Food Festivals

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< ON THE COVER
Kiwanis Food Festivals
When I joined the Key Club at Alpena, Michigan, High School in 1977, I joined because Key Club was a group of friends who liked to help others. Little did I think that I would one day serve as the president of Kiwanis International. You placed your trust in me to lead an organization that is a part of your life. And I thank you.

One of my favorite quotes is by Forest Witcraft: “A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove. But the world may be different, because I was important in the life of a child.”

As Kiwanis started its 101st year, Kiwanis was important in the lives of many children. I’m sure you’ll agree. We saved and protected moms and babies from the scourge of tetanus—millions of moms and babies. #KidsNeedKiwanis.

Throughout the year, I met Kiwanis members who served because they wanted to experience the joy that comes from giving their time—reading to a third-grade class, collecting food for a food bank, building an accessible playground, providing bike helmets, supporting children with Down syndrome, cheering as a Special Olympian crossed the finish line. #KidsNeedKiwanis.

As we continue serving the children of the world, Kiwanis must stay relevant. We need the courage to change. We need to invite more friends, colleagues and family members to join us in serving our communities. #KidsNeedKiwanis.

Thank you for your love and support. As I continue to serve my global community, I am truly happy to return to where my journey began, in Michigan, the birthplace of Kiwanis. With heartfelt thanks, it has been my privilege to serve as your 2015–16 Kiwanis International president.

This issue of Kiwanis magazine may be my favorite one of the past several years. The focus on food festivals will surely whet your appetite. But don’t miss the Showcase section that shares more stories about clubs raising money and having fun with food. What I really like about Kiwanis is that our clubs have become uniquely creative about incorporating food into fundraising as signature projects in their communities. Here are just a few of the Kiwanis food activities you’ll read about.

More than 650 Kiwanis clubs host a pancake event every year. At issue for many of them are bragging rights over which one is the largest, has fed the most people or flipped the most flapjacks. One of the best is the Kiwanis Pancake Karnival in Fargo, North Dakota, which is listed in the book “1,000 Best Places to See Before You Die.”

Speaking of places you’ll surely want to see in your lifetime, add to the list a trip to France to visit Pessac les Graves’ annual Kiwanis chocolate fair, which draws more than 6,000 chocolate lovers together to not only enjoy everything chocolate, but to induct new members into the brotherhood of chocolate gourmets.

And while we’re talking about chocolate, it only makes sense a Key Club would pour it over ice cream to raise money in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. A food fundraiser doesn’t have to be complicated. A simple idea about something everyone loves can be successful.

Maybe the most memorable Kiwanis food effort is the strawberry festival in Stilwell, Oklahoma. Dating back almost 70 years, this festival draws more than 30,000 visitors and has grown to add a 5K run. The best part is that everyone attending gets free ice cream with fresh strawberries. The Kiwanis club’s project earned the state’s designation as Strawberry Capital of the World.

As you read through these Showcase stories, get your appetite ready. There just may be a great idea for your club’s next fundraiser.
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A non-profit, Kiwanis-sponsored fundraising program exclusively for the Kiwanis Family of Clubs
One Day is on the move
Kiwanis One Day is moving to the fourth Saturday of October, giving Kiwanis-family clubs around the world another opportunity to show the impact Kiwanis members can make in just one day.

Kiwanis One Day is a great opportunity to bring the Kiwanis family together to focus on local community service.

How will your club make a difference in your community on Kiwanis One Day? Let us know at pr@kiwanis.org.

Worldwide Day of Play
September 17 marks Worldwide Day of Play, when Kiwanis Vision Partner Nickelodeon goes offline to encourage all kids to get outside and play. Will your club host a kickball tournament, reading marathon, dance party or another active, fun event? Register your plans at day-of-play.com.
News

Tagging together
Kiwanis clubs and members are encouraged to promote Kiwanis by using the #KidsNeedKiwanis tags on social media, as well as in print, TV and radio spots, signage and videos. This one message, used by clubs worldwide in unison with Kiwanis International promotions, will boost recognition of the Kiwanis name and our service. Download Kids Need Kiwanis materials at kiwanis.org/brand. Contact pr@kiwanis.org for help in maximizing your club’s PR and marketing.

Voice of courage
A child of courage and a woman of determination, Ruby Bridges will join Kiwanis at its 2017 convention in Paris, France, as a featured speaker. Bridges was only six years old when she became one of the first black children to integrate the all-white public school system in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her walk to the front door of William Frantz Elementary School was immortalized in Norman Rockwell’s iconic painting “The Problem We All Live With.”

