

Inspire the Member to New Heights

SING: Satisfy, Inspire, Nurture, Grow! Here is an idea to “Inspire the Member to new heights”. As with every idea there is a story behind it.

Part 1: On December 1st 2009, I traveled to Denver, CO. to attend a sales training Seminar. I landed at the Denver airport around 6 pm, picked up my rental car and headed to the Marriott City Center downtown Denver. As I neared my destination I witnessed a multitude of people in the street. My first thought was “there must be a concert or sporting event going on.” I continued up the street and found the event to be a place, the Denver Rescue Mission! I was stunned. All of these people, men, women and children, standing in line needing something to eat! I had chills, my heart felt an emptiness. The feeling and sight of this remain in my mind to this day.

Part 2: I was preparing for my first DARE to SING forum on January 8th in Buffalo with 32 Seneca Land District Leaders. As I was thinking through the Inspiring and Service portion of my presentation, I reviewed old issues of Smoke Signals and was amazed at the power and energy the came from chapters serving the community. I recalled my night in Denver and then thought of the old theme song of our service project; the Institute of Logopedics. We sing that they shall speak transformed into We sing that they shall eat. I took a stab at writing the lyrics and shared them with a couple of friends, Larry Brennan and Dr. Bill Billingham, who made a few excellent recommendations in regards to tweaking the lyrics. We then experimented on our Chapter. During a rehearsal I explained the premise for this song, my personal experience and what “we” might be able to accomplish. We sang through the song once, wow pretty solid, everyone remembers this very singable arrangement. One more time with Dave Bender narrating. I got goose bumps. We finished the song and took a break. The whole chapter was buzzing with positive energy. Comments like “I know the Director of the Food Bank of Central NY, What about the Food Pantry, Catholic Charities, the Soup Kitchen, ideas for singouts, shows, publicity, partnering with radio stations. Holy Cow, this feels right on the mark! I then took this idea on the road as part my DARE to SING Divisional Meetings. Once again the idea was met with overwhelming enthusiasm by barbershoppers from across our District. One more test, share the idea with some of my barbershop heroes (men I hold in reverence for their accomplishments, knowledge and love of this hobby). One such barbershopper talked me through a few barriers to success.

The first barrier, I was told, is that the Barbershop Harmony Society currently has a service project, “the Harmony Foundation” and can we support two projects? My answer is yes and I spent an hour and a half discussing this with Clark Caldwell, Ev Nau, Ed Watson and Rick Spencer. I believe in supporting the future of Barbershop and I encourage and challenge every Seneca Land Chapter to donate what they can. Check out the new “Direct Connect” option for chapter donations. The Barbershop Harmony Foundation supports Youth Festivals and with our declining membership actually underwrites some of the Society’s operating expenses. In other-wards, it’s important for today and tomorrow’s Barbershop activities. But I also believe that we need a connection with our communities. When someone asks what do Barbershoppers do? What a wonderful statement to say, Barbershoppers perpetuate their singing art form and support hungry families in our community. They’re the guys that sing so others may enjoy a warm meal. On April 12th, the first barrier was officially cleared with an e-

mail from Rick Spencer authorizing our use of the Society arrangement “We Sing That They Shall Speak”, for their support in this I am grateful and overjoyed.

The second barrier, “Does this program resonate with Joe Barbershopper?” My reply was an emphatic YES! I spoke of the positive energy, faces and sheer motivation from my chapter experiment and the overwhelming response from Chapters during my Divisional meetings. There is a feeling of joy in helping others. It’s another way for guys being proud to be a barbershopper.

The third barrier to success according to my barbershopper consultant, “the words, lyrics, even the title are crass and harsh. The word “eat” is a harsh word, the lyrics seemed forced and are not uplifting and motivating. This barbershopper told me that this idea was a noble and just endeavor, that my enthusiasm and vision had moved him during our discussion and that he would take a shot at writing lyrics for me with one stipulation; that the credit for anything he gave me be attributed to a caring, anonymous barbershopper. Within thirty minutes of our discussion I received this; a new title “We Sing To Feed Them All”.

Lyrics: We sing to feed them all, the family in need. We sing to answer ev’ry prayer a mother cannot heed. We sing to touch the noble heart and raise the siren’s call. We sing to feed each hungry child! We sing to feed them all.

This service project allows a chapter to partner with any organization in their community that “Seeks to Feed Them All”. Your District Marketing and PR Team will be creating a community engagement tool kit around this big idea, stay tuned!

My dream is that our Barbershop chapters are positively recognized in every community, as those wonderful, caring men who love to Sing to Feed them All. We not only become a recognized, giving organization in the community but the marketing and membership opportunities are endless. This program will deliver on the promise of “Inspiring Members to New Heights”.

Pete Carentz

President Seneca Land District