As 2016-17 president, Jane Erickson brings a bold vision to Kiwanis International
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**ON THE COVER**
- Jane Erickson
- Photo by John Bragg
Ever since I was a little girl I’ve dreamed of a world where every child was happy, healthy, safe and loved. My parents taught my sisters and me the importance of giving back to the community. I found it was a way to leave my own positive handprints on my world.

Nearly 25 years ago, I was working at a hospital 60 miles away from my home. I struggled for a way to know the community, as I was only there during the workday. One day, a man walked into my office, introduced himself as Dean Clark and asked me two questions: Do you like children? Do you like this community? Yes, I answered. Then he asked me to join him for lunch with the Fort Dodge, Iowa, Kiwanis Club, promising a way to get to know my new community. My dad was a Kiwanian, so I said yes.

That decision changed my life in more positive ways than I can count. Dean invited me into a new legacy of service: the Kiwanis family who shares my dream to improve the world one child and one community at a time.

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News
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

The gift of tomorrow

The March of Dimes has launched Give Them Tomorrow. Launched this past September, GTT is a consumer platform that unites the efforts of the March of Dimes, corporations, organizations and individuals to generate awareness, engagement and funding to solve the problem of prematurity. Through North America’s fall, the March of Dimes will encourage supporters and consumers in the United States to take action, such as sending a hand-delivered card to a family in the NICU, joining a social movement around sharing their babies’ firsts and engaging around World Prematurity Day on November 17. Do something today at marchofdimes.org/tomorrow.

Deadline approaching

Does your club have a proposed amendment or resolution to be discussed at the 2017 Kiwanis International convention? The deadline for proposals is October 31. Don’t miss it!

Trick-or-treat to save lives

Knock-knock. It’s that time again! Will you and your Service Leadership Programs Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF this year? Kiwanis will donate funds raised through this program to The Eliminate Project. Learn more at TheEliminateProject.org/TrickorTreat.
Don’t just change a life, change the world.

When you sponsor a young, emerging leader for a Key Leader weekend you’re setting something powerful in motion. You’re helping to create a new generation of leaders who understand that empowering others is the real way to create permanent, positive change in this world. Please help tomorrow’s leaders find their voice and discover their passion.

Learn more at Key-Leader.org.
Ed Koskie joined the Kiwanis Club of Northwest Indianapolis just a few months ago, but he’s hardly new to Kiwanis. Far from it. The 86-year-old retired mechanical engineer has held an affinity for Kiwanis most of his adult life. The ties are so strong that neither long absences nor an unforgiving work schedule could keep him away. That lifelong relationship began in 1949, when he joined his school’s Key Club. He enjoyed his time with the group, but circumstances soon severed the bond. “Whenever I’d get settled, I’d start looking into it,” he recalls. “But then I’d have to move again. I didn’t really get a chance to establish a lot of roots.”

Finally, in 1965, he signed up with the Lander Circle, Ohio, Kiwanis Club in Cleveland. He stayed active for half a decade, even serving as club president. After Koskie’s retirement, he moved to the Indianapolis area and once he became situated, Koskie immediately sought out Kiwanis. When he realized his retirement community sat within walking distance of the Northwest Indianapolis club’s meeting place, he sashayed over and asked about signing up.

Koskie hasn’t missed a single meeting since—save for the time he recently spent on honeymoon with his new wife, Nancy. Of course he’s going to ask her to join the club too.—Sam Stall

Have a member who’s transferred to your club? Tell us about it at loveit@kiwanis.org.

Answer the call

They’re funny, they’re rambunctious, they have dreams—but some kids face challenges like poverty and hunger that keep them from achieving those dreams. They need you.

Kids of all kinds from all over the world are in need of a role model, a guide and a builder of dreams. Answer their call. Kids need you. Kiwanis needs you. The Formula needs you.

Check out this inspiring video to help you answer the call: kiwanis.org/answerthecall.
We’ve come to the most important part of The Eliminate Project: fulfillment. If you made a pledge, it’s time to make your gift ... and your impact. Help protect 55 million lives from maternal and neonatal tetanus.

TheEliminateProject.org/give
News

The U.S. Army in your community

Over the past few months, U.S. Army representatives have been traveling around the country to visit Kiwanis clubs as part of a series of speaking engagements. Anaheim, Jersey City, St. Louis, Jacksonville, Cincinnati, Atlanta—these are just a sampling of the 30 areas the Army is visiting. These speaking engagements provide an opportunity for the Army and Kiwanis members to connect and talk about how the two organizations can work together to help our youth achieve success. Specifically, the Army’s scholarship and tuition assistance can make it easier for promising high-school students to attend college. Army ROTC awards hundreds of full and partial scholarships and is available at more than 1,100 colleges and universities.

