



The LOOP

VOLUME
2
ISSUE
4

SUMMER 2024 ISSUE

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103 TOASTMASTERS

YEAR-END RECAP

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE:

- 2023-2024 DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FINAL MESSAGES
- 2023-2024 D103 & D30 YEAR-END EVENT RECAP
- OPACC LUNCH & LEARN
- INCOMING 2024-2025 DISTRICT LEADERSHIP
- 2024 CONFERENCE MEMOIRS
- 2024 SUMMER TLI



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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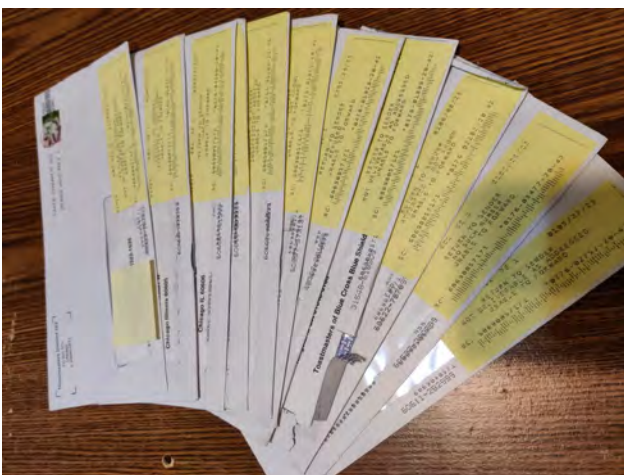
Elizabeth L. Stevenson, DTM

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Cover Photo

2024 Conference Background in Black and White

Photo: Members' Undelivered Mail Returned to the District.



Loop End of Year Issue 2024

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District's New Postal Address

District 103 has a new postal address. The address is:

Toastmasters District 103

PO Box 571

Chicago, IL 60690-0571

Should you want to send any mail correspondence to the district or refer someone to send a mail to our District, please utilize the above address.



***Please update your mailing address.
The district will be sending recognition letters every month.***

Here's the link to update your mailing address <https://www.toastmasters.org/myhome/profile>

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103
District Director
 SAM SUKUMAR, DTM



Dear fellow Toastmasters,

The year that has just gone by will have a special place in my heart for years to come. As District 103 Director, I sincerely thank the army of members who volunteered for the different leadership roles, projects and activities. This recognition goes to all those who stepped up to support and for leadership roles this year in District 103. We surely couldn't have administered the district without your support. Thank you.

Club officers: You ensured your clubs kept meeting in spite of the volatile membership situation. I'm very much aware of the challenges some clubs had with certain members not renewing during the September renewal cycle and you still forged ahead. I acknowledge your tenacity and the strong will in keeping your clubs active & enthused. Till date we have 532 level completions in Pathways. This speaks volumes of the support you have provided to your members in their pursuit of the educational program. Thank you.

Area Directors: You worked hard in supporting your clubs with their requirements, visiting your clubs, completing reports and mentoring your club leaders. Most of you held your role for the first time and I'm sure it was an exhilarating experience, seeing your clubs evolve and achieve. You all did a fantastic job with the Area Level Speech Contests. Thank you.

Division Directors: You displayed excellent leadership in holding your Divisions together and supporting your Area Directors. Your indomitable spirit is greatly applauded and I wish you all to take up senior leadership roles in the years to come. I also appreciate you for conducting the Division Speech Contests with such high standards. Thank you.

Club Mentors, Sponsors, Coaches, Pathways Specialists, Contest Gurus, Special Project Chairs and all advisors: Your support, guidance, training and task delivery to the district members has been invaluable throughout the year and I couldn't thank you all enough for the dedication and support provided. Clubs going distinguished, membership renewals, Pathways progression are all pointers to your success in your roles. Thank you.

The Executive Team of our Program Quality Director, Club Growth Director, Public Relations Manager, Administration Manager, Logistics Manager, Technology Manager, Parliamentarian worked tirelessly expending long hours supporting our District and ensuring we all operated in the best interests of each member and club. Thank you.

The torch will soon be passed on, in a few days. I am grateful to have served alongside all of you and had the ability to ensure integrity being the cornerstone of all the decisions taken. In the larger scheme of things, doing the right thing is what always prevails, is what makes the world a better place. We, as humans, generally Edge Goodness Out by taking shortsighted trivial actions, not realizing the discomfort and negative emotions we stir up in everyone impacted by those trivial actions.

Decades from now, should something trigger our memory to this centennial year of Toastmasters, a smile and a feeling of pride will fill us all up with how we administered and that will be the perennial state of mind anytime a memory flash of this year occurs. We have just invested in our random future snippets of good memories.

