# Encouraging Innovation to Foster a Collaborative Chapter Culture

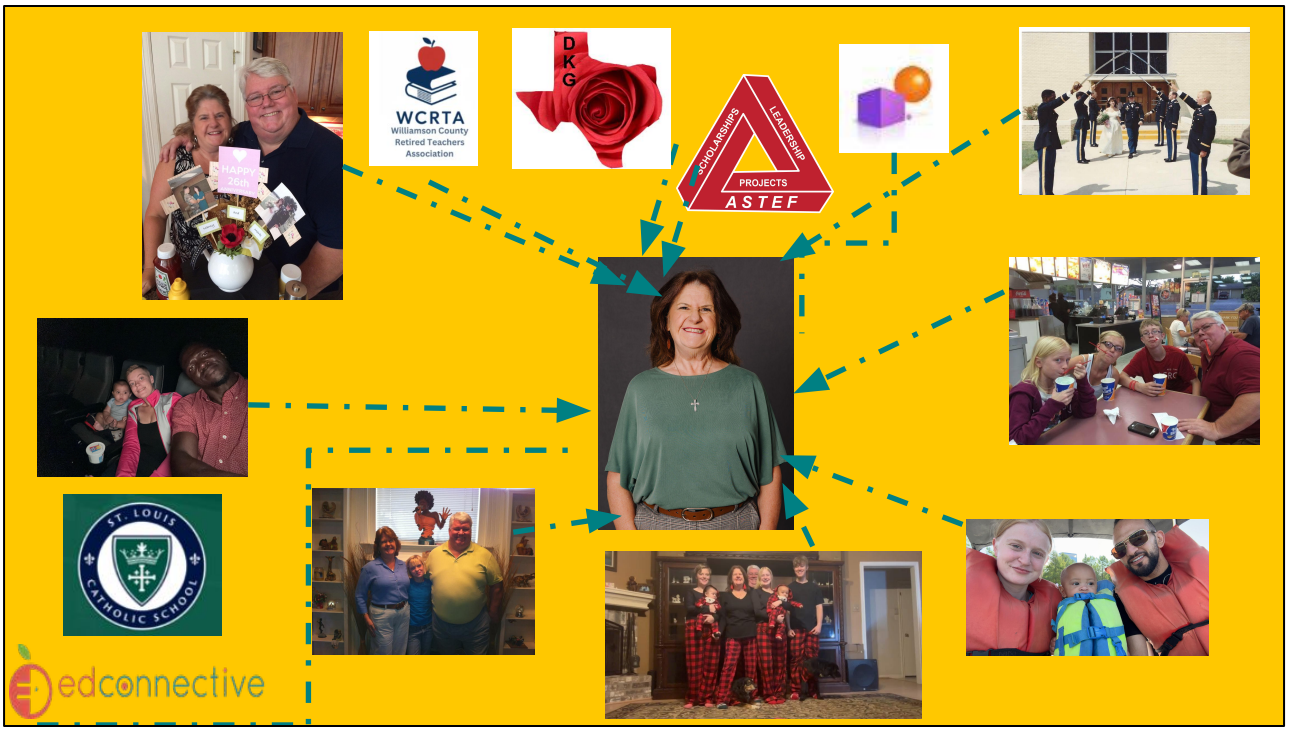
TSO State Convention
Denton, TX 2025

*Nancy Varljen*
nvarljen@gmail.com

Link to Presentation

Link to Handout

2:30
Encourage Innovation to Foster a Collaborative Chapter Culture




2:30-2:33

Personal introductions.

We are going to do a lot of sharing together so take just a minute to introduce yourself to the 3 or 4 people sitting next to you. Share your chapter name, where you are from & one thing that you love about DKG.

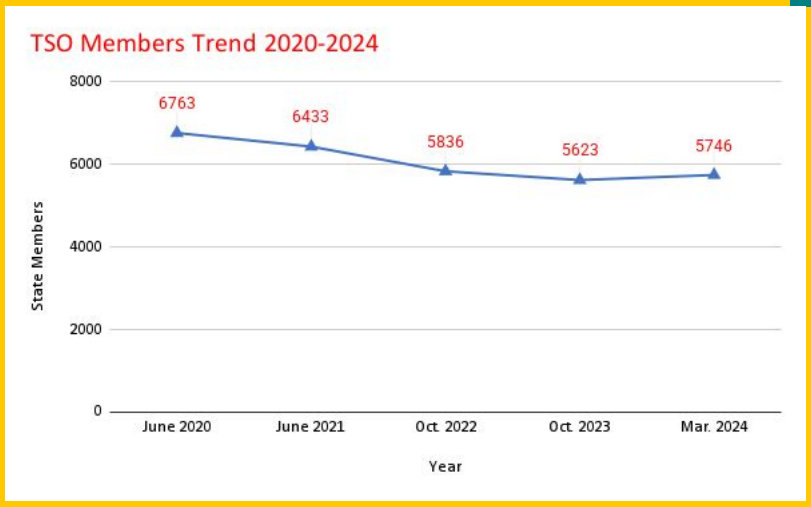
# Let's Start Today with a

2:33
What is a challenge that is facing DKG at this time?

