



# The LOOP

WINTER 2022/SPRING 2023

## THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE

“A LEADER IS ONE WHO KNOWS THE WAY,  
GOES THE WAY, AND SHOWS THE WAY.”

- JOHN MAXWELL

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# LOOP

**A periodical of District 103 Toastmasters covering Downtown Chicago along with the South and West sides of Chicago & suburbs. Providing inspired information since 2022.**

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Cassandra Lee, DTM aka the Diva of Dialog



Loop Fall/Winter2022

## EDITORS' NOTES

Happy New Year D103 family and Friends. A few years back I did away with making New Year's resolutions. Instead I decided to set intentions for the year to come. I begin considering my intention for the new year about three months before new years day. I begin taking actions that align with this intention about two months before new years day. This way the intention naturally becomes a part of my daily life before the new year arrives.



Alhaji Abubakar  
2022-2023 Loop Editor in Chief

A profound learning has come from this practice: I don't have to wait for a particular point in time (for instance, the start of the new year) to begin incorporating change into my life. Change begins when we decide. It can take one year, one month or in an instant. It's always your choice. We don't have to wait until the start of the new year to become a new person.

*So who are you becoming today?*

*Alhaji Abubakar  
2022-2023 Loop Editor in Chief*

Much like our Editor in Chief, I abstained from making New Year's resolutions. Part of that is because I wind up breaking resolutions in some colossal way. A good example is when I made a resolution to reduce or eliminate profanity. For a very short bit, I was doing well. However, it took one person who cut me off in traffic and another who sat at a green light longer than necessary to throw that one out the window.

Fast forward to now. I am working toward a larger goal of home ownership. In order to make that happen, I will need to juggle a lot of pieces. Clean up credit, pay off bills, search for funding, and, if I am looking at a new build, researching things like properties, HOA, and all of that stuff.

What does that have to do with leadership? Simple. Decisiveness has to come into play. Waffling about will put you in a position to miss something that would help you achieve your goal(s). In the case of house hunting, I have plans A, B, and C ready. In leadership, you must always have contingencies in place when things go awry with your strategic plan. This will ensure you are able to make a decision that will be good for everyone involved, and be prepared to execute on that plan if and when things change.



Prince Leftridge, II; DTM  
2022-2023 D103 Loop Layout Editor  
©2014 Martha Brock Photography

*What are your contingencies when things go awry?*

*Prince Leftridge, II  
2022-2023 Loop Layout /Graphics Editor*

# Leave Your Marquee on the World in 2023!

*Shanita Akintonde*

*2022-2023 District 103 Public Relations Manager*



A New Year signals movement. As we enter 2023, factor travel into your plans. Trips to the kitchen do not count (unless you're getting ice cream)!

Travel allows you to hold your reflection against "the mirror of the world." You unlock who you are in every place that you visit. It forces you to test yourself in different environments. The universe becomes your Marquee. My company, ShanitaSpeaks, LLC, is an international media enterprise that provides creative, educational content that energizes business groups, youth groups, women, and fellow speakers to make their MARK on the world. I am honored to have traveled to over five countries and 40 states as an invited professional speaker to deliver keynote addresses, workshops, and seminars to SRO audiences that range from Ohio to Ottawa, Houston to Honolulu, Baltimore to Boston, and San Francisco to South Africa. In 2023, I will add Paris to the list. I also plan to return to one of my favorite vacation spots--the Bahamas. This time the foray will include sunshine AND speeches, as it will be for the Toastmasters International Conference on August 16-19, 2023.

Being a member of Toastmasters International, Inc. sharpens your worldview. With every speech you write, practice, and deliver, you pinch a bit more of your personality to share with humanity. Your beliefs are actualized, a spirit realized.

I felt that way in September 2022 when I established the FIRST female-focused charter club in D103 history-- Leading Ladies!

Our 25-member club is some of the most talented, creative, and intelligent members of Toastmasters. Our tagline is: "Leave Your Marquee on the World!" which is what members do. LL Charter Member and Sergeant-at-Arms, Junchi Lu, won first place in a dance contest at our first in-person meeting that Veuve Clicquot hosted. Another LL Charter Member, Victoria Rock, coached a female entrepreneur through a successful pitch session that garnered the winner thousands of dollars in revenue potential. And yours truly is in negotiation for a few exciting ventures that I plan to announce to the entire Toastmasters family very soon!

Toastmasters International Inc. allows speakers to travel across the communication landscape while equipped with enough topics to spread across a million tables (or Zoom screens). All one needs to do is pack their speaker's suitcase.

On Thursday, February 23, 2023 at 6 p.m. the Leading Ladies Club will discuss the book, Move with author Gregory Thomas, CSP. All Toastmasters are welcome. You can reach out to us on LinkedIn at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/d103leadingladies/>. Here's to YOU leaving your Marquee on the world in 2023!!!



## District 103 PRM

# Shanita Akintonde

put on her travel pants for the  
Cancun Jazz fest  
in November 2022

# DISTRICT DIRECTOR'S NOTE

DIONNE LEGGIN, DTM

2022-2023 DISTRICT DIRECTOR

It's a New Year. 2023. And the first thing that comes to mind when we transition from one year to another is CHANGE. We see several other media outlets giving us tips on how to embrace change and how to prepare for a successful New Year. However, what happens when you're not ready for something to change or you were not prepared? I am currently going through one of the toughest seasons in my life, and that is due to the recent passing of my father. To know my daddy, LaVelle Johnson, is to know what joy felt like along with a stomachache due to all the laughing you would do in his presence. Now that he has transitioned, "CHANGE" has come knocking at my door, and unlike any other change in my life, I have had to lean on the guard rails of my faith, family, and friends during this time.