Thank you.

**LET'S GET
 REAL.**



**Recognition
 Engagement
 Achievement
 Leadership**

District 103



2023-2024

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103
Program Quality Director
 SANDRA LANE, DTM



As your District Director for the upcoming Toastmaster year, I'm honored to embark on this journey with all of you. This year holds the potential for remarkable success, and together, we can make it truly exceptional.

Our first priority is empowering club officers with a clear vision of success. Strong leadership is the backbone of a thriving club, and by providing officers with the necessary training and resources, we can ensure every club flourishes. Imagine workshops specifically designed for club presidents, equipping them with the tools to foster a positive and engaging club environment. Equipping vice presidents with proven membership development strategies will lead to a more vibrant club atmosphere. When secretaries and treasurers receive clear guidance on best practices, club operations run smoothly, freeing up valuable time for member development.

Next, we'll focus on fostering member engagement and development. After all, our members are the heart and soul of District 103. This year, we aim to significantly increase member engagement by offering a diverse range of educational programs, workshops, and exciting district networking opportunities. Think workshops on storytelling techniques to elevate speeches, or leadership development sessions that empower members to take on club roles with confidence. Engaging workshops on effective communication will not only enhance their professional lives but also refine their everyday interactions.

Ultimately, our goal is to see every club in District 103 achieve Distinguished status. This prestigious recognition is a testament to the collective dedication of our members and leaders. We'll achieve this by setting clear, measurable objectives for each club, and by tracking progress throughout the year. Regularly celebrating milestones will keep our spirits high and create a sense of shared purpose. Achieving Distinguished status isn't just a destination, it's a journey filled with learning, growth, and camaraderie. We'll make it fun and exciting, all while fostering a supportive environment where everyone feels comfortable honing their speaking and leadership skills.

With our collective vision, unwavering commitment, and collaborative spirit, I have no doubt that District 103 will be recognized again as a Distinguished District. Let's embark on this journey with a spirit of excellence and a shared commitment to making this year unforgettable. Together, we can achieve anything!

Best Regards,

Sandra Lane

District Director 2024-2025 District 103



ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA | AUGUST 14-17

Once in a Lifetime!

This is your chance to gather together with Toastmasters worldwide in centennial celebration. Take a trip to Southern California where it all began 100 years ago. Come to learn, connect, and take part in the most dazzling communication event on the planet.

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103
Club Growth Director
 SHANITA AKINTONDE, DTM



From "Ta Da" to "Ta Ta": A Fond Farewell as Club Growth Director

As I pen this final column as the Club Growth Director for Toastmasters District 103, I am filled with a deep sense of pride and gratitude. This year has been a remarkable journey of growth, connection, and shared success. Together, we have accomplished incredible feats and set the stage for a bright future for our district.

The implementation of the "Each One, Bring One" initiative stands out as one of our most successful endeavors. By encouraging each member to bring a friend to our meetings, we fostered a spirit of inclusivity and camaraderie that strengthened our clubs. This initiative not only increased our membership but also enriched the diversity and vibrancy of our Toastmasters family.

Our District-Wide Open House was another highlight of the year. This event showcased the essence of Toastmasters to a broader audience, drawing in potential members who were inspired by the power of effective communication and leadership. The enthusiasm and energy at the open house were palpable, and it was heartening to see so many new faces eager to join our community.

One of the most thrilling moments was when our efforts received media coverage that extended all the way to India. This international recognition underscored the global impact of our district's initiatives and highlighted the universal appeal of Toastmasters. It was a testament to our collective hard work and dedication, and it brought our message of personal and professional development to a wider audience.

I am also proud to announce that we have successfully chartered four new clubs this year. These new additions are a testament to the unwavering commitment of our members and leaders. Each new club represents a beacon of opportunity for individuals to develop their communication and leadership skills, and I am confident that they will thrive in the years to come.

Throughout this journey, I have been consistently reminded of the power of love and community. The support, encouragement, and genuine care that each member has shown have been the bedrock of our success. We have created a space where everyone feels valued, heard, and empowered to reach their full potential.

As I transition from "Ta Da" to "Ta Ta," I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you. Your dedication, passion, and unwavering support have made this year truly unforgettable. While my role as Club Growth Director comes to an end, my commitment to Toastmasters and to each of you remains steadfast.

Let us continue to build on this foundation of success and keep the spirit of growth and love alive in District 103. Here's to the next chapter, filled with even more achievements and cherished memories.

With gratitude and love,

Shanita Baraka Akintonde, DTM
 Club Growth Director, Toastmasters District 103



Reminder:

If you haven't turned in your club's Officer List by **June 30, 2024**, you are missing out on one of the easiest DCP Points to be acquired.

