



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

April 1, 2020

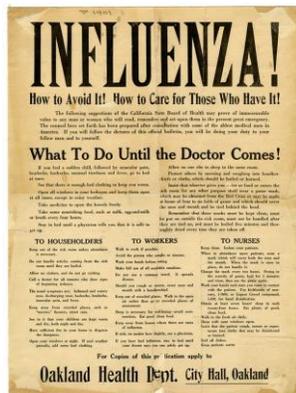
Pandemic Message

We are all doing our part to prevent further spread of the COVID-19 virus. We are staying at home, avoiding meetings and gatherings, and using proper hygiene. The month of April will be a respite from our Kiwanis activities. Our monthly meeting has been cancelled. There will be no community service projects this month. Our Board of Directors will remotely meet via conference calls. This is a trying time for our nation and its citizens. We must sacrifice for the common good, something we are not used to. Our parents and grandparents lived through the Great Depression and WWII. There were enormous sacrifices that had to be made, including lives. The Great Depression destroyed our economy, leading to high unemployment, and starvation. Over 405,000 American soldiers lost their lives in WWII. So, our sacrifice of isolation for a few weeks should be tolerable. Yes, we are social beings. We enjoy conversations at our monthly meetings. We feel good about the impact we have on the community when we treat children to a picnic or party, or do some arts and crafts with them. All that is right around the corner. Hopefully in May. But until then, let's keep in touch with each other through e-mail, a phone call, or postings on social media sites. We remain a community. An organization that is dedicated to “building our community, one child at a time.” Let's look forward with hope for better days ahead. Our nation will recover. We will once again enjoy the laughter of the children we serve, and the friendships we have as a Kiwanis family.

I would like to thank **Enos Martin**, for providing the following article about the 1918 Spanish Flu, and efforts by our young Kiwanis Club to help save children and their families during that catastrophic pandemic.

- **President Tom**

The Spanish Flu and Kiwanis



Lasting from January 1918 through 1920, the Spanish Flu is estimated to have caused somewhere between 50 to 100 million deaths around the world. India was particularly hard hit with an estimated 17 million deaths. In the US, approximately 500,000 deaths were attributed to the flu. Supposedly, soldiers returning from World War I brought the virus to our shores. About 1,000 residents of the Lehigh Valley passed away as a result of the pandemic. The origins have never been definitively established and it vanished as mysteriously as it began. Little to nothing was known about viruses at the time and penicillin had not yet been developed (discovered in 1928).

The Kiwanis Club of Allentown led an effort to deal with the Spanish flu epidemic in Allentown. On October 16, 1918 our club acted in support of efforts to combat the Spanish Flu. Member Charles Kline called the club's leadership to a meeting at his home at Hamilton and Jefferson Streets. At the suggestion of member Bruce Traylor, the men pledged \$500 to aid the city with this epidemic. Several days later at a meeting at the Hotel Traylor, the club's leaders reached an agreement with Army doctors at Camp Crane (located at the Fairgrounds). The Army would staff a flu clinic for the public and it would operate between the hours of 9 AM and 9 PM for persons ill with the disease who could not get prompt treatment from their regular physician. Kiwanis also provided rides for doctors to take them to the homes of those too ill to leave them. A public appeal was made for donations of mattresses, pillows, sheets, and blankets for the beds and cots as well as toys, books and other playthings for the children. In addition, \$4,375 was raised to fund the operations of the facility. The Kiwanis Club also pledged \$500 each to Allentown and Sacred Heart Hospitals to assist in the flu epidemic at those facilities.

In cooperation with the Red Cross and the Motor Messenger Service (a government agency), Kiwanians established the Children's Temporary Protective Home at 105 South 4th Street on October 25th. Mrs. Samuel McCurley, Jr., whose husband would later become a member of our club, made the suggestion to the Kiwanis Club that they pursue the use of the A. G. Saeger mansion at 4th and Walnut Streets. The mansion, owned by John Saeger, the nephew of Alfred G Seager, was not occupied at the time. John had purchased his uncle's home upon the passing of Mrs. A. G. Saeger. Mrs. John Saeger donated the use of her former mansion free of charge for the cause.

On October 31, 1918 the Allentown Kiwanis Club opened the temporary home for convalescent children, and children whose parents were ill with influenza. Eighteen children were admitted during the first day ranging in age from one week to 13 years. Kiwanis members provided supplies and equipment for the home. Under the leadership

of a registered nurse, young women volunteered their services to the home as long as necessary. The home had 26 rooms with a large playroom, dining room, kitchen and pantry along with rooms on the first floor for physicians who cared for the children. The second floor had five dormitories with 30 beds and cribs.

As many as 36 children were housed at the facility during the course of its operation. The home would continue to function until January 16, 1919 when Kiwanis Club Vice-President Lawrence Rupp announced the temporary children's home would be closed. Parents who survived got their children back. The rest had been taken in by other family members. Any remaining money was used to aid returning veterans by renting rooms for them to use at the Allentown YMCA.

- **Enos Martin**

March 12 Meeting



On the eve of drastic measures to reduce social interaction, just 5 members of our club met for dinner on March 12. Our guest speaker was **Mary Lou Scarf** of **Project Child**. Mary Lou retired after 28 years working as a child protective services caseworker for the Northampton County Children, Youth and Families (CYF) division. Project Child started in 1991, and by 1993 was a coalition between Lehigh and Northampton Counties, the VNA and Valley Youth House. It is the only exclusively-dedicated child abuse prevention agency in the Lehigh Valley. They are a program under the administration of Valley Youth House. Project Child operates parenting classes for individuals referred by CYF or the courts. They run a parent support group at New Bethany Ministries. They have started an "empathy" program for kindergarten children. A mom brings an infant into a kindergarten class and the youngsters see how to feed and clothe the baby, measure him or her, to gain empathy for their own infant brothers and sisters. This is especially important in dysfunctional homes where an older child, who may be abused, will then in turn abuse a younger sibling. Project Child also runs an annual conference for social workers and caregivers. Mary Lou provided information about Project Child's annual "Tortoise & Hare 5K Race" fundraiser, to be held on Memorial Day, May 15 at the Wind Gap Memorial Park. Last year, they had around 300 participants and raised \$7,000 for the organization. Information about this fundraiser has been forwarded to our membership.

Service Leadership Programs



Due to the coronavirus epidemic, Allentown schools have been closed for several weeks. Our SLP's have not been meeting. In addition, the "Key Leadership Program" for Key Club members scheduled for late April has been cancelled by Pa. District Kiwanis. At this point in time, we have no idea if and when the schools will reopen this academic year.

Allentown Kiwanis History Book

We have sold over 30 copies of our new book “The Kiwanis Club of Allentown – A Century of Fellowship and Service and Its Impact on Allentown”, authored by **Enos Martin**. But we have a long way to go! We continue to reach out to former members of the club to notify them of the book’s availability. Enos planned to sell the books at the Pa. State Kiwanis Mid-Year Conference in State College on March 21, but that event was cancelled. He has submitted an article about the book to Kiwanis International to see if they would like to feature it in an upcoming edition of the Kiwanis Magazine. If you have not as yet purchased the book you can order one online at our website, www.allentownkiwanis.org for \$25, which includes shipping and handling costs. Proceeds from the book’s sale benefit our Foundation.

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

NO MONTHLY MEETING OR SERVICE PROJECTS THIS MONTH

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, April 29, 5 PM. Telephone Conference.



April Birthdays



NONE!



-Tom Harp, Editor