If I had to come up with a theme for the leadership training this summer,.it would be “Re-connecting.”

Every discussion I was part of, every “task” we were assigned in different sessions/groups had that theme up front and immediate.

First, it immediately appeared the pandemic had turned DKG Int’l upside down. Plain and simple.

Our entire membership had/has been dealing with both immediate and future PERSONAL, Professional, and larger group concerns brought on by a world-wide pandemic that seemed almost endless, depending on what was happening locally, nationally, and internationally.

In one small group, in trying to come up with a title for what to call that “challenge,” we decided to say we all had been in “hibernation.” That term was almost instantly accepted as true and totally accurate, in all ways. We would survive, but that would look DIFFERENT t the least.

And, as we continued to focus on our group task, someone asked, “So are we all going to come back as butterflies?” In our immediate laughter, we realized THAT was just as perfect!! :-) So we all said, “YESSSSS!”

Problem solved—sort of.

Challenge #1–
Reconnect with each other at the chapter level—do something FUN, first and foremost and CONTINUOUSLY, through the year.

We all had to allow members to download personal challenges only as far as they felt comfortable —and then share professional challenges.
Secondly, how do we help with those challenges ? Again, brainstorm.

THOSE ideas/realities were all over the map. One school district in the DC area had lost all funding for BOOKS. That member shared that their classrooms had been emptied of ALL class sets of books, throughout the district!!!!

But since the funding had been erased, the teachers were at a loss of how they all were going to move forward. She walked away at the bell, to shift to another group—and we were left sitting there, dumbfounded.

Result? We all shared that we had better “take stock” of what was happening in our schools’ physical classrooms, as well as our personal and professional health when we returned home!!

AND, that was accepted as NOT being an easy nor “quick” task.

However, our physical and emotional health had to be our FIRST concern—our students would be shortchanged if we didn’t do that. Ideas like using counselors in every building, and not just from the school district, were advanced—we were reminded to take advantage of the counselor talent in our larger communities, like in hospitals, community emergency services, etc.

We also were reminded that every community, even the smallest one, would have some access of help to that need, either from local, district, or state level. We were admonished to look “larger” than even the field of education—city, county, state, and national level entities had access to that community need.

Did we walk away with solutions to local DKG needs? Not necessarily—but we all had been challenged to discover our needs, and then work together to answer those needs.

THAT was something we all agreed we could do.

Submitted by Gayle Hammons, state member, DKG, October, 2023.