kennedy, Gerald R. Ford, Ann Bancroft, Gale Sayers, Elvis Presley, Dan Quayle, Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Larry Holmes, Bill Clinton, Jeanna Yeager, Kaye Lani Rae Rafko-Wilson. Refer to the USJC website for a complete listing of the past honorees.

❖ **Daughters of the American Revolution – Good Citizenship Awards**

<http://www.dar.org/natsociety/workSociety.cfm>

DAR Good Citizens Awards are given outstanding high school seniors for their contributions to their communities and schools.

DAR Good Citizenship Medals are presented to children in grades 5-11 who are dedicated to honor, service, courage, leadership, and patriotism.

❖ **Optimist International – Scholarships**

<http://www.optimist.org/e/visitor/scholarships.cfm>

Optimist International sponsors scholarships as prizes for the winners of the contests listed below. Each contest is entered through your local Optimist Club. This organization does not offer any application-based or need-based scholarships. Some individual Clubs do, but this information is not available at the International Office. All communication should be made with an Optimist Club Member in your area.

Essay Contest

Topic: "How My Education is the Key to a Successful Future"

The Essay Contest is for students under 19 years of age as of December 31.

Oratorical Contest

Topic: "If I Were Leader of the Free World, the First Issue I Would Address Would be..."
The Oratorical Contest is for young people under the age of 19 as of December 31.

❖ And finally, an example of a local program I am personally acquainted with:
The Helping Hands Program – sponsored by the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna
http://www.optimistclubofgreatervienna.org/helping_hands.html

The Helping Hands Program is unique to the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna and was the brainchild of Past President Sheryl Friedley during her term in 1996-1997. The purpose of the program is to recognize a sixth grader from each of the 11 elementary schools in the club's service area that goes "above and beyond" in helping to support school-related and extracurricular activities.

My daughter was actually one of the Helping Hands recipients this past spring – she and the program itself are the inspiration behind this concept I am presenting to [client]. Where will she be 10 years from now and what will she be doing? Will her profession or avocation be seen as an extension or outgrowth of the activities and accomplishments for which she was recognized in 2011? The wider question of the ongoing civic contributions of young people who have been similarly recognized over the years is the core issue I believe [client] is well suited to illuminate through the project outlined in this proposal.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have regarding this concept.
Increasing civic engagement in this country is a most worthwhile goal!

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

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