If you need assistance, please contact your Area or Division Director.



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
- 2023-2024 District Service Credit*

If you are interested in taking up this challenge, please contact the D103 Club Growth Director, Shanita Akintonde, DTM at cgd@d103toastmasters.org for more information.

Note: In order to receive the District Service Credit, the club must meet the following conditions:

- Serve as a coach for at least six months
- Have the club earn a designation of Distinguished or better
- Have at least 20 paid members on the club's roster regardless of its qualifying requirement



CLUBS CURRENTLY NEEDING A COACH

UIC-COE Toastmasters

Next Step Toastmasters

Chicago Speakeasy Toastmasters Club

US Bank Toast of Chi-Town

BMO-Harris Toastmasters Club

Towering Talkers

Viewmasters

Money Masters Toastmasters

SaaSy Speakers

Loop Trustmasters

The Lynda Morrill Club

Speakers Forum Club

Extreme Possibilities Toastmasters Club

ChiTown SpeakEasy

Michigan Avenue Club

Wicker Park-Bucktown Toastmasters

Toast of TCS

ABA SPEAKEasies

Cook County Toastmasters Club

Chicago Toastmasters

AT&T Chicago East

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois Chicago 2

PMI Chicagoland Toastmasters

HHS Toastmasters

HUD Chicago Toastmasters Club

U.S.B.C. Corporate Toastmasters

Sargent & Lundy Club

DIC Toastmasters

Talk Of The Town Toastmasters Club

Saturday Sunrise Club

MSI Chicago Toastmasters

KPMG Chicago Toastmasters Club

PGL/NSG Blue Flames

My Brother, My Sister Speak

Power Speakers

Bold Literary Talkers (BLT) Club

NAACP Chicago Southside

Greater Englewood Toastmasters Club

Christ Universal Temple Club #3 - 666595

Christ Universal Temple Club 1

Toastmasters of Palos Heights

Park Forest Club

Club Coach Program for Clubs



Clubs with a club coach gain:

- ▶ Higher quality club meetings
- ▶ A more engaging experience for guests and members
- ▶ Increased membership with more new and renewing members
- ▶ Recognition in the Distinguished Club Program
- ▶ Best practices for longterm success once the coach's term has ended

Your club is eligible for a club coach if:

- ▶ Your club has 3 to 12 members
- ▶ A club officer has completed the Club Coach Program Training module in Base Camp
- ▶ Your club is not currently suspended
- ▶ Your club does not already have two coaches appointed

Ready to have a club coach appointed to your club?

Your District Director will help! You can contact your District by going to their [website](#).

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103

Public Relations Manager

ELIZABETH STEVENSON, DTM



Dear Distinguished District 103 Toastmasters,

As we reflect on this remarkable Toastmasters year, I'm filled with immense gratitude and admiration for each of you, your dedication and creativity setting Distinguished District 103 apart in Toastmasters International's centennial celebration.

From SummerFest to our collaborative holiday event with District 30, culminating in a vibrant year-end event, every moment has been a testament to your dedication and creativity.

Sam Sukumar, our District Director, led a successful outreach initiative, bringing Toastmasters closer to the community. The partnership with the Orland Park Area Chamber of Commerce, including a well-attended Ribbon Cutting and a productive Lunch & Learn, demonstrates our commitment to engagement.

Special recognition goes to Shanita Akintonde for orchestrating our first-ever District Wide Open House, which significantly boosted membership and awareness across our clubs. Nandini Kurup's Road to DTM Masterclass provided invaluable guidance to members aspiring for the prestigious Distinguished Toastmaster accolade.

I congratulate Sandra Lane for organizing and implementing the wildly successful ToastmastersLeadership Institute training last fall with Matt Abraham and Fursery Gotuaco. At popular demand, Fursery returned to lead the summer session including a first-ever component – The Leadership Lab Workshop. Initial feedback: outstanding...wonderful...innovative!



Our communication efforts have been revolutionized thanks to initiatives like the Tuesday Tidbits managed by Coach Lee Hopkins and the redesigned District 103 website project led by Maren Jenkins and Ehren Muhammad.

Sheila Edens Brown deserves applause for her exceptional stewardship of our social media platforms and communications strategy, stepping in admirably when Chelsea Thomas needed to focus on her health. Dara Wiltgen's dedication to LinkedIn outreach and AlyceAnn Crump's artistic contributions have enhanced our visibility and impact.

A heartfelt thank you to Prince Leftridge, II and Martha Brock Leftridge for their meticulous work on our District 103 newsletter The LOOP as well as the Conference Program, ensuring that our achievements are beautifully documented and shared. Thanks to Prince for his layout/design and Martha for her copy-editing skills. Additional thanks go out to Prince for utilizing his design skills for a multitude of conference-related graphics with a very rapid turnaround time and coordinating the printing of the program book.

