



David Cassidy with Megan Early, promotional manager of DGAD.



DGAD secretary, Emily Levit.



DCIM vice-president Cindy Grant.



DCIM president Patty Gisetto.



Promotional manager Maxine Kilmer.



DGAD president Jan Shulman.

## “David’s Girls Against Disease”

David Cassidy has come a long way since his days as a teenage singer with TV’s “The Partridge Family” — and his fans have come with him. Most fan clubs exist purely to boost the star they admire and members rarely do anything more constructive than buying records and sending long, adoring letters to their idols. But a group of girls in East Meadow, N.Y., have changed all that.

Superstar Cassidy, who has fan clubs and millions of admirers around the world, devotes a great deal of his time to charitable work. And this inspired Jan Shulman and Carol Killen to organize “David’s Girls Against Disease” (DGAD). The following article describes their activities:

Only the beginning . . . Only just a start. This is the motto, taken from the lyrics of a song sung by performer David Cassidy, that provides the impetus of a young organization dedicated to helping people afflicted with various diseases.

“David’s Girls Against Disease” (DGAD) is a group of young women throughout the world who are raising funds for a wide variety of charitable organizations.

From Singapore to the Netherlands, from New York to Australia, the young women are highlighting one disease research or needy organization each month in their DGAD newsletter. Fund-raising projects are sponsored throughout members’ communities to benefit the organiza-

tion. Also, parties for retarded children, entertainment for elderly people and other similar projects are hosted by club members.

Starting its third year, DGAD has raised more than \$500 for such organizations as the March of Dimes, the Leukemia Society, Muscular Dystrophy Telethons, Fresh Air Fund, Save The Children Federation, Multiple Sclerosis, Heart Fund, Cancer Society, and Mental Retardation.

David Cassidy, 25, is the club’s honorary president and has been an inspiration to the club by working for many charities such as the Special Olympics, March of Dimes and the Cancer Society.

DGAD was born in the summer of 1972 in East Meadow, New York

when the club's acting president Jan Shulman (19) and former co-president Carol Killen decided to stop just sitting around only playing David's records. "We decided we should put our enthusiasm and admiration to a constructive purpose."

Rather than organize a purely "booster" fan club, Ms. Shulman and Ms. Killen followed David's example in actions for charity and used this as a basis for the club. "We wanted to show that there are a lot of people in the world who really care about one another." Due to numerous commitments Ms. Killen had to resign as co-president but she is still actively involved in the club.

"It's kind of funny looking back on it all, especially when I remember when the club first started," Ms. Shulman reminisced. "People said then it would never work... You'll never get any members and if you do, they won't donate to diseases... you're crazy."

"Well, I am so proud to say those people were wrong. DGAD has come a long way — at times even further than I thought it would... Although I love and truly enjoy my work, there are times when all of it has left me physically and emotionally drained, but when I receive letters from members full of enthusiasm and ideas or a letter from an organization thanking us for what we've done, my energy returns and my joy is enhanced — it makes up 10 times over for all the work because not only do I love what I'm doing but it is constructive work," Ms. Shulman added.

Besides raising money and helping people, the club's other main purpose

### *"I hope we can prove that we are not just immature teenyboppers"*

is to keep abreast of David Cassidy's career and activities. The club strives to keep Cassidy fans together and to help him in the expansion and transitions of his career. "David is capable of much more than people realize... we want the best for him," Ms. Shulman explained.

David isn't the teenybopper a lot of people still imagine him to be. "He's not the teenager he portrayed on the Partridge Family series. He's a man. If people would listen to his most recent albums, they'd soon realize this," explained Megan Early (18), Port Washington, New York, DGAD's promotional manager. Since becoming promotional manager, Ms. Early has brought word of the club's activities to such people and publications as columnist Earl Wilson, Newsday, Teen Magazine, and of course PAGEANT.

David's fans have grown up too. DGAD's purpose proves that. "When people see all the things we've achieved they'll realize we're more than just a bunch of screaming 'boppers', we're caring individuals. When people think of us differently, they'll start thinking differently about David," Ms. Early added.

"I think DGAD's possibilities are endless," added Maxine Kilmer (25), of Vancouver, Washington, DGAD's public relations manager. "I'd like to see the club as well as David get the serious recognition that we're working so hard for," she explained.

Increasing membership is a continuing goal of DGAD, for more members can help more people. "I hope we can greatly increase our membership because the more people we have helping us, the more people we'll be able to help," Ms. Kilmer noted.

Emily Levit (16) of Franklin Square, New York, and DGAD's secretary summed up her involvement with DGAD. "It takes people, brings them together under their interest in David Cassidy to help others. This is very important because if you can't help yourself, then who will help you? We don't know the answer, but we do try to help as many people as we can, and I feel very strongly that we have just begun to reach our goal. In the future, I hope we can prove that we are not immature teenyboppers, but rather mature young adults. As far as diseases go, I hope people will donate so we can help each other," Ms. Levit said.

Usually members send in donations for the disease featured each month in the newsletter, or a member may wish to send money for another disease in which he has a special interest. This will be set aside until the club collects for that disease in the future.

DGAD is closely associated with "The David Cassidy Individuality Movement" (DCIM), another international organization of David Cassidy fans. DCIM is not a fundraising group, rather it strives to inform its members about David's activities and future as well as creating a constructive relationship between his audience and himself. DGAD and DCIM complement each other and

work together on many projects. DCIM's staff is headed by President Patty Gisetto of Middleboro, Mass., and vice-president Cindy Grant of Lindenwold, N.J. who are responsible for the content and publication of their monthly newsletter "Alive & Kicking". DCIM feels David's original "perfect image" misrepresented him and has prevented him from being accepted by an older audience and the music he is now performing from being judged honestly.

Other DCIM staff members such as Ellen Davis, promotional director; Sue Whitney, business manager; and Elena Quaceci, secretary are also interested in DGAD activities and at least one DGAD staff member, Emily Levit, has been influenced in her career choice because of these activities. Ms. Levit plans to attend college and get the necessary training to enable her to teach math to deaf children.

"Everyone's involved with disease in one way or another sometime in their life... DGAD gives us a channel in which to work. Maybe DGAD can't wipe out diseases but we're sure going to keep on doing everything we can to help," Ms. Shulman said.

For this club it's "Only the beginning... Only just a start..." Won't you help too?

For further information on DGAD and how you can join send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Ms. Jan Shulman, 2456 Gladmore Street, East Meadow, New York, 11554

For those who'd like information on DCIM also send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Ms. Patty Gisetto, 224 Plymouth Street, Middleboro, Mass., 02346. ■