Key Club Teens Take on State, Regional Roles

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Kodiak High School is no stranger to clubs and organizations. The list runs the gamut, but few have the worldwide backing of Key Club International. Key Club is a student-led organization that focuses on community service. Sara Thomas is a senior at KHS and active Key Club member. She said the Kodiak club is one of many across the state, country and world.

“So you have what are called districts across the United States and internationally. And a district includes several states. The Pacific Northwest, which Alaska is a part of, happens to be one of the largest. So it’s students who are taking initiative and taking leadership. And we just do service. And we really value being involved in our communities, being involved in our global community, our local community. And doing service in any shape or form. I think Kodiak’s charter in particular; we do a variety of things. When people ask specifically what we do, we’ll get emails and calls for service projects and we’ll send volunteers. And I think that’s something really endearing to see in high schoolers. We’re taking initiative, not only that but we’re also taking leadership roles.”

While active in Key Club locally, Thomas’ role in the organization spans well beyond the archipelago. As the District Editor for the Pacific Northwest, Thomas trains editors throughout a region that encompasses Alaska, Canada, Washington, Idaho, Oregon and Northern California. She is charged with publishing four magazines each year, which are distributed to more than 23,000 high schooler students around the country. The magazines summarize what chapters across the region are up to, and include other bits of information relevant to Key Club.

Last year Thomas served as Lieutenant Governor of the Alaska Yukon South District, a position now held by Kodiak Junior Tahna Lindquist. While also active in Kodiak’s Key Club, Lindquist role as lieutenant governor allows her to works with 11 other schools around Alaska, connecting the clubs and their members. Sometimes this means traveling up to the mainland to meet with different clubs — something she’ll be doing this weekend.

“And we’re holding an Alaska rally. So I’ll have a whole bunch of schools joining and we’ll have different presentations on how officers can do their jobs, and we’ll also have a motivational speaker and we’ll have a service project. It’s just a way to bring the schools closer together and the Key Clubs closer together to realize it’s not just within the club, it’s bigger than that and when we bring everyone together how much we can do.”)

In many ways, Key Club is Kiwanis Club for high school students. In fact, Thomas said traditionally Kiwanis Clubs will sponsor local Key

Clubs, which is what happens here in Kodiak.

“They really believe that children
are the first and foremost priority in their organization. So each Key
Club has a Kiwanis sponsoring club. So we have our local charter and
they support us and they help us with service projects. And it’s a real
blessing to have that. And it just establishes a sense of community
within your community a little bit, just knowing that adults also care
for you. And some of the most influential people in my life have been
Kiwanis members. And they really just care so much about what we’re
doing and that’s why their organization exists to some level. They also
do other things, they also serve in the community as adults, but they
really do a great service to us as service members.”

Tyler Canete-Hall is a senior KHS and president of the Key Club. He
said there are about 20 truly dedicated members and they meet once a
week during lunch periods to plan and discuss service opportunities. He
said Key Club has played a huge role in his life, and he’ll absolutely
take the tools and values he gained there with him throughout life.

“This is just amazing, what we do.
And I’ve kind of noticed, like around the school, some kids are almost
afraid to help. Like if you see a kid fall down, people just kind of
look at everyone else, like, ‘oh.’ We talk about this in psychology too,
that there’s this expectation that everyone thinks that someone else is
going to help so they just kind of hold back. But Key Club, I’m not
afraid to help out. It’s kind of amazing. I don’t know how else to
explain it, it’s really cool.”

In December the Key Club will help out with Kiwanis’ annual
Christmas tree sale. Trees will be available on December 6 starting at 5
p.m. at the Worldwide Movers building on Bartel Avenue. The sale will
continue on various days through December with different times for each
day. You can get more information and specific dates and times by
emailing Kodiak Kiwanis at gmail dot com.