# A Challenge…

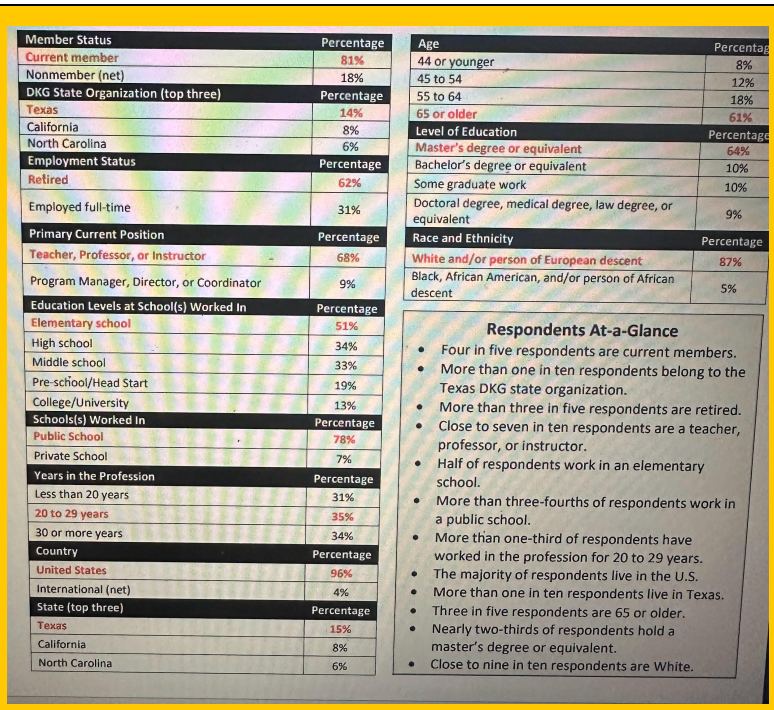
2:32
This graphic shows membership trends from DKG International from 2009-2016.
What do you notice? <Click>

# A Challenge…




2:33-2:34

And this graphic, shows our TSO Membership trends from 2020-2024. Notice the decline in state membership.



| Member Status | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Current member | 81% |
| Nonmember (net) | 18% |
| **DKG State Organization (top three)** | **Percentage** |
| Texas | 14% |
| California | 8% |
| North Carolina | 6% |
| **Employment Status** | **Percentage** |
| Retired | 62% |
| Employed full-time | 31% |
| **Primary Current Position** | **Percentage** |
| Teacher, Professor, or Instructor | 68% |
| Program Manager, Director, or Coordinator | 9% |
| **Education Levels at School(s) Worked In** | **Percentage** |
| Elementary school | 51% |
| High school | 34% |
| Middle school | 33% |
| Pre-school/Head Start | 19% |
| College/University | 13% |
| **Schools(s) Worked In** | **Percentage** |
| Public School | 78% |
| Private School | 7% |
| **Years in the Profession** | **Percentage** |
| Less than 20 years | 31% |
| 20 to 29 years | 35% |
| 30 or more years | 34% |
| **Country** | **Percentage** |
| United States | 96% |
| International (net) | 4% |
| **State (top three)** | **Percentage** |
| Texas | 15% |
| California | 8% |
| North Carolina | 6% |

| Age | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 44 or younger | 8% |
| 45 to 54 | 12% |
| 55 to 64 | 18% |
| 65 or older | 61% |
| **Level of Education** | **Percentage** |
| Master's degree or equivalent | 64% |
| Bachelor's degree or equivalent | 10% |
| Some graduate work | 10% |
| Doctoral degree, medical degree, law degree, or equivalent | 9% |
| **Race and Ethnicity** | **Percentage** |
| White and/or person of European descent | 87% |
| Black, African American, and/or person of African descent | 5% |

**Respondents At-a-Glance**

- Four in five respondents are current members.
- More than one in ten respondents belong to the Texas DKG state organization.
- More than three in five respondents are retired.
- Close to seven in ten respondents are a teacher, professor, or instructor.
- Half of respondents work in an elementary school.
- More than three-fourths of respondents work in a public school.
- More than one-third of respondents have worked in the profession for 20 to 29 years.
- The majority of respondents live in the U.S.
- More than one in ten respondents live in Texas.
- Three in five respondents are 65 or older.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents hold a master's degree or equivalent.
- Close to nine in ten respondents are White.

