

District 15 Program Quality Director's Report
Sarra Idehen, DTM
April 13, 2022

Hello Members of District 15,

I began this 2022-2023 year stating that I had great expectations. Expectations to look beyond where we stood at that moment and see a new future where our clubs were moving beyond the restrictions and devastations of Covid. This Expectation saw us providing relevant and meaningful training, and offering incentives that promote strategies for increased membership, and stronger clubs. This Expectation also saw our members rekindling a passion for volunteerism and member, club, and community engagement. I am revisiting those expectations today to reflect on what has been realized and where we are still looking to go.

Great Expectation #1: Clubs moving beyond the devastation of Covid19.

We are meeting in person! Some clubs have in-person meetings while some have hybrid meetings, but we are getting together again. On June 30, 2022, our base number of clubs was 62. We have 57 paid clubs as of March 31st. Despite the reduction in the number of clubs, club membership is growing, and clubs are improving. For instance, in January of this year we had 12 "almost distinguished" clubs. As you are aware, distinguished clubs are characterized as having met certain membership and goal criteria, and "almost distinguished" indicates a membership number or goal attainment less than the criteria but very close.

By the end of March, we had 13 "almost distinguished" clubs. This is significant because of the 12 "almost distinguished" clubs listed in January, seven dropped off by having met the education goals and membership criteria. These clubs will move to the list of distinguished clubs once TI updates April records. By March 31, eight additional clubs moved to the list of "almost distinguished". Of the five initial clubs that remained from the January list, all have improved and have moved closer to distinguished: either by gaining membership and/or completing education goals. So, amid loss, this is an up-turn. I believe as we keep improving incrementally, we will attain the goals we have envisioned. To see a current list of "almost distinguished" clubs go to:

<https://dashboards.toastmasters.org/District.aspx?id=15&hideclub=1>

There are administrative goals tied to the Distinguished Club Program as well. How do we measure up administratively? We submit dues 74.2% on time and submit officer lists 84.8% on time.

Great Expectation #2: Providing relevant and meaningful training programs that enhance your experiences and empower you as speakers and leaders.

Training attendees provided feedback from which we were able to plan topics for future training that were relevant, and we were able to improve the general administration and overall planning of the training. Based on this feedback, we focused the training on Member Retention, Member Recruitment, Pathways, Club Success Plan, and Speech Contests. In addition, we offered bonus sessions. We received positive feedback on the training and the presenters.

Of our 57 paid clubs, 30 clubs had four or more officers trained, 20 clubs had one-to-three officers trained and only seven clubs had no officers attend the training. Hats off to Strong Women's Legacy and Cross-Talkers Club. Both these clubs had all seven officers trained.

Great Expectation #3: Offering incentives that promote increased membership, and stronger clubs.

We have incentives that reward and promote member retention, member recruitment and education attainment. What is missing is better promotion of incentives so that all members are aware of them. Better promotion on our District 15 website, on our social media and in our contacts with membership.

District 15 has secured licenses for district wide Meetup accounts available to clubs at no cost. Meetup is a way to increase the flow of potential members to your club. Here is meeting ID and password for an informational meeting on 4/18/23:

Meeting ID: 890 1880 0394

Passcode: 019685

Great Expectation #4: Members rekindling a passion for volunteerism and member, club, and community engagement.

We are a volunteer organization. No one gets financially compensated for their sacrifices and hard work. Yet, we have dedicated members. Many have been Toastmasters for 5, 10, 15 or 20 or more years. Many are members of several clubs, and not only members, but are the leaders and backbone of those clubs. They attend meetings, they mentor their club members, they give speeches, they champion Pathways.

According to district reports, 25 of our members earned Triple Crowns, five members completed the Pathway Mentorship Program, and four members were assigned as Club Coaches: Paige Ishii (Cross-Talkers Club), Steve Piet and Dave Morrison (Strong Women's Legacy) and Brent Satterthwaite (Upper Valley Toastmasters). You might recognize that the two clubs who had all seven club officers trained also have club coaches. Hats off to Strong Women's Legacy coaches who have brought the club from the edge of extinction to distinguished, if all numbers hold after the April numbers are tabulated.

When I look at District 15, in my opinion our **Strength** is our people. One **Weakness** is not providing better, more timely information to our members so they can take advantage of the benefits we offer. Our **Opportunity** is leadership development (club, Area, Division and District levels). A real **Threat** is burnout – overuse of same volunteers and lack of new volunteers, another is insufficient contact with and outreach to our members and individual clubs.



Great Expectations #5: Becoming a Distinguished District this year, comprised of Distinguished clubs, and engaged and empowered members.

Well, we are on our way! Hold that thought.

All the best,

Sarra Idehen, DTM

Program Quality Director, 2022-2023