Key Club elects new leaders
Devin Sun, right, a student at Bridgewater Raritan Regional High School in New Jersey, was elected 2016–17 Key Club International president at the organization’s annual convention in Atlanta, Georgia, this past July. Burbank Senior High School, California, Key Club member Mary Grace Lewis, far left, was elected vice president. For a complete list of election results, visit keyclub.org/convention/elections.
PEACE IS POSSIBLE

Make peace possible
Share a commitment to peace by using the JCI Peace is Possible toolkit, allowing your community to create a commitment to everlasting world peace. You can join the effort by sharing it with your online network. Use the hashtag #PeaceisPossible, watch the “Peace is Possible” video and download the toolkit to plan and promote an event in your community. Visit peaceispossible.cc to get more ideas for creating peace events in your community. JCI is a Kiwanis Community Partner.

BGCA rewards Kiwanis’ work
Congratulations to the Kiwanis Club of Manteca-Sunrise, California, for winning the Impact Award from the Boys and Girls Club of America, a Kiwanis International Preferred Charity. Honored for its work with children in the community, the club helped establish and build the local Boys and Girls Club 34 years ago and now serves 2,500 kids every year. Kids need Kiwanis in California and around the world. How does your club help the children in your community? Drop us a line at shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.

Musical journey
Kiwanis Promotional Partner Up with People has announced its 2017 tours. One-hundred participants from 20 countries will travel the world impacting communities through service and high-energy benefit concerts. Current plans are to visit southwestern U.S. in the spring; Switzerland and the Netherlands in the summer; northeastern U.S. in the fall and Europe in winter. Visit upwithpeople.org to learn how your club can partner with Up with People to impact your community and raise funds.

Shared missions
Service, leadership and education: These are just a few qualities Kiwanis and the U.S. Army share. The organizations have a partnership that has lasted more than six years, creating a united bond to strengthen local communities and emphasize to youth the importance of community service and good character.

Over the years, the partnership has grown to include Army sponsorship of Key Club International convention and coordination of speaking engagements across the United States, all of which increase the partners’ opportunities to join together and inform communities about the education and career opportunities available to those serving in the U.S. Army.

With this partnership, Key Club and Circle K members have full access to Army resources, such as March2Success.com, which provides free ACT and SAT preparation courses for high school students. Furthermore, the Army offers an education web platform called ArmyEdSpace.com, with an educator toolkit that contains information about scholarships, ROTC, tuition assistance and other education resources.

For more info on how you can get involved with the Army, visit goarmy.com.

Through its partnership with Kiwanis, the U.S. Army offers speakers for Kiwanis club meetings.
INSPIRATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

It’s a fact: Members of Kiwanis Service Leadership Programs are more inspired when Kiwanians are involved. That’s why November is Kiwanis Family Month. It’s a time for our clubs to engage members of all ages and abilities. Serve together. Share ideas. Be an inspiration … and get some inspiration in return.

Share the fun! Send photos, stories and more to pr@kiwanis.org.

KIWANIS FAMILY MONTH
Breaking a sweat

Insurance agency owner and newly minted Kiwanian Erica Reibrich likes to keep busy. So it seems appropriate that she heard about Kiwanis not at a formal meeting or after-work event, but during a group exercise session with her personal trainer—a session that was also attended by Bettie Sleeth, one of the founding members of the recently formed Kiwanis Club of Greater Cherokee, Georgia.

“I met Bettie while we were working out together,” Reibrich says. “I was invited to join the club right at its beginning.”

She soon discovered that the group, organized this past January, offers the perfect schedule and mindset for her needs. Greater Cherokee is a 3-2-1 club, meaning its approximately 30 members meet for one hour each month, socialize for two and work on service projects for three.

“We have a diverse group of people who are busy professionals that really don’t have time for the traditional, every-week meeting,” Sleeth says. “But they still want to be involved in service and make a difference in their community.”

Reibrich and Sleeth are working shoulder-to-shoulder on several Kiwanis service projects, from reading programs at pre-school and kindergarten classes to contributing to The Eliminate Project. Recently the duo, along with other Kiwanians, spent a weekday morning stuffing school supplies into backpacks for the club’s Give a Kid a Chance program, which distributes those backpacks to underprivileged students.

“Erica has been a great addition to the club,” Sleeth says. “I wish we could find a few more just like her.” —Sam Stall

Have you found a new member in an unexpected place? Tell us about it at loveit@kiwanis.org.
Protect yourself ... and those you serve.
Kiwanis Youth Protection Week is September 11–17

Has your club reviewed the Kiwanis Youth Protection Guidelines—and completed the annual youth protection training? Youth Protection Week is the perfect time! Remember to discuss our new policy: On October 1, all Kiwanis advisors to a Service Leadership Program must have a criminal history background check conducted and verified by Kiwanis International.

Get ready. Get informed.
kiwanis.org/youthprotection
If it’s succulent, juicy, yummy, ice-cold, sinus-clearing habañero hot, crispy, crunchy, smooth, creamy, decadent, sweet, sour, salty, one-of-a-kind, world’s best, deep-fried, stewed, baked, grilled, seared, home-grown, tasty, taste-bud tempting or the most delicious dish this side of a five-star Parisian restaurant, a Kiwanis club sells it.

Whether for hospitalized children, school resources, a new playground for the park, scholarships, camps, Scout troops or The Eliminate Project, food festivals feed funds into Kiwanis clubs’ service treasuries.

