



**“Building our community, one child at a time”**

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## **The Downtowner**

*Newsletter of the Kiwanis Club of Allentown*

**December 1, 2023**

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### **November 11 Meeting**



**Denise Brown**

At our November 11 dinner meeting, we welcomed guest speaker **Denise Brown**, Regional Director for the Pennsylvania Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH). Denise has been deaf since birth, and was assisted by American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter **Cindi Brown**. Denise was born and raised on the south side of Allentown. She attended Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, where she graduated with a degree in Social Work. After college, she joined the Peace Corps. She eventually earned a degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, and since 1997 has worked for ODHH. There have been numerous technological advancements in the field over the decades. Denise is a native ASL user, so it was difficult for her to read words in caption. Now there is sign language captions available on video. Hearing aids have improved greatly. Most now have Bluetooth capabilities. Old-fashioned TTY's have evolved into video conferencing. Denise recommended that consumers contact their local Centers for Independent Living

(CIL's) for information about state-of-the-art products. In 2000, the Lehigh Valley CIL launched the state's first Sign Language Interpreter Referral Service (SLIRS), which provides a directory of qualified ASL interpreters for business, government, and other users. Denise reported that 22-26 million Americans suffer from hearing loss. 60-70% of those are senior citizens. It is the largest category of all reported disabilities. Hearing aid costs have been a barrier for many seniors on a fixed income. They can cost \$2,000 each. AARP has been lobbying Congress to lower the cost of these and other hearing devices. Another guest at this meeting was **Jerry Latchic**, who was recently fitted with his second cochlear implant. Jerry has lived with severe bilateral hearing loss most of his life. He is very pleased with how well he can now better understand verbal communication with the use of the implants. Denise suggested that we go to [www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) for more information about hearing loss and treatment options. And she also mentioned that Google Translation offers voice to text translation, and that Zoom has a captioning option as well. This was a very informative and interactive meeting.

At this meeting, we also welcomed **Kim VanAken**, who is replacing **Jeremy Kappes** as representative of the Lehigh Christian Academy.

## Holiday Hope Chests



We are very happy to brighten up the lives of 18 children enrolled in the Salvation Army Foster Care & Adoption Services program with Holiday Hope Chest gift boxes and gift cards this year. Gifts were donated by **Bob Ashcraft, Tom & Peg Harp, Enos & Susan Martin, Terry Kennedy, Young Chang, Joyce Crosby, Belinda Gray, Deb Lamb, Kathryn Best, Ricki Stringfellow** and **Karen Baker**. Tom has been collecting most of the gifts, and will be delivering them to the agency's offices at 2200 Hamilton Blvd., Suite 200, Allentown 18104 on **Wednesday, December 6 at 11:00 AM**. Feel free to join him there for a photo-op!

## Foundation Grant Awards Luncheon

A highlight of the Holiday Season is our annual Foundation Grant Awards Luncheon, to be held this year on **Thursday, December 7 from 12:00 PM to 1:30 PM** at the Shanty on 19<sup>th</sup>. Already, 39 guests have registered, including members of our club; the Allentown Northeast, Emmaus, Palmer and Easton Kiwanis Clubs; and representatives from non-profit organizations receiving grant awards. We are pretty much at capacity for the Shanty dining room. There will be a lunch buffet for \$20, which can be paid at the door. 12 non-profits will be receiving a total of \$10,000 in grant money for a variety of projects. This is always a festive occasion, culminated by a performance by the Allen High School Chorale. **Ho-Ho-Hope** to see you there!

## LVCC Christmas Party!



Our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual LVCC Christmas Party is being held on **Friday, December 15** from **9:00 AM to 1:00 PM** at the Judith Chase Early Learning Center (ELC), 540 Chew Street, Allentown. We are expecting 185 children enrolled in LVCC "Pre-K Counts" programs at the South Mountain, Walnut Street and ELC centers to attend. There will be several activity stations set up for the kids in the ELC gym, as well as musical entertainment. We will be treating the children to a lunch of chicken nuggets, baby carrots, cookies and juice boxes. **Toys for Tots** has approved our request for two toys per child. And each child will enjoy having a personal photo taken with Santa! We are pleased that once again this year, the **William Allen HS Key Club** will be helping out. And, we would like to thank members of our club who have volunteered for the event, including **Karen Baker, Enos & Susan Martin, Bob Ashcraft, Deb Lamb, Young Chang** and **Tom Harp**. A great time will be had by all!

