



**Third Newsletter
March, 2026**

Entering into
the new season
of leadership
for everyone.

District 109

**In District 109, we educate,
we compete, and we grow.
We also cheer and
celebrate!**

(Issue 3/25-26)

109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice !

Editor's note

We are less than 10 weeks from Tirana. Contest season is running across all six divisions, renewal deadlines are closing in, and the fourth trimester is the one that decides how this year is remembered. That is the context for everything in this issue.

Inside, you will find updates from every District Officer, news from across our divisions, and a full briefing on the Conference. If you have not booked your ticket and accommodation yet, this is your reminder. Do it today.

This issue also introduces sections built to last. A PhotoBooth capturing real moments from across your divisions. A Club Spotlight on one club doing something worth your attention. A PR Tips section with ideas you can use immediately. Something from the Harmony Team that is genuinely worth reading slowly. The educational video archive is back by popular demand.

This newsletter exists because District 109 has a story worth telling. My job is to make sure it gets told well. See you in Tirana.

Yannis Kanlis, PRM

District 109 Core Team

and their presentations for DCM
2025-2026



109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!

A Season of Energy, Growth, and Leadership

When members rise, the District thrives.
Across District 109, this is a time full of energy.



In many clubs, members are preparing for speech **contests, celebrating** the courage of those who step on stage and the dedication of many volunteers who make these events possible.

At the same time, clubs are working on **renewals, membership** campaigns, welcoming new guests, and continuing the essential work of keeping our communities vibrant and growing.

This is also the season when we look ahead to the **future of our leadership** and review the alignment of our Areas and Divisions.

Club officer elections are approaching, followed by District leadership elections.

Across many Divisions, inspiring conferences and events are bringing members together to learn, connect, and celebrate the Toastmasters experience.



Renewals



Recognition Hub,



**TM D109
Official Channel**



What matters most right now? Renewals. Taking care of our members, strengthening our clubs, and continuing to grow our community.



Please remember to check the **Recognition Hub**, where you can find the latest incentives and opportunities for your clubs.

There is also a new incentive: **Renew by March 21, the first day of spring!** 🌸 Clubs that complete their renewals by this date will be recognized.

And there is more. **If your club organizes a Speechcraft this spring, the District will reimburse the Digital Bundles.**

PQD 1-2-3

Education Program Updates

Toastmasters International is bringing back classic education materials within Pathways, including the very first education manual and part of the CC manual (though this time not in print).

The Better Speaker Series and other specialty series will also return during the coming year.

1

Want to be a Conference Manager?



Click here to submit

We're looking for a Technical Manager!
You do not have to be an expert in audio-visual equipment, though some prior knowledge is preferable.
See above for type of candidate.

If you're interested, please reach out to PQD Laor Glukhovsky at pqd@district109.org

2

More than 180 tickets already sold for FOLTirana!

Want to get your early bird while you still can?

Just go to foltirana.com

Want to attend your division conferences?

- Division A** - April 18-19 in Genoa, Italy
- Division B** - April 18-19 in Rhodes, Greece
- Division C** - April 25 in Basel, Switzerland
- Division D** - April 25 in Morges, Switzerland
- Division E** - April 11 in Zurich, Switzerland
- Division F** - April 11 in Graz, Austria

3

Focus on Education

This is a great time to help members schedule their speeches until the end of the year and get those educational points!

If you know of a member who is very close but without enough time, have a SPEECHATHON!

D109 is united by our mission:

“We build new clubs and support all clubs in achieving excellence.”

This year, we have set ourselves a bold goal to achieve **Smedley Distinguished** status. To reach this milestone, we need to add 12 new clubs, and with your commitment and dedication, we know it is possible. We already have four promising leads, and now is the time to take action.



