



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

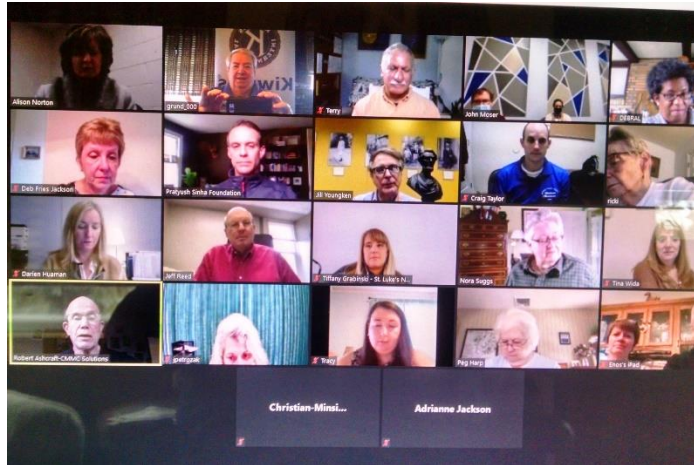
Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

January 1, 2021



Wow! Let's hope that 2021 turns out better than 2020, which will forever be remembered as the **Year of COVID-19**. It was a challenging year for Kiwanis. Since March, 2020 Kiwanis Clubs around the world had to resort to virtual meetings, service projects and fundraisers. We missed the comradery of meeting in person, the joy of sitting in a circle at a day care center reading a book to the children, holding our annual LVCC Picnic, and enjoying a day at the ballpark for our annual IronPigs game. We had to cancel fundraisers. No delicious meals at the Shanty on 19th. No Salvation Army bell-ringing. No Kiwanis Conventions to enjoy and to motivate us. But throughout the tragedy of a global pandemic, we stood strong. We were still able to perform some significant community service projects, including the construction of raised flower beds at the LVCC South Mountain Center, the purchase and installation of a park bench commemorating LVCC founder Judith Chase, donations to the Down Syndrome Buddy Walk and Holiday Hope Chests, the use of a \$2,000 grant from the Kiwanis Children's Fund to purchase Thanksgiving meals for 10 needy Raub Middle School families, and hundreds of items for their food pantry, and finally helping to sponsor a Virtual Christmas Party for four LVCC centers. We tried to stay healthy and socially distanced, while maintaining contact with monthly club and board meetings on Zoom. It hasn't been easy. But the Kiwanis Club of Allentown is our "extended family." We pull together for each other and the community we live in. We are starting 2021 with more Zoom meetings. We hope that as soon as the COVID-19 vaccine is rolled out, and pandemic restrictions are lifted, we can return to our routine of monthly lunch or dinner meetings at the Shanty, and special events in person. Until then, stay safe. Stay involved. We will get through this challenge and resume our mission of "building our community, one child at a time."

Foundation Grant Awards Meeting



Every year we have enjoyed hosting a Foundation Grant Awards Luncheon. It has been a highlight of our social calendar! Getting together with representatives of grant award recipients, enjoying musical entertainment by the Allen High School Chorale, savoring a good meal and the fellowship of our members and those of other Kiwanis Clubs in our area. Great memories! But this was 2020 and the pandemic once again forced us to conduct the event on Zoom. Regardless, over 20 people participated in the virtual meeting including representatives of all 12 non-profit organizations that received grants from our foundation. Foundation President **Bob Ashcraft** greeted everyone, and provided a brief history of our foundation. It is a rich history that began in 1952. Since then our foundation has awarded grants in excess of \$1 million to programs that benefit children and their families.

First to receive a grant on this day was the Boys and Girls Club of Allentown. Executive Director **Deborah Jackson-Fries** accepted the award and thanked our foundation for the honor. The money will be used for their "Make Your M.A.R.K." program. The B&GCA was closed from mid-March to July 5 when the 6th Street Clubhouse opened with a limited number of children and a 1:10 staff ratio. They hope to pilot this grant program in the summer of 2021. Next, Director **Jeff Reed** accepted a grant award on behalf of the Community Music School. CMS just celebrated its 40th Anniversary providing instruction in voice, piano and 16 other instruments. Their teachers have been giving lessons from their home, on-line with their students. Our grant money will be used for their music instruction scholarship program. Jeff reported that 50% of their students are on scholarship. A new grant recipient this year was the Greater Valley YMCA. Allentown Branch Director **Jodi Perry** expressed gratitude for our funding of materials for their "Grab 'n Go" meals program. Since March, participating YMCA's have distributed 87,978 meals to needy children. Another new grant recipient in 2020 was the YouthBuild program under the Housing Association and Development Corporation (HADC). Allentown Director **Craig Taylor** accepted the grant award, which will be used to purchase heavy-duty cases and screen protectors for iPads used by youth in their program. That program targets 18-24 year olds who dropped out of high school. It provides GED classes and on-the-job training in construction.