Avenue M Group Report
September, 2023
DKG International

2:34-2:39
Here is some information from the Avenue M Group's Report that was commissioned by DKG International a few years ago.

Take 3 minutes to talk to the people around you. What stands out to you from the information? What conclusions can you draw based on the information from the slides? What do you think are the reasons for the decline in membership?

2 minutes Share

Relevancy to join any group is problematic for all organizations. For these reasons, it is important that we think "outside of the box", be open to new ideas, and <Click>

Focus on creating a message about the importance of DKG.
There are many generational groups within our organization. Be creative when creating programs to incorporate ideas that are inclusive to all members throughout the year. Seek input from chapter members to create ownership.

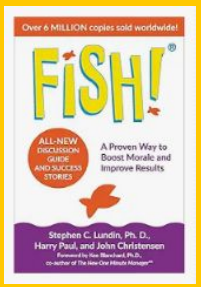
# Be Innovative..

*"The word innovation has become synonymous with technology, and it shouldn't be. Innovation is about new ways of thinking, creating, and operation."*

*- Sheryl Sandberg*

2:39
Read slide. Times have changed and as we have seen, DKG and TSO membership have been affected.
<Click.>

# Agenda




- FISH Concepts
- Why Innovate?
- Innovative Strategies to Foster a Collaborative Culture
- Resources to Encourage Innovation and Create a Collaborative Culture
- Note-Taking Guide

***"A practice is more than a theory. It's something that you actually put into action, and the more you do it, the better you get at it." - FISH Quote***

2:40
This year, chapter presidents did a book study on Fish during the Leadership Development for Chapter Presidents. In rereading the book, I found that the principles are relevant to DKG and engaging our chapter members. During this session, we will review the Fish concepts from pages 45-84 and how they can apply to DKG, TSO, and our chapters. We will look at some reasons for why we need to be innovative, share strategies for fostering a collaborative culture, and have some time to gather ideas that you use in your chapters. We will close with some additional resources that are available to you from International and TSO.
<Click>

## Interesting Statistics from Avenue M Report

- Affiliation with DKG is stronger at the chapter level than international level.
- Nearly ⅘ (79%) DKG members and former members accepted DKG membership because they knew a friend or colleague who was a member.
  - Community/connections with other women educators (65%) is the other top reason to accept membership.
- ⅘ (79%) are likely (21%) or extremely likely (66%) to renew their DKG membership. [Industry benchmark tracked in Avenue M's database of professional membership organizations is 55%.]

★ Respondents 65 and older are most likely to believe there are no barriers to engaging w/DKG.
  - Those 64 or younger note a lack of time as a barrier to engagement.

★ Respondents 65 and olders number one goal is to connect with other women educators (59%).
  - 64 or younger engage to get information or resources to help them do their job better, find opportunities for training/education, and find opportunities for financial assistance.

2:41-2:46
Here are some interesting findings from the Avenue M Report.
Read or call on participant to read out loud.

How does this information relate to your conclusions from the data I shared earlier?

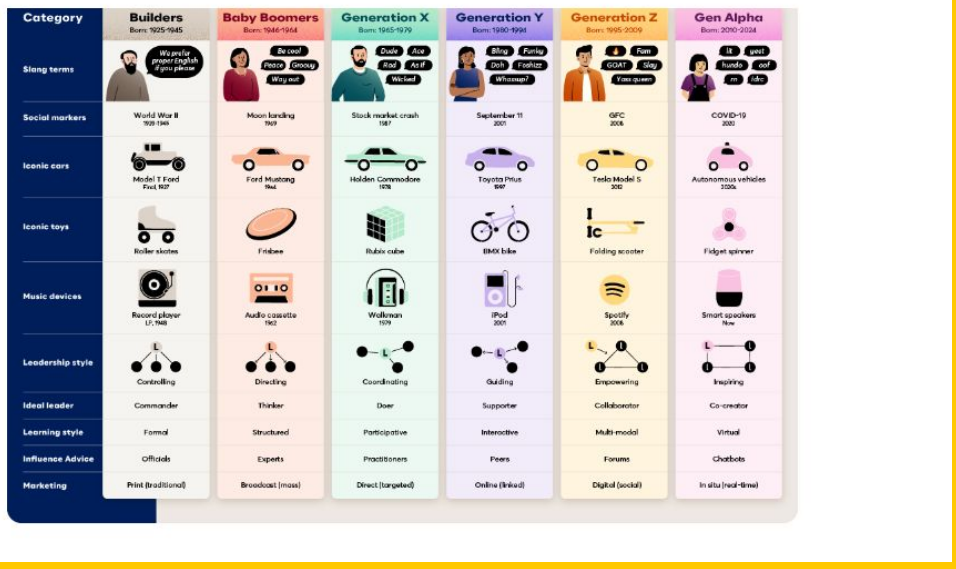
2 minutes for discussion.

