



DISTRICT LEADER BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Candidate's Name: **Alicia Smith-Kirk, DTM**

Candidate's Office: **District Director** District Number: **10**

Toastmasters member since: **October 1, 2012**

Education:

Academic: Purdue University Global Alumni, Bachelor's of Science, Communications Major; MBA Finance Major expected graduation 2021
Industry Specific: Cecchetti Council of America, Licensed Ballet Instructor; Dance Masters of America Certified Ballet, Tap, Jazz Instructor, Acrobatic Arts Certified and Yoga/Pilates Certified
Toastmasters Traditional Program Awards (15) - CC, CC, ACB, ACB, ACS, ACG, CL, CL, CL, CL, ALB, ALB, ALS, DTM, LDREXC
Pathways: Dynamic Leadership (DL1, DL2, DL3, DL4, DL5) and Persuasive Influence (PI1, PI2, PI3, PI4) completed, (PI5 pending); Motivational Strategies and Visionary Communication enrolled.

Toastmasters offices held and terms of service:

District Leader Service: Area 51 Director (2015-16), Northern Division Director (2016-17), Pathways Guide (2017-2018), Club Growth Director (Dec. 2018-June 2019), Program Quality Director (July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020)
Westlake Toastmasters - VP Education (2013-14 & 2017-18, Presidents Dist.) VP Public Relations (2017-Distinguished); VP Membership (2019, President's Dist.), President (2019-2020 President's Dist. pending)
Top of the Town Advanced - President (2017-18, Presidential Dist.); Sergeant-at-arms, (2020)
CWRU Spartans Toastmasters - President (2016-17), (2017-18-Select Dist.), Secretary (2018-19, Distinguished), VP Education (2019-2020); Treasurer (2020),

Toastmasters honors and recognition:

District Director Award Recipient - PDD, Tim Juda, 2018; PDD, Dave Wiley, 2017
2017 Fall Conference Co-Chair Recognition, 2017-18 Pathways Guide Award-Toastmasters International 2017-18 Triple Crown Award, 2017-18 Triple Crown Sponsor Award, Has competed at the club, area and division levels and also won several Toastmasters Speech Contests.
Membership Sponsor History: 2019-2020, (3 Members); 2018-2019, (7 Members), 2017-2018, (5 Members)
Talk up Toastmasters: Westlake Toastmasters 497 (2016-17)
Beat the Clock: CWRU Spartans TM (2017-18); Top of the Town ADV TM (2017-18 & 2018-19); Westlake Toastmasters 497 (2018-19)
Club Sponsor and Club Coach Awards

Relevant work experience and how it relates to Toastmasters and your role as a District officer:

1) Franklin Bank-MI, Human Resources Department, VP Training: Duties to train and transition executive employees of three bank branches into the windows platform for required bank specific software use. This responsibility relates directly to my role as a potential trio member responsible to increase current members and new members knowledge and comfort level of Toastmaster's International professional development opportunities across the board. 2) American Tap Dance Foundation - NYC Festival Youth Director: Planning, scheduling and coordinating a diverse group of youth performers throughout the United States, Scotland, Germany, Brazil, the Philippines, Japan and other countries to perform in NYC celebrating the art form of tap dance. Managing multiple events running concurrently in different locations throughout New York City was a great experience in the multi-faceted level of planning required to achieve seamless excellence in each production.

What experience do you have in strategic planning?

Strategic planning is a pillar of leadership that requires discipline and persistence. In addition to my Toastmasters Leadership accomplishments, I have planned dozens of Dance Recitals with 300-400 attendees here in Ohio and upwards of 500-1,000 in Michigan years prior. A Dance Recital entails, students, their teachers, parents and extended families understanding all required information in a timely manner especially cost related needs such as costumes, recital spotlight ads, dancewear, dance shoes, pictures, flowers, etc. There are monthly benchmarks that indicate being "on track" for a stellar show. Students need to learn technique in classes to execute choreography on stage under the lights, excitement and sometimes nerves of large audiences. I have strategically trained dancers to preparedness to win large scale competitions repeatedly over the years locally, regionally and nationally while managing student and parent expectations and studio brand pride. I have also trained and prepared 100s of students to successfully examine in classical ballet from beginner to professional level in front of International Examiners. As an athletic coach, there are multiple layers of planning that goes into managing teams that travel for competitive athletic events. I have successfully led and coached these athletic and competition teams over a couple decades. Many of the students who were on my teams are successful adults leading their own teams in academic, artistic industries or in their own families. They keep in touch with me sharing the impact I had on their lives with gratitude appreciating that push they needed to go to the next level.

What experience do you have in the area of finance?

