



My Journey from NIEA to NEW

By Mark Taylor

Years ago, as a young administrator, I had just moved to St. Louis, Missouri, to be the superintendent at North County Christian School. The pastor who brought me to St. Louis had been a part of an organization called Nazarene International Education Association (NIEA), now Nazarene Educators Worldwide (NEW). My pastor wanted me to join the organization and actively participate in it. A new world and network opened to me. I had been a part of other education organizations but never one that was unique to my church and denomination.

I had no idea that there were so many Nazarene schools in the United States, Canada, and other parts of the world. It was awesome to connect with those who were likeminded in faith and beliefs as we ministered through our Christian schools. I joined without hesitation.

My Start with NIEA

Our organization's history at this point focused solely on Nazarene schools and preschools. I went to one of the NIEA conferences and got to know other educators in the Nazarene church and exchange ideas. I learned that we had many of the same challenges and needs. God used NIEA to bless me in many ways. I no longer felt alone in what I was doing.

It was not long after I had joined NIEA that I became a regional chairperson and a part of the larger council. At that time, the group organized their work by our Nazarene college regions. We had a strong support group and looked for ways to assist one another. We would host regional conferences for our Nazarene schools and their educators and leaders. I had the opportunity to host one of those conferences in St. Louis.

Now I Am NEW

After serving as a regional representative, NIEA elected me as the general chairperson of Nazarene International Education Association. During my time as general chairperson, we expanded our outreach to not only Nazarene day schools but to any Nazarene in education whether homeschool, public school, or college. This is when we rebranded and became Nazarene Educators Worldwide.

We also wanted to reach out more to our Nazarene schools and educators around the world. NEW has been able to do mission trips to Belize and Kenya, connecting with those educators and schools. I would have never dreamed of these incredible opportunities when I joined NIEA, now NEW!

Everyone asks why they should join. What is in it for me? Is it worth the cost? The answer is absolutely, yes! I would like to challenge anyone who has not joined or is considering renewing their membership. Do not look at what NEW can do for you but look at what you can do for NEW! It is incredibly inexpensive to join. Do not think of NEW like you think of other organizations. Think of your membership cost as a donation to support Nazarene educators worldwide. Look for ways to get involved in NEW, strengthening our mission. NEW will only be as strong as we all work together,

Acts 20:35, ESV: "... Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Luke 6:38, ESV: "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you."

Be a blessing and be blessed!

Mark Taylor lives in Ferguson, Missouri. He retired in May as professor of education and the department chair of the Social and Behavioral Sciences/Teacher Education at St. Louis Community College. He continues to teach some classes at the school. He has been a teacher and a principal and currently a board member of North County Christian School. You may contact Mark at mtaylor@stlcc.edu.