As a leader and caregiver, I often feel as if I have to have my hands in everything. When my daddy passed, and even a bit before, I felt obliged to take on everything. However, I knew this was going to just lead to burnout and unresolved emotions. So, as hard as it was, I leaned on my loved ones. Whether it was assisting with funeral arrangements, helping me with house chores, addressing financial tasks or just simply checking in on my mom for me.

Sometimes as leaders, we are so quick to say, "I'll do it myself," or continue to lurk in the background without trusting someone with a task



wholeheartedly. The willingness to continue to "roll up our sleeves" might work in the beginning, but the long-term effects could lead to burn out and unwarranted stress. Sometimes as leaders we have to open our eyes; listen, empower, and mentor those around us and become vulnerable and trustworthy enough to give them the space to grow, learn and eventually lead on their own. I personally believe this is a lesson that many of our Toastmasters leaders can benefit from, and that is you can't do everything by yourself. It will not work. Step aside, accept help and let others

execute. And also understand, people are always not going to do things exactly how you would; maybe they have new ideas on how to lead club meetings or new strategies for gaining new members. Whatever it is, invite those new concepts.

Of course, this is not easy. Especially if you are someone who has been holding down a position and taking on a role for quite some time. However, to be a great leader you have to learn how to delegate. The world we live in gives high regard to strength and endurance but taking on everything is unrealistic. I'm continuing to learn this, not only as a leader in Toastmasters, but also as a mother, wife, and daughter. As much as I want to do it all, I cannot and will not. Instead, I am going to try my hardest to not always whip out my superwoman cape, slow down, delegate and not only ride this season of grief but embrace the change and indescribable love that comes along with it.

## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

*Nominations are needed no later than 11:59 p.m. on January 31, 2023.*

Here are the district leadership roles in which you can nominate yourself or a fellow Toastmaster:

- District Director
- Program Quality Director
- Club Growth Director
- Central South (B) Division Director
- Central North (C) Division Director
- Central East (F) Division Director
- Central West (G) Division Director
- South (S) Division Director

*Scan for Officer Agreement & Release Form*



*Scan for Candidate Application Form*



If you are interested in applying for one of the above positions, please scan the above QR Codes for the Officer Agreement & Release and Candidate Application Forms. More information is provided in the most recent district email.

# PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR'S NOTES

SAM SUKUMAR, DTM



Fall is here and surely is having its signature way of announcing its arrival — a play between dampness in the air and the bright sunlight, the rustling sound as we walk on dry leaves and the vibrant colors of the leaves just before they glide down. As Toastmasters, the fall season is a reminder for us to fast track and achieve the 2022 goals we set for ourselves.

As Program Quality Director (aka PQD), I have been constantly monitoring members' progression through Pathways — enrollment, engagement and excellence. I am proud to share our District is doing well with all these 3 Es. All credit to the Vice Presidents of Education of our clubs for their commitment and work done in this space. Thank you, VPEs.

A few of our members are so very driven and committed along their Pathways journey. They truly deserve to be applauded for their high Pathways level completions this Toastmasters year. The top three level completion achievers are:

1. 10 levels completed - Sheila Edens-Brown, EC5, PM5, Toastmasters of Palos Heights (Sheila has also

completed the Pathways mentor program)

2. 6 Levels completed - Christine Gomez, DL5, PM1, The Lynda Morrill Club

3. 5 Levels completed - AlyceAnn Crump, DTM, Extreme Possibilities Toastmasters Club

From July 2022 to September 2022, we had 108 level completions for 87 clubs in our district. This is a good achievement. However, it averages to just over 1 level completion per club. I strongly believe we could be doing better.

For District 103 to be a viable district, we would need to achieve a certain number of level completions for each level (Table 1).

Pathways Level	Goal to achieve by June 30, 2022	Monthly avg. needed to achieve goal
Level 1	176	15
Level 2	176	15
Level 3	88	8
Level 4	44	4
Level 5	44	4

Table 1: Pathways Level Completions for D103 clubs, July 2022 – June 2023

**For more information, please reach out to the following:**

**S52: Barbara Barreno-Paschall**  
[areas52director@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:areas52director@d103toastmasters.org)

**S53: Germain Walker**  
[areas53director@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:areas53director@d103toastmasters.org)

**S54: Robert McKenzie**  
[areas54director@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:areas54director@d103toastmasters.org)

# PROGRAM QUALITY DIRECTOR'S NOTES

SAM SUKUMAR, DTM

Table 2 tells us where we are for the first quarter of the current Toastmasters year, and also where we should be. We are doing extremely well on completions for levels 4 and 5, great job! Keep it up, and let's all encourage and support our fellow members who are working through levels 1, 2 and 3. As you can see, doing the math to achieve our target totals for the year, we should have 15 level 1 completions, and 15 level 2 completions, across D103 every month. With this in mind and knowing your club's composition, I am sure you all can come up with appropriate strategies to complete more levels 1 and 2.

