

Governor Elect Speech delivered at 2020 Virtual Convention Aug 15, 2020
By Sarah Zulueta, Kiwanis Club of Main Line and University City (Philadelphia)

Governor Mike, Governor Elect Don, Immediate Past Governor Phil, Executive Director Kevin, Delegates at Large, and my fellow Kiwanians

I am Sarah Zulueta, I am from the Kiwanis Club of the Main Line and the University City Club in Philadelphia.

Volunteering is something that has been part of my life even before Kiwanis. One of my favorite projects when I first joined Kiwanis in 2003 was being a mentor for a project called Discovery Days at an elementary school in North Philadelphia, an area in Philadelphia known for its rough neighborhoods.

Discovery Days were mandated Saturday morning sessions for students requiring additional help with reading, writing and math. There were many students in the program.

I recall a Thanksgiving project where 2nd graders were supposed to draw what Thanksgiving means to them. One student pointed out to me in her picture - her siblings, her mom, her mom's boyfriend, an aunt and on the side, she pointed to her father in jail behind bars. I had no words, and she drew and talked about her family with no hesitation like this was commonplace to have a parent in jail. She was so young. I quickly looked at other students' pictures and I soon learned there was some similar pictures around the room.

It was heartbreaking for me to see these students in different situations who didn't have books, lacked good writing skills and did not have solid family units, which was foreign to me growing up in a traditional Filipino middle class home, where education was important and always accessible to me. From that project, I realized how fortunate I am and knew I wanted to continue making a difference in the lives of children.

Our Kiwanis mission has not changed in over 100 years, but our membership and landscape have. The ***"We have always done it that way"*** mantra is not going to cut it anymore, the time is now to act and take a serious look on how we operate at a District and local level to better provide for the children in our communities in a effective, meaningful and relevant way.

My personal, professional and Kiwanis experience has prepared me to be able to lead this District as the next Governor Elect. I am willing to share my time and talents with this District and in return I ask for your trust, support and your "Can DO" attitudes to help strengthen our Kiwanis District.

With a strong team with me, I will be a TRANSFORMATIONAL leader for our District, that honors our rich Kiwanis history but is open to new ideas that will further our mission. Kiwanis was there for those children during those early Discovery Days in Philly and they need us more than ever throughout the world as many children are starting back to school virtually this Fall.

My vision for the Pennsylvania District is to promote a culture of collaboration, diversity, and inclusiveness at all levels. This year will be a challenge with restrictions put in place due to Covid-19, but it is the hope that my leadership and a great team in place, it will inspire more members to dream the impossible and step up to leadership roles to become part of a greater change that the world and Pennsylvania is ready for.

I am ready for the challenge. Are you? I ask for your vote for as your next Governor Elect.

Thank you for your time.