CGD Resources



To succeed, **we are calling for leaders who are ready to grow while serving our community.** Opportunities are available in several key roles:

- **Club Mentors** will guide new clubs, supporting their leadership teams to achieve excellence.
- **Club Sponsors** will help establish new clubs, ensuring they start with strong foundations, secure membership numbers, and successfully charter with Toastmasters International.
- **Club Coaches** will revitalize struggling clubs, strengthen their membership base, and guide them toward becoming distinguished.
- **New Club Leads** are vital to opening doors for more people to experience the benefits of Toastmasters, while also expanding opportunities for leadership and personal growth across our district.

Taking on one of these roles is not only about service it is also about what you will gain.

You will experience personal and professional growth, enhance your collaboration and team-building skills, and receive recognition as you progress toward your **Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM)** award requirements.

You will also expand your leadership and networking opportunities and, most importantly, leave a lasting legacy in District 109. I am more energized and inspired than ever by the passion of our global community.

With the dedication of our **Club Growth Team** and **your support**, I am confident that we can achieve our vision and proudly become a **Smedley Distinguished District.**



We build new clubs and support all existing clubs in achieving excellence.



✉ If you have leads or would like to volunteer to support D109 Club Growth Team, please contact us at **cgd@district109.org** Check D109 **Events here.**

Growing with 109 voices in 2026!

As we move towards the last quarter of the Toastmasters Program year, let us stay motivated and finish strong.

The District can celebrate the chartering of its third new club, 'Lead and Speak.' Let's continue to charter more new clubs and support our struggling clubs.

The CG team, Peer-2-Peer calls Growth Cafe & Club Loyalty teams are here to help you with your questions



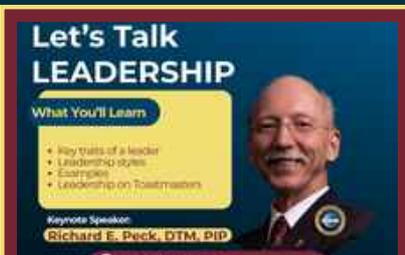
CORPORATE SUMMIT TÜRKIYE

For three inspiring days in February,

professionals, leaders, and Toastmasters members gathered in Istanbul for the Toastmasters Corporate Summit.

A celebration of communication, leadership, and continuous growth.

“ Take those opportunities when you are not ready. ”



PEER TO PEER MENTORS COMMUNITY

Peer to Peer Mentors has been continuing to inspire.

Ted Corcoran, DTM Aletta Rochat, DTM, gave keynote insightful speeches.

Next session Richard E. Peck, PIP, DTM will be our keynote speaker.

[Click here to register](#)



CLUB GROWTH CAFÉ

Hosted by Yannis Kanlis & Tuana Arikboğa, Club Growth Café reveals creative ways to grow.

Paola Perina, Bettina Howarth, Maciej Baranowski shared valuable insights. Next session will be on 30th of March with Vanessa Stournari and Berenice Millan.

[Click here to register.](#)



CLUB LOYALTY PROGRAM

Our newest series “**Club Loyalty Program**” took off to improve retention within clubs. Helene Kriström, Morag Mathiesson, DTM, gave speeches.

Our next speaker will be 2015-2016 PIP Jim Kokocki, DTM on March 12th.

[Click here to register](#)



Region 10 Mid Year Training

Was held very successfully in Oman end of January to share knowledge and celebrate chartering clubs.

Partnerships

We are starting a collaboration with JCI.

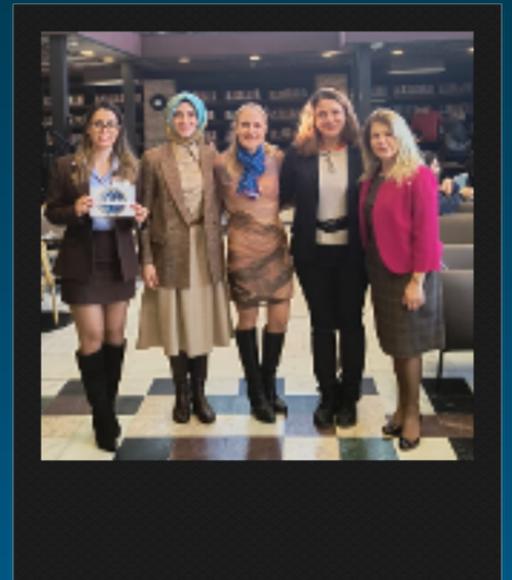
Stay tuned for details!