Table 2: Quarterly Level Completions as of September 30, 2022 – Targeted Compared with Actual

Pathways Level	Level Compl. Targeted by Sept 30, 2022	Actual Compl. as of 9/30/2022	Difference
Level 1	45	28	-17
Level 2	45	19	-26
Level 3	24	20	-4
Level 4	12	25	+13
Level 5	12	16	+4

A club-wise breakdown lookup indicates 53 of our clubs do not yet have a single level completion this Toastmasters year, which started in July 2022. We hope this means that members are giving their speeches – but perhaps have not remembered to log back into Base Camp and complete the post-assessment? If so, easy enough to remind members, and have them trigger the level completion process when they have done all their speeches for that level! Please reach out to your Club Officers, Area Directors and myself should you need any support to progress through Pathways. Find your leaders and their email addresses on our D103 leadership page: <https://www.d103toastmasters.org/about/leadership/>.

Remember that another key resource for our district is the D103 Pathways Specialist team: <https://www.d103toastmasters.org/education-training/programs/pathways/specialists/> Training sessions are scheduled throughout the year; check your email for information from District 103, or check the D103 website calendar: <https://www.d103toastmasters.org/calendar/>.

Wishing you well as you cruise along your Pathways journey.

kindest regards,  
Sam Sukumar

## WINTER 2022 CLUB LEADERSHIP TRAINING MAKEUP SESSIONS

If you missed the dynamic TLI sessions on November 5th, December 10th, and December 15th, don't worry.

Scan one of the two QR codes to register for one or both of the final makeup sessions.

Each of these sessions is designed to supercharge your club toward becoming Distinguished or better.

If you need more information or have questions, please email AlyceAnn Crump at [divisioncdirector@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:divisioncdirector@d103toastmasters.org) or Cheryl Lane at [divisionfdirector@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:divisionfdirector@d103toastmasters.org)

**DIVISION C**  
HOSTED BY: ALYCEANN CRUMP  
MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2023



**DIVISION F**  
HOSTED BY: CHERYL LANE  
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023



# 2023 D103 ANNUAL HYBRID CONFERENCE

DRIVE YOUR VISION TO A HIGHER GROUND

## UPDATE: Save-the-Date!!

The 2023 District 103 Annual Hybrid Conference is set for **April 21-22, 2023** at the beautiful and classy Elements by The Odyssey, 16232 LaGrange Road, Orland Park, IL 60467. Overnight accommodations at the adjacent Homewood Suites by Hilton are available to attendees at a conference reduced rate.

D103 Conference Manager, Elizabeth L. Stevenson, DTM, announces this year's theme is: "**Drive Your Vision to a Higher Ground.**"

Conference registration will open next month and members will be able to sign up to attend the Annual Conference. Benefits of attending include: networking opportunities with fellow Toastmasters and District Leaders; opportunities to hear proficient speakers compete in the Evaluation Speech and the International Speech Contests; and the chance to elect the 2023-2024 District leadership team.

The keynote speaker and education session speakers will be announced at the time of registration. New this year: sponsorship opportunities.

Plan to "**Drive Your Vision to a Higher Ground**" at the 2023 D103 Annual Virtual Hybrid Conference!

There are also opportunities for you to be a part of the conference planning. Volunteers are needed in multiple roles. Simply contact Elizabeth L. Stevenson at [confmgr@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:confmgr@d103toastmasters.org) for more information.

A gallery of venue photos is on the next page.

Check back with the D103 *The Loop* for more updates, opportunities to volunteer, and details on sponsorship opportunities. Don't forget to save the date: **April 21-22, 2023!!**

Yours in service,  
Elizabeth L. Stevenson, DTM<sup>2</sup>, MS5  
[confmgr@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:confmgr@d103toastmasters.org)

2023 D103 ANNUAL HYBRID  
CONFERENCE  
DRIVE YOUR VISION TO A HIGHER GROUND

## VOLUNTEERS WANTED!



THERE ARE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO BE A PART OF PLANNING THE 2023 D103 ANNUAL HYBRID CONFERENCE. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED IN MULTIPLE ROLES TO HELP DRIVE THE VISION TO A HIGHER GROUND. SIMPLY CONTACT ELIZABETH L. STEVENSON AT [CONFMGR@D103TOASTMASTERS.ORG](mailto:confmgr@d103toastmasters.org) FOR MORE INFORMATION.

*Volunteers needed in the following areas:*

*Registration • First Timers • DTM Ceremony • Floaters  
Tech Committee • Awards*

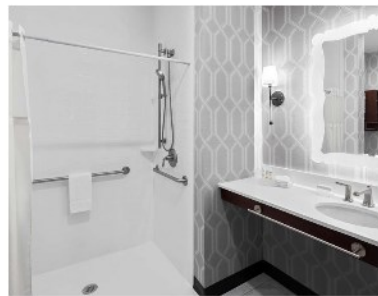
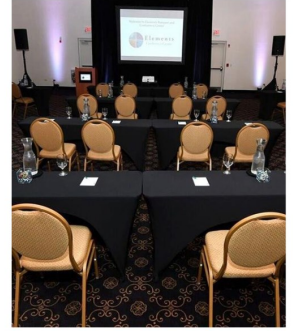
*.....and many more*

# 2023 D103 ANNUAL HYBRID CONFERENCE

DRIVE YOUR VISION TO A HIGHER GROUND



*elements*  
BY THE ODYSSEY



  
**HOMWOOD  
SUITES**  
Hilton







# CLUB CONTEST SEASON IS UPON US!!

## Benefits of competing in the upcoming Evaluation & International Speech Contests

- Speech contests are a great way to further develop your speaking and leadership skills
- Speech contests are a challenge in areas such as time management and other things we learn in Toastmasters
- Stretches your creativity and sharpens your storytelling
- An achievement all can take pride from being a part of and enjoy as well, while building a network of companions



Won't you take your next challenge and compete?