It’s time to eat!

CRAWFISH BOIL • CEDAR CREEK LAKE, TEXAS
If you’re ever at Cedar Creek Lake, you may want to cast a line for catfish and crappie on the reservoir or photograph a sunset. But if you’re at Cedar Creek Lake on the first Saturday of May, hustle over to the Mabank Pavilion and suck down some juicy mudbugs at the Cedar Creek Lake Car Show and Kiwanis Krawfish Boil. For sure.

Cars, trucks and motorcycles arrive before 8 a.m., but by mid-morning, veteran attendees start heading to the Kiwanis booth for crawfish and all the trimmings. When they sell out—and they will—they’re gone.
The car show and boil is a cooperative event between the chamber of commerce and the Kiwanis club. The event promotes the area’s lakeside living and recreation while raising funds for Kiwanis-supported programs that benefit children.
NOT JUST PEPPERS, THIS RED-HOT FUNDRAISER ALSO SHOWCASES THE TALENTS OF LOCAL FOOD AND CRAFT VENDORS, MUSICIANS AND SPONSORS. PHOTOS BY BRAD BOWIE

PEPPER FESTIVAL • ST. MARTINVILLE, LOUISIANA

You probably won’t catch George “Coach” Choplin Jr. in the pepper-eating contest. The 2014–16 St. Martinville Kiwanis Club president doesn’t mind a bit of fire in his Cajun dishes, but he’d rather watch local officials sweat bullets as they suck down homegrown cayennes and imported habañeros. “That’s when you find out what they’re really made of,” he laughs. A 25-year tradition, the festival nets about US$35,000 annually for a full plate of causes, including Every Child a Swimmer, bike safety, sports programs and a foster children’s Christmas party.
“We have something for everyone,” Choplin says. “There’s something for the young and something for the old.” In addition to pepper-enhanced foods and a backyard barbecue cookoff, guests can dance to zydeco, Cajun or rock music while youngsters enjoy carnival rides and games. Anyone can walk or race in the 5K fun run and shop the craft booths. But only the bravest of the brave dare to enter the pepper-eating contest.
Finger-lickin’ good

FROM CHEFS BATTLING FOR THE BEST RIBS TO CLASSIC CAR OWNERS COMPETING FOR BRAGGING RIGHTS, THIS WYOMING FESTIVAL IS ONE SAVORY FUNDRAISER.
PHOTOS BY ERIN HULL

RIB FEST • CHEYENNE, WYOMING

They’re called ribbers. They’re down-to-the-bone specialists. At the Cheyenne Kiwanis Rib Fest, you’ll find the best of the best rib chefs.

“All (competitors) have won (US) national barbeque cooking contests and have been featured on national TV and radio,” a 2015 festival news release promised.

“Rasta Joe” Alexander (left) brings his Jamaican-style sauce—and a long list of awards—all the way from Plymouth, Indiana. A Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, transplant from Sydney, Australia, Paul “Aussom Aussie” Mackay is a frequent contender on the U.S.-Canada rib festival circuit with his fruit-based sauce.

Yet there are local favorites who have the chops (pun intended) to compete with the big pigs. Tasty Bones smokes their ribs up to 20 hours over hickory wood, convincing one Facebook fan to rave, “off-the-hook delicious.” Johnson’s BBQ, home of the Thermonuclear Sauce, has claimed more than 120 national awards in the past five years.
While prospective customers review ribbers’ achievements and honors (opposite page) before ordering, other ticket-holders gather at the car show. A part of the festival, the event hands out awards for impressive imports, restored antiques and gleaming trucks, motorcycles, lowriders, muscle cars and rat rods.

Revenues from this and other club fundraisers allow the Cheyenne Kiwanis Club Foundation to make a significant impact in the community. Recent grants, for example, helped fund a mobile children’s museum, after-school enrichment and construction of a residence for homeless youth.
SOMETIMES CALLED A “STINKING ROSE,” GARLIC GETS ITS DUE AT THIS NEW YORK FESTIVAL.
PHOTOS BY MIKE BRADLEY

GARLIC FESTIVAL • WEBSTER, NEW YORK

The adage “too many cooks spoil the broth” does not apply to folks in Webster, New York. The proverb “the more the merrier” is more apt.

When their community dreamed of building a US$1.5 million Miracle League baseball park for children with disabilities, Rotary, Lions and the Webster Kiwanis Club came together this past year for the inaugural Webster Garlic Festival. Despite two days of torrential rain, the clubs netted US$13,000 for the sports field.

“The cooperation was just phenomenal,” says Kiwanis club president Roger Awe. “I’m relatively new here, and seeing the community come together like that, it was a great feeling.”
The three clubs set up an executive committee with one representative each from Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions. "We didn't have a template for putting on a garlic festival, so we met once a week," Awe says. "This year, we have a bit of experience, and the committee is meeting less frequently."

