



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

June 1, 2020

Our First Zoom Meeting!

On May 14 at 12 noon our club held its first Zoom teleconference meeting on-line. Only seven members participated. However, it was a very productive meeting. Our guest speaker was **Sheri Hilt** of the **Allentown Health Bureau**. We also welcomed a guest, **John Moser**, Development Director for the LV Christian Academy. After a moment of silence for those afflicted by the coronavirus, **President Tom** introduced Sheri Hilt. The City of Allentown has been hard hit by the pandemic. As of that date, there were 2,023 positive cases of COVID-19, and 51 deaths. Over half of the deaths were elderly folks in long-term care facilities. The others had pre-existing conditions that contributed to their fatalities. The first case of the virus was reported in the city back on March 12, ironically the last meeting of our club in person at the Shanty on 19th. The virus is widespread in Allentown, with higher concentrations on the inner city neighborhoods. The Allentown Health Bureau has around 20 employees, all now working from home. Only 2 employees, including Sheri are “disease investigators.” In the beginning of the outbreak, it was a challenge trying to convince many families to quarantine. Allentown has very dense housing in many inner-city wards, with large families that are very social. This demographic leads to a faster and wider spread. Sheri indicate that the city has enough tests for the virus, but only if there are symptoms. They have not yet begun contact tracing. Antibody testing is now being done on past positive cases. The Health Bureau does not distribute masks to the public, but will refer inquiries to other agencies that do. **Susan Martin** has been sewing face masks for the past two months, participating in Mask Force 2020. That initiative has 2,000 volunteers nationwide who have produced over 20,000 masks. Sheri did not indicate any other needs at this time. Her talk was informative and very timely.

May Service Project

We were restricted on what we could do physically for a community service project last month. We continued to support a project to donate food and other items to needy families from the Raub Middle School. **Enos Martin** has coordinated this effort. We also applied for a grant from the Pennsylvania Kiwanis Foundation to help pay for these supplies.

Honoring Our Heroes

All over the country, people are recognizing the real heroes in our battle against the “invisible enemy,” the coronavirus. They include our doctors, nurses and other hospital personnel. They are caring for patients who are fighting for their lives against COVID-19. Every day during shift changes, residents of New York City step outside on their balconies to applaud hospital workers. There have been parades of firetrucks outside hospitals. Meals have been delivered to those facilities to feed workers during the few breaks they have. And locally, there have been several acts of kindness and recognition of our hospital workers. On May 15, **Jeff Burnatowski** joined five local car and motorcycle clubs to parade in front of three LVH hospitals. He toured in his antique 1966 Mustang convertible. Hospital personnel came out to show their appreciation on a beautiful spring day!



(Don't) Play Ball!



Regrettably, our annual “Allentown Kiwanis Day at the IronPigs” game, scheduled for June 7 has been cancelled. It is doubtful that the Pigs will even play this year. Another casualty of the pandemic. We plan to make a reservation for a game in June, 2021.

Club Receives a RIF Grant



We are pleased to report that our club has been awarded a grant of \$165 from Reading is Fundamental (RIF) to purchase books for middle school teens who participate in the Allentown Boys and Girls Club program. Our foundation provided a match of \$165 to earn us a total of \$330 in the RIF “bookstore” to purchase up to 110 books for the youngsters. We have formed a small committee of **Young Chang, Alison Norton, Terry Kennedy, Enos Martin** and **Tom Harp** to order the books and plan an event to distribute them. All of the B&GC locations are currently closed due to the pandemic. The staff have been creating video content for the kids on YouTube on subjects like “healthy snacks.” We look forward to having a lunch meeting at the B&GC 6th Street clubhouse after they reopen.

Foundation College Scholarships

Each year, our Foundation awards three \$1,000 college scholarships for deserving Key Club members at William Allen, Allentown Central Catholic, and Salisbury High Schools. Applications for the scholarships are due by the end of May. So far, we have received and approved a scholarship for Allentown Central Catholic HS Key Club member **Emma Luchetti**. Emma was President of the ACCHS Key Club in her senior year, was a 4-year member of the club, a 4-year member of the varsity swim team, a Viking Ambassador and Mentor, was in the school’s Red Cross Club and Best Friends Forever Club and much more. Emma will be attending Holy Cross College in the fall, with a goal of transferring to the University of Notre Dame next year. She will be studying applied computational mathematics and statistics.

We anticipate receiving nominations from William Allen and Salisbury High Schools Key Club advisors in the next few days.



Kiwanis Waives New Member Fees

Due to the impact from the pandemic, Kiwanis International and the Pennsylvania District of Kiwanis have waived new member fees for the balance of this administrative year (until September 30). This move was made to encourage us to recruit new members in the months ahead. If you have a friend, family member or coworker who has expressed some interest in joining our club, this is a good time to do so. Even though we are restricted in how our club meets and conducts service projects, new members will benefit from learning more about Kiwanis and its impact on the community. It is a great opportunity for new members to try our club out to see if it is a good match for their needs and interests.

Allentown Kiwanis History Book

The COVID-19 quarantine has limited our opportunities to promote and sell our club history book "The Kiwanis Club of Allentown – A Century of Fellowship and Service and Its Impact on Allentown", authored by **Enos Martin**. People have time on their hands and are looking for ways to entertain themselves at home. Why not enjoy a good read? Please encourage friends and family to order one of our books. Send them an invitation to visit our club website where they can order a book. Cost is \$25 which includes shipping anywhere in the U.S. Let's continue to support this fundraiser for our Foundation!

There is a chance that our club's support of a children's shelter during the 1918 Spanish Flu may be featured in an upcoming edition of the Kiwanis International magazine! Enos has shared his research with a KI staff member, who is also interviewing local historian **Frank Whelan** for details. If the article is printed, we hope it may generate some interest in our history book.

A Glance Into Our Past

100 Years Ago – June 1920

Club Vice President David J. Lewis and member Claude Himelright attended the Kiwanis International Convention in Portland, Oregon, on June 16 -19.

75 Years Ago – June 1945

The Club undertook several significant service activities during June, 1945. Fifty-three club members served as fundraisers for the YMCA Building Fund Campaign. Twenty-five members donated blood during the June Red Cross blood drive. Twenty returning servicemen from World War II were honored at club luncheons during the month.

50 Years Ago – June 1970

The Club won an honorable mention at the 1970 Kiwanis International Convention in Detroit for its 1969 service projects. Major projects which contributed to this award were the Boys Club Campaign and the creation of the Lehigh County Geological Garden behind the Old Courthouse on Hamilton and 5th Streets. President Ralph Pidcock and Past-President Stanley Millard attended the convention to receive the award.

25 Years Ago – June 1995

The Club moved its meetings from the Livingston Club to the Allentown Hilton at 9th and Hamilton Streets. Current longtime member Sam Saxton announced the intention to participate in an interclub meeting with the Toronto Kiwanis Club. He would fly his plane to the meeting and include any willing members to attend with him.

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

SERVICE PROJECT – To be announced. Possibly a project with a Lehigh Valley Children's Center location.

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, June 11, 7:00 PM, Zoom Meeting. Speaker will be Tom Shortell, Morning Call reporter and "Road Warrior" columnist.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, June 24, 5 PM. Zoom Video Conference.



June Birthday



16 - Bill Hengeveld



-Tom Harp, Editor