## D103 Contest Season Has Begun!

Area S51 & S54	January 14, 2023	9am CST
Area G93	January 21, 2023	10am CST
Area G92 & G94	January 28, 2023	2pm CST
Area F81 & F83	February 1, 2023	TBD
Area F82 & F84	February 4, 2023	10am CST
Area C21	February 5, 2023	10am CST
Area C22	February 11, 2023	9am CST
Area S52, S53, & S54	February 11, 2023	10am CST
Area B14	February 11, 2023	10am CST
Area B11	February 18, 2023	10am CST
Area B12 & B13	February 25, 2023	10am CST



Scan The QR-Code To Access D103 Events Calendar For A Full Listing Of Area & Division Contest Dates, Times, & Registration Links.

**TOASTMASTERS**  
INTERNATIONAL®

# CLUB GROWTH DIRECTOR'S NOTES

DUSHUN MOSLEY, DTM



This is the time of year when we turn our attention to helping people and realizing “what is our place in life.” Believing in ourselves is key to open the door to success in our lives — doing things we haven’t done before, and making sure that what we have done is successful.

Nature reminds us that there is an orderly process by which things work. Plants blossom in the spring and summer; in the fall, they lose their flowers, but the fall foliage breaks out in brilliant colors.

Everything has a process, including Toastmasters. In Toastmasters, October signals a new membership dues cycle; we practice and have speech contests; and we even bring in new members and help them blossom into better speakers and leaders.

Remember the promises you made when you first became a Toastmaster. It’s not just about being a member. It’s about belonging. It’s about working on how to make better speeches. How to be better leaders, and help others do the same. Doing the work when called upon. Acting within the core values of integrity, respect, service and excellence during the conduct

of all Toastmasters activities. And inviting guests to meetings, for them to also benefit.

Just being a member is not enough – yes, we must pay our dues, and step up to leadership when called upon within our clubs and district. For speech contests, if you’re not stepping up to compete, take a role to help facilitate the contest. Study to be a successful leader – in your club, your district, at home, in your community. And enjoy this learning journey – as Toastmasters founder Ralph Smedley said: “We learn best in moments of enjoyment.”

The Toastmasters Pathways educational program can help us reach our personal communication and leadership goals. And by reaching our personal goals, our clubs will reach their goals, and our Areas and Divisions will reach their goals. With our clubs, Areas and Divisions reaching their goals, can you just hear District 103 bursting out in song to celebrate our members’ achievements!

This is the season to grow not die, please stay on top of WHY you wanted to be a Toastmaster. Remember: “Ain’t no half stepping.” Be the best you can be. Make the most of your membership.

## CLUB COACHES NEEDED

*Ready for Your Next Challenge?*

### *Benefits of being a Club Coach*

- *Using your skills to rebuild or strengthen a club*
- *Getting credit toward your DTM for Coaching*
- *2022-2023 District Service Credit*

*If you are interested in taking up this challenge, please contact the D103 Club Retention Chair, Martha Brock-Leftridge for more information.*





# 2022 - 2023 District 103 Club Growth Committee

**Martha Brock-Leftridge; DTM<sup>®</sup>**  
**Retention Chair**

The Club Coach Program is intended to partner experienced Toastmasters with a club that may be struggling. The purpose of this program is to help clubs increase their membership and improve the quality of their meetings. This year, Toastmasters International has revamped the Club Coach program and has added a greater incentive for members to coach clubs.

This 40–90-minute module is divided into two chapters.

Chapter I: Introduction to the Club Coach Program provides an overview of the program for club members, club officers, District leaders, and prospective club coaches.

Chapter II: Becoming a Club Coach looks more deeply at the requirements of the program.

Completion of both chapters is a requirement to participate in the Club Coach Program. Other eligibility requirements include:

Have completed, at a minimum:

- Level 2 in a path, Advanced Leader Bronze, or Advanced Communicator Bronze
- Are not currently coaching any other club

- Are not a current member of the club they wish to coach
- Have not been a member of the club to be coached during the past 6 months

Assuming the prospective club coach meets the eligibility requirements, they will:

- Be appointed by Toastmasters International headquarters to start their club coach term
- Serve as a club coach for a minimum of 6 months, up to a maximum of 2 program years
- Help the club reach Distinguished status (or better) in the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) during their club coach term

Clubs that are interested in needing a coach must meet the following requirements:

- Must have between 3 and 12 members
- Cannot be suspended
- Cannot have 2 club coaches currently appointed

Once a club has reached Distinguished or better, the coach is not only eligible for the coaching credit but also the credit for District Service. For more information, register to attend the club coach training on Thursday, January 27, 2023, 8:00 pm CST to get more information on being a club coach.

## CLUB COACH TRAINING

*Are you interested in becoming a club coach but have questions or don't know where to begin?  
Are you a club wondering if a club coach is needed to steer the club toward success?*

Both of these pertinent questions and many others will be answered during the Club Coach Training Session scheduled for Friday, January 27, 2023 at 7:00 pm Central Time

If you are interested in attending, please scan the QR code to register.

### *Requirements to be a Club Coach*

- Have completed, at a minimum: Level 2 in a Path, Advanced Leader Bronze, or Advanced Communicator Bronze
- Are not currently coaching any other club
- Are not a current member of the club they wish to coach
- Have not been a member of the club to be coached during the past 6 months
- Be appointed by Toastmasters International headquarters to start their club coach term
- Serve as a club coach for a minimum of 6 months, up to a maximum of 2 program years
- Help the club reach Distinguished status (or better) in the Distinguished Club Program (DCP) during their club coach term

**Questions? Please email Martha Brock-Leftridge at [CRChair@D103toastmasters.org](mailto:CRChair@D103toastmasters.org)**



**Scan Me to Register**



# HONEST LEADERSHIP: A CONVERSATION WITH THE D.I.V.A OF DIALOG

*Author: Alhaji Abubakar*

If you have ever been lucky enough to be in the room when Cassandra Lee has taken the stage to speak or train, then you have had the pleasure of witnessing a master at her craft. But only recently did I discover that Cassandra is also one of the most humble human beings I have ever met.