## Why Innovate?

- Encourage Membership Diversity
  - Cultural Diversity
    - Backgrounds
    - Ethnicity
  - Organizational Diversity
    - Different educational levels and backgrounds
      - Elementary, Middle School, and High School
      - Teachers, Administrators, Librarians, Counselors
    - Educators from outside of our common definition
      - Preschool teachers
      - Corporate trainers
      - Other
  - World View Diversity
    - Broad range of beliefs,
    - Political affiliations
    - Travel experiences
    - Employment experiences
- Appreciate Generational Differences

2:46-2:48
Increasing membership is just one reason that we should think innovatively. Other reasons include Encouraging Membership Diversity. (Read from Slide.) Anything that I have missed?

Another specific aspect is Appreciating Generational Differences. There are many different models for generational differences. Let's take a quick look at this one just for fun! <Click>




Generational Stereotypes

2:48-2:53

Here is one example of a chart showing Generational Stereotypes.
(Take a few moments to point out some fun features and let participants find things they find interesting.) They can talk together and then share out.
(Tell them to hold onto these until we dig deeper and look at another model.)

We need to be creative when creating programs to incorporate ideas that are inclusive to all members throughout the year. Seek input from chapter members to not only create ownership, but spark new ideas and thinking.

2:53-2:58

So let's dig into some strategies!
As we look at how we can Innovate to Increase Chapter Collaboration, let's look at how we can use the FISH principles to help us! As I share them, think about how they connect to you or members in your chapter. We know that the first, "Choose Your Attitude" is really the key to everything so we will continue to keep it first. What about the concepts from pp. 45-84? How many of you have read the book? If you have, you know that Mary Jane has been assigned to lead a team in her company that is not very good. After a visit to the Fish market, she is inspired and returns bringing each of her team members separately.
One principle they learned was the second principle of the Fish Philosophy <CLICK> "Encourage Play!" Fish market team memberLonnie shared, *"We discovered we could be serious about the business and still have fun with the way we conducted it." "Not get all uptight, but let things flow."*
When thinking about our chapter cultures, how can we engage all of our members? What can we do to <CLICK> "Make Their Day?" As Lonnie, again said, *"Look for as many ways as you can to create great memories." "That's the key word: Engage." "We try not to stand apart from our customers but to find ways to respectfully include them in our fun."*
Later, Lonnie shared a story of going to a meat counter at a grocery store where the employees were having a good time but not giving him much attention. How often do our members feel that the meeting/relationships are going on around them? The final

ingredient:<CLICK> “Be There!” As Lonnie said, *“If they had included me in their fun, it would have been a whole different experience.”*

Are there any of these that you specifically related to either through personal experience or in DKG? Take a minute to share with your neighbors or

As we share strategies and hear them from you, keep in mind these three principles. How can we Encourage Play, Engage Members and Make Their Day, and Be There/Present and help our members  feel that they are important as well.