One lesson the Kiwanians, Rotarians and Lions learned is not to trust the weather. This year, the festival is moving to a recreation center with indoor and outdoor facilities. Rain or shine, visitors will enjoy music, garlic lectures, cooking demonstrations and crafts. Of course, there will be garlic too. And all things garlic: garlic soups, garlic stews, garlic salads, garlic scapes, garlic wreaths, garlic bulbs, garlic, garlic, garlic.
2016 was a season I will never forget.

I have been coaching Little League Baseball for five years now, starting with the smallest tee-ball team. My son is now 9 years old and entering the minor division of Clarksville National Little League in Tennessee.

This is “real baseball”—pitch counts, base stealing—where coaching decisions can make or break a game. My excitement and fear as a coach reached new levels. It’s an opportunity to prove myself as a coach, but also a greater challenge to work with older kids and somewhat anxious parents.

My teams have had little success to this point. A few wins, but mostly losses. I have learned a lot over the years, and hopefully the kids have as well.

Even before this season, I had worked with kids of varying levels of interest and athletic ability. I had seen many different family backgrounds and beliefs. Some paralleled mine while others were wildly different. Some kids had medical issues affecting their play and mental or physical well-being. I had seen military fathers get deployed overseas during the season and the effect it had on their children.

As a coach, I hoped that I had a positive influence on my teams. But it was evident that the boys had an influence on me as well. Working with so many kids from so many backgrounds gave me an appreciation for the things in my life—my family,
“These are kids—9- and 10-year-old boys. But the character they showed was way beyond their years.”

my job, my health. It also made me appreciate the opportunity to have a small part in their lives as well. It’s a blessing to have the chance to teach young boys how to act, both on and off the baseball field. Not to mention that running and acting like a kid, playing a game you have always loved is a great stress reliever in itself.

But this season seemed different. The makeup of our team was similar to past years. Some new kids, some older. A few with standout talent for baseball, and some that needed my help.

We started the season with high hopes and came back for a dramatic first-game win late on a cold Saturday night. Through the season, we won and lost games, but entered the tournament with a winning record. The boys had good games and bad, both athletically and personally, but I had seen them all grow. One boy, who had only been playing baseball for a year or so, progressed from young player to all-star before my eyes. It wasn’t his skills on the field that impressed me the most. By the end of the season, he had learned to take criticism and coaching better and to shake off many of the distractions that previously would have made him upset. This is a trait that will serve him well as an adult.

However, the true character of the boys came out when it counted most. These boys, dubbed the “Cardiac Cardinals,” fought with resiliency in every game of the league tournament, winning four straight to take the championship. Three games were decided by one run and in the last inning.

These are kids—9- and 10-year-old boys. But the character they showed was way beyond their years.

This season of coaching taught me several things. I learned the coach can be a huge influence on the players. They look up to you for advice, but also confide in you when they are not happy. They trust you to look out for them when they are injured and teach them good sportsmanship when they lose.

I learned that my favorite piece of advice to share with the kids is about focus. During a game, the field is full of Heckling players, the stands with “professional coaches.” By learning to focus on their position, the team around them and their coaches, players can “tune out” many of the comments that can be more harmful than helpful to them. In a world of growing technology and social distractions, focus can be the key to success as an adult.

For my part, I learned something from them: to enjoy every second of life. I have seen the kids jump with elation at a big win, but also continue to enjoy fun and friendships with their team even after a heartbreaking loss. It’s about getting back up, playing hard and doing your best. And most of all, it’s about enjoying the fun—because it really is just a game.

Have a story to share? Tell us! Email shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.

Coach Steve Wilson (center) with his Little League team.
IN MURPHYSBORO, ILLINOIS, BOCCE IS NOT A HOBBY, IT’S A LIFESTYLE. AND IT’S BEING USED TO SHARE AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE.

STORY BY ARIANA GAINER
The Italian word for “bowl,” bocce is played between two teams of two to four players each.

Balls clink. Hands clap. The smell of grilled hot dogs and bratwursts fills the air. Homemade lemonade flows. The sun shines brightly, as light, airy clouds float across the baby-blue sky above Murphysboro, Illinois.

“Nice roll, Bob!”
“Way to go, Vanessa!”
“Let’s go, Mike!”
Words of encouragement mix with teasing banter and laughter. It’s bocce ball time.

In this quiet town of about 8,000 people, 238 players vie for a spot in today’s tournament, which will conclude the spring league of the Murphysboro Bocce Club. Only the top 16 teams (with names like Big Muddy Monsters, Deboccery, Rowdy Cougars, Misfits of Bocce, Bocce Bandits and Squatchy Bocce) qualified.

Just a few years ago, there were no grills, players or conversations here.
And no bocce.
The Kiwanis Club of Murphysboro took over a deteriorating park to build their bocce courts. Where there used to be a collapsed community swimming pool, there are now rails, backboards and brick dust.

