



**“Building our community one child at a time”  
*For the past Century!*”**

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## **The Downtowner**

***Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown***

**December 1, 2019**

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### **November 14 Meeting**



**Chief Granitz**

A dozen members of the club, and a couple of guests attended our dinner meeting on November 14. We had the privilege of inducting another new member, **Barbara Miller**. Barb is a math teacher at Building 21 in Allentown. Her sponsor is **Tracy Davis**, who taught with Barb at Building 21. She is still trying to start a Key Club at the school. Barb was accompanied by her husband. She was inducted by President **Tom Harp**. We would like to welcome Barb into our Allentown Kiwanis Family!

After dinner, we introduced our speaker, **Allentown Police Chief Glenn Granitz**. Chief Granitz is a life-long resident of Allentown. He grew up in the West End of the city, not far from his current home. His father was an Allentown cop. He participated in the Police Athletic League (PAL) as a young child. He followed his father's footsteps by joining the

police force as a young adult, working his way up the ranks until he was recently appointed Chief of Police by the Mayor and City Council. He immediately expressed his knowledge and respect for Kiwanis. His grandmother, **Carla Munsch** was a member and President of our club many years ago, and most recently has been a member of the Allentown Northeast Kiwanis Club. Chief Granitz was a member of the Allentown Central Catholic Key Club. So he is very supportive of Kiwanis, and the good we do in the community.

Chief Granitz is the first permanent Allentown police chief in 5 years. His top priority is to reduce violent crime in the city. One reason that we do not have more deaths from violent crimes is the wonderful first responders we have in the community. From city EMT's to our fine hospitals and trauma centers, there is a coordinated effort to save lives. Granitz expressed the need for the force to return to community policing. He wants to get more officers on foot and bicycle patrol. "Violence is a disease" he stated. And the most violent crimes are by gang members. "Maybe 100-150 people are the core problem" he said, indicating that the overwhelming majority of the city's population is law-abiding. There has been an 18% decrease in Type 1 crimes in the downtown area. There have been 8 homicides this year compared to 18 the same time last year. Granitz talked about the dirt bike, ATV and "wheelie bikes" problem in the city. They are not just a nuisance, but a huge public safety issue. But they are making inroads in controlling this menace. The police just received a grant to train officers in the use of drones to track down and record dirt bike violations. And, over 150 dirt bikes and ATV's have been confiscated and taken off the streets.

Chief Granitz feels that open communication is the key to building a positive relationship between police and citizenry. Allentown Police uses Twitter feeds and Facebook postings to provide instant, direct communication with the public. Granitz hopes to increase contact with local media as well. He mentioned the new Senior Citizen Police Academy which was so popular they filled the first class in mere days. He hopes to focus more on children in the community, particularly in the middle schools and high schools with mentorship programs. Granitz fully understands the need and value of diversifying the Allentown police force. He mentioned that 3 out of the last 6 new recruits speak Spanish. There are 250 members of the police force. "Quality of life" crime is another area of concern, especially around schools with double parking, loud music, etc. He would like to see an end of converting single family homes into apartments.

It is always a challenge to replace retiring police officers in the city. Chief Granitz would like to see police recruits in the future who have benefitted from the youth Police Academy and other outreach efforts. Allentown Police has 8 school resource officers – 2 stationed at each high school and one at each middle school. They are a welcomed safety presence, especially in this era of school shootings and other violence.

We were very impressed by Chief Granitz's sincerity, and his enthusiasm for improvements in the Allentown Police Department. We wish him and our police force well, and hope to possibly collaborate with them in common initiatives to benefit youth in our community.



## Holiday Hope Chests



This week, our club will donate at least 27 Holiday Hope Chests to the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley. Tom Harp will be picking them up at the JS Burkholder Funeral Home and dropping them off Tuesday at the donation site. We would like to thank all of our members who participated in this service project, including **Tom and Peg Harp, Enos and Susan Martin, Ricki Stringfellow, Todd Siegfried, Terry Kennedy, Young Chang, Vic Mazziotti, Deb Lamb, Bob Ashcraft, Serena Ranney, and Deirdre Govan.** There may be one or two others that have put some boxes together that I am not aware of! And we would also like to recognize and THANK JS Burkholder for storing the boxes for the past two weeks. This is a special time of the year, and these boxes will bring joy to many children and their families. Happy Holidays!

## Annual LVCC Christmas Party



One of our signature service projects of the year is the Annual LVCC Christmas Party, to be held this year on **Friday, December 13** at the LVCC South Mountain Center. We expect 180 pre-school children from 3 LVCC centers at the event. Volunteers should be at the LVCC South Mountain Center, 2002 South Albert Street, Allentown no later than 10:00 AM. Children from the Walnut Street and Early Learning Center locations will begin to arrive after that. Our club volunteers, along with several from the Allen HS Key Club will prepare and serve lunch for the children, as well as assist at the three rotating activity stations planned by LVCC staff. There will be a music sing-along station, a games station, and Christmas card arts and crafts station. This will be followed by lunch, and an appearance by **Santa!** We have requested gifts for the children from Crayola and Toys for Tots. Our Allen Key Club “elves” will hand out gifts to the kids. And for the first time this year, LVCC has arranged for a photographer from Dan’s Camera City to take professional photos of each child meeting with Santa, which will be offered to the child’s parents. Sharing the joy of Christmas with these children will make YOUR day! So please consider volunteering for this event.