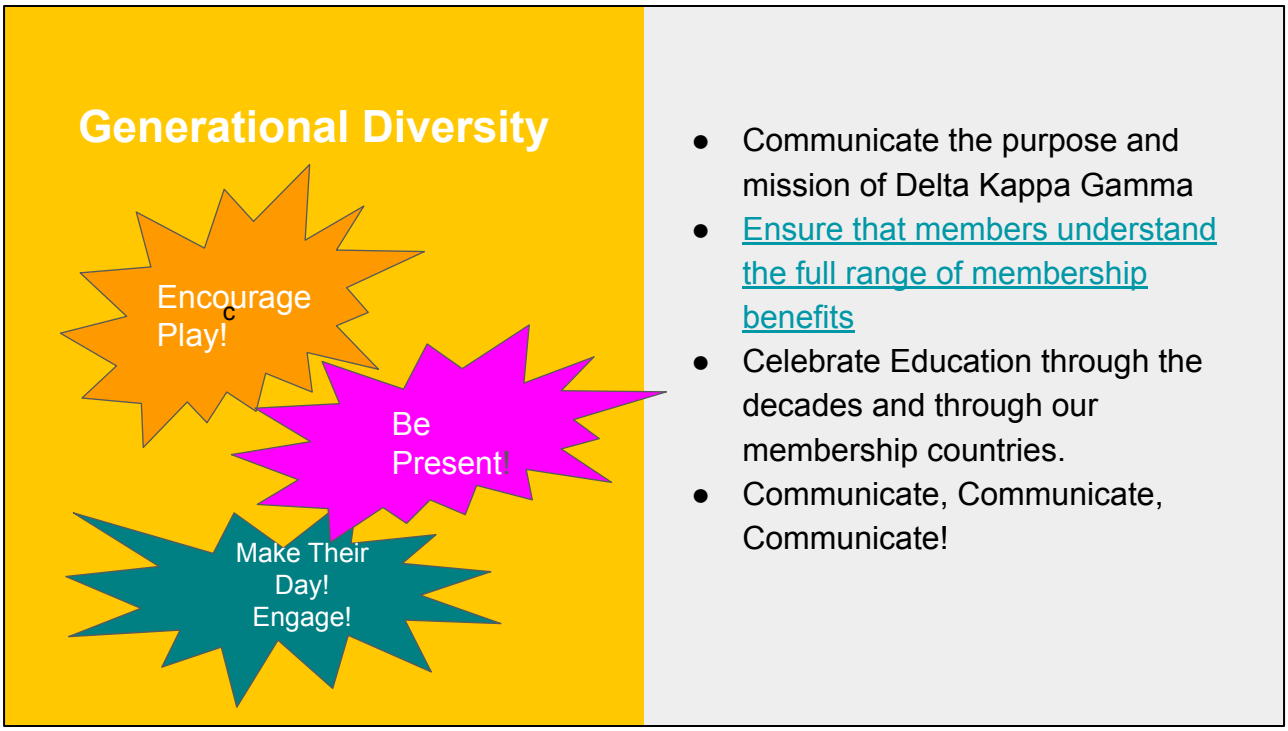
# Bridge Generational Differences

| | Traditionalists | Boomers | Gen X | Millennials (Y) | Gen Z |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Born** | 1925-1945 | 1946-1964 | 1965-1980 | 1981-1995 | 1996-2009 |
| **Age today** | 77+ | 58-76 | 42-57 | 27-41 | 13-26 |
| **Parenting and Childhood** | Strong nuclear families, parenting was associated with discipline. | Most Moms are home. Do it because I said so. Larger classrooms; more competition. Freedom, optimism | Divorce rates increase-single parent homes. Latchkey kids. Self-sufficient, first milk carton kids | Parents more involved-helicopter parents-safety. Amber alert. Participation Trophies. Video games and systems. | Parenting style encouraged realistic expectations. Constantly exposed to media. Almost everything has a digital equivalent. |
| **Leadership** | Command and control style influenced by strong military associations | Accept poor management and positional leadership. Competitive and value face time. | Prefer leadership styles that are comparatively more autocratic, directive, task-oriented, and transactional | Prefer leadership styles that are democratic, participative, relationship-oriented, and transformational. | View the internet as the authority. Prefer coaching style leadership. Expect positive feedback. Enjoy being on location. |
| **Early Communication** | Letter/memo. Rotary phones-phone calls are important, prefer one on one | Telephone/email Used touch tone phones-call anytime. Just fax it to me. Enjoy face-to-face. | Email/Text Used cell phone early. Caller ID/Voice Recorders. Call me only at work. (work/life balance) | Text/social media/Smart Phones (iPhone)/apps. More comfortable with digital communication. | Smartphones/ Apps/Snapchat/ Video/use images and symbols. Prefer face-to-face. |
| **Work Expectations** | Good Supportive Manager, Job Satisfaction, Rapport with Colleagues, Caring environment, Job Fulfillment | Job satisfaction, Results-Oriented, Supportive Team, Good Rapport with Colleagues, Self-actualization | Job Satisfaction, Work/Life Balance, Flexibility, Independence, Feedback, and Appreciation, Supportive Manager | Technology, Diversity, Growth Opportunities, Career Development, Connection to Purpose, Active Involvement | Technology, Diversity, Flexible Hours, Independence, Social Responsibility, Authenticity, Acceptance |
| **Meeting Preferences** | Enjoy Face to Face, Appreciate Traditions, Like Order | Happy with face-to-face meetings, Love seeing people, shaking hands, Collaboration | Practical, Organized meetings, Value Productivity, Opportunities for Career Growth | Spontaneous, Enjoy Group Discussions, Interactive Activities, On-the-go meals | Optics (social media options) are important, don't care for paper, Shorter Attention Span |

2:58-3:02

Let's go back to Bridging Generational Differences. Here is another model taken from Shawn Johnson, Strategies for Generational Inclusion. Notice the Communication and Meeting Preferences especially. Remember these are generalizations. There are many different models that give you insights but are probably not 100% accurate if you just Google Generational Differences.) With that being said, take 2-3 minutes to review the rest of the diagram and take some notes on your handout. Jot down some ideas that stand out to you. Allow time to talk in groups and/or share out with whole group.