Together as a Public Relations Team, you have demonstrated unwavering teamwork, talent, and resilience. Your efforts have not only informed but inspired our entire district and beyond!

Fellow Toastmasters and friends please join me in expressing my deepest appreciation to each member of this remarkable team for their sacrifice, their creativity, and their steadfast support of one another. Your contributions have made this year unforgettable, and I am honored to serve alongside such outstanding individuals. I look forward to the incredible things that will come from the team taking over the responsibility to "let the world know" about Distinguished District 103!

Yours in service,
Elizabeth L. Stevenson, DTM, PRM
2023-2024 Public Relations Manager
Distinguished District 103 Toastmasters



Moves to Region 4

All Districts: The new regional structure will necessitate adjustments to how Districts receive support from leadership. Previously assigned International Directors (IDs) and Region Advisors (RAs) may no longer oversee your specific area due to the shift in regional boundaries. This is particularly relevant for District 103, which will be transitioning from Region 5 to Region 4 as of July 1, 2024. For District 103 and any other Districts impacted by the realignment, it's crucial to take some proactive steps to ensure a smooth transition. Firstly, it's essential to identify your new regional leadership team by consulting the updated region maps and District list. Familiarize yourselves with their contact information and areas of expertise. Secondly, explore any potential changes to support protocols or communication channels established by the new leadership. Proactive communication with the new IDs and RAs will be essential to maintain a seamless flow of support for your District.

2024 International Director Candidates: Those with aspirations to run for an International Director position at the upcoming Annual Business Meeting in 2024 should pay close attention to the revised regional structure. The open positions will be specifically designated for even-numbered regions. This is important for District 103, as it will now be part of Region 4 (assuming it's an even-numbered region). To ensure a successful candidacy, it's vital that interested individuals submit their Letters of Intent with the new regional breakdown in mind. Aligning your application with the correct region will streamline the nomination process and demonstrate a clear understanding of the revised organizational structure. For instance, if District 103 falls under Region 4 and it's an even-numbered region, then a candidate from that District would be eligible to run for the International Director position designated for Region 4.

International Leadership Committee Members: The committee's composition will undergo a significant shift in February 2024 to reflect the new regional makeup. Appointments will be made to fill vacancies from even-numbered regions. Current committee members serving their second terms who hail from odd-numbered regions may find themselves no longer geographically aligned with the region they were initially appointed from. For these members, the realignment could potentially lead to a transition in their role or responsibilities. The organization should provide clear communication and support to these members throughout this potential shift. For example, if a member from District 103 (originally in Region 5) was serving on the committee for that region, the realignment might necessitate their transition to a different committee role or even their departure from the committee altogether, depending on the new regional makeup.

Region Advisors: The application process for the coveted 2024-2025 Region Advisor term will be directly impacted by the region realignment. This is particularly relevant for District 103, as its move to Region 4 will determine which Region Advisor position they can apply for. Individuals with an interest in applying will need to ensure they are submitting their application for the region they now fall under according to the updated map. The organization will likely send notifications to existing applicants informing them of the realignment and confirming they are applying for the correct region based on the new structure. It's also recommended for interested individuals to stay updated on any potential changes to the application criteria or selection process that may arise due to the realignment. District 103, along with all other impacted Districts, should be particularly attentive to these updates to ensure they submit a competitive application.

TOASTMASTERS
INTERNATIONAL
2024 CONVENTION

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA | AUGUST 14-17

REGISTER NOW

Toastmasters: A Therapeutic Journey of Finding My Voice

DR. ALYCE ANN CRUMP, DTM



Toastmasters International has been an integral part of my life since I joined on April 1, 2018. Over the years, this organization has not only provided me with a platform to enhance my public speaking skills but has also become a form of therapy for me. With my membership spanning over 50 clubs across the globe, I have had the privilege of serving in various leadership roles in 8 districts, including club and district leadership roles in districts 1, 3, 9, 10, 37, 40, 103 117. I have held the position of area director three times and division director twice, and I am proud to have completed all 11 paths three times. I am a 3x DTM

Toastmasters came into my life when I needed it the most. When faced with the imminent loss of my husband, I found solace and support within the Toastmasters community. Initially, I joined Toastmasters to find my own voice, but little did I know that I would discover much more than that.