“Bocce,” the Italian word for bowl, is played between two teams of two to four players each. The game begins when a member of one team tosses a white golf-size pallino (Italian for cue ball) across the court. The point of the game is for players from both teams to toss larger softball-size balls as close as they can to the pallino.

One team is represented by red balls and the other, by green balls—reminiscent of the Italian flag to honor the game’s heritage. The teams take turns bowling, and the team with at least one ball closest to the pallino scores a point for that round. Some competitors throw underhanded, some overhanded. Some focus only on the pallino, while others strategize by knocking the opposite team’s balls away from it.

So, why bocce in Murphysboro?
Ask anyone in town. Murphysboro became known for bocce ball because of the undiscouraged efforts of one man: Bob Chambers. A former president of the Murphysboro Kiwanis Club, Chambers was seeking an activity that would bring the community together.

“Bob never let the idea die,” says club President Vanessa Lirely.

Chambers’ idea ran into a number of obstacles. One neighbor said no one would use the courts because no one would know what bocce was. Another neighbor was sure teens would vandalize the park. Today, those neighbors are a couple of the league’s top players.

“It’s about building relationships,” Chambers says. “I thought,
‘How can we build community? What can we really do to make a difference in the community? What can we do that’s different and has some impact?’

Chambers adopted the idea from a neighboring town that had an active bocce league.

“Maybe this would be an activity our community could rally around too,” he thought. So he and the rest of the Kiwanis club petitioned the park district for permission to use part of Riverside Park to build the courts. Because the club was well known in Murphysboro, the city trusted them with revitalizing the park. The Murphysboro High School Key Club also assisted with the project.

Thus, the Murphysboro Bocce Club was born—and it literally is a part of the neighborhood. The courts are surrounded by players’ homes. Unlike an exclusive country or polo club, the bocce courts truly are for the community.

Rich history, bright future

Founded in 1843, Murphysboro is an old community with a rich history and long-standing traditions, and locals take pride in them. The Kiwanis Apple Festival has been going strong for 65 years, and that is only one of dozens of annual festivals the town hosts. A St. Patrick’s Day festival, Brewfest and the Wine and Jazz Festival present other opportunities for neighbors, families, friends and co-workers to enjoy one another’s company.

Bob Hall, a longtime Key Club advisor and Kiwanis member, has been around to see many changes in the community, and the introduction of bocce ball is one of his favorites.

“We turned an eyesore into a wonderful opportunity for the community,” Hall says. “Families can be together and be outside. It’s something everyone can take part in and experience a feeling of community.”

Small town, big heart

“Bocce is fun for all ages,” says Melissa Voss, secretary for the bocce club. Her husband, Herb, serves as the bocce
I’ve met tons of people through playing. There’s community spirit and pride. We’re a diverse group of people playing together and interacting.”

On the walls surrounding the bocce courts are dozens of ads, which businesses have purchased to support the Kiwanis club and the courts. From the chamber of commerce to banks, it seems the entire town either supports or plays in the bocce league. And the park space is not used only for bocce. The Kiwanis club also hosts music festivals and community fundraisers to support local causes. If there’s a worthy purpose, the bocce players will play for it.

Not all the players are Kiwanians. But if they’re not, they likely have a history with the organization. Maybe they were a part of Key Club in high school. Maybe a sister, mother or best friend is a die-hard Kiwanian. Maybe they are a beneficiary of the service work the club does in the community. Regardless, most people have a story about Kiwanis.

One day, he wandered over to the park and met bocce player Mike Ewbank.

“I introduced myself, and then he shook my hand,” Thomas proudly recalls with a toothy smile.

Ewbank invited him to play.

“Bocce is the best sport in the world,” Thomas says unequivocally. After some thought, he adds, “I can’t forget about wrestling and baseball though. I like those too.”

Thomas says he likes the food and the lemonade, and, of course, the people he has met.

Thomas Capel (center, front), with bocce players and members of the Kiwanis Club of Murphysboro.
The way to the heart of Hillsborough, New Brunswick, is through the stomachs of its 1,400 residents. And the Hillsborough Kiwanis Club has found its way there.

The secret may be the club’s nearly ubiquitous presence. Or it could be the signature poutine. (Read on for more about this dish!)

This Canadian Kiwanis club operates a canteen inside the Hillsborough Community Center, which club members built with fundraising profits. It’s also where the club holds meetings and all-you-can-eat breakfasts. For eight Saturdays in the first part of the year, village residents flock to the club’s canteen for Chef Jeff Jonah’s French toast, scrambled eggs, baked beans, hash browns, fried ham, sausage, pancakes and hot drinks.

“It’s a fundraiser, but really it’s a community event,” says Barry Russell, club president. “When people are still drinking coffee and talking two hours after they got here, we think that’s great.”

Extending its involvement in residents’ lives (and raising more funds), the club rents out the community center for weddings, concerts and other events, and sends out the canteen’s chef for catering.

“We also donate the building for youth to use 169 nights a year, for tae kwon do and such,” Russell says.

