***Educational Excellence and Our Future***

**Dr. Jensi Souders, 2010-2012 International President**

**Banquet Speech, April 16, 2011**

President Smart’s theme of ***Sharing Our Service: WE Hold the Key*** is so very appropriate to what your state organization does and has done for members and non-members alike. Your members, all our members, epitomize educational excellence.

The future of our organization and of education in general depends on our focusing not only on impacting education in a positive way, but also making animpact withinour organization by presenting our positive efforts for education, sharing our service in such a way that is attractive to potential members and equally attractive to initiates and our communities at large.

The dues we pay are so minimal compared to the opportunities and benefits of membership and the important work we can do if we are focused on our vision of impacting education worldwide. We hold the key to that vision.

This biennium we have presented two projects for our focus—one **international (Schools for Africa)** that requires only our fundraising efforts to send money to UNICEF. The other project is local **(Early-Career Educator Support)**, and that requires little money, but lots of service on the part of members to help keep potentially excellent educators in the profession we have spent our careers to further. What other organization can say it impacts education in such way?

Focusing on early-career educators gives us inroads into identifying prospective members. Once initiated, we retain those members with meaningful programs, sustained and effective projects, and through member benefits and opportunities that, collectively, cannot be obtained anywhere else.

My column in the March/April NEWS is the story of the selfish wife and her husband. She complains about his non-appreciation of her, and he replies that he’s given her a 5-carat diamond ring that she doesn’t wear, that he’s given her a chalet in the Swiss Alps to which she never goes, and that he’s given her three furs that she never wears. She replies, “But what have you done for me lately?!?!”

Michigan State Organization has received quite a lot from the International organization over the years:

* 11 International Leadership/Management Seminar participants and 2 Golden Gift Special Stipend awardees, bringing over $78,000 in leadership training and professional development opportunities to Michigan. Your most recent recipient of about $7000 in leadership training is Nancy Everett. The Society invested the equivalent of 175 years’ worth of one member’s international dues in her training. I would say that your dues made not only a good investment in her training, but have come back to serve you well, wouldn’t you?
* 18 International Scholarship recipients (The most recent being Krista Hall in 2009-10) have brought $71,750 to the state to improve educators’ knowledge and skills. Her $6000 scholarship is the equivalent of 15 years of Krista’s international dues.
* 11 Cornetet Professional Development Grants totaling $10,628 since the awards began five years ago. This includes Tamara Albert who was been awarded $700 in 2009. That about 18 years’ worth of Tamara’s international dues. Your state organization also received a Cornetet Seminar award of $1000 to conduct a professional development event just this past month that benefited 30 Michigan members!
* 19 World Fellowship recipients have studied in Michigan universities, bringing another $64,900 to your state over the years.
* Since 1964, 15 Educational Foundation grants have been awarded for educational projects in Marquette, Mendenhall, Sandusky, Cheboygan, Kalamazoo, and Levonia, totaling $36, 925.
* This is approximately $263,200 from your international dues that have come back to Michigan in support of members and excellence in education.

That doesn’t include the dollars Michigan State Organization members have received over the years from International Emergency Fund after major storms, fires, and other natural disasters. That money comes from members’ donations. Taken all together, I believe that’s a pretty good return on your money, don’t you?!

In addition, your state organization has scholarships, leadership seminars, the Katherine Keeling Professional Enhancement Award, grants for international meeting attendance, and a state organization Emergency Fund.

Your chapters have scholarships for members, and grants for members and non-members. Last year alone, with only 66 of 79 state organizations reporting, chapters across the Society gave 2368 scholarships and grants-in-aid totaling $1,166,000! That is 65% of the grand total of $1,646,000 in international, state, and chapter scholarships and grants-in-aid for one year!!! Talk about how we impact education at the chapter level! Wow!!!

I’d like you to get a little exercise now, after such a wonderful meal. Please stand and remain standing if you have ever received or benefited from:

* International—state—chapter scholarship
* Cornetet—Katherine Keeling grant—chapter grant for Professional Development
* Attended Int. LMS—State LMS
* Society-sponsored Parliamentary Seminars
* Been published in *The Bulletin*, our juried and peer-reviewed professional journal
* Emergency Fund gift of $500 from International—Wilma Adams Emergency Fund gift from Michigan State Organization
* If you participate in the Society’s Social Network, dkgnetwork.org

Everyone standing has received benefits from your membership, and that includes getting a little after-dinner exercise! Those who didn’t stand up even once—you are missing out on the many opportunities that your membership in Delta Kappa Gamma affords you. You may even be like the wife in the story, thinking, “What has the Society done for me lately?”

So, everything I’ve talked about up until now has been what’s gone on in the past. So let’s talk about what international opportunities are out there for you, not even counting state organization and chapter, if you just reach out for them. Let me recap the ones I’ve already mentioned:

* 30 international scholarships of $6000 each
* Cornetet Awards—up to $2000 one-time awards for PD or **Financial assistance for National Board Certification**
* Golden Gift Special Stipends—up to $800 each for PD
* International Leadership Management Seminar, @$7000 of premier graduate training at one of the leading business schools in the nation
* Society-sponsored Parliamentary Training Seminars
* *The DKG Bulletin*
* International Emergency Fund--$500/incident
* **Professional Networking** through DKG Social Network, International conferences/conventions, service at the international and state organization levels

There are also opportunities that I haven’t mentioned before:

**Money for classroom/school/community project** DKG Education Foundation Project Awards

**Insurance that provides greater benefits at member discounts** Cancer, liability, ID Theft protection, pet, etc.

**Speaking opportunities in other countries on topics of** International Speakers Fund speaker

**personal/professional expertise**

**Enrichment/Travel Events** DKG Foundation’s Seminar I Purposeful Living

 International/regional conventions/conferences

 International Speakers Fund speaker

**Leadership opportunities in a nurturing environment** International committee member/chair

 International Administrative Board member/officer

**Service to community/state/the world** International *Schools for Africa* Project support

 Support for local early-career educators

 State organization service project support\*

 Chapter service project participation

All of these opportunities begin at the chapter level, with chapter involvement. Probably the greatest benefit of our membership and dues is the fellowship we enjoy whenever we get together for any reason.

Sharing our service is something we do well. Whether we’re working on a project, attending a meeting, presenting a program, enjoying a meal together, spending money on fundraisers—whatever, we have wonderful fellowship one with another. We truly are the key to the health and success of our organization, and contribute greatly to the furtherance of educational excellence, now and in the future. We might make an ad for television that says;

 International Dues: $40

 Opportunities: Limitless

 Society Membership: Priceless

I know that I’m preaching to the choir tonight, that the ones who really need to hear this aren’t here. I hope you’ll go from here this weekend, back to your chapters, and spread the word of how we are Sharing Our Service, Supporting our Members, Embracing Our Vision locally so that we can Design Our Future Globally.

So, if you have 1) taken advantage of the opportunities and benefits of your membership, 2) are going back to your chapter and advertise these opportunities, 3) if you have made a private vow that you are going to take advantage of some or all of those benefits, and/or 4) will gladly support and encourage your chapter members to do so, would you please stand---

Now, That’s DKG sharing, networking and fellowship at its very best! What has your Society done for you and for Michigan educational excellence lately? A lot! And as we said in Spokane last summer, that’s worth a big Ta-Dah!