Single Service Project: Outstanding ITEC Graduate Award

1. Identifying a service need. **Although many awards were given to recognize the outstanding high school graduate of the various programs at the county-wide vocational school, the ITEC program for adults with disabilities was overlooked.** The award began when the wife of a Kiwanis member was an aid to one of the students in the I-TEC program. She observed the discrepancy and unmet need at the graduation. She discussed it with the instructor and appealed to the Kiwanis Club to add the ITEC program to their scholarship awards. The Kiwanis club proceeded to give the award for many years until the Aktion Club was chartered, 10 years ago. When the Aktion Club of Licking County was chartered, it made sense to the Kiwanis advisors that the Aktion club seemed like the perfect sponsor of the award. The Kiwanis Club Advisors asked the Aktion club whether they would be interested in assuming responsibility of the award and presentation. The Aktion Club discussed it at their meeting. The award includes a $500 annual award. Their Board discussed and made the decision to commit the funds and invest the time to present the annual award. The Kiwanis Club advisor brought the Aktion Club President to the first presentation. It was clear after the first year that the award was a proud accomplishment by the winner and the club realized they were making a real impact in the community, especially for those with disabilities. It has been a terrific partnership working with the sponsoring Kiwanis club to continue the promotion during the 4th of July parade and in the press releases with the other high school Kiwanis scholarship winner.

2. Creating a service project plan –Initially, the Aktion club worked directly with the scholarship committee chair of the Kiwanis club to create a service project plan. Now the Aktion Club alone raises the funds for the award, approves the nomination in April, makes the physical award presentation at graduation in May, promotes the award through a press release in June, invites the winner to the Aktion Club meeting in June and support the student's participation at the 4th of July parade. The project has many components and requires planning, club and Board approval, community participation, communication within the club, between the Aktion Club, Kiwanis club and I-TEC instructor via email, and a commitment to deadlines. The Kiwanis Advisors help to ensure the process runs smoothly.

3. Carrying out the project plan – Since our club was formed in 2016, our Aktion Club of Licking County has sponsored annually an Outstanding Student Award with $500 for the local vocational high school program that serves students in our county. Our Aktion Club is also comprised of members from all over our county. The award recognizes an outstanding high school student with disabilities who graduates from the I-TEC (Individualized Transition Education program, a work preparation program for students with disabilities) from our county-wide high school, C-TEC (Career & Technical Education School). We work with the instructor in April for nominations. At the school-wide graduation in May, our club President presents the award to the winner on stage at the graduation. It is a surprise to the winner. The President talks to the winner and invites them to a club meeting. We take a photo for the newpaper article and promote the award on our Facebook and to our Kiwanis clubs. The Kiwanis Club of Granville scholarship committee also helps review the application of the nominated student. The Kiwanis club invites the student winner and their family to attend the Kiwanis meeting after the award and speak to the club along with the other scholarship winners. The Kiwanis club also invites the winners to

ride on a float in the Kiwanis 4th of July parade. Their names are on signs on the float and listed on the official 4th of July Event Schedule, program card and posters. The Kiwanis Club also publishes the winners in the local newspaper article. The Aktion Club publishes the I-TEC scholarship winner in their own press releases and in the LCBDD communications. In the articles, we highlight the students' achievements, promote the I-TEC program for adults with disabilities and the community service and sponsorship by the Aktion Club of Licking County. The Aktion club now meets once a month. At each meeting, the club follows an agenda to report on short and long-term projects. Some projects require communicating between meetings as committees by email, text and in person. Throughout the year, the club raises funds for the $500 scholarship/award. The club has raised funds from a flower sale, bracelet sale and hosted game booths at Kiwanis club's festivals. The club also receives donations at service events and funds from the sponsoring Kiwanis Clubs. The club partners with the school program instructor and Kiwanis scholarship committee to identify, interview, review nominations and recognize the Outstanding Graduate $500 Award for the I-TEC program. The Kiwanis club creates and prints a certificate, which the Aktion Club President signs. The Aktion Club writes the check for $500, which is presented at the graduation. Both Kiwanis and Aktion clubs create press releases.

4. Engaging with others – The Aktion Club interacts with the Kiwanis club, the I-TEC instructor and the nominee and their family through this service project. The club President engages directly with leaders in the community during the on-site graduation ceremony in the lounge and in the audience. The President meets the award winner before the ceremony for a photograph. The student learns about the award on the day of graduation. The Aktion Club President congratulates the winner and shares about Aktion Club, offering an invitation to visit and join the club. In the months prior to the award presentation, the instructor communicates with the Aktion Club Advisors and Kiwanis club scholarship chair to coordinate the presentation and meetings with the student. The Kiwanis club advisors and volunteers help provide transportation and photograph the presentation made by the current Aktion Club President. The presentation is a highlight of the club and an important duty of the Aktion Club President. The club enjoys meeting the award recipient and learning how they will use the award money.

5. Impact on the members – The award and participation promote Aktion Club and the achievements of students with disabilities. This year, the President sat next to and interacted with the Superintendent of Granville schools. Last year they spoke at length to the President of the regional hospital, Licking Memorial Health Systems. Members learn about the work program at I-TEC/C-TEC and the community leaders. The members share about Aktion Club and our community service through the award and press release. The club invites the graduating students to attend our meetings and join the club. The award is one of the most popular service projects each year. The Club Presidents enjoy getting on stage at graduation to award the presentation. The ceremony is formal and they dress up. They are respected being in the company of other community leaders and Presidents. The Aktion Club President is invited to mingle with other award sponsors and outstanding leaders in the community before the awards ceremony. They are seated alongside them during the ceremony. Because of the in-person awards presentation, our club officers interact with other community leaders at the awards presentation.

6. Impact on the community – The Kiwanis club has learned more about Aktion Club and the impact of the I-TEC award. They have continued to work with the Aktion Club and promote the award during their 4th of July and through their application and interview process. The scholarship committee learns more about the I-TEC students and their accomplishments when they attend the Kiwanis meeting. The award is part of the formal C-TEC Graduation. The award and presenters (Aktion Club) are listed in the formal program as well as in the press releases. The community learns more about service by the Aktion club and impact of the I-TEC program. After the awards ceremony at graduation, we invite the winner and their family to our club meeting. The winner can speak about themselves and the impact of the award. We also invite the winner to our sponsoring Kiwanis club meeting where they are introduced and speak to the club with the other scholarship winners. In addition to the $500 award which the Aktion Club contributes, the highlight is riding in the 4th of July parade. The Kiwanis club invites all scholarship winners to ride on a float in their Kiwanis 4th of July Parade. Their names are announced on the main stage during the parade. Their name is also on a sign on the float that they ride. The recognition and award money build confidence, recognition of the program and provide funds to purchase clothing and anything to benefit their job responsibilities. By sponsoring the award, the club takes pride in giving back to the community directly by recognizing a student's achievements and indirectly, by promoting the I-TEC program and outstanding students with disabilities who deserve to be recognized.