Public Relations Manager– Karen O'Donnell, DTM

My goals for this year included:-

- put in place a district wide **PR Team**
- Provide up to date **training** for our VPPRs &
- assist our clubs to **flourish** through an active PR presence

& on my own personal Toastmasters Journey - to embrace new challenges !!

DLT TOOLS!

My first unexpected challenge came in the form of the DLT tools - Gotowebinar, Wordpress & Constant Contact. Challenges are always good and I knew that getting familiar with these tools would help me communicate with our members. It's a work in progress though having embraced them, they are a lot more familiar to me now.

DISTRICT WEBSITE

This is our 'shop window', where members of the general public as well as our District members can 'see' what's happening in our district. I have populated our district website with some interesting incentives and articles. There are many incentives – each month rewards are sent to the lucky recipients. Our website is updated frequently with helpful articles for our members. Our PR professional, Chantal Cooke, has succeeded in publishing articles relating to Toastmasters in an estimated reach of over 950,000.

Our Division Directors have embraced the Newsletter Editor role and produced three newsletters already this year. These newsletters along with our incentives & media articles, can be viewed on our district website.

One of my PR incentives this year was the 'Travelling Toastie'. The idea behind this was to encourage communication/support & learning between clubs. At the same time, it assists all Travelling Toasties in their own Toastmasters journey as they take on roles/speeches in other clubs. Part of this program encourages the Travelling Toasties to promote the visiting club on Facebook. This has lead to an increase in Toastmasters articles being posted on Facebook resulting in greater public awareness of our clubs.

Video Testimonials are a wonderful way of connection clubs with the general public. We are running a 'Best Video Testimonial' incentive and to assist clubs – I have set up a **'Media Room'** at the Dubhlinn conference. This is another way of assisting our clubs in producing video testimonials. Some experienced Toastmasters will also be interviewed and these can be used to promote our clubs and district.

ONGOING TRAINING & ACTIVE PR PRESENSE

To assist our clubs, we have already had 5 conference calls with VPPRs and also members from the PR Team. This has helped the VPPRs in their new roles and has also lead to 'brain-storming' sessions where new ideas of 'getting the word out' has been explored. I find these sessions exciting as our members drive and enthusiasm leads to wonderful collaborative work and support for one another.

Our PR Teams throughout the District are working on 'Bright Ideas – External PR' ways of getting the message out about our wonderful clubs, to the general public. We had collaborative work from various clubs at the Tullow Show in August. Brendan Haughton spear-headed the Feilte event for the Youth Leadership Program - he also succeeded in securing a workshop at this event. Members in Wexford will had a stand and give a workshop at their Business Expo. Another suggestion which would benefit all the clubs in the district is Meetup. We are currently looking into the feasibility of this and hope to roll this out over the coming weeks on a trial basis. Thanks to the great ideas from this PR Team.

The feedback from members is very positive in relation to my approach to PR this year. I have thoroughly enjoyed connecting to members of District 71 & look forward to seeing plans unfold over the coming months.

Karen O'Donnell, DTM (Public Relations Manager 2016 – 2017)