During those challenging times, when I was coping with the impending loss of my husband, Toastmasters became a therapeutic space for me. Every day, I had the opportunity to express my emotions, share my experiences, and talk about how I was navigating through the process of watching my husband battle with his illness. Each club I visited welcomed me with open arms, providing me with a safe and inviting environment to openly discuss my feelings. It was through these conversations that I not only found the strength to face my grief but also gained the confidence to ask for the support and understanding I needed during that difficult time.

Even after my husband's departure, Toastmasters continued to be a source of solace and healing for me. It offered me the opportunity to talk through my grief, allowing me to process my emotions in a supportive community.

The Toastmasters meetings became a space where I could share my journey, seek guidance from fellow members, and receive the empathy and encouragement that I needed to move forward.

Toastmasters has played a significant role in my personal growth and healing process. It has provided me with the tools to become a better communicator, but more importantly, it has given me a platform to express myself during one of the most challenging periods of my life. Through Toastmasters, I have not only found my voice but also discovered the power of vulnerability, resilience, and community.

Today, as I reflect on my journey with Toastmasters, I am grateful for the therapeutic impact it has had on my life. The organization's commitment to creating a supportive and empowering environment has allowed me to heal, grow, and find my way forward. Toastmasters has truly been a form of therapy for me, and I am forever indebted to the organization and its incredible members who have been by my side throughout this journey.

In conclusion, Toastmasters has been much more than just a public speaking club for me. It has been a lifeline, a sanctuary, and a community that has helped me navigate the darkest moments of my life. Through Toastmasters, I have found my voice, my strength, and my healing. I encourage anyone who is seeking personal growth, support, and a space to share their story to consider joining Toastmasters. It may just be the therapy you need to find your voice and embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery.

2024 DISTRICT 103 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

The 2024 District 103 Toastmasters Annual Hybrid Conference, themed "Keeping It Real - Elevating Communication Excellence," took place on April 19th-20th at Elements by THE ODYSSEY in Orland Park, Illinois. Conference Manager Cheryl Lane assured it catered to all experience levels, from brand new members eager to find their voice during their first Toastmasters experience to seasoned Toastmasters with decades of experience ready to share their expertise and learn from fresh perspectives.

This highly anticipated event offered exceptional networking opportunities. Attendees, buzzing with energy, filled the spacious conference halls, their conversations echoing with a shared passion for public speaking. Whether discussing techniques to overcome stage fright or the nuances of vocal delivery perfected over years of experience, these interactions fostered a sense of camaraderie and provided a wealth of insights for honing communication skills. Highlights included presentations by accredited

speakers Sheryl Roush, known for her dynamic storytelling that weaves humor and personal anecdotes into powerful messages, and Sima Dahl, whose interactive workshops leave a lasting impression with their engaging exercises and actionable takeaways. Workshops led by District 103 leaders delved into a variety of topics, from crafting compelling narratives that capture the audience's attention to mastering body language that reinforces the speaker's message. These sessions, packed with practical advice and strategies, empowered participants to become more confident and effective communicators, ready to captivate any audience. Speech contests became a stage for the district's best speakers. Compelling narratives, infused with humor and passion, left audiences inspired and eager to refine their own public speaking abilities. The energy in the room was palpable as each contestant delivered their carefully crafted presentations, showcasing the power of effective communication to inform, persuade, and entertain.







DISTRICTS 103 & 30 YEAR-END EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

ELIZABETH STEVENSON, DTM | D103 PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER



Ellacec Publishing

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Becoming a Published Author

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- Self-Publishing
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Book Marketing and Promoting

- Virtual
- Promote to your TARGET audience

Surviving a Layoff

- Virtual / Recording
- Manage finances
- Create a resume and find a job

Zoom

- Virtual
- Basic, intermediate, advanced features

PowerPoint

- Virtual
- Create FASCINATING presentations

All classes are reasonably priced at **\$20.24** each. So go ahead... **enroll today** before classes fill up! 😊



ORLAND PARK AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



ELIZABETH STEVENSON, DTM | D103 PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER

The Orland Park Area Chamber of Commerce (OPACC) hummed with a warm energy on May 22nd. Members streamed into the Orland Park Public Library, eager to participate in the highly anticipated monthly Lunch and Learn event. This month's featured guest was District 103 Toastmasters, a pillar organization within the Chamber, renowned for its unwavering commitment to cultivating public speaking and leadership skills. A palpable buzz of anticipation filled the air as the Toastmasters prepared to unveil their insights to the assembled business professionals.

The presentation itself unfolded like a captivating narrative. It delved into the rich history and global reach of Toastmasters International, a non-profit organization with a presence that spanned continents. The Toastmasters aimed to illuminate the audience on how their unique program could serve as a powerful catalyst for empowering businesses within the Orland Park area. Their meticulously crafted presentation showcased their structured approach, a testament to decades of experience in refining their methodology. They explained how this approach could equip teams with the confidence and communication skills necessary to not only survive but thrive in today's demanding professional landscape.