Special Edition

Corporate summit

Istanbul, Türkiye
11-12-13 February 2026



Building bridges between organizations and leadership development



From February 12 to 15, Istanbul hosted an inspiring Corporate Summit, organized by our Club Growth Director Meltem Altınay, bringing together members and leaders committed to expanding Toastmasters within the corporate world.

The event was also honored by the presence of two distinguished officials, the Region 10 Advisor Lilian Shaftacola, DTM, and the District 109 Director Katia Burdet, DTM, whose visit created valuable moments of exchange and reflection on the role corporate clubs can play in developing communication and leadership within organizations.

During the summit, we had the opportunity to visit corporate clubs, including those at Boston Scientific and the Collective Voices of EECA, gaining insight into how Toastmasters supports professional growth in international and corporate environments.

One of the highlights of the event was a leadership panel discussion, guided by Hulya Kurt, with the participation of representatives from Rotary, creating an interesting dialogue between different leadership and service organizations.

Thanks to Özgün Kaplama,, we also had the opportunity to connect with JCI (Junior Chamber International), further strengthening relationships with organizations that share similar values of leadership development and community impact.

To conclude the summit, participants attended an Area Speech Contest, celebrating the courage and talent of our members on stage.

Overall, it was a rich and inspiring experience, full of learning, connection, and new ideas.

Organizing a Corporate Summit is a powerful opportunity to create partnerships, discover new possibilities, and bring Toastmasters closer to the professional world.

Perhaps this is something that other Divisions or Areas might consider organizing in the future.

What are you waiting for?



Corporate summit

Istanbul, Türkiye

11-12-13 February 2026

Toastmasters Experience

The summit opened with dynamic Toastmasters demo meetings, giving participants a firsthand experience of how a supportive environment and structured feedback can transform public speaking confidence. From first-time speakers to experienced leaders, the room was filled with energy, curiosity, and meaningful conversations.

A highlight of the summit was the **Leadership Workshop** led by **Region 10 Advisor Lilian Shaftacola**, where participants explored practical leadership insights and the importance of effective communication in today's professional world.

On the second evening, the stage welcomed an inspiring **Rotary & Toastmasters Leadership Panel**, featuring **Lilian Shaftacola, District 109 Director Katia Burdet, and Rotary District 2420 Governor Fuat Yalçın**. Their discussion highlighted the shared mission of developing ethical, confident leaders and the power of collaboration between communities.

Beyond the sessions, the summit created space for networking, idea-sharing, and new connections reminding everyone that leadership growth happens not only through learning, but through community.



“ More than a Event ”

As part of the event, companies were also introduced to interactive Toastmasters corporate demo sessions, offering organizations a practical way to strengthen communication, confidence, and leadership within their teams.



The Toastmasters Corporate Summit 2026 was more than a series of events it was a reminder that when professionals come together to learn, practice, and support one another, communication becomes a powerful tool for leadership and impact.

[If you would like to access recordings click here.](#)

109 ways to lead with your voice

Public Relations Corner

Introductions

Hello, District 109! I'm Yannis, your new Public Relations Manager, and I couldn't be more energized to step into this role.

By day, I serve as a Navy Commander, by passion, I live and breathe public speaking, storytelling, and the art of communication.

I'm here to make sure our district's story reaches every corner. From the mountains of Switzerland to the beaches of Israel, and from the cobblestone streets of Italy to the bazaars of Türkiye.

And if you spot me anywhere across the District, come say hi. I love meeting new people and hearing about what drives you.

