



“Building our community, one child at a time”

The Downtowner

Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown

August 1, 2023

July 13 Meeting



Shawn Bariana

The guest speaker at our monthly dinner meeting on July 13 was **Shawn Bariana**, Community Relations Manager for the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley. Shawn was introduced by Program Chair **Peg Harp**. The VCLV was established in 1985. It serves as a “clearinghouse” for volunteer opportunities in the Lehigh Valley. With a staff of 6, they handle 359 non-profit accounts with over 470 volunteer opportunities a year. They have recruited over 1,700 volunteers for various projects. 74 businesses in the area have partnered with them. They offer several programs for youth, including YLEAD for high school students, and the development of a Youth Council. 18 high schools have participated in these programs with 82 students benefitting from the training. VCLV has a number of important events on their calendar. There is the Volunteer Challenge in the

Spring where over 400 volunteers representing 30 businesses perform services for 30 non-profit organizations. On Intern Impact Day, over 240 college interns assigned to 40 area businesses work with 14 non-profits on specific projects. Our club has participated in the annual United Way Day of Caring, which will be held on September 14, 2023. Each year, over 700 volunteers and 40 businesses complete projects at 30+ non-profit sites. And finally, another major activity that the VCLV coordinates, Holiday Hope Chests, is one that our club has enjoyed participating in for years. Last November, 8,000 gift-wrapped shoe boxes full of toys, school supplies, and other items were donated by 227 organizations. 46 non-profits that serve children received the boxes. Our club, and the Salisbury HS Key Club have supported this cause. VCLC also posts non-profit organizations "Wish Lists" on their website throughout the year. The Center is a fantastic resource for non-profits in the Lehigh Valley as well as individuals seeking rewarding volunteer experiences.

Following Shawn's presentation, we provided **Mickey Mantone** of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lehigh Valley an opportunity to speak. That organization currently serves 275 children in our area, but has over 250 children on their waiting list. Those who volunteer to be a Big Brother or Sister must commit to a relationship of one year. The "Sports Buddies" program is less involved. It requires one contact a month for nine months to take a child to a ball game, play, movie or some other fun activity. Volunteers must go through a 1 ½ hour interview and receive extensive training and background checks. The BBBS program is for kids ages 7-16. We hope that the local chapter of BBBS will join our club as a corporate member.

Later in the meeting, we officially elected **Karen Baker** to serve as our club's Vice-President for the upcoming administrative year. We would like to once again thank Karen for "stepping up to the plate" and volunteering for this position. We look forward to her leadership in the years ahead. Congratulations, Karen!

LVCC Reading Events



Terry and his Audience

On July 18, **Deb Lamb, Terry Kennedy** and **Tom Harp** met at the Hayes Elementary School to read to children enrolled in the Lehigh Valley Children's Services (LVCC) summer classroom there. Although 20 children are enrolled, only 5 were in attendance that morning. So, along with the instructors, we were able to provide one-to-one attention. They really enjoyed the two books we read to them, "The Foolish Turtle" and "Chicken in Space." The books were donated to the children afterwards. Terry then led a group reading of the "Kindergarten, Here I Come" book. We look forward to our next reading

sessions which will take place tomorrow, **August 2** at the LVCC Fairmont Street Center. Deb, Terry, and Tom will be joined by **Peg Harp** and **Enos and Susan Martin** as we read to two classrooms, one at 9:00 AM and the other at 9:30 AM. We thank Deb for organizing the sessions and selecting the books. And special thanks to all of our volunteers! It means a lot to these young children.

Meeting with Dr. Birks



On July 26, **Tom Harp** and **Deb Lamb** joined representatives from the Kiwanis Club of Allentown Northeast in a meeting with **Dr. Carol Birks**, Superintendent of the Allentown School District. Our purpose was to provide Dr. Birks with information about Kiwanis Clubs and our Service Leadership Programs. We have been frustrated for some time with the inability to organize K-Kids Clubs and Builders Clubs in the district, primarily due to turnover of administrative staff and the lack of teacher volunteers to serve as advisors to the clubs. We provided Dr. Birks and her Chief of Staff **Jennifer Ramos** with Kiwanis brochures, including one that focuses on SLP's. Dr. Birks acknowledged the benefits of SLP's in the city's schools, and was supportive of their development. However, she advised us that principals at each school have a high degree of autonomy, and it is those individuals who we must convince to host an SLP at their school. And, they in turn must recruit a teacher, guidance counselor or other school personnel to serve as advisors. Dr. Birks suggested we provide her with "bullet points" about Kiwanis SLP's that she could forward to principals. If they are interested in having an SLP in their school, they will contact us. Or, we are free to reach out to them prior to the school year. We hope that this visit will result in greater interest and cooperation for our Kiwanis Clubs sponsorship of SLP's in the ASD.