As we go through and share strategies, think about what implications this has for our meetings. What strategies/processes do you have to actively Engage, Be There for your members, and Help them to Be Present and Own the meetings?
As we go through each slide, please feel free to share your ideas.




**3:02-3:07**

**Generational Differences Brainstorming Ideas**

- Communicate the purpose and mission of DKG: We promote professional and personal growth of women educator and excellence in education. (Does anyone know the motto?) *Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide*
- Ensure that members understand the full range of membership benefits-Click on this to go to the link. Read the types of benefits and choose one to highlight by clicking on the link. Share highlights and encourage participants to review these on their own and share with their chapters. Membership benefits appeal to all as they include travel for the adventurous, discounts & financial assistance for the frugal, recognitions for the competitive, and advocacy for the inclusive and future-oriented among many others. Reading the quotes, you can see how DKG fulfills many different needs.
- Communicate…..Communicate via email, social networking, but don't forget phone calls! Send postcards to missing and former members. Ask members their preferred communication style and use that to remind them of meetings, service projects, and events.

-Celebrate Education through the decades - different educators share most memorable teaching experience
-Technology training tailored to different generations
-Collaborative chapter projects
-Mentoring both ways

**** (My district) Copperas Cove ISD - District created the “Golden DAWGS program open to 60+ year old citizens/retired teachers to become involved with schools and district committees

What ideas have you done with your chapter?

3:09-3:12
Read through slide and add as you want.
Vary meeting times

- Vary the days of the week/times
  - Accommodate those who do not drive at night
  - Current school employees have a difficult time getting to meetings by 4:00.

Committee Responsibilities -

- Assign tasks to different committees to involve as many members as possible. Members want to be involved and feel like the are contributing.
  - Example: Actual Program, inspirational thought, door prize, refreshments
  - Empower committees by having them take turns explaining their duties and current items they are working on. Highlight a committee or two at each meeting.
  - Highlight officer positions
- Active Involvement

# *Engagement in Meetings*

- Meeting Types:
  - Traditional Meetings
  - FieldTrips
    - Library
    - Schools - ASTEF Projects
    - Museums / Garden Visits
    - Friday Night Football Game, Cindy Kirchner
  - Just for Fun
    - Game Night
    - Craft Night
  - Professional Development
    - Technology Sessions
    - Speakers
    - District Departments
    - Crafts
    - Legislation
  - Service
    - Military Appreciation
      - Cards for Veterans
    - Blankets, Care packages, etc.

Make Their Day!

Encourage Play!

Customers like being part of the show, and memories are created here that will bring smiles and make good stories for a long time afterward. “

3:09-3:11
Read through the slide and add as they want.

3:12-3:16
<Click> and each line will appear. Read as they appear or choose a participant to read them.
Ask participants to share Innovative ideas they have for chapter meetings.

## Communities-

DKG Visionary Networks, Teresa Cowan (Chair)

Make Their Day!
Engage!

***What communities might be welcomed within your chapter?***

Example: Book Clubs

Mentoring

Lunch/Dinner Clubs

Games

***"If you are always trying to be normal, you will never know how amazing you can be." - Maya Angelou***

Be There
(Present!

Encourage
Play!

3:16-3:20
Based on a recommendation from the Avenue M Report, DKG International is offering virtual, interest-based groups called the DKG Visionary Network. <Click on link. >Quickly share clubs being that were offered, and the new ones. Did anyone participate? Please share your experience.

How could you apply this concept to your chapters? How do you?