The canteen doesn’t stay inside the center, however, and neither do its 18 Kiwanis members. In June, for instance, they sold barbecue in front of a grocery store to kick off a campaign to expand the center’s kitchen.

One of its most visible events is inside the Hillsborough Arena during the minor-league Fairview Hockey Association games.

“Years ago, we were selling just a few items from a back room at the arena,” Russell says. “Then about 10 years ago, the club asked to move to the main arena floor, build a new canteen and do it up right.”

The arena said yes, and the club became the exclusive food vendor. From October to April you’ll find club members working deep fryers and hot grills making hamburgers, hot dogs, French fries, breakfast sandwiches “and our version of poutine,” Russell says.

“We deep fry our French fries. Then we put grated cheese on the bottom of the poutine boat, add the hot fries, put a liberal covering of grated cheese on top and then smother the cheese and fries with gravy. It is something good!” he says.
CHOCOLATE IS ALWAYS THE ANSWER
NEW CLUB DISCOVERS THE COCOA BEAN IS A RELIABLE FUNDRAISER.
STORY BY JACK BROCKLEY

What's a new club to do? There was great excitement when the Pessac les Graves, France, Kiwanis Club organized in 2009. There were so many ideas. So many service opportunities. So many eager members. But so little money. Actually, there was no money.

Taking a logical approach, says Charter President René Lagueyte, the club agreed to find a fundraiser that would be easy to implement but raise enough funds to support many good causes.

Why not a chocolate fair, someone suggested.

“You should know that nine out of 10 people love chocolate,” Lagueyte says. “And the tenth lied about not liking it.”

The fair was an instant success. A large room allowed chocolatiers ample space to show off their cocoa-crafting talents and for the crowd of chocolate-lovers. Yet, the Kiwanians realized the fair’s future was far from certain.

“We had serious flaws,” Lagueyte says. “Such as keeping promises made to exhibitors, listening to and respecting their wishes, and making a big effort on communication so visitors will come.”

Because of the members’ unfamiliarity with the chocolate business, some of the earliest exhibitors were not up to customer’s expectations.

“It took us five years to get to choose the best among the good,” says Lagueyte. Now, each year, fair activities include two inductions by the grand master of the Brotherhood of Chocolatière Gourmande.

Now the fair attracts up to 6,000 customers each year. Ticket sales, booth rental and sponsorships bring in about 30,000 euro annually, with expenses of about 15,000 euro.
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VERY, BERRY GOOD

AWARD-WINNING STRAWBERRIES ARE A TEMPTING TREAT IN STILWELL, OKLAHOMA.

STORY BY CINDY CONOVER DASHNAW • PHOTO BY LISHA NEWMAN/OKLAHOMA TOURISM

When the Stilwell, Oklahoma, Kiwanis Club organized the first Stilwell Strawberry Festival almost 70 years ago, the fundraiser was such a hit that the following year, the governor of Oklahoma designated the area as the Strawberry Capital of the World.

Though the claim may have been a bit of a stretch then, it’s not anymore. The festival now draws 30,000 attendees annually on the second Saturday in May.

Beyond raising funds for the club, the festival benefits the community by involving children and teens in educational programs, getting people active with a 5K run and promoting tourism and economic development.

Marty Green, Kiwanis club president, has a tough time saying what part of the event is his favorite. His involvement began more than 15 years ago with connections to growers as an Oklahoma State University educator. It has evolved to overseeing the strawberry contest and auction.

Yes, Stilwell strawberries are so popular that berries are auctioned off to raise funds for Kiwanis. Green has seen a 16-quart crate of berries go for as much as US$5,000. And winner or not, every grower in the contest donates berries for auction.

The festival wraps up with free strawberries and ice cream, courtesy of the Kiwanis club.

“We back up a big truck that’s filled with strawberries and ice cream and start serving,” Green says. “You can go through the line as many times as you want to—like I do—because it’s so good!”
FLIPPING FLAPJACKS IN FARGO

A FREQUENT CONTENDER FOR WORLD’S LARGEST PANCAKE FEED, NORTH DAKOTA KIWANIANS ARE REAL CHAMPS AT SERVICE.

STORY BY NICHOLAS DRAKE • PHOTO BY THE FORUM

Ah, the venerable Kiwanis pancake breakfast. It’s been part of the organization’s lore since forever. In North Dakota, the Kiwanis Club of Fargo has taken that tradition to another level entirely.

Flipping flapjacks to benefit a ton of local, regional and national organizations, Fargo Kiwanians set a record in 2008 for the number of pancakes made during an eight-hour period: exactly 34,818.

“A few of our members led the charge to get the Guinness Book of Records representatives on site to see if we could set the record for largest pancake feed in the world,” says Bret Kinzler, 2016 Pancake Karnival chair. “We ended up winning the title after serving nearly 35,000 pancakes. Our club is a great club to be part of as we have a very diversified group—younger and older generations, Fargo-area lifers and new to the area, male and female and many different professions represented. This diversity keeps our group lively and continuously changing but keeps our core beliefs and values the same.”

