



Empowering Leaders



*Providing a foundation of support to assist GIG Leaders
to effectively meet the needs of GIG members and community.*

December 29, 2008

GIG Leaders and Managers,

I wanted to take the time to say thank you and how wonderful you all are. I can't thank you enough for all that you are doing locally to make the lives of those with gluten intolerances better. Truly it is through your many "Helping Hands" that so many people are able to live healthy lives – gluten free.

As we have been working frantically in the national office to finish all the work that needs to be done to close the 2008 year and the planning going into 2009, I have been reflecting on what a positive year it was for GIG – largely in part to all of you. I also find myself with many sleepless nights, wondering what impact the economy will have on the work we all do - how we will do all that needs to be done, knowing there are more to serve with the very real probability of having to do it with less. We know that service organizations like GIG often experience a decline in donations, while at the same time are sought out more by those in need.

It is my personal goal in 2009, to hold our services to the same level, so as not to create further hardships on those who need us, and find growth in programs to meet the demand of the greater community that we serve. How we will make this happen, I don't know – I just know we have to try...and I need you to walk this journey with me. If there is one message we can take away from the recent presidential election, it is that grassroots efforts work and together our "Helping Hands" will make a difference.

So, in 2009 GIG will focus on:

...What we can do with less...

...Show that there is power in numbers...

...Using grassroots efforts, we will make a difference in awareness, support, and education to bring peace of mind to those living gluten-free.

Here is what is being planned in 2009:

May 3, 2009 - Chef to Plate, Celebrating Restaurants Serving Up Awareness. This is a national awareness campaign for gluten-free living, through the restaurants that support persons living with gluten intolerances. To make this truly a national effort, GIG is asking Branches across the country to be part of this event. Please mark your calendars. A packet of information is being completed and will be sent out soon.

June 4, 2009 – GIG Leadership Conference, as part of the GIG Annual Education Conference in Seattle, WA. *This year we will spend more time "Sharing and Caring." We plan to discuss how GIG is uniquely positioned to be the leading organization in advocacy work, share a teen leadership program that you can take back to your Branch and openly discuss with exhibitors how to have a win-win relationship with them. Sales Tax will be a topic for discussion and learning this year.*

This program is provided at no cost for GIG Branch Managers and Leaders, Board members and staff. Program materials, breakfast, lunch and dinner are included. All meals are GF.

GIG Tours My goal is to visit more Branches in 2009. These visits will be offered in conjunction with other

travel that I am involved in. As much as possible, I will give plenty of notice. If you are flexible, I may be able to visit your area. This is your opportunity to tell me what you need...do you want me to talk to your group; work with your leaders; assist in an event? You name it. The time I spend with you is for your benefit. Please take advantage of my being in your area.

Tours in the Works:

March 5-8 – Anaheim, CA. I could attach stops to the front or back end of this trip.

April 18-19 – Chicago IL (THRIVE). I could attach stops to the front or back end of this trip.

May 4-7 – Southern Visit (Atlanta and surrounding area)

Early Sept – Texas Road Trip

Late Sept – I will be in Boston and can plan a trip around my time in the Northeast

Oct (17-20) – I will be in Denver and could attach stops to the front or back end of this trip.

There will be more trips, I just don't know when or where yet. If you want to have me visit, please let me know.

Highlighting Branches in the GIG Magazine: Let's tell everyone about all the good work that your Branch does. We would like to highlight all you are doing, by sharing a story about your Branch in the Quarterly magazine. We will highlight up to 5 branches each quarter, depending on space and length of stories submitted. If you want to share a short story about your branch, we will share it with our readers. Tells us about your group, events or other special things about your group. As articles are received they will be held for the next magazine. The first quarter magazine is going to the printer the second week of Jan.

Helping Hands Times 10! It is my desire to show just what we can do through grass roots efforts. I have a vision of a campaign to show how much volunteers can accomplish. The concept and idea are rough...and I would love to have a "Think Tank" of people to make it come to reality. If people can't give financially, maybe we can spur them to give of their time. We could use this movement to show that bringing about awareness, education and support doesn't take lots of money...it just takes "helping hands." Basically we would set goals and each goal would be doubled (i.e.: initial goal: 10 hands, next goal 100 hands, next 1000, etc. Could we reach a goal of 1 million hands and 10 million hours? That is only 10 hours per set of helping hands). We start small and watch it snowball. We could try to make it a national effort across all groups to show our unity. It could include recognition levels, ideas for volunteering and support ideas that work, etc.

Spreading awareness to the medical community: GIG would like to offer a complimentary membership to 10 health care providers in your area, of your choosing. Please send us a listing of 10 health care professionals that you would like to receive a complimentary subscription to the GIG magazine.

Celiac 101 – you said you wanted a standardized program. Are there any volunteers to help review everyone's materials and put together the best program ever?

Conference Calls: We have set aside a conference call date each month to be used for various things. In Jan I would like to use this call to tell Branch leaders about the Chef to Plate Campaign. You just might have some ideas to make it better. The call date is Jan 22nd, 5-6:30 pm (Pacific), 8-9:30 Eastern. You will receive an invitation to attend. Please let me know if you do not receive the invite and if you want to attend.

Finally,

My wish for you is peace, health and happiness in the new year.

Cynthia Kupper
Executive Director

Gluten Intolerance Group of N. A.®
31214 - 124 Ave SE, Auburn WA 98092
P: 253-833-6655 F: 253-833-6675