## Innovative Strategies to Foster a Collaborative Culture

- Connect with Other Chapters
  - Mixers / Socials
  - Unified Chapter Programs
- Communicate, Communicate, Communicate!
  - Spotlight members at meetings and in Chapter Newsletters
  - Encourage members to write articles and publish in Chapter Newsletter
  - Disseminate all DKG information happening at local, state and international levels
  - Establish a communication system to remind all members of upcoming chapter events/meetings
  - **Feedback Loops…Surveys, Informal Conversations, "Think Tanks", Communication Buddies**
- Marketing
  - Advertise meetings on campuses
  - Wear keypins or carry bags to get interest
  - Create an informational pamphlet about your chapter and the DKG Society mission and member opportunities
  - Create a list of educators and invite them to an informational DKG meeting social

***"We need diversity of thought in the world to face the new challenges." - Tim Berners-Lee***

3:20-3:23

Point out Feedback Loops-Surveys, Informal Conversations, Think Tanks/Task Force-Yay people & nay people

Give participants 1-2 minutes to review these ideas. Have them jot down and/or chat in ideas that make sense to them or they might want to try. They can add new ones if they have them.

# Resources

- Member Journey Map Member Journey Map
  - Awareness-Initial exposure
  - Consideration-Evaluation by prospective members
  - Decision: The Joining Process
  - Onboarding: Support new members
  - Engagement: Activities to retain and support members, fostering community and leadership
  - Ambassador: Engaged members take action to support the organization
- Hybrid meeting Toolkit Hybrid meeting Toolkit
- Membership Videos from International website Membership Videos from International website
- Keeping New Members Engaged Keeping New Members Engaged
- Strategies for a Positive Chapter Environment Strategies for a Positive Chapter Environment
- Generational Comparison Chart, Shawn Johnson
- Generational Stereotypes, Wheresmysunnyporch.com
- Avenue M Group DKG International Report…#Second Century DKG and Beyond
  - Source: DKG Research Report – Final – September 2, 2023

3:23-3:26

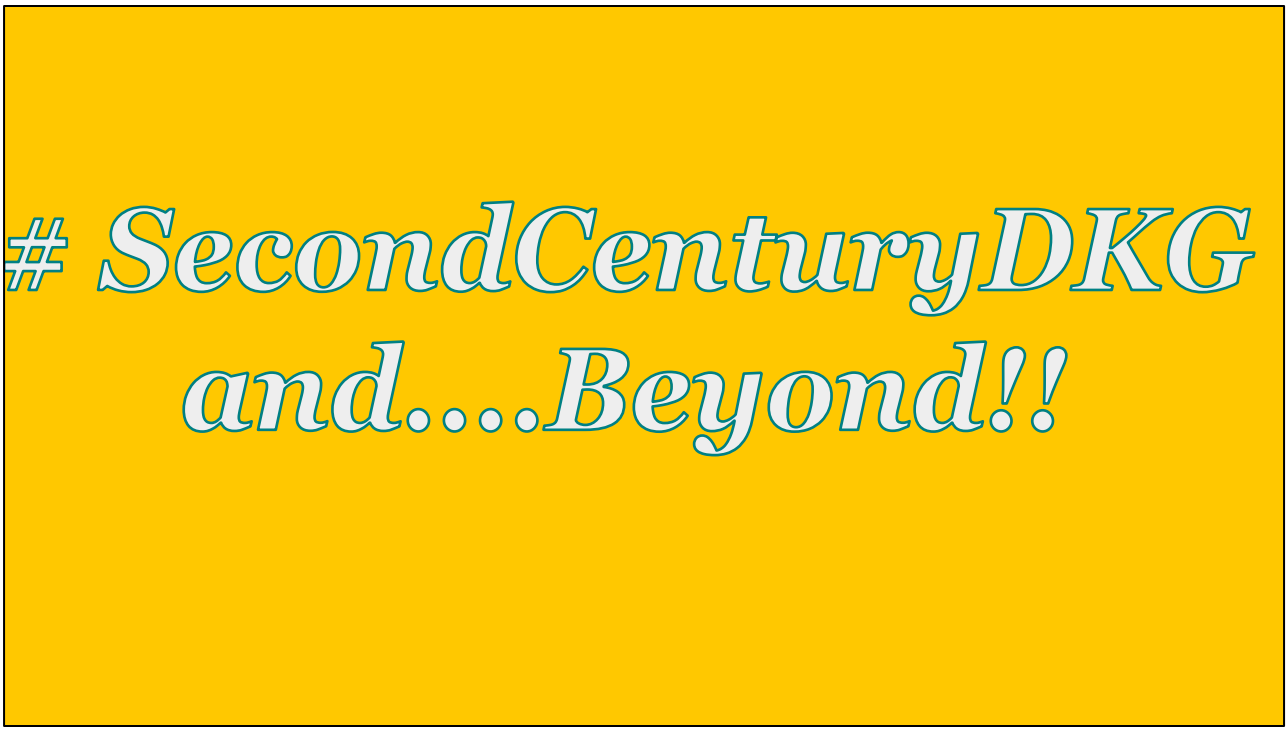
Here are some additional, interesting resources from DKG International that they can explore. The videos are a few years old, but informative.. Walk quickly through The Member Journey Map was new to me and an interesting way to explore chapter membership.