That lively team feeds about 10,000 foodies each year. The event began in the late 1950s. Kinzler estimates Fargo Kiwanians have flipped more than 2 million flapjacks for 500,000-plus patrons over nearly six decades. Net income lands at about US$55,000 to support groups that include Scouts, Key Clubs, Circle K, Special Olympics, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Clubs, Children’s Hospital Sanford, Rape & Abuse Crisis Center, Parenting Paths Project, public schools, the local zoo and Plains Art Museum.

“The Pancake Karnival has been embraced by the community and is a must-see event if you’re in the area,” Kinzler says. “It was featured in the bestselling book ‘1,000 Best Places to See Before You Die.’ Our members love putting it on.”
Bacon is having a cultural moment. In November 2014, Food & Wine magazine published a story titled “Why the Bacon Trend Will Never End.” Bacon turns chefs into wild-eyed innovators, giving us dishes like bacon-topped donuts, bacon-stuffed sausage and ice cream sundaes sprinkled with bacon bits.

Not all bacon innovations have been successful. No one is exactly clamoring for bacon perfume or bacon air fresheners these days. But when it comes to food, few can ignore bacon’s siren call. With this in mind, the Next Generation Kiwanis Club of Columbus, Nebraska, made bacon the centerpiece of its annual fundraising festival.

“We wanted to do something fun,” President Nicholas Whitney says. “Typically people do pancake or spaghetti feeds, and we wanted to think beyond that.”

Whitney and his fellow club members started with research, traveling to nearby Omaha, Nebraska, for its annual BaconFest. The trip confirmed their suspicions: There’s just something inherently alluring about bacon.

The club launched its BaconFest in 2014, drawing hundreds of Columbus residents to sample dishes like bacon sushi rolls (ground beef rolled inside bacon), bacon sundaes (a medley of pulled pork, coleslaw, baked beans and bacon) and maple bacon ice cream.

In three years, the BaconFest has raised more than US$12,000, contributing to a new city playground and a backpack program that provides countless meals for hungry Columbus children. And while the festival features live bands, DJs, karaoke, a kids’ carnival and even zoo animals, Whitney knows the secret to its success: the smoky, succulent taste of the most-loved pork product.

“It’s trendy for sure,” he says. “Hopefully the trend never ends.”

THE BECKON OF BACON
FEW FOODS CAPTURE A MEAT-LOVER’S IMAGINATION—AND APPETITE—LIKE BACON. NOW, A NEXT GENERATION KIWANIS CLUB IS USING THE TRENDY FOOD TO CAPTURE FUNDRAISING DOLLARS.

STORY BY MATT GONZALES
Get ready. Get set.
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ONE SCOOP, OR TWO?

ICE CREAM SALES KEEP IT COOL IN CAROLINA.

STORY BY CATHERINE USHER  •  PHOTOS BY KEVIN BENNETT

How do you take your ice cream? You can fancy it up with chocolate sauce, whipped cream and a cherry on top or go the tried-and-true route of plain, but tasty, vanilla. The Key Club of Rocky Mount Academy in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, serves the frosty treat with a sprinkle of service. A recent ice cream fundraiser scooped up nearly US$1,400 for The Holly Project, a foundation that assists families of patients at the North Carolina Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center in Chapel Hill.

“The ice cream social came from a previous president who’d come up with the project about seven years ago,” says Olivia Turnage, the Key Club’s 2015–16 president. “It was really popular, but there was not much profit. We were interested in the project, so we decided to see if we could get sponsors to help make it more profitable.”

The club secured 14 sponsors, each donating $50 to $200, ice cream and other supplies. The club sold ice cream for $2 a scoop, dishing out a total of 12 gallons of the frozen treat.

The Holly Project was created by the family of Holly Fryar, a Rocky Mount Academy student diagnosed with a rare liver cancer. While receiving treatment in Chapel Hill, Holly noticed there were families struggling with expenses not covered by insurance, such as gas money, child care, hotel bills and car repairs.

“One person who cared about others,” Turnage says.

The community has come out in full force supporting The Holly Project.

“Our son decided he wanted to sell t-shirts and give the money to the hospital. Holly was happy to lend her name to the idea, but she said she’d prefer the money not just go to the hospital for research and things like that. She wanted to give it to families that couldn’t afford all of the extra things that come with treatment."

“She was like that, always thinking of others,” Turnage says.

The community has come out in full force supporting The Holly Project.

“It’s really been a heart-warming response by a very thoughtful and caring community,” Fryar says.
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Have suggestions for other Kiwanis partners? Let us know at partners@kiwanis.org.
Guitar music plays in the background, mixing with the hum of conversations rising from the nearby tables. Within the soothing atmosphere, anticipation swells. Heads turn toward the kitchen door. Someone picks up the evening’s menu and reads aloud, reminding her tablemates what to expect:


In the kitchen, a nervous excitement follows the chef as he examines the beets. Tonight, presentation is just as important as taste. And taste must be superb.