Cassandra Lee aka the D.I.V.A of Dialog is a well-known name in District 103 (D103). She was an original charter member and sponsor for the Wrightwood Ashburn Overcomers (WAO) Toastmasters club, where she currently serves as the Vice President of Education (VPE). The club will be celebrating 18 years on March 25th, 2023. She also serves as the Training Director for D103 while also holding a position as one of the district's Preferred Trainers. And lest I forget to mention, Cassandra Lee was the very first District Director for D103. In other words, she is D103 royalty.

For Cassandra, speaking is not just something she does as a Toastmaster, it is her career. She is an entrepreneur who runs a professional and management training company where she teaches professional development.

Cassandra is also heavily guided by her faith. In fact, it was her trust in her faith that led her to choose her signature moniker. She says, "I am the D.I.V.A of Dialog because I use *divine inspiration vocally applied* to educate and empower my audiences towards personal growth and career success."

In fact, it was Cassandra's faith which guided her to agree to our interview. "When you said you wanted to interview me, I asked those questions because that's my logical side. Then, after you responded, I said, okay Lord, I'm leaving it to you. Whatever it is that you need me to share, whatever it is that I need to say and do, let it come from you through me."

Throughout our wide-ranging conversation Cassandra shared timeless insights, personal milestones, and a lifetime worth of leadership knowledge that will serve Toastmasters and non-Toastmasters alike on their leadership journey.

Enjoy the following Q&A with Cassandra.

**How should someone new to Toastmasters approach taking on officer roles? Would you suggest they take some time before jumping into a role or should they jump right into it?**

I really think it depends on the member. There are some members who are very focused on why they are there and what they want to get from it. I was one of those members. I knew why I was there and I was taking on leadership roles every meeting. So I started small. I started with meeting functionary roles. That is the first place where you experience the leadership. I was advised if you are joining and you're going to be a part of a Toastmasters experience, experience Toastmasters, don't go to a meeting and just sit by the wayside and watch everybody else do everything.

Though if you're not seeing (members) active in the club meeting functionary roles, they more than likely are not going to do well in a club officer role. Even with newer members who are active in the meetings, they still want to be very mindful of which roles they can honestly do.

Back around 2013... I was very mindful on the club level of mentoring the entire club on leadership roles, and I observed two or three years in a row we had these new members that came in. They were active. They were skilled. They were passionate about their own personal growth. And we gave them that carrot of being a leader. And it just seemed to overwhelm them and they eventually left.

Every member has to be very honest with themselves about what they can do in the leadership role. Therefore, I always say it depends.

**I'm curious to know how your faith serves as an inspiration for your message and for your life in general.**

My faith is everything. I always say it's like the Holy Spirit taps me on the shoulder. Sometimes it has to grab me by the collar, or sometimes it just simply provides me with inspiration. Being a part of Toastmasters, though, has really enforced for me the need for understanding empathy and for having strong relationships.

Being a district leader is a really intense role. Intense emotionally. Intense from a time standpoint. And I kept Him in the process because there were some days I didn't understand how you have people show up who say they want to join the Toastmasters Club and then only two of them return your phone call.

And He kept me guided, and kept me patient. There was a lot of personal growth for me through the process with His guidance and assistance. I have to keep Him with me and I do all the time.

# HONEST LEADERSHIP: A CONVERSATION WITH THE D.I.V.A OF DIALOG

*Author: Ahaji Abubakar*

## What were some important milestones on your leadership journey?

The very first one that I could think of was being able to allow my corporate environment to experience the value of Toastmasters. My HR department gave three members of our corporate Toastmasters club, myself included, a 5 to 7 minute slot to deliver a speech at the company Martin Luther King Jr. celebration. We knocked their socks off! They were impressed by me, since that was the first time they had ever seen me speak. It eventually led me to be promoted, and I was given the opportunity to gain some corporate training experience because of that. Most importantly it put our club on the map as a professional development resource. Being a part of that live employee-based program gave the entire company a very good view of how Toastmasters helps.

And of course, the next one would be when I served as district director. Being the first district director for a brand-new district. Look at us now, six years later. I'm glad to have laid the foundation. So many of the leaders around me believed in my ability to handle that historic role. That's not an easy thing to do and it is also not a very common thing where there's a brand-new district.

## When you held the role of district director, were there any initiatives or anything that you accomplished that you were particularly proud of?

I am particularly proud that we still have the Pathways educational program in our district. It was under my leadership that Pathways was rolled out.

We received Pathways in February of 2018 — a year and a half sooner than it was supposed to be rolled out here. It was so overwhelming. Yet, our district has done some really creative things to make sure our members can get into Pathways.

When I left the role of district director, there were two things that I wanted to make certain could continue on, and that was to keep growing our members, and Pathways. And I'm so proud of the Pathways gurus, the Pathways specialists and the various Pathways trainings. The Pathways resources have evolved over these last six years. Yet our district is remaining focused on helping our members with learning Pathways. And then I wanted to make certain we could get the Train-the-Trainer program kicked off. The District Directors after me all supported the idea, and now we have a staple program for our district. I'm proud of that.