Need help with anything PR-related? Reach out at prm@district109.org or find me on any IM app at +306972920554.

See you out there in D109 or in Tirana at our District Conference!

P.S If you or your club want to be included in the next issue of this newsletter, do not forget to tag us in your social media accounts or email us.



Yannis Kanlis
PRM

Annual Conferences 2026, Albania

Where Communication, Leadership and
Community Meet

Dear friends,

Tickets for FOLTirana 2026 are now available!

Join us from 28 May until 31 May, in Tirana, Albania, for an event designed to strengthen leadership, speaking skills and professional impact.

- **Keynote spotlight:** This year's conference features outstanding international speakers:

Sabyasachi Sengupta

Douglas Kruger

Francesco Fedele, DTM

- **Panel Discussion:**

Shared Secrets: Where Communication, Networking and Strategic Leadership Converge. This interactive panel brings together leaders from Toastmasters and Business Network International (BNI) to explore how communication, networking and strategic leadership work together to create strong communities and successful organizations.

Interactive Workshops: covering topics such as:

Leadership styles and conscious communication, cross-cultural networking and facilitation skills, advanced rhetorical devices for powerful speeches, AI tools for communication and personal branding, stress management and embodied communication, Influence, persuasion and impactful language.

Social Activities:

FOL Tirana is also an opportunity to connect beyond the stage. They will take place on 28-29 May and afternoon of 31 May.

Participants will enjoy networking moments, informal gatherings and social activities that celebrate the energy, culture and hospitality of Tirana.

Tickets:

Visit the event page and reserve your ticket now.



district109.org/FOLTirana

Let's celebrate great speaking and great company together—see you at FOLTirana 2026

Best,

The FOLTirana Team

Do you need to transfer your ticket?

Please send an email with the name and contact details (phone and email) of the receiving person to: registration@district109.org
Our Registration Manager Petra Salmutter will inform you about further steps. Thanks.

109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!

D109 PhotoBooth

Trivia, Photos, and Happy Faces

Chios Toastmasters Club

Annual Public Speaking Conference



**Toastmasters
Rimini Riviera**

Every summer, our Saturday morning club meetings in June, July, and August are held at the beach, in the sun and with our feet in the sand.

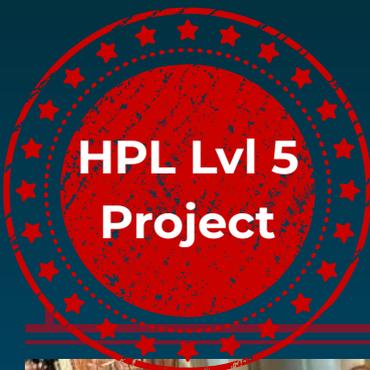


D109 PhotoBooth

Trivia, Photos, and Happy Faces



Hybrid Debates in ENG and IT Toastmasters Napoli



Zuriberg Toastmasters Club Bellinzona Carnival



On the Spotlight

Embajadores Toastmasters Club

The First Spanish/English Speaking Club
in D109

Do you want to improve your Spanish?

SWITZERLAND

Puerto Rico



VENEZUELA

México

FRANCE

Viva España

COLOMBIA

República Dominicana



For more Info

Embajadores.ch

“Your Story in Spanish,
Your Impact on Others.
Embajadores!”