## Salvation Army Bell-Ringing

For many years, our club has volunteered to help out with the Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign at the Lehigh Valley Mall. This year, we will be ringing the bell for the Salvation

Army at the JC Penney 2<sup>nd</sup> floor entrance (inside) on Saturday, December 21 from 10 AM to 8 PM. So far, our volunteers are:

- 10 AM to 12 PM – **Young Chang**
- 12 PM to 2 PM – **Two volunteers from the Salisbury HS Key Club**
- 2 PM to 4 PM – **Bob Ashcraft**
- 4 PM to 6 PM – **Tom Harp**
- 6 PM to 8 PM – **Terry Kennedy**

We would like to encourage any other volunteers to pair up with our members in one of the time slots. Just show up and we will be glad to let you ring the bell with us!



## Service Leadership Programs



We were happy to support the **Salisbury HS Key Club's** citrus sale fundraiser last month. A number of our members are enjoying fresh citrus fruit from Florida. And, we are also supporting their Holiday poinsettia and Christmas cactus sale this month. The flowers will be delivered on December 13.

The **Raub Middle School Builders Club** helped out with a pre-Thanksgiving dinner at the school on November 21. The club decorated Thanksgiving-themed cookies, baked by **Susan Martin**, that were served at the event. This month, the club plans to deliver Christmas cards and wreaths to residents at the Phoebe Home. There are 21 members of the club, and they have been very enthusiastic!

The **South Mountain Builders Club** is still seeking a faculty advisor. **Terry Kennedy** continues to try to revitalize this club.

The **Ramos Elementary School K-Kids Club** is small but mighty! They have 8 members, who have been very active. They meet every Monday morning. Our club advisor **Vic Mazziotti** reports that they have initiated a food drive, going from classroom to classroom asking the children to donate canned goods and other non-perishables.

**Tom Harp** reports that the **Washington K-Kids Club** has been meeting on a regular basis. They have over 30 members, and a lot of energy. They have identified three school service projects, and the kids have volunteered for each of them. One is to launder donated clothes left off at the school.

The **Union Terrace K-Kids Club** is in the process of electing officers and brainstorming service projects. **Deb Lamb** is our liaison to the club, and will have more to report after recovering from her recent surgery.

We are looking forward to inviting representatives from our three sponsored Key Clubs to our annual Key Club Dinner on January 9, 2020.

## **Allentown Kiwanis History Book**

We are excited to announce that the Allentown Kiwanis History book, authored by **Enos Martin**, will be printed this week, and will be available for purchase at our December 5 luncheon. Nacci Printing of Allentown will be producing the books. The books will be sold for \$20 and all proceeds will benefit our Foundation. So please plan to purchase at least one copy. They will be a unique keepsake to commemorate our club's rich 100 + year history. Kudos go to Enos for his extensive research and writing skills in authoring this book, and to **Sam Saxton** for sponsoring its printing.

## **A Glance Into Our Past**

### ***100 Years Ago – December 1919***

On Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, 1919, the club hosted approximately 550 children at the Orpheum Theatre, located at 35 North 6<sup>th</sup> Street. At their December 11<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Hotel Allen, the members contributed over \$800 to fund the Christmas Party. In preparation for the party, over 500 toys, 250 pounds of candy, a gross of dolls, and boxes of candy were purchased to distribute at the party. After the party, the Kiwanians took the children home in special cars.

### ***75 Years Ago – December 1944***

On Saturday morning, December 24, 1949, 800 children attended the club's Yuletide party at the Earle Theater. The Vacanovas of Allentown High School sang Christmas songs for the children. In addition to underprivileged children, guests included Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts from the troops sponsored by the club, and children from the Good Shepherd Home. Santa Claus, Kiwanian Earl Weaver, distributed gifts to all the children. Dr. Conrad Raker from the Good Shepherd Home delivered a children's message. They were also shown a movie.

### ***50 Years Ago – December 1969***

The Club and the Allen, Central Catholic, and Dieruff High School Key Clubs joined forces to collect funds to send to the Biafran Relief Foundation to aid the disease-ravaged and starving children of the Biafra. The Key Clubs showed a movie to the Kiwanis members which showed the plight of these children. The Key Clubs established a goal of \$3000 to send to the fund. The Kiwanis members responded generously to their appeal during the luncheon.

## **25 Years Ago – December 1994**

On December 17<sup>th</sup>, the club hosted an Hispanic Children's Party at Alliance Hall for over 100 children. Oranges, apples and candy were handed out to all the children. Thirteen Kiwanians and 20 Key Clubbers participated to help make it a successful affair. Members also participated in packing Christmas baskets at the Salvation Army. Club members also supported the Marine Corps "Toys for Tots" program by filling hundreds of gift boxes and bags with puzzles, books, stuffed animals, dolls, trucks, games and various Crayola products donated by Binney & Smith.

- **Enos Martin**

## **Upcoming Meetings and Activities**

**SERVICE PROJECT – Annual LVCC Christmas Party, Friday, December 13 from 10 AM to 1 PM**

**SERVICE PROJECT – Salvation Army Bell-Ringing, Saturday, December 21 from 10 AM to 8 PM. LV Mall, JC Penney inside entrance**

**MONTHLY CLUB MEETING - Thursday, December 5, 11 AM at the Shanty on 19<sup>th</sup>. Annual Foundation Grant Awards Luncheon.**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, December 18, 5 PM at the J.S. Burkholder Funeral Home.**



### **December Birthdays**



- 1 - Barbara Miller**
- 1 - Serena Ranney**
- 20 - John Stoffa**
- 25 - Deirdre Govan**
- 29 - Joyce Crosby**
- 31 - Enos Martin**

**Merry  
Christmas**

A small illustration of a green Christmas tree with a yellow star on top, decorated with red and white ornaments. At the base of the tree are three wrapped gifts in blue, green, and yellow paper.

**-Tom Harp, Editor**