## How has the leadership skillset that you've developed in Toastmasters shown up in your personal life?

In the words of my mom I'm the enforcer of the family. She said, "If I need anything done, I go to Cassandra." And as I mentioned to you, with her recent passing, the leadership is definitely at play. With the support of my siblings, I'm making the major plans, including what the service will look like and finalizing plans.

Therefore, when it comes to going through this process and prepping for my mom's homegoing celebration... oh, my goodness, I have no idea about a memorial. I don't know how to do cremation. How do I deal with insurance? What is all of this?

Toastmasters has given me the practice to feel comfortable in uncertain situations. Toastmasters has given me the courage to take on something new when I've never done it before. I've been doing that now since 1998.

Am I grieving? Absolutely. Do I have my moments? You betcha. But am I in a state of inaction? Nope. I can't be, because I have to be of service: number one, to my mom's wishes and number two, to everyone else. To make certain that we can all get through to the day where we put her into her final resting place. And that will be at the end of the month. So, yeah, I'm using my leadership skills in my personal life all the time. And everything that I've learned in Toastmasters is helping.

## When you think of taking on leadership roles in Toastmasters, how much of a time commitment do you recommend members make?

A minimum of 2 hours prep for the role that you're performing in your meeting. Start there as a club member. That means if you are being the speaker, prep your speech, practice your speech, rehearse the speech. Make certain if you're being a functionary, you print the script, you review the material, and you ask people about how to do it.

Can you make it more? Can you make it less? Absolutely. The more involved you are, you might find your time will adjust. Because I've been a member for so long and I've been involved at both the club and the district level simultaneously, I have one day I call my WAO Wednesday. It is fully dedicated to everything that I need to do. Therefore, it varies, but I would recommend start with 2 hours a week and go from there.

## How do you keep from being overwhelmed with all of your Toastmasters responsibilities in addition to everything else happening in your own life?

Learn how to say no. You can't be everywhere and do everything. I have to sometimes step away because I am in the role that I'm in. I'm an advisor,

# HONEST LEADERSHIP: A CONVERSATION WITH THE D.I.V.A OF DIALOG

*Author: Ahaji Abubakar*

I'm a past district director and I'm someone who's knowledgeable. I get requests sometimes from individuals who want me to do things. Also, I'm solution oriented. Therefore, I will think that I can be the one to provide solutions. In the last two years, I've been recognizing I need to take a step back. I've been saying no more than I've ever done! Yet I recognize there are still some places where I could potentially say no. It goes back to being honest with yourself about what you can and what you cannot do.

**In thinking about your home club WAO, how do you feel when you think of how you've seen the club transition since chartering?**

Grateful. At one point I asked myself, why am I doing this (chartering the club)? Why am I sticking with this? Why did I stay when one year went by and the club still wasn't formed? And the district was asking what's going on? When are you all chartering? And why am I getting frustrated? But why did I continue to remain persistent despite the frustration?

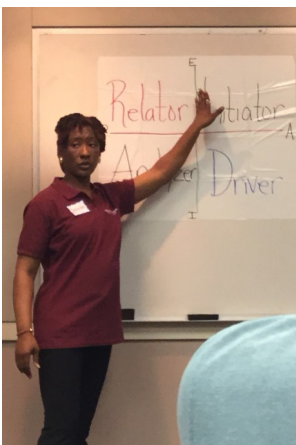
And the answer became, because this is a professional development resource for the greater Ashburn community. And no matter if I'm still around, this club should be here to serve this community.

**How do you believe our district members and leaders can discover the leader within themselves?**

- 1. Move forward in the face of fear.** Sometimes you are going to feel fearful or uncertain. Move forward in that space. Test it out. Start small if need be.
- 2. Establish consistency.** You can't develop if you try it once scared to death then go sit down for nine months. You have to keep moving forward establishing that belief in yourself.
- 3. Celebrate your successes.** When you focus on what you should have done rather than what you have accomplished it makes you miss the lessons behind the experience.

**What is the legacy that you want to leave?**

I want people to remember me as someone who educated and empowered others. I want them to remember me as someone who would take in information so I could share it. I want everyone I connect with to be better at, feel more comfortable with and have good results in whatever it is they do. That's the legacy for me. And especially for District 103 Toastmasters.






# District 103 Statistics

Below, see a comparison of D103 statistics as of November for current year 2022-23 compared to prior years 2021-22 and 2020-21. These statistics capture the number of paid clubs; the number of member payments (received in the international website, via Club Central), and the number of distinguished clubs. Note that at this point in the Toastmasters year, there are typically very few clubs who have already achieved Distinguished status (5 of the 10 DCP goals).


## 2020-2021 District 103 Statistics



Paid Clubs	
Base	To Date
82	83
Goals	
Distinguished	84
Select Distinguished	85
President's Distinguished	87
Smedley Distinguished	89




Payments	
Base	To Date
2,892	100
Goals	
Distinguished	2,936
Select Distinguished	2,979
President's Distinguished	3,037
Smedley Distinguished	3,124




Distinguished Clubs	
Base	To Date
82	0
Goals	
Distinguished	33
Select Distinguished	37
President's Distinguished	41
Smedley Distinguished	46


## 2021-2022 District 103 Statistics



Paid Clubs	
Base	To Date
94	94
Goals	
Distinguished	96
Select Distinguished	97
President's Distinguished	99
Smedley Distinguished	102




