WHY ARE WE HERE?

- Overview of STUDENT ENGAGEMENT practices from internal and external resources in the appendix of the Kids’ Chance Scholarship Guide
- Open discussion and Q&A to help each other out
  - Discuss hot topics and best practices in affinity groups
  - Report back with suggestions or questions
- Outcomes:
  - Programs are better equipped and able to offer high-quality, effective awards to student.
  - Enhance the Kids’ Chance brand.
  - Enhance the student experience.

WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Previous information from Kids’ Chance
- Two conference calls with 14 states
- Research on NSPA website and toolkit
- Interviews with three NSPA members, 2 national and 1 local program
START WITH WHY

- Start with the end in mind. Why do better at student engagement?
- What do you hope to accomplish? How will you know the impact of your efforts?
- Program or effort flows from there.
- Assemble internal and external partners, collaborators, employees, etc. to achieve the goal.

Advice: Start simple. Include students in decisions.

IDEAS FROM KC STATES
FINDING STUDENTS

- **Gain access** to information or referrals through state Worker’s Comp Commission (WCC) or Department of Labor (DOL).
- **Build relationships** and awareness with attorneys who are involved in Worker’s Comp claims.
- School level: **Send information directly** to high school guidance counselors via postal mail or email. Get school districts to post the scholarship information on their intranet or within student career and college information systems.

IDEAS FROM KC STATES
ENGAGING CURRENT STUDENTS

- Use special events or fundraisers to drive engagement with students as **speakers** who tell their story or participate on a **panel** at sponsor events.
- Build in **renewal check points** (each semester) or other strategies via phone, email or text to gain access to information about how students are doing in college – academically, financially and socially.
- Capture **bios and photos** for use on the state website. Include stories of students and their families that can showcase college success.
- Establish an **e-newsletter** with content about Kids’ Chance, upcoming opportunities or deadlines.

* [https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html) for federal
  [https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html](https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html) for state
IDEAS FROM KC
ENGAGING CURRENT STUDENTS

• Test social media to see what resonates with students and their parents, not only as a way to share program information but also to help recipients connect and build community.

• Reach out to siblings and parents to help prompt current scholarship recipients to participate, respond, renew or otherwise stay engaged.

• Make the effort for personal outreach, to students and parents, instead of generic group emails.

• Celebrate college graduation! Current examples included congratulatory calls, emails, graduation cards or plaques; a few states ask students to connect on LinkedIn.

IDEAS FROM KC
ENGAGING ALUMNI

• Continue to communicate with alumni via newsletters or updates; ask students to “opt-in” and give permission for further communication to keep the relationship going.

• I invite alumni to special events and fundraisers and make their role clear. Offer the option of video stories if alumni cannot attend an event in person or are uncomfortable being on stage.

• Encourage alumni involvement as board members or advisory council members to gain their perspective in a meaningful way.

• Provide a structure for past recipients to mentor or guide newer recipients on how to get involved.

• Offer to connect students with board members for job search assistance or career mentoring, as board members are willing and able.

IDEAS FROM NSPA MEMBERS
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

• Leverage technology to the degree possible to contact with students as they matriculate, graduate and grow into their careers and lives.

• Support, recognize or engage students through awards, titles, designations, membership labels, categories or badges that acknowledge their status and can be promoted on their résumés or LinkedIn accounts.

• Provide a scholar orientation via webinar, Google hangout or conference call to help recipients understand how to use the scholarship, how to renew the scholarship and who to contact should they have problems or questions.

• Provide weekly motivational messages to scholarship recipients, especially during the first semester of college. These messages can be automated in an email program.

IDEAS FROM NSPA MEMBERS
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

Send care packages to students in their first semester and each subsequent year. HOW?

• Leverage volunteer forces through the human resource departments at board members’ or sponsors’ places of employment.

• Ask volunteers or board members to write letters of encouragement.

• Conduct a care package drive or cookie drive and find a sponsor to pay for postage; send the packages to students at their college address.

• Partner with other organizations such as fraternal or benevolent groups or Junior League to maximize efforts and defray costs.

If hand-crafted care packages are not possible, send small care packages to the students at college via Amazon or another online retailer.
IDEAS FROM NSPA MEMBERS
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

• Offer a grocery or supply stipend, extra book money, or emergency fund, beyond the scholarship. This could help students stay in school, reduce stress and fill a need that is often filled by a parent.

• Offer to take students out for coffee or a meal, even on campus, if a Kids’ Chance board member will be in town in their location. This helps establish bonds, puts a face to the brand and helps students feel supported.

• Create and maintain a college advisory panel, comprised of volunteers who work in the college and university space. They could serve as a sounding board or respond to questions students may have about financial aid, enrollment or other challenges for which Kids’ Chance representatives are not equipped to answer or provide counsel.

IDEAS FROM NSPA MEMBERS
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

• Maintain a post-college database with fields of information such as major, employer, spouse’s name, permission to text, social media presence. Losing touch students is the biggest risk to future engagement.

• Encourage alumni to give back by volunteering in the office or at events, even if the alumni do not wish to be featured publicly or appear on stage.

• Ask alumni how they want to be involved, if at all, and listen to what they say. Their ideas are more likely to be generationally and culturally relevant than something designed by a person 20-30 years older than them.

• Form opportunities for alumni to give back financially, no matter how small, to current students, and acknowledge this as part of the Kids’ Chance culture and circle of support.

IDEAS FROM NSPA MEMBERS
OVERALL ENGAGEMENT

• Instead of student engagement being driven by staff or volunteers, ask alumni to help think through an effective process and provide direction based on their own experiences.

• Create peer support opportunities (which some states already have done) among students who have been through similar situations with injury or loss of a parent as they attempt to earn their degree.

• Codify the level or type of mentoring the program can offer, if at all, and the degree of formality that the students and Kids’ Chance volunteers can handle and sustain.

• Find marketing and messaging opportunities in interactions with current students and alumni stating that: “Kids’ Chance Cares.”

TABLE TALK

1. Newer state or those who need help get 2 minutes to present scenario or ask question to their small group.

2. Small group provides ideas, opinions, expertise.

3. Those who are more advanced share their top tips, challenges and “most mileage” examples.
REPORT BACK – KEY TAKEAWAYS

• ONE new thing I learned
• ONE thing I am going to TRY doing
• ONE thing I am going to STOP doing

THANK YOU!

Kim Stezala (The Scholarship Lady®)
Senior Partner
Design Group International
414-747-9391
KimS@designgroupintl.com
LinkedIn/in/kimstezala
www.designgroupintl.com
www.stezalaconsulting.com