Another foundation grant first-timer was the Lehigh Christian Academy. Development Director **John Moser** introduced the school's Director, **Elizabeth Houser** who thanked

us for the grant. LCA is a 47 year-old non-profit faith-based school. The grant will be used to purchase a software program called TouchMath Rtl which will provide multi-sensory learning for grade school students with reading and math deficits. Our next grant recipient was Lehigh County Historical Society, represented by Executive Director **Joe Garrera**. LCHS was founded in 1904 to preserve the history of Lehigh County. Our grant money is used to sponsor field trips to the museum by Allentown School District students, for in-school programming, books and other giveaways designed to pique their interest in our local history. Another long-time grantee, Lehigh Valley Children's Services (LVCC) will be using our grant money for "Mad Science" STEM programming in several of their centers. VP for Development **Deb Lamb** thanked our foundation for the award, mentioning that LVCC serves 1,350 pre-school children at 30 locations in the Greater Lehigh Valley. During the pandemic, LVCC had to shut down briefly, re-opening on June 8 to serve 1,000 children at 11 full-service centers.

Minsi Trails Boy Scouts Council was the next non-profit to receive a grant. Development Director **Christian Averill** graciously accepted the award, remarking that this year BSA truly needed to "be prepared." They conducted two "virtual summer camps" during the pandemic. Their grant will be used to help purchase laptops and other technology needed to offer scouting programs on-line to Allentown youth. The Pratyush Sinha Foundation was next to receive a grant for their mindfulness and yoga programs. Their founder, **Pabha Sinha** was in India tending to a family matter, but Program Director **Jason Sizemore** thanked us for the award. The organization has produced 90 professional videos to be viewed on-line by students in the Allentown School District. **Darian Huaman** from the Salvation Army, Allentown Corps accepted their grant to purchase backpacks and school supplies for needy children in the city. SATORI Director **Nora Suggs** thanked us for our grant to support their "Gift of Music" program that provides used, refurbished instruments to school children. Since its inception, SATORI has provide 661 instruments, valued at \$185,000 to children who could otherwise not be able to afford to buy or even rent them. Last year, 25 instruments were donated to Allentown School District students, especially to the Raub Middle School.

Finally, St. Luke's VNA received a grant to purchase books for parents during next April, "Child Abuse Awareness Month." The books provide a method for moms to better bond with their newborn children in positive way. Nurse-Family Partnership Program Director **Tiffany Grabinski** and Program Manager **Tina Wida** mentioned how challenging their jobs have been during the pandemic. Typically, most of their work is in the homes of new mothers. Since March, they have had to do phone visitations and other social distancing measures to serve their clients.

We congratulate all of the 2020 Kiwanis Foundation of Allentown grant recipients! We look forward to resuming a fun and inspiring event in December, 2021.

LVCC Virtual Christmas Party

On Friday, December 11 our club hosted its 14th Annual LVCC Christmas Party via Zoom. Several classrooms from LVCC's Walnut Street, South Mountain, Union Boulevard and Early Learning Center facilities participated in the event. The party started with the children "leaving" their LVCC centers for a "Trip to Santa's Workshop." The first stop was a craft activity led by our own **Susan Martin**. She demonstrated how to make a snowman out of paper cutouts glued together. After building a snowman, the children printed their

names on each one. This was a fun activity and a keepsake for the children to take home. Next stop was a scavenger hunt, led by Allentown NE Kiwanis President **Cathy Kane**. The children were given clues to look for Christmas-related objects in their classrooms. This was followed by a sing-along of popular Christmas favorites like “Frosty the Snowman.” Then, we all enjoyed a children’s book read on-line with a YouTube video. At the end of this virtual journey, the children arrived at Santa’s workshop where he greeted them with hearty laughs, and read letters each classroom sent to him. We thank **Todd Siegfried** for once again booking Santa for our event. Children from all of the centers were treated to a traditional chicken nugget lunch, courtesy of our club and Allentown NE. And, each received a present – a book provided by the “Cops ‘n Kids” program. We wish we could have enjoyed the party in person, but this was the next best thing. To all of the children and staff at LVCC we wish you a healthy and Happy New Year!



Susan Makes a Snowman



Santa From the North Pole!

Raub Food Pantry Project

As was reported in the last issue of the newsletter, our club was awarded a \$2,000 grant from the Kiwanis Children’s Fund for the purpose of providing food supplies to needy families of Raub Middle School students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are portions of a report that **Enos Martin** provided to KCF, and some additional photos from our donation of non-perishable goods to the Raub Middle School Food Pantry:

“Background: Raub Middle School, located in one of the poorest sections in the city of Allentown, has approximately 850 students in grades 6 through 8. The school is comprised of 70% Hispanic, 18% Black, and 5% other minorities. Over 99% of the

students qualify for free lunches. In addition, many of the students live in single parent family units. The school population has been severely impacted during the COVID-19 crisis since the school has been closed to the students. Since most of the students would receive at least two meals per day at the school (breakfast and lunch) during the school year, the closing of the school has created challenges to providing meals to these students. The school district established a food pantry and food distribution program named "Grab & Go Meals" for the students and their families. To provide food for nearly all the families for a student population of 850 students created a challenge for the school and school district.

The Kiwanis Club of Allentown decided to take advantage of the Children's Fund grant program during the COVID-19 crisis to assist the school in obtaining significant quantities of food. With the award of the grant, the Club has been able to support these needs along with several other organizations which have stepped up to support the cause.