Payments	
Base	To Date
3,351	182
Goals	
Distinguished	3,402
Select Distinguished	3,452
President's Distinguished	3,519
Smedley Distinguished	3,620




Distinguished Clubs	
Base	To Date
94	0
Goals	
Distinguished	38
Select Distinguished	43
President's Distinguished	47
Smedley Distinguished	52


## 2022-2023 District 103 Statistics



Paid Clubs	
Base	To Date
86	71
Goals	
Distinguished	86
Select Distinguished	87
President's Distinguished	89
Smedley Distinguished	91



Payments	
Base	To Date
2,893	1,330
Goals	
Distinguished	2,922
Select Distinguished	2,980
President's Distinguished	3,038
Smedley Distinguished	3,125



Distinguished Clubs	
Base	To Date
86	0
Goals	
Distinguished	35
Select Distinguished	39
President's Distinguished	43
Smedley Distinguished	48

Source: District Performance, <http://dashboards.toastmasters.org/District.aspx?id=103>



# Club Spotlight

*Spotlighting clubs and their events  
For entries, please email [newsletter@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:newsletter@d103toastmasters.org)*

Christ Universal Temple Club #3

## JOIN US FOR AN **OPEN HOUSE**

**to Gain Confidence  
and Find Your Voice**



WHERE LEADERS  
ARE MADE

**Saturday January 14, 2023  
12:30 pm - 2:30 pm CST**

For more information, please call Martha Brock-Leftridge at (480) 570-1118 or email her at [secretary@cut3toastmastersclub.com](mailto:secretary@cut3toastmastersclub.com)



# POWER SPEAKERS

*Cordially Invites You to*

## VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 23, 2023

7:00 PM CENTRAL TIME

LEARN TO

- Organize your thoughts
- Think quick on your feet
- Develop Meeting Skills
- Build Confidence
- Practice Leadership Skills
- Speak with Clarity & Fluency
- Provide & Receive Positive Feedback



SCAN ME FOR ZOOM LINK  
TO ATTEND

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Cynthia Anglin  
[cynt.anglin@gmail.com](mailto:cynt.anglin@gmail.com)  
(872) 212- 9284



# KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

INSPIRED AND PERTINENT INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED



DISTRICT 103

## PATHWAYS

TRAINING TEAM

### Is Your Club Getting Full Credit for Pathways?

By Sandra Washington, DTM, D103 Pathways Program Manager

Too many clubs are failing to record level completions in Club Central. Hopefully, your club isn't one of them.

If your club is working to complete its Distinguished Club Program (DCP) goals, you know that Pathways is an integral part of the DCP. Six of the ten DCP goals are related to Pathways. That means you can't be recognized as a Distinguished Club in 2022-23 unless your members complete a certain number of Pathways levels. But if you fail to record your club's level completions in Club Central, you can't get the DCP credit your club has earned.

Level completions need to be recorded in two places: inside of Base Camp and also in Club Central. In other words, it's a two-step process. When a member requests a level completion, one of the

Base Camp Managers, usually the VPE, goes into Base Camp, verifies that the work has been done, and approves the Level Completion. That's Step 1.

Step 2 requires the VPE (or other club officer) to log into Club Central and give the member credit there for completing the level. Step 2 is critical because it notifies Toastmasters International that the member has completed a level. It's also critical because it provides the information Toastmasters International needs to give your club the DCP credit.

So, make sure your club is getting full credit. If you're not sure how to do this, or if your club just needs help with Pathways, feel free to contact me, the Pathways Program Manager, at [pathways@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:pathways@d103toastmasters.org).



**BHANU DABADI, DTM**  
D103 PATHWAYS SPECIALIST/PREFERRED TRAINER

## PATHWAYS FOR BEGINNERS

**WORKSHOP TITLE: GETTING STARTED WITH PATHWAYS:  
A HANDS-ON CLASS FOR BEGINNERS**

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- NEW TOASTMASTERS MEMBER
- MEMBERS NOT YET ENROLLED IN PATHWAYS
- BEGINNERS WHO NEED HELP CHOOSING A PATH OR GETTING STARTED WITH PATHWAYS
- BEGINNERS WHO NEED HELP UNDERSTANDING WHAT PATHWAYS IS AND HOW IT WORKS

#### WHAT YOU'LL LEARN?

- HOW TO LOG ONTO PATHWAYS
- HOW TO SELECT A PATH
- HOW TO GIVE YOUR ICE BREAKER SPEECH AND PLAN YOUR LEVEL 1 PATHS
- BEGINNERS WHO NEED HELP UNDERSTANDING WHAT PATHWAYS IS AND HOW IT WORKS

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023, 6:00 PM CST**

**SCAN THE QR CODE TO THE RIGHT TO REGISTER  
FOR THIS POWER-PACKED EVENT.**



# KEEPING YOU IN THE LOOP

INSPIRED AND PERTINENT INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED

## DCP Changes

In the past, many of our clubs have had the goals to be Distinguished but are missing the 5 net new members. This prevents the club from officially achieving Distinguished status. As of July 1, 2022, your clubs now have a better chance of becoming Distinguished or better. Enlarge your membership by 3 net members (after replacing any lost members) and get 5 or more goals and your club will be Distinguished. This change runs until July 31, 2024 (two full years).

Now with 3 net new members needed, you can achieve the Distinguished status and bring your club the recognition it deserves.

None of the other requirements have changed. Make sure your club is getting the goals required to complete the Distinguished requirements listed below.