109 ways to lead with your voice

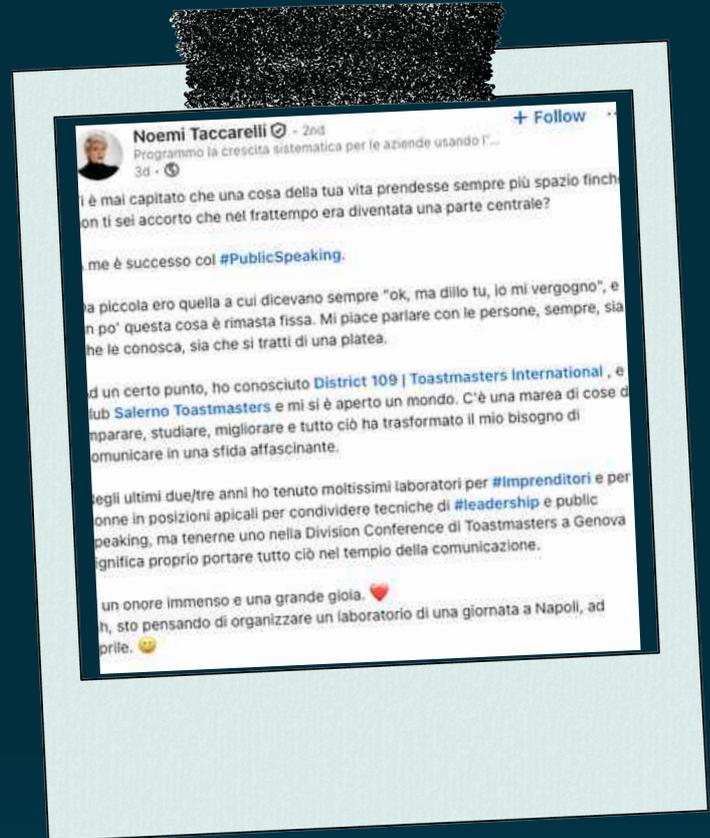
In Their Own Words

Unfiltered Members Experience

Noemi Taccarelli

Have you ever had something in your life take up more and more space until you realized that in the meantime it had become a central part? It happened to me with PublicSpeaking.

As a child I was the one who was always told "ok, but you say it, I'm ashamed", and this thing has remained fixed a bit. I like to talk to people, always, whether I know them or an audience.



At some point, I met District 109 | Toastmasters International, and the club Salerno Toastmasters, and a world opened up to me. There is a lot of things to learn, study, and improve, and all this has turned my need to communicate into a fascinating challenge.

In the last two/three years I have held many workshops for Imprenditori and for women in top positions to share leadership and public speaking techniques, but holding one at the Toastmasters Division Conference in Genoa means bringing all this into the temple of communication.

It is an immense honor and a great joy. ❤️

Ah, I'm thinking of organizing a one-day workshop in Naples, in April. 😊

Let's talk about PR

PR tips and hints

Let's be honest. Most Club Presidents and VPPRs wear too many hats. PR often falls to the bottom of the list. But I believe that your club's public image is what brings the next member through the door.

You don't need a marketing degree to do this well. You need three things: **a clear message, a consistent presence, and a simple system.**

Start with your message. Who is your club for? What do you help people do? Don't say "we improve public speaking." Booooring. Say "**we help professionals speak with confidence.**" That small shift makes your message land. Everything you post, publish, or share should connect back to it.

Then show up consistently. You don't need to post daily, just regularly. Pick two or three topics that reflect your club's identity. For example, **public speaking, leadership, and personal growth.** Then rotate among them. One post a week is enough to stay visible. Two is better. Just be consistent.

Use what you have. Your best content is already **happening inside your meetings.** A member overcomes stage fright. Someone delivers their first speech. A Table Topics answer turns into a life lesson.

Capture those moments. Share them with permission. Real stories beat stock photos every time. You know that, right?

Stay brand-compliant. Use the Toastmasters logo, colors, and fonts correctly. This builds trust and keeps us aligned as a district.

Templates are available in the Brand Portal on the Toastmasters website. Reach out to our brand ambassador: Francesca Gammicchia.

Finally, **don't do it alone.**

Build a small team. Delegate. Let members who want to develop writing or creative skills contribute. It's Toastmasters, where growth happens when we share the work.

PR isn't a task you complete. It's a habit you build. Start small, stay consistent, and your club's voice will carry further than you think.