The presentation wasn't confined to theoretical concepts. The Toastmasters weaved in real-world examples, painting a vivid picture of

how their program could transform individuals from hesitant speakers into articulate and persuasive communicators. This valuable skillset transcended the realm of simply delivering impactful presentations. It encompassed the ability to lead successful negotiations with key partners, inspire teams during crucial meetings, and confidently represent their companies at industry events. The Toastmasters effectively demonstrated how their program could equip individuals to navigate any communication challenge with poise and effectiveness.

The atmosphere during the Lunch and Learn was a delightful blend of informality and camaraderie. A delicious spread of pizza and salad awaited guests, fostering a relaxed environment conducive to networking and informal discussions. This lunchtime event transcended the realm of simply informative; it blossomed into a valuable opportunity for businesses to explore the transformative potential of Toastmasters. The Toastmasters effectively demonstrated how their program could equip teams with the tools and confidence needed to achieve success, all within a friendly and social setting. The event concluded with a sense of shared purpose, leaving a lasting impression on the Orland Park business community. Many attendees departed with a newfound appreciation for the power of effective communication and a keen interest in exploring how Toastmasters could empower their teams for future success.



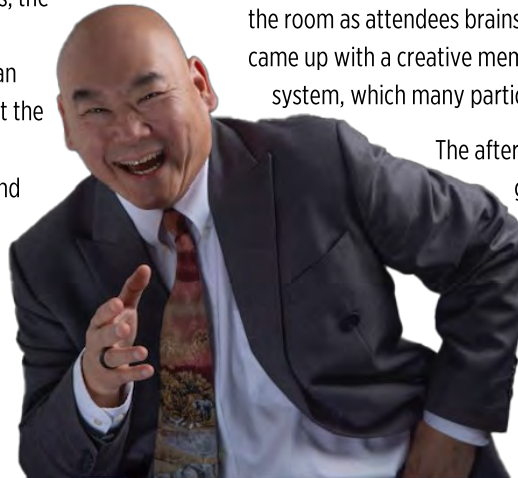
2024 DISTRICT 103 VIRTUAL SUMMER TLI JESSICA THOMPSON



As the TLI Dean for this year's Summer TLI, I am excited to reflect on the resounding success of D103's Toastmasters Leadership Institute. Over 120 Toastmasters participated with infectious enthusiasm on Saturday, June 8th, via Zoom.

With many clubs undergoing leadership transitions, the theme "Dare to Lead: Courageous Leadership in Toastmasters" resonated deeply. Leading a club can be daunting, and Chad Welch, PM4, masterfully set the tone with an inspirational message. He drew a powerful parallel between Toastmasters leaders and buffalo, explaining how they bravely face challenges and pave the way for others, just like our leaders empower members to find their voice and hone leadership skills.

Fursey Gotuaco, our returning keynote speaker, captivated the audience with his insightful presentation on "5G Communication of Courageous Leadership." He outlined five key elements - Goals, Gratitude, Growth, Greatness, and Global - and emphasized the importance of clear communication in leading effectively. This resonated with a participant who, during the Q&A session, shared a powerful story about how focusing on "Growth" within their club led to a mentorship program that revitalized member engagement.



Building on this momentum, we introduced a new concept - the Leadership Lab Workshop. In this collaborative environment, Toastmasters were randomly placed into breakout rooms led by fantastic facilitators. They tackled real-world challenges like club conflicts, member recruitment and retention, and fostering diversity and inclusion. The energy crackled in the room as attendees brainstormed solutions. One group, for example, came up with a creative membership retention strategy using a buddy system, which many participants found valuable.

The afternoon Club Officer Training provided in-depth guidance on specific roles and responsibilities. Participants actively participated in interactive exercises, making the training session engaging and informative.

Throughout the TLI, the dedication and collaborative spirit were truly inspiring. Everyone was eager to learn, ask insightful questions (e.g., a participant inquired about strategies for managing challenging club dynamics), and prepare to lead their clubs to new heights. The lessons learned here extend beyond Toastmasters, and I have no doubt these experiences will have a lasting positive impact on our Toastmasters community. Thank you to everyone who participated and made this TLI such a success!

2024 DISTRICT 103 LEADERSHIP MAKEUP SESSIONS

Calling all officers who missed out!

Were you bummed you couldn't attend the electrifying TLI session on June 8th? Don't sweat it! We understand that life can get in the way, but your dedication is crucial. That's why we're excited to announce upcoming makeup sessions tailored specifically for you.

