

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES THAT DKG CHAPTERS
MAY USE TO SUPPORT BEGINNING TEACHERS

Ideas Compiled by

Members of the Eta State Beginning Teacher Support Committee

Providing support to early career educators (those in years 1-4) is a goal of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. Also, it is a goal supported by Eta State that established a Beginning Teacher Support Committee in its new governing documents adopted in 2011. The first bulleted item below is something expected of all Eta State DKG chapters; the other items are program and project ideas to support the chapters in carrying out the goal. Each chapter and member is encouraged to add to this list by sending ideas to the Eta State Beginning Teacher Support Committee.

- Appoint a contact person responsible for guiding the chapter's efforts to support the work of the Educational Excellence and Beginning Teacher Support Committees. The name is to be reported to President Linda Little or to Vice-president Patricia Taylor. Each chapter should implement the forms to document chapter's participation in beginning teacher support; these will be sent to the Chairman of the Educational Excellence Committee and International.
- Reduce the local chapter dues of an early career teacher or help pay the state and international dues for her.
- Sponsor a reception designed to celebrate new teachers and newly tenured teachers where the chapter presents DKG and the advantages of membership.
- Provide childcare, if needed, so younger members may attend the meetings.
- Use the Working Conditions Survey (www.ncteachingconditions.org) conducted annually by DPI to identify local concerns of the beginning teachers. Chapters could survey their own members to identify what they see as the needs of early career teachers in their area and how they may focus on member recruitment in light of the needs.
- Work with members who are principals to identify ways to support their work with beginning teachers and to encourage some work and outreach at the building level.
- Sponsor beginning teachers to attend the state convention; this would not be too expensive for chapters close to the convention site (Cary in 2012).
- Set up a help website sponsored by local chapters where members can post helpful hints for new teachers.
- Solicit experienced teachers who are willing to serve as mentors for new teachers. Each chapter could contact persons in their central offices to see how they could mentor new teachers. (The state no longer funds the mentoring teacher program.) An example of a mentoring program is described in the THAT program described on the DKG website under the Educational Excellence Committee and in the Fall 2011 *Bulletin*.

- Encourage retired teachers to volunteer in the classrooms of early career teachers (many classrooms have no assistants).
- Begin to plan ways to encourage and support the attendance of early career teachers at the June 2013 Eta State Leadership Seminar being planned by the Leadership Committee.
- Explore grants that can support a workshop or conference for beginning teachers. There are many local foundations or organizations like Rotary who may support such efforts.
- Encourage beginning teachers who are members to apply for the individual Cornet Grant or Golden Gift Special Project Grant to support attendance at non-DKG conferences or to support special projects. Information is on the DKG website.
- Set up Facebook and Twitter pages and encourage members to join those set up by Eta State and International.
- Connect with new teachers by publicizing chapter activities and recognitions in the local media outlets (newspapers, free local papers, area magazines).
- Contact members who are newer in the profession more often to share information and keep them engaged.
- Encourage chapter committees to use the International website link related to beginning teacher support. One example, the THAT information that is on the international website.
- Meet first year teachers and determine from them what their 'concerns' are; see if there is anything the 'experienced more seasoned members' can help with.
- Do a survey within the school district or talk with Central Office Personnel to learn about the status of support for beginning teachers, its retention rate, etc., and plan a project to impact the local district; chapters in the same district should collaborate on this.
- Plan a chapter program around reading and discussing one of the DKG 2011 Educator Award Books of Interest (*Why Great Teachers Quit and How We Might Stop the Exodus* by Katy Farber, 2010 Corwin Press—filled with suggestions for making a difference); a chapter could then share the book with their local school officials or school board members or host a public forum on the issue.
- Continue to share gift baskets, school supplies, notes/cards, etc., as encouragement to beginning teachers and/or student teachers during these stressful school days.
- Encourage members to invite early career teachers to attend the Eta State Legislative Day, if held, and to get to know their representatives in order to address key issues. Encourage all members to complete the survey and review plans from the Educational Law and Policy Committee. Invite the representatives from your area to a meeting to let them hear from the teachers.
- Invite school board members to meet with the chapter to discuss local education issues related to beginning teachers; could invite teacher recruiters to share what they do and how a chapter could support their efforts.

Activities shared by Eta State Chapters:

We organized a reception in honor of the beginning teachers in our school system. The theme of the social was centered on Christmas. We had a tree decorated with sticky notes and pens for each BT to take. We also had goodies such as punch, nuts, sausage balls, and cake squares. BT's were given a questionnaire to complete. Our plans include using this information to provide support to our BT's throughout the school year. Information regarding Delta Kappa Gamma was shared with the group. The BT Chairman thanked the teachers for the job they do each day and emphasized the influence a teacher has upon the lives of children. A news clip was shown with Cindi Rigsby, NC Teacher of the Year. She was featured on Good Morning America and was in search of a special teacher that made a great difference in her life. She described the importance of being a teacher and the influence this one teacher had on her life. The teachers in attendance enjoyed this video clip and said they too wanted to impact others in the same way. (Submitted by Gloria Sherman)