Grant Project: After the award of the grant, the Kiwanis Club of Allentown sought out a partner in the supply of food to the school. Weis Markets, a supermarket chain headquartered in Sunbury, PA, was chosen initially to review the program and determine their interest in support of our project. The Club project leaders met with the Weis Market store located on North Cedar Crest Boulevard in Allentown. The store's manager, Tim Genua, heartily accepted the opportunity to participate with the Club. Weis Markets offered to help us leverage the grant funds by providing special discounts on various items.

The Kiwanis Club of Allentown completed the grant project in two phases at the request of the Raub Middle School administration. The School requested that Phase 1 provide a complete Thanksgiving meal for 10 extremely needy families in the school district. The school provided a list of items to be supplied with each meal including a turkey. These items were provided to the Club by Weis Markets, delivered to Raub Middle School and sorted into the 10 family groupings on November 20. Raub Middle School staff delivered the meals to the 10 families on November 23. The 10 meals served a total of 14 adults and 33 children. The cost of the food including the turkeys was \$804.34.

Phase 2 consisted of restocking the school's food pantry in support of the "Grab & Go Meals" program. A list of items to be supplied included the following:

- Canned Fruit
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Breakfast Food (cereal, oatmeal, etc.)
- Instant Rice
- Canned Beans (black, pinto, pigeon, kidney)
- Soup
- Pasta
- Sauce
- Healthy Granola Bars/Snack Bars
- Fruit Cups
- Microwaveable Meals
- Microwaveable, easy-make mashed potatoes, stuffing, sweet potatoes, etc.

Weis Markets provided these items (80 cases of food consisting of 868 items) to the Club on December 2 for delivery to the school and storage in their pantry. The total cost of this

delivery was \$1,254.20. This ensured that the school's pantry would be stocked to provide food items until the end of the year. Currently, approximately 300 families have been served through this program at the school. The Kiwanis Club of Allentown spent a total of \$2,058.54 to provide these much-needed meals and food items to the Raub Middle School families. A Club member donated the additional funds to the Club to cover the full cost of the program. The actual value of the food prior to the discount by Weis Markets was \$2,304.94. The Kiwanis Club of Allentown greatly appreciates the partnership with Weis Markets to enable the purchase of this food at a discounted value. The Club was able to provide a significant amount of additional food because of their generosity.

Through the grant provided by the Children's Fund, the Kiwanis Club of Allentown has been able to make a significant impact on these families during this prolonged pandemic. During the Spanish Flu pandemic in 1918, the Kiwanis Club of Allentown led the effort to establish a Temporary Protective Home for convalescent children and children whose parents were ill with influenza. The Club takes great satisfaction in being able to make these significant contributions during both pandemics."



Ricki, Tom, Terry and Enos Packing Dinners



Raub Principal (L) and our Crew in Their Cafeteria



868 Items of Food Crammed into Enos' Truck



Enos and Tom with Food Pantry Stash

A Glance Into Our Past

100 Years Ago – January 1921

On January 19, Allentown Kiwanis held its 2nd annual Kiwanis Assembly at Mealey's Auditorium. Nearly 600 guests attended the affair which was 200 more than the first Assembly. Sherbo's Orchestra from New York City was selected to provide music for a night of dancing. During the dinner, Irene Sawyer and Maurice Castle, dancers extraordinaire from New York, provided the entertainment with a magnificent display of dancing. It was considered the social event of the year in Allentown.

75 Years Ago – January 1946

On January 26, the Kiwanis Theatre Guild presented its amusing farce "Conan Doyle Turns Over" to the Allentown Elks Club members and their wives. The play, written by Kiwanian Art Gillespie, featured Kiwanian Joseph Hummel as Sherlock Holmes and fellow Kiwanian George Blume as Dr. Watson. All characters in the skit were played by Kiwanis members including the female role of Miss Radcliffe by Kiwanian Chester Dutton. This is one of many such skits written by Gillespie in takeoffs of renowned plays from Broadway and elsewhere.

50 Years Ago – January 1971

The Kiwanis Club played both the Central Catholic and Allen High School Key Clubs in basketball. On January 25, the Central Catholic Key Clubbers outscored their sponsors 52-46. However, the Kiwanis Club followed up the loss with a 61-51 win over the Allen Key Clubbers with Kiwanian Bernie Durant scoring 24 points in the victory.

25 Years Ago – January 1996

On January 4th, Allentown Mayor Bill Heydt gave his annual "State of the City" address to the Kiwanis Club and about 90 attendees at the Allentown Hilton. One of the notable setbacks for the city was the closing of the Bon Ton store at the former Hess's Department Store site. Can it be that it's been 25 years already since we lost the major department store in downtown Allentown? One of his goals was the extension of the American Parkway which was finally completed in 2015.

- ***Enos Martin***

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, January 14, 12 Noon on Zoom. Speaker will be Vic Mazziotti on investment strategies and stock market trends.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Wednesday, January 27, 5 PM. Zoom Video Conference.



January Birthdays



3 - Alison Norton

30 - Sam Saxton