"Back to School Bash"

On **Tuesday, August 15**, our club will be participating in the first annual "Back to School Bash" sponsored by the Allentown School District. It will be held at Cedar Beach Park in Allentown from 1-7 PM. We will be sharing a table with the Kiwanis Club of Allentown Northeast. Parents and students in the school district will be invited to attend. Backpacks and school supplies will be distributed. There will be a variety of fun and educational activities, as well as food vendors, games, and entertainment. At our table, we will be providing information about Kiwanis and its Service Leadership Programs. We will also be handing out Learning Guides for younger children and their parents. We will be raffling off a gift basket, and be offering other goodies to draw in the families. Volunteers from both of our clubs will be helping out during the event. Already, we have covered most of our 1 ½ hour shifts with members who have signed up. This has the potential to be an exciting event, and a great opportunity for us to promote Kiwanis, and its youth programs.

2023 Pa. District Kiwanis Convention

The Annual Pennsylvania District Kiwanis Convention will be held August 10-13 in Scranton. **Tom Harp, Enos Martin** and **Karen Baker** are our club's official delegates to the convention. **Peg Harp** will be joining Tom, who is being nominated to serve as District Governor-Elect in 2023-24. Tom is honored to be nominated for that important position. We have reserved a display table in the exhibition room featuring our club's "signature projects" over the past year, and to promote Tom's candidacy. There are a variety of general sessions and educational opportunities at the convention. Voting will occur on Saturday, August 12, followed by the Governor's Banquet that evening. A complete report will be provided in the next issue of the newsletter.

A Glance Into Our Past

100 Years Ago – August 1923

The Kiwanis met with four other local service clubs for a picnic at Dorney Park. Besides Kiwanis, the three other clubs included the Lions, Four Square, and Quota Clubs. The Four Square Club was a religious-affiliated service club. The Quota Club was a women's service organization formed to provide for the basic needs of women, children, the deaf, and hard of hearing. The organization was founded in 1919 and disbanded in 2020. The picnic attendees participated in a potato race, shoe race, 50-yard run, bag race, nail driving, needle threading, shot put, cigar smoking, tie tying, balloon blowing, watermelon eating, doughnut eating, and peanut scramble contests. The Kiwanis Club lost to the Lions Club 12-11 in a baseball game. The day ended with a basket luncheon and some dancing to music by the Herman Rau Orchestra, one of the most notable orchestras in the Allentown area at the time.

75 Years Ago – August 1948

Allentown Mayor Donald V. Hock, Kiwanis guest speaker at the Americus Hotel on August 26, predicted that a new bathhouse would finally be built at Cedar Beach to replace one that had burned down in 1942 by a fire. Finally, in June 1952, a new bathhouse was completed along with the first concrete pool at the site. He also predicted the construction of a municipal golf course to allow lower income residents to be able to play golf. The golf course was completed and opened in May 1952.

50 Years Ago – August 1973

At the Pennsylvania District Kiwanis Convention in Monroeville held August 9-11, Allentown Kiwanis Club's bid for the 1975 convention was approved by the convention delegates. The bid proposed holding the convention at the George Washington Motor Lodge. An expected total of 900 individuals would attend the convention. The Motor Lodge was demolished in 1994 to make way for the construction of a Home Depot.

25 Years Ago – August 1998

The National Eagle Leadership Institute, located in Kansas City, MO, notified Kiwanis Club member Lou Ramos of his selection for the prestigious Eagle Award for his leadership among culturally diverse Fortune 500 companies. Ramos, a member of the

club for 1991 through 2005, served as PPL's Manager of Community Affairs at the time. He left the club when PPL promoted him to a position in Berwick in 1995. Ramos came to the United States when he was in first grade. He was a member of the first graduating class at Bethlehem Freedom High School and eventually worked his way through Lehigh University with a bachelor's degree. He served as president of our Foundation in 1994-95. He tragically lost his life in an automobile accident in January 2008 on Route 80.

- *Enos Martin*

Upcoming Meetings and Activities

MONTHLY MEETING – Thursday, August 10, 6:00 PM (5-6 PM Social Hour) at the Shanty on 19th. Speaker will be Kim Schaffer, Executive Director, Community Bike Works. Deb Lamb, Program Chair.

SERVICE PROJECT – Wednesday, August 2, 9:00 AM & 9:30 AM. Reading event at two LVCC classrooms, Fairmont Center, 1325 Fairmont St., Whitehall (down the street from Dan's Camera City)

SERVICE PROJECT – Tuesday, August 15, 1:00 PM – 7:00 PM. “Back to School Bash”, Cedar Beach Park, 2600 Parkway Blvd., Allentown

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – Thursday, August 31, 5 PM on Zoom.



August Birthdays



9 - Jim Fronheiser

13 - Big Bob Ashcraft



- *Tom Harp, Editor*