The wait staff waits for their entrance.

Culinary elegance raises €3,500 for the Kiwanis Club of Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, which arranges charity dinners with area restaurants. The nine-course dinners are prepared with locally grown ingredients.

Kiwanis members are on hand to help serve diners and wash dishes.

This year, profits supported the Stichting Onderwijs Zieke Kinderen Apeldoorn, a foundation that offers remedial teaching for hospitalized and ill children.

“In this way, they not only keep up with schoolwork, but can stay in touch with their friends,” says Kiwanian Lou van Noorden. “This is extremely important for their self-esteem.”

AMAZING MAIZE

WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN SWEET EARS FROM THE DEKALB KIWANIS CORN BOOTH?

STORY BY CATHERINE USHER

The hot, buttery taste of summer draws folks to one particular booth during an Illinois festival that celebrates the tasty variety of corn. The DeKalb Kiwanis Club has been roasting farm-fresh sweet corn during the town’s Corn Fest for nearly 35 years, and the crowds keep coming back for more.

The secret to repeat customers is in the corn cooking process. “It’s roasted just as it is harvested—silk and husk and all,” says Gary Vander Meer, the club’s secretary/treasurer. “We then strip back the green, butter it and offer it for sale. Several years ago we started selling corn with mayonnaise, cotija cheese (a soft Mexican variety somewhat similar to parmesan) and Mexican spices. It has increased in sales each year since we introduced it. It’s my favorite now.”

The Kiwanians also serve up root beer and floats to round out the menu. Proceeds from the booth are used for several service projects, including six annual college scholarships, high school music activities, local homeless and domestic violence shelters, as well as two Builders Clubs and a Key Club.

Even on Saturday, when Corn Fest gives away free corn, a long line forms at the Kiwanis booth.

“We’ve been at it long enough that people recognize what we sell,” Vander Meer says. “They like it and show up to get it.”
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7 A.M. – 5 P.M.
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showcase

BIRTHDAYS
These clubs are celebrating their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries in October.
For a complete list of birthdays, visit kiwanis.org/birthdays.

100TH—1916
Worcester, Massachusetts, October 18
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 24
Troy, New York, October 25
South Bend, Indiana, October 28

75TH—1941
Lapeer, Michigan, October 8
Delta, Colorado, October 23

50TH—1966
Bruxelles Scale, Belgium, October 14
Grand Falls-Windsor, Newfoundland and Labrador, October 29

25TH—1991
Lucasville, Ohio, October 1
Norco, California, October 4
Spa, Belgium, October 28
Michelsamt-Beromünster, Switzerland, October 28

CENTENARIAN
Howard Latton, who is a member of the Kiwanis Club of Portage, Wisconsin, celebrated his 100th birthday this past April 27. His club surprised him with the presentation of a Legion of Honor award for 75 years of Kiwanis service.

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Warning: They’re contagious.

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Sponsor a CKI club today. Learn more at kiwanis.org/charter.
Food festivals are popular Kiwanis events, and they have the potential to bring in substantial amounts of cash—cash that goes toward other Kiwanis projects. But throwing a food festival is no small feat. So Kiwanis magazine turned to experts from the Saint Marys, Georgia, Kiwanis Club for tips on how to plan and execute a food festival. Why are they experts? The Saint Marys Rock Shrimp Festival has attracted thousands of hungry fans every year for the past 43 years. We think they know a thing or two about food preparation, parties and planning. Dig in.

ORGANIZATION/PLANNING
Start early! The Saint Marys Kiwanis Club begins publicity planning and vendor recruitment 10 months before the festival. Monthly planning meetings begin eight months out.

STAFFING
Appoint committees with a committee chair. Set specific tasks and times for each to serve. Appoint a coordinator to oversee volunteer registration. Reach out to Kiwanis-family members, Boy Scouts, former members and those who have helped in the past. Keep everyone informed with a monthly email. Send a thank-you note after the event.

SPONSORS/ENTERTAINMENT/PROMOTION
Before you get too deep into planning, secure all permits needed from your local government—which might in turn, as is the case in Saint Marys, provide support for logistics, safety and security. Invite businesses to sponsor and promote the event. Turn to locals for entertainment—high school choirs and bands, karate and dance studios, etc. And be sure to advertise in area newspapers, billboards, radio spots, posters in business windows, your club website and social media.

PITFALLS
Always have a backup plan. Don’t be left with an unstaffed station because of too few volunteers. Be ready to move people around if needed. But there’s one thing you may not be able to control:

“The biggest lesson we’ve learned through the school of hard knocks is, don’t depend on the weather to cooperate,” says Saint Marys Kiwanis Club President Suzie Tippins. “Be ready for the changes that will happen, in spite of your best planning.”

The Saint Marys Rock Shrimp Festival draws 5,000 to 10,000 people and nets about US$14,000 for the club. Learn more by visiting the July 2016 blogs at kiwanismagazine.org.
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