These sessions will offer the same valuable officer training, but in a more intimate setting. Imagine a smaller group environment, perfect for focused learning and diving deeper into the material. Plus, you won't miss out on the insights shared by an incredible keynote speaker. Their expertise will be truly inspiring, and these makeup sessions offer the chance to unpack the knowledge further.

This smaller format also means ample time for your questions. Our knowledgeable trainers will be there to address any specific areas you want to explore, ensuring you leave with a solidified understanding and the skills to excel. Don't miss this second chance to elevate your expertise, get the officer training DCP credit, and take your performance to the next level. Dates and times will be forthcoming during the months of July and August. Contact your Division Director or Area Director for more information.



RUN ACROSS AMERICA

ELIZABETH STEVENSON, DTM

One of District 103's newest members, Tomaz Sobania, hails from Poland and is on a mission to run across the United States to raise awareness for persons with disabilities.

I had the pleasure of meeting Tomaz at the First Ever District-Wide Open House, organized by Club Growth Director Shanita Akintonde. Tomaz attended as a guest of District Director Sam Sukumar and enthusiastically shared his ambitious plans with everyone.

This September 2024, Tomaz will embark on the biggest race of his life. His goal is to run from New York to Los Angeles, covering a marathon distance of 26 miles every day.

He will be accompanied by a relay of people with disabilities and disorders, joining him in a spirit reminiscent of Forrest Gump's famous run. At 25 years old he has previously completed marathons through Poland, Rome, Barcelona and Greece.

Tomaz plans to run across America carrying the Polish flag on his shoulders and an eagle on his chest, aiming to demonstrate the strength and determination of Poles. As he put it, "Poles can do it".

His journey will begin on September 15, 2024, in New York, and he won't stop until he reaches Los Angeles. He will make a stop in Chicagoland, where fellow Toastmasters, visitors, sponsors, and volunteers can participate in a Charity Relay Race, "Run Across America". This event will

allow persons with disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders to compete, showcasing that everyone is capable of achieving more than they think.

You can get involved today by sponsoring a mile, a marathon, or even an entire episode of the Run Across the USA. Funds collected will help defray the costs of the Run and the Charity Relay Race.

Join Tomaz in this inspiring journey and help make a difference! For more information and to support, check his website:

<https://bit.ly/3RPEb71>



**THE PURPOSE
OF RUNNING
THROUGH THE
USA IS
SIMPLE!**



To accomplish an extraordinary athletic feat - to run across the entire United States.

Implement a public awareness campaign entitled. "You can do more than you think."

Inspire people to act in spite of disabilities, disorders, diseases and other life adversities.

Create a feature-length documentary in collaboration with American producer Alex Klymko.

Promote the Run Partners and influence the positive image of Poland in the USA.

DISTRICT 103



WELCOMES NEW CLUBS!!

Exciting news, District 103! We're thrilled to announce the addition of several dynamic new clubs this Toastmasters term, bringing fresh energy and eager learners to our community.

Leading the charge is ToastMcMasters Toastmasters Club, chartered on January 1st, 2024, with an impressive 38 members already on board! Avant Toastmasters also joined the District family on the same date.

History buffs, take note! Union League Toastmasters, chartered on October 30th, 2023, brings the Toastmasters experience to the heart of Chicago's historic downtown Union League Club, under the leadership of Toastmaster Amy Segami.

Syro Toastmasters Club adds a vibrant cultural dimension to District 103. Chartered on March 5th, 2024, at the Syro Cultural Academy in west suburban Bellwood, this exciting new club follows a successful demonstration meeting organized earlier in the year by Club Growth Director Distinguished Toastmaster Shanita Akintonde and her team.

These new clubs are already buzzing with activity, with members actively participating in meetings and honing their communication and leadership skills. A huge congratulations to all the new members and leaders! We're excited to see you continue to thrive and contribute to the vibrant District 103 community.





Road to DTM Masterclass

A Toast to DTM Achievers and the Road Ahead!

As we draw the curtain on the 2023-24 Toastmasters year, a resounding round of applause is due to a remarkable group: our Distinguished Toastmasters (DTM) achievers!

Standing at less than 1% of the entire Toastmasters membership, these individuals represent the pinnacle of educational achievement within our organization. Their dedication to self-improvement and their commitment to the Toastmasters mission are truly inspiring. These distinguished members have not only honed their own communication and leadership skills to a masterful level, but they have also become role models for all members, demonstrating the incredible potential for growth within our community. Their success stories serve as a beacon, motivating others to embark on their own journeys of development and mastery.

Special thanks go to Nandini Kurup, our three-time Distinguished Toastmaster, for spearheading the "Road to DTM Masterclass." Held on the last Thursday of each month, these sessions provided an invaluable space for aspiring DTMs to navigate the program's sometimes-daunting requirements.