D109 Educational Material

Workshops and Webinars

Peer to Peer
Mentor
Community

Alleta Rochat, An invitation worth saying yes to
Ted Corcoran, Better bottom-up purpose

Club Loyalty
Program

Morag Mathielson, Invisible Bonds
Helene Kristöm, Is your boat sinking

Club Growth
Cafe 2026

How to Make a Great Toastmasters Club
From Visibility to Visitors

Club Growth
Cafe 2025

Speechcrafts and Demo Meetings
Unlocking Growth
Using Tech and PR for Club Growth
Transforming Guests into Lifelong Members
Club Growth with Lisa

AM in 4 steps

Administration Manager Corner

As District 109 enters an active phase of the program year, administration continues working behind the scenes to keep processes clear and organized.

Here's what happened behind the scenes:

1

Contest Season Begins

Supporting Area and Division Directors with coordination, documentation and administrative preparation to ensure contests run smoothly.

3

District Conference Preparation

Working with the District leadership team to support the administrative preparation for the upcoming District Conference.

2

Calendar & Website:

Keeping the district calendar, event page, and website information up to date so members always know what's happening and when. New events and sessions are happening every day in our district. Check here: [District 109 Calendar](#)

4

Looking ahead:

- Supporting upcoming Division Conferences across the district.
- Preparing for the District Conference
- Assisting clubs with membership renewal reminders.
- Preparing documentation for upcoming DCM and DECM meetings.

💡 "Great administration is invisible, until it isn't." 😊



Divisions page NEWS

“Click on your **division link** to see the latest news.”



[Division A](#)



[Division B](#)



[Division C](#)



[Division D](#)



[Division E](#)



[Division F](#)

Your Harmony Team - feel heard, respected, and supported

Over the past eight months, we had the privilege of serving the District as the Harmony Team. Together, me (Petra) as Chair, Yafit as Trainer, and under the inspiring leadership of District Director Katia Burdet, we supported members and clubs across District 109 in **strengthening trust, clarity, and collaboration.**

This collective effort taught us valuable lessons about **dialogue, culture, and connection.**

“
Harmony is not the absence of differences - it is the courage to explore them with curiosity, respect, and an open heart.
”

WHAT THESE EIGHT MONTHS HAVE TAUGHT US

- **Ask questions, don't interpret**

“Are you feeling overwhelmed?” invites openness.

“You seem overwhelmed” defines the person and closes the conversation.

- **A Harmony Team call is support, not punishment.**

It's a neutral space to pause, reflect, and gain clarity, not a trial or a sign of wrong doing.

- **People experience situations differently**

What triggers one person may not affect another.

Recognizing this leads to more compassionate communication.

- **Most people share the same goals**

Conflicts often arise from disagreement about strategy, not intention.

Once the shared purpose becomes visible, tension fades.

- **Our combined strengths and wonderful team work made this possible**

Petra's background in communication and management,

Yafit's empathy-led training and moderation, and Katia's steady, supportive leadership.

LOOKING AHEAD

<https://district109.org/harmony-team/>

With the Harmony Team website section going live step by step, members will have access to practical tools, case insights, and guidance on how to enrich their club cultures.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Stay curious, ask before assuming, and look for the shared goal behind every disagreement. Harmony begins with understanding.

109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!

Your Harmony Team

Feel heard, respected, and supported

WELCOMING OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER

Who Matt Podgorski is

- Certified mediator with a multicultural background
- Broad international experience
- Works in agile environments and project development
- Supports organisations, clubs, and teams in challenging conversations, negotiations, conflict resolution
- **Focus:** strengthening understanding and collaboration
- Facilitates in German and English

What motivates him

- Believes strong communities grow through healthy dialogue
- Sees diversity in District 109 as a powerful opportunity for learning
- Enjoys helping people: find common ground, turn tension into cooperation

We are grateful to have him with us.