In the area of finance, I am familiar with basic accounting. I have created and implemented budgets. I understand the reality of planning, developing and staying within the budget. The negative consequences that could come from being over budget. My goal is to always land in the black. Even if the circumstances take me into the red, before the deadline, I adjust my budget then aggressively pursue a new strategy to raise the additional funds that ultimately lands on target within the budget. My role as Co-Chair of the 2017 Fall Conference is an example of how my team and I followed this process to exceed expectations by finishing with a surplus. As a Trio member both in the role of Club Growth Director 2018-2019 and now in the role of Program Quality Director, 2019-2020, I understand the importance of and participate in the implementation of budgetary projection. Determining when we need to spend money versus when expenses will get reimbursed and most importantly that all budgetary dollars are for us to invest in activities to fulfill our District Mission of building new clubs and supporting all clubs in achieving excellence while we maintain a district reserve to support expenses related to the functionality of running the district.

What experience do you have in developing procedures?

I have had a lot of experience in developing procedures. As an entrepreneur, I've been a sole proprietor or partner in an LLC, an officer in a nonprofit corporation and an independently contracted professional. I've been a part of development with every employer or director I've worked with or for. A recent experience was working with City officials of a local Recreation Department to bring new programs to fill the void of a lack of programming for girls at the rec center. The Director and his Team enthusiastically embraced the program I developed for their center and have implemented it for the city. One important aspect of developing procedures is having a backup plan in case you need it. I've had to re-negotiated contracts to augment the procedures after analyzing the outcomes. The new procedure is more efficient for both parties and the relationship continues. The most important part are the people who will work with you on procedural implementation. Having an exit plan for all parties to end or transition working relationships amicably provides a bridge for future collaboration.

What lessons did you learn from previous leadership positions?

The biggest lesson I've learned is not to take things personally and Plan A will not always work out. Some people may not like you and sometimes the best plans fail. Preparation in leadership is a key element to avoid these types of pitfalls. This includes having strong mutual support through building teams, standing on your core principles and being ready to implement Plan B. I have become stronger as a person and more effective as a leader through this learning process of leadership in Toastmasters and in life. Another key lesson I learned is to build your pipeline and strengthen your bench. Life happens to all of us and having a prepared backup is what keeps excellent outcomes during difficult transitions. It does take time and it is a process. Be sure to remain positive, open minded and actively listen to those you're working with. Strength of progress lies in diversity of effort. Even though it's natural to gravitate toward people "like you," you cannot grow when everyone constantly agrees with you. It's a good thing to be challenged; this is a stepping stone toward deeper growth.

Why do you want to serve as a district officer?

I want to be a district officer again this year and serve as District 10 District Director 2020-2021! Each year I have served in district leadership there have been two distinct outcomes. One, I was able to impact and help many people achieve their goals and two, those same people inspired me even more to achieve my goals. I am filled with deep pride in our District for its past accomplishments, it's present strides of growth and change and the future vision I can see for each one of us as we elevate our own lives, contribute to the lives of others and achieve goals that used to be dreams. As District Director, my passion to connect people and provide leadership opportunities align directly with Toastmasters International's tagline, "Where Leaders Are Made." My understanding of how a Toastmasters District is structured at the District, Division, Area, and Club level with the main focus on our "Members First" and "Core Values Always," will resonate throughout all of my leadership decisions. As leaders in District 10, finding the balance between the "work of the job" and the "fun of the job" is what will be the key factor to the "success of the job." I would like to lead this effort. This is why I want to serve as a District Director this year!

In your opinion, what are the district mission's major objectives and how would you work to achieve them?

In my opinion, our District Mission has two objectives: to build new clubs (Club Growth) and to support all clubs in achieving excellence (Program Quality). The way I will work to achieve these goals is strategically. Our Trio team will be supported by 5 Elected Division Directors and 24 Appointed Area Directors. Additionally, the members of the Club Growth Team and the Program Quality Team will play an instrumental role in synergistically moving our district in the direction of achieving goals. There are two key teams in club growth: Extension and Retention. There are 4 key areas of focus for program quality: Education, Training, Conference and Contests. Following our Toastmasters International calendar of deadlines helps navigate us and keeps us on course. Recognizing the potential obstacles are important. The two biggest obstacles in my opinion are time and conflict resolution styles. If the leadership team is cohesive and effective, it sets the tone for a trickle down effect district-wide. Two powerful tools we need to use are SMART goals and FUN! Keeping our goals specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound builds confidence in the little wins as we gain momentum to the big ones. A focus on fun follows our founders philosophy, "We learn best in moments of enjoyment." -Dr. Ralph Smedley.

Additional information about yourself:

I'm an enthusiastic person. I love life and enjoy sharing it with others. As a leader, I am careful not to ask others to do something I'm not willing to do. It's not about bossing someone around, holding a title, or pointing fingers. I bring enthusiasm, encouragement and support to make the process memorable and fun. Like exercise, leadership experience strengthens you; it changes you. In order to get the physique you seek, you will have to endure sweat, elevated heart rate, muscle burning, but the best part is how you feel afterwards and when you see the results. My personal statement of self-awareness...My life is a journey filled with successes and failures. My successes give me confidence in my ability to achieve. My failures challenge my willingness to persevere. Along the way, they both make me a better person. Favorite Quote: "Pride is doing your best work, even when no one is watching." -author unknown.