- Distinguished—5 Goals and Net 3 more members as compared to baseline at June 30, 2022
- Select Distinguished—7 Goals and Net 3 more members as compared to baseline at June 30, 2022
- President's Distinguished—9 Goals and Net 3 more members as compared to baseline at June 30, 2022



Are you interested in working with youth? Would you like to teach young people the art of public speaking? Do you want to learn how to become a coordinator of a Youth Leadership Program (YLP)?

If you have any questions about the Youth Leadership Program, feel free to review the details on the Toastmasters International website. Visit <https://www.toastmasters.org/education/youth-leadership-program>

For details about the informational meeting, call Ivory Gwin at 847-217-0864 or e-mail [ig2387@att.com](mailto:ig2387@att.com).



# The LOOP

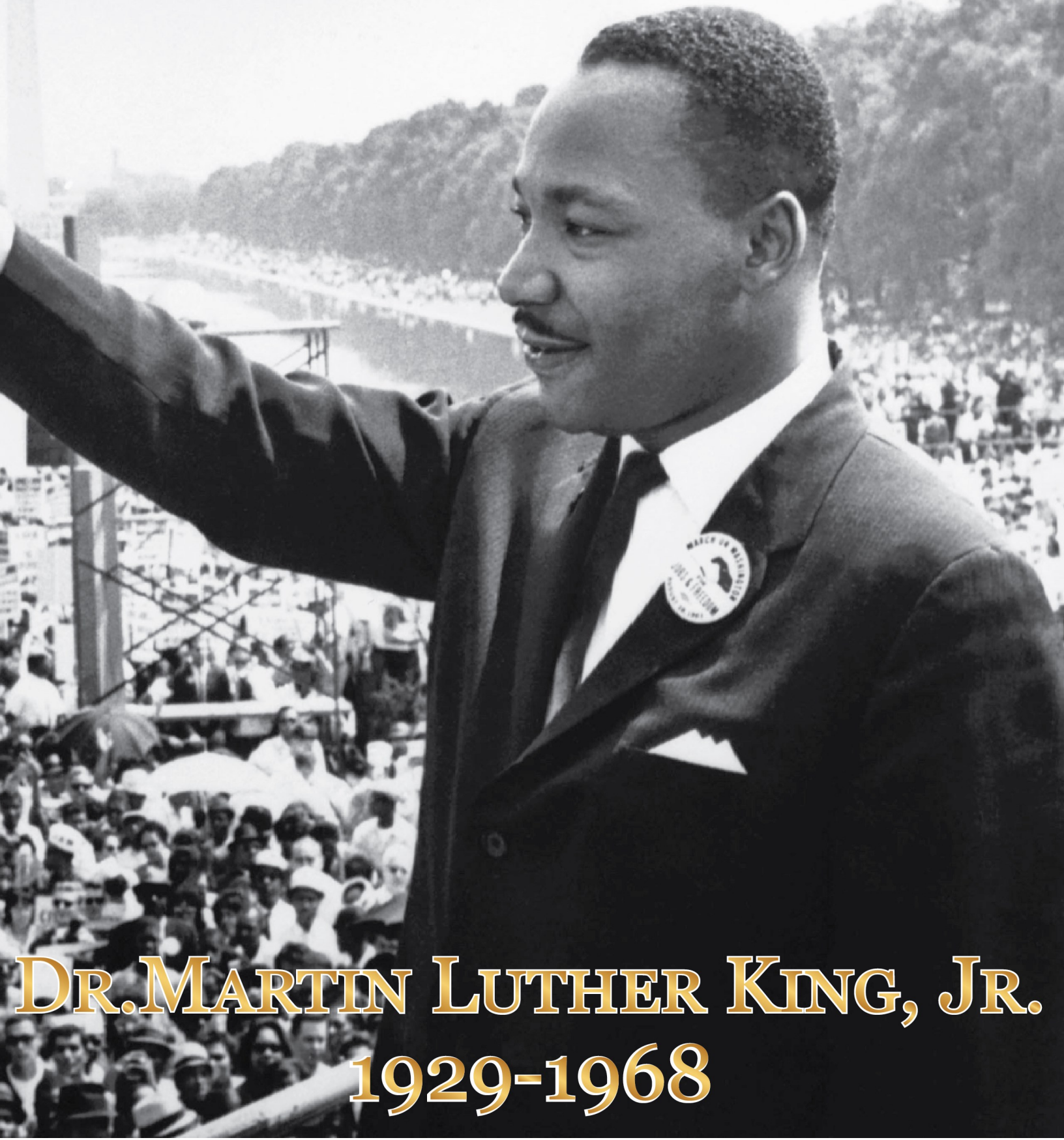
## Guidelines for Article Submission

- *Articles may be submitted to [newsletter@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:newsletter@d103toastmasters.org).*
- *Articles must be a maximum of 500 words or less, but not limited to that number dependent on content (Editors' discretion)\**
- *All high resolution (Minimum 1280x720) photographs, graphics, and artwork must be attached at the time of submission*
- *If you have questions, please email [newsletter@d103toastmasters.org](mailto:newsletter@d103toastmasters.org)*
- *Next issue to be released by March 13, 2023*
- *Articles must be in by February 20, 2022*
  
- *Upcoming Schedule*
  - *Spring Issue drop date: March 13, 2023*
  - *Conference Issue Drop Date: May 8, 2023*
  - *Summer/Final Issue Drop Date: June 26, 2023*

### **Note:**

- *Editors reserve the right to edit photographs, graphics, and submitted articles at their discretion*
- *Articles submitted after the stated deadlines may be slated for the next issue. No exceptions!*

*“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal.”*



**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.**  
**1929-1968**