The Masterclass offered a winning combination of informative presentations and interactive elements:

In-depth Presentations: Nandini, drawing on her wealth of experience as a three-time DTM, provided in-depth explanations of key DTM components – Sponsorship, Mentorship, and the DTM Project. She didn't just present information, but also offered practical tips and strategies to help attendees overcome challenges and ensure a smooth journey to DTM. These presentations delved into the specifics of each requirement, offering

real-world examples and success stories from previous DTM achievers.

Interactive Breakout Sessions: Attendees received personalized guidance through one-on-one consultations, allowing for in-depth exploration of specific questions. These sessions fostered a sense of community and support, connecting aspiring DTMs with experienced members who could offer valuable insights and encouragement. The breakout sessions

provided a safe space for attendees to ask detailed questions, discuss their individual roadblocks, and receive tailored advice to help them navigate their unique DTM journeys.

This dynamic duo – Nandini's leadership and the Masterclass format – empowered members to confidently embark on their DTM journeys. The Masterclass not only provided essential knowledge, but also fostered a spirit of camaraderie and collaboration, creating a supportive network for those pursuing the DTM designation. This sense of community is vital, as the road to DTM can be challenging. By connecting with experienced

members, aspiring DTMs gain access to a wealth of knowledge and encouragement, making the journey more rewarding and achievable.

To Nandini and everyone who took the Road to DTM, a heartfelt thank you! Your commitment to excellence serves as an inspiration to us all. Let's carry this momentum forward into the new Toastmasters year, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth within our clubs. As we celebrate the achievements of our DTMs, let their dedication motivate us all to embark on our own personal journeys of development within Toastmasters. Remember, the path to DTM is not just about reaching the destination, but about the transformative experiences and growth along the way. Let's all strive for excellence, inspire one another, and continue to elevate the Toastmasters experience for everyone.



Nandini Kurup, DTM

2023-2024 DISTRICT 103

District Leadership Awards



Each year, District 103 Toastmasters recognizes its members who have made significant contributions to the organization and their communities by presenting awards for Toastmaster of the Year, Division Director of the Year, and Area Director of the Year.

Toastmaster of the Year - Martha Brock Leftridge, DTM3

Toastmaster of the Year is awarded to a member who has demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication to Toastmasters, both within their club and beyond. This award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond to help others achieve their goals and have made a significant impact on their club and the organization as a whole. The Toastmaster of the Year award recognizes individual(s) who are not a member of the District Executive Council but whose dedication, commitment and efforts have made a significant contribution towards achieving the district's mission within District 103. To be eligible for this award, the nominee must be a paid member of a Toastmasters Club within District 103. Nominators must also be paid members of a Toastmasters Club within District 103.

Division Director of the Year - Dr. AlyceAnn Crump, DTM

The Division Director of the Year award is given to a Toastmaster who has excelled in their role as a Division Director. Division Directors are responsible for overseeing multiple clubs within their area, providing support and guidance to club leaders, and ensuring that their division is meeting its goals. The Division Director of the Year award recognizes individuals who have shown outstanding leadership, communication, and organizational skills in this role.

Area Director of the Year - Theresa 'Terri' Banks, DTM

Area Director of the Year award is presented to a member who has demonstrated excellence in their role as an Area Director. Area Directors are responsible for overseeing a group of clubs within a geographic area, providing support and guidance to club leaders, and ensuring that their area is meeting its goals. The Area Director of the Year award recognizes individuals who have shown exceptional leadership, communication, and organizational skills in this role.

Distinguished Toastmaster, Rebecca Daly chaired the Leadership Committee tasked with the selection of the Leadership Awards recipients. Rebecca's team were bound by the Award's criteria. All accomplishments and activities must have been within the period from July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

Questions in the application form were weighted for scoring purposes. Specific details of how the nominee fulfills the criteria for the award and how the nominee upholds the values of Toastmasters Internationals were required.

These selected individuals were recognized at the Distinguished District 103 Annual Conference on April 19- 20, 2024 at Elements by the Odyssey in Orland Park, IL.

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1924

2024 DISTRICT 103

District Leadership Awards



Dr. Alyce Ann Crump, DTM
Division Director of the Year



Martha Brock-Leftridge, DTM
Toastmaster of the Year



Theresa "Terri" Banks, DTM
Area Director of the Year

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CONGRATULATIONS WINNERS



Valerie Smith, DTM
Program Quality
Director



Sandra Lane, DTM
District Director



Latrina Oddo, DTM
Club Growth Director

2024-25 D103 Executives Elect