



Incoming President's Speech – Jane Koch  
June 5, 2022

I am honored and humbled to be the President of Ohio State Chapter of the P.E.O. Sisterhood. As I look out today at the Past State Presidents who have served before me, I am inspired to provide the leadership needed in the coming year to advance and enhance the P.E.O. Sisterhood throughout Ohio.

P.E.O. has always blended a respect for the past along with a vision for the future. The Sisterhood has stood firm in its values of faith, love, purity, justice, and truth. At the same time P.E.O. has grown to become a philanthropic organization that celebrates, educates, and motivates women. The blending of our fundamental beliefs and the vision for the advancement of women is what enticed me to become a P.E.O. As I considered my beginnings as a P.E.O. sister, I was led to the logo that I have chosen for the coming year. ***P.E.O.: A Beacon of Light***

The lighthouse represents our firm foundation in our beliefs of faith, love, purity, justice, and truth. The beacon is the light that guides women to a safe, inclusive place where they will be celebrated for their advancements, educated through our philanthropies, and motivated to achieve their highest aspirations. These are not my words but taken from our mission statement. I encourage you to place the mission statement in your yearbooks and read it at every meeting. I firmly believe that the mission statement reflects how we live out our Objects and Aims.

My dear sisters, when you share any talent that you possess within your chapter and your community, you increase the brightness of the light of P.E.O. and extend its beam even further than you ever thought possible. A 50-year Honoree, Margaret Ehrgott, Chapter AH, wrote in her story of being a 50 year P.E.O. :

“P.E.O. has always been a safe harbor for me filled with unconditional love, encouragement and support.”

You would have thought that Margaret had assisted me in choosing my theme.

Light has always represented hope, love, celebration, and vision. These qualities blend well with our values and are needed today more than ever before. This year I encourage you to share your light within your chapter and your surrounding community. There are no women who are non-P.E.O.s, but only women who are potential P.E.O.s.

Being a teacher at heart, I would like to try a small exercise with you today. Please take out your cell phones. If they are turned off, please turn them on but put them on silent. If yours is on silent, please keep your phone in that mode. Now locate the flashlight icon on your phone but wait for further instructions!

Would the PSPs, the committee members and the board please turn on their flashlights and hold them up? Now would the visitors please do the same? Last but far from least will the delegates turn on their flashlights? Notice how the light grew and illuminated the room with each group adding more light. What you just experienced is the power of the Sisterhood of P.E.O. – women working together, sharing their talents, and shining the light of faith, love, purity, justice, and truth.

I close with a quote from Ruth Bader Ginsberg:

“I would like to be remembered as someone who used whatever talent she had to do her work to the very best of her ability.”

This sums up my promise to you as I serve as your president for the 2022-2023 year. May this year be one of renewal, growth, and vision as we shine our Beacon of Light throughout the state of Ohio.