## Top Six Calls to Action

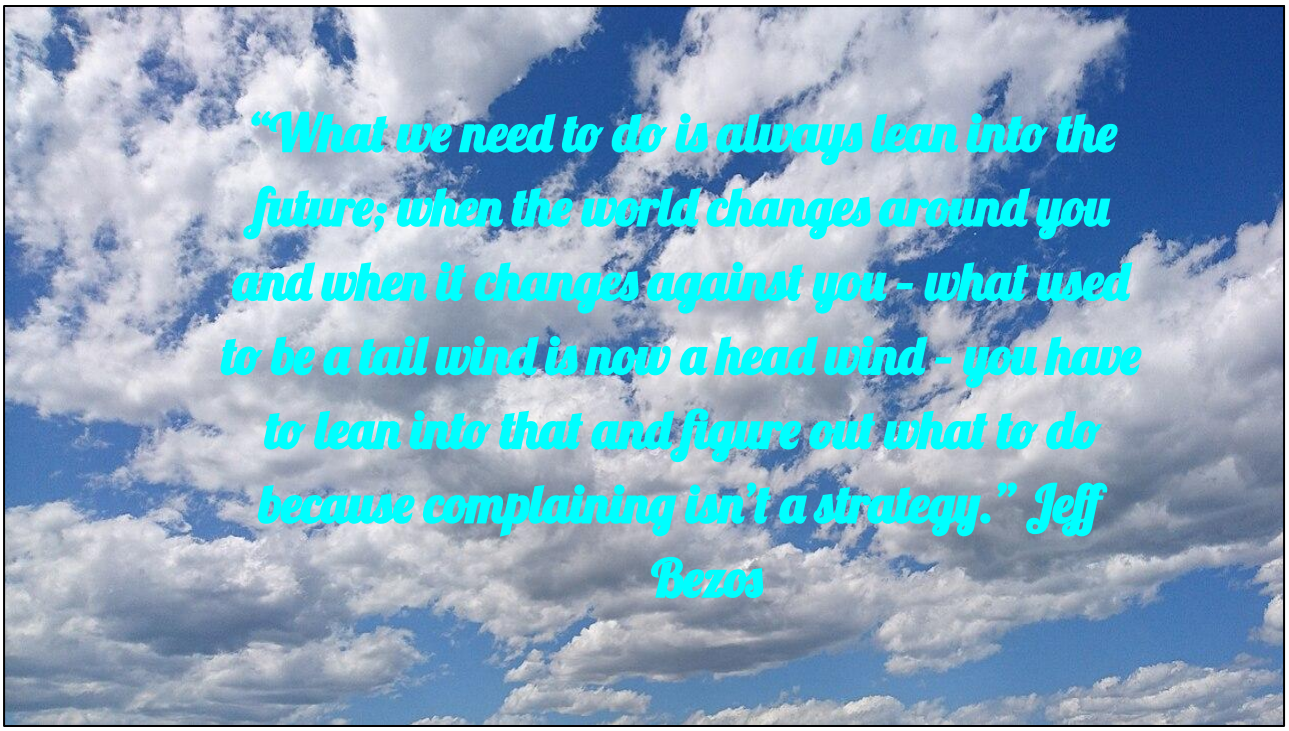
- Partnering with educational organizations to explore the crisis of educator burnout/resignations and the shortage of educators entering the profession and determine solutions. (#1)
- Identifying the increasing expectations of educators including issues affecting students outside the classroom and provide resources which can be implemented quickly and efficiently. (#2)
- Inviting a friend/colleague to join you at a chapter meeting or event. DKG Members join because they know a friend/colleague who is a member and for community/connections with other women educators. (#3)
- Improving the value of membership: provide updates on state/federal policies affecting education and improving communications about member benefits, activities, and events. (#6)
- Connecting with other women educators to find information or resources, opportunities for training/education, and opportunities for financial assistance. (#10)
- Focusing on attracting/recruiting educators to become DKG members and attracting/recruiting educators to the profession. (#11)

3:26-3:28

The DKG International Project M committee identified the 6 most important recommendations from the report to use as “Top Calls to Action.”
This slide is also in your handout.




As we move forward in DKG, we are encouraged to transition to #SecondCenturyDKG and Beyond, and how perfect is that as we focus on Innovation and Diversity in membership.




3:28
End with quote.