To Our Texas DI Family,

Yesterday, October 27, the Texas DI community suffered an unimaginable, heartbreaking loss with the death of our beloved and cherished Affiliate Director, Sue Shanks. Sue’s passing was unexpected, and we know this will be troubling news for many of us to process.

To say that Sue Shanks was a revered leader in Destination Imagination would not be enough. Sue was the pure embodiment of DI and the spirit of creative problem solving. Her decades of work and contributions have touched hundreds of thousands of lives, shaped generations of leaders, and built a passionate and creative international community.

Sue’s career in the creative problem solving world was unparalleled, as she served for decades in a variety of roles, including Affiliate Director of Texas, Member of the International Board of Trustees, and the President of the Destination Imagination Affiliate Director’s organization. Sue’s contributions number far too many to ever be counted, but among those she was most proud include developing Texas DI to become the largest, and most successful affiliate in the Destination Imagination program. Under Sue’s leadership, Texas grew to nearly 4,000 teams, and amassed hundreds of Global Finals awards and championships. We may never again know a leader as capable and as accomplished as Sue.

The Texas Destination Imagination Executive Board wants to acknowledge the unprecedented circumstances our organization is facing with the onset of COVID-19, and further recognize the devastation of losing Sue Shanks.  While we all grieve this tragedy, we can be certain that the best way to honor Sue’s legacy and memory is to ensure the longevity and success of Destination Imagination. Now, more than ever, we must come together as a community not only to honor a treasured leader, but to ensure learning through creative problem solving continues on for generations to come.

At this time, we want to assure the Texas DI community that the Executive Board is taking action to safeguard the sustainability of our program. In accordance with our bylaws and policies, the Executive Board will engage our continuity plan wherein the Board President, Emily Duke, shall assume the roles and responsibilities of the Affiliate Director for the time being. Texas DI will continue to implement the 2020 – 2021 challenge program season as planned, and the Executive Board will continue to meet to ensure a path forward. Whenever possible, details will be shared out to ensure timely communication and clarity.

We know there will be many questions and inquiries from across the state, and in the spirit of transparency we ask for your patience and understanding as the Board works swiftly and responsibly. Over the coming days, if you encounter any time-sensitive needs that you would typically direct to the Affiliate Director, please kindly send those needs along to the Board so we can support you.

Plans to honor the life and memory of Sue Shanks have not yet been released by her family, and we ask that you respect their privacy at this incredibly difficult time. We will certainly communicate any appropriate details when they are made available.

Now is the time for us to join together as leaders and creative problem solvers. Unity in our DI community has never been more vital.

Respectfully,

Your Texas Destination Imagination Executive Board

Emily