## Service Leadership Programs



Salisbury HS Key Club faculty advisor **Barry Frick** reports that the club is healthy and active, with 65 members. They expect to donate 75 gift boxes to the Holiday Hope Chests campaign, 60 of which are going directly to the Valley Youth House. They are also working on an event in February to raise money for the St Luke's Children's Hospital, possibly along with canned food donations. And they plan to help out next May with our annual LVCC Picnic, along with volunteering for the Special Olympics.

As mentioned above, several members of the Allen HS Key Club, along with faculty advisors **Mary DiFebo** and **Steve Patterson** will be helping out at the LVCC Christmas Party on December 15. **Peg Harp** has finally connected with **Rebecca Saylor**, faculty advisor for the Allentown Central Catholic Key Club. They have 30 members and meet twice a month. They have been raising money for Dream Come True. Peg hopes to attend one of their upcoming meetings.

**Enos Martin** reports that the Raub Middle School Builders Club has been busy decorating Christmas wreaths to donate to residents of the Phoebe Home in Allentown. Part of the decoration is sugar-free hard candy. They plan to take them to the Phoebe Home on December 14.

The Brandywine Heights Key Club recently hosted their annual dinner for local senior citizens. **Karen Baker**, our advisor to that club also reports that they are donating shoe boxes full of small gifts for needy children in their area. We are also exploring the possibility of sponsoring a Key Club at Lehigh Christian Academy.

## **Glance Into Our Past**

### ***100 Years Ago – December 1923***

Harry Ives of the Ives Manufacturing Corporation located in Bridgeport, Connecticut, addressed the Club on the “Toy Industry”. His address indicated that the toy industry would sell \$85,000,000 worth of toys during the 1923 Christmas season. The **Ives Manufacturing Company** was a toy manufacturer from 1868 to 1932. It was founded by Edward Ives, a descendant of Plymouth colony governor William Bradford, in Plymouth, Connecticut. The company initially produced paper dolls whose limbs moved in response to hot air, but soon began producing a wide range of toys, including a toy cannon that shot using real gunpowder. Ives’ later shifted to trains as its designs were copied by other toymakers who were willing to sell them more cheaply. Ives’ trains were made of tin or cast iron and initially powered by clockwork, and later electric trains. The company was the largest manufacturer of toy trains in the United States from 1910 until 1924, when Lionel Corporation overtook it.

### ***75 Years Ago – December 1948***

The Club held a Christmas Party for 600 needy children at the Earle Theater. One of the Kiwanis members provided a Christmas message to the children. After watching a two hour moving picture, Santa Claus distributed candy, fruit and nuts to all the children.

### ***50 Years Ago – December 1973***

The Club collected books and games for about forty young children at Casa Guadalupe. In addition, a caravan of Kiwanis member cars chauffeured 25 children to the Emmaus VFW from Casa Guadalupe to see the East Penn Model Railroad Putz. Casa Guadalupe continues to exist in Allentown to provide health, education, and social services for Latino residents of the Lehigh Valley.

### ***25 Years Ago – December 1998***

The Club sponsored an Adopt-A-Family service program through the Salvation Army for Christmas to provide families with toys and family needs for families in Allentown. The families received a food basket containing a four-day supply of food. Each child received four toys for Christmas. Over 125 families were served by the Salvation Army program. There is no information on how many of those families were adopted by the Kiwanis Club.

- ***Enos Martin***

## Upcoming Meetings and Activities

**MONTHLY MEETING** – Thursday, December 7, 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM. Annual Foundation Grant Awards Luncheon, Shanty on 19<sup>th</sup>.

**SERVICE PROJECT** – Holiday Hope Chests to benefit the Salvation Army Foster Care & Adoption Program. Gifts to be delivered on December 6.

**SERVICE PROJECT** – Annual LVCC Christmas Party, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM. Early Learning Center, 6<sup>th</sup> & Chew Streets, Allentown.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING** – Thursday, December 28, 5 PM on Zoom.



### *December Birthdays*



- 25 - Deirdre Govan
- 29 - Joyce Crosby
- 30 - Karen Baker
- 31 - Enos Martin

### *December Club Anniversaries*

- Boys & Girls Club of Allentown - 8 years
- Lehigh Christian Academy - 8 years
- Enos Martin - 24 years !!!