GET INVOLVED OR REACH OUT

Whether you're facing a challenge, want to learn more, or are interested in supporting the initiative, we are here for you. You can contact us via the District website <https://district109.org/leadership-team-2025-2026/> or email (see below).

Let's have a District where every voice is heard, every concern is respected, and every member feels supported.

With harmony,

Petra Salmutter – Harmony Team Chair

Yafit Gabai – Harmony Team Trainer

Matt Podgorski – Harmony Team Mediator

info@petrasalmutter.com | yaq016217@gmail.com | matt.podgorski@gmail.com



Petra Salmutter
Harmony Team Chair



Yafit Gabai
Harmony Team Trainer



Matt Podgorski
Harmony Team Mediator

109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!



LET'S CONNECT!

NVC Lounge

with Yafit Gabai, DTM

HOW TO CREATE CONNECTION EVEN IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Don't rush to give advice or even sympathize

thinking that this is what
the speaker wants.

In any conversation when
someone is telling you
something, stay with the
experience of the person.

**Ask how your words are
received with the other person**
when you are telling somebody
to do something, even if you are
the decision maker.

When you end with *"how is this
for you to hear?"* the other
person feels that they matter
and this makes all the
difference.

Disagreements are on strategies not on needs.

We may not like the action
that someone does but if we
understand their motivation
- their need -
it is easier to relax and
connect and together find a
strategy that works for both
of us.

Listen for the feeling and needs, not just the words.

When you have judgments
about something that
somebody did or said, look
for the needs that you are
trying to fulfill and express
your needs rather than your
judgments.

International Women's Day

Where Voices Rise

March 8 is more than a date.

It is a statement of visibility, courage, and leadership.

Toastmasters International provides more than a stage, it creates a space where women's voices are not only heard, but amplified.

Within this community, stepping up to the lectern means more than delivering a speech.

It means challenging limits.

Building confidence.

Inspiring others to believe, **"If she can do it, so can I."**

In our District, we are proud to move forward under the leadership of our female District Director. A visible and powerful example that leadership here is not symbolic, but real.

Representation is not an aspiration, it is our lived experience.

Women in Toastmasters are not only speakers. They serve as Club Presidents, mentors, trainers, and District leaders.

They shape direction.

They influence culture.

They lead with clarity and conviction.

When representation increases, confidence grows.

And when confidence grows, courage becomes contagious.

Leadership does not begin with a title. It begins with the courage to stand, to speak, and to lead.

On this International Women's Day, we celebrate a community where women lead boldly, speak freely, and elevate one another.

Our voices are strong.

Our stage is open.

And our journey continues, ***Together.***



Stronger voices.

Bigger stages.

Limitless

leadership.

March

109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!



**EBRU
BARUT**

We are building something

Join the PR Executive Team

District 109 is raising the bar on how it communicates.

Starting now, we are building a PR team that operates like a real media operation.

Consistent content, sharp visuals, active social channels, and a newsletter that members actually look forward to reading.

That takes people who want to develop real skills in writing, design, digital communication, and strategy.

If that sounds like you, read on.

We are looking for

Newsletter Proofreaders

You read carefully, catch what others miss, and care about getting it right. No experience required.

Graphic Designers

You work in Canva or similar tools and have an instinct for brand-compliant layouts.

Social Media Manager

You will manage posting schedules and help grow D109's presence online.

PR Consulting Team

You will advise on strategy, review our direction, and help us think bigger

These roles are open to any member across D109. Just send a message, tell us what you want to do, and we will find the right place for you.

prm@district109.org or find me directly on any messaging app:

+306972920554

The people behind this issue

A newsletter is only as good as the people who trust it with their stories. These are the people who made this issue possible.

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Special Thanks

Every member who shared their story, tagged us on social media, or showed up and let us photograph it.

Want to contribute to edition 4? Contact prm@district109.org

Our Fourth
edition will be
released on
09 June 2026



Please don't forget to follow us



109 Ways To Lead With Your Voice!