Brigadier General Donna Martin spoke to the Nashville, Tennessee, Kiwanis Club about education and career opportunities available through the Army. “I tell young people to pick something they love and the Army will train and educate them to succeed in that career path,” she said.

Martin discussed how students can obtain scholarships and tuition assistance through the Army ROTC program. She referenced resources that the Army provides, such as March2Success, the Army’s free online test-prep portal, which students can use to prepare for college entrance exams and applications.

Martin accepted an invitation to join the Nashville Kiwanis Club. For more information about the U.S. Army, visit goarmy.com.

STEM and Boy Scouts

STEM Scouts is a co-educational activity-driven program for youth. It supports character, leadership and interest in the STEM field. For more information visit stemscouts.org or “like” facebook.com/STEMScouts.
Budget for Paris

Be sure your club has a voice at the 2017 Kiwanis International convention in Paris, July 13–16. Budget to send two delegates to vote during convention. Need help figuring out your budget? Check out kiwanis.org/convention/budgeting.

Kiwani Family Month

Join the rest of your Kiwanis family to celebrate Kiwanis Family Month in November. Take the entire month to show off your pride for service and plan activities that bring together different branches of the family. Enjoy!
In living COLOR

PRESIDENT JANE ERICKSON ISN’T AFRAID OF TOUGH DECISIONS, BOLD ACTION AND LOTS AND LOTS OF FUN.

STORY BY JACK BROCKLEY • PHOTOS BY JOHN BRAGG, ALLISON V. SMITH AND JACK BROCKLEY

Einstein is guardian of the patio. His gray, three-pronged rebar talons balance his stance on the backdoor step. His long rebar neck stretches through a “Finding Dory” inflatable floaty and up to his rust-speckled farm plow beak. This prominent proboscis protrudes from beneath yellow goggles and a clear plastic swim cap. Across his backyard domain are a gnomish, red-hair, smiling child all dressed in blue; a chubby teal owl atop a white pedestal; a red, one-wing flying pig and two butterflies—one with lilac wings and the other, yellow with magenta accents.

The life and personality of Kiwanis International’s 2016–17 President Jane Erickson are as colorful as her Bellevue, Nebraska, yard. Vibrant hues radiate through her life, her family, her passion for teaching leadership and her enthusiasm for everything Kiwanis is and can be.

HANDPRINTS ON DREAMS

President Erickson has a dream. She tells everyone about it. She tells teenagers about it at Key Leader events. She told the class of 2016–17 class of Kiwanis governors about it during their training conference this past November. She wrote it into the first paragraph of her remarks at the 2016 Kiwanis International convention in Toronto, Ontario, this past June.
“Ever since I was a little girl, growing up in Storm Lake, Iowa,” she says, “I’ve dreamed of a world where every child was happy, healthy, safe and loved.”

In Kiwanis, she’s found fellow dreamers to apply their muscles and resources toward achieving that dream. As she puts it: “Energize the dream.”

“Nearly 25 years ago, I was blessed to be invited into a new legacy of service: the Kiwanis family of service,” she says, noting that her father is a long-time Storm Lake Kiwanis Club member. “I found a global family who wish to improve the world one child and one community at a time.”

When they do, she says, they leave positive handprints.

Jessica’s palm is purple, surrounded by aquamarine fingers and splattered with white dots. Jesse’s has a swirl of orange and purple spiraling out to yellow-and-black fingers. Jessica and Jesse are attending a Key Leader event at Mt. Hood Kiwanis Camp near Portland, Oregon. Erickson is the facilitator and has set up the palm-painting exercise as an ice-breaker to encourage the shy high school students to introduce themselves to one another. Over the next few days, she’ll mold the 50-plus attendees into confident, motivated leaders eager to change the world—ready to leave their handprints on their communities. Just as she has left her Kiwanis handprints on them.

“You’ve changed my life,” says one enthusiastic Key Leader at the weekend’s graduation ceremony. As Erickson packs up her projector, speakers, pencils, crayons and visual aids, a line of teenagers forms, each waiting to say thank you. “I have to come back next year; will you be here next year?” another asks.

“I love to watch people learn, especially children,” says Erickson, who admits she was painfully shy as a child. “I like to see the transformation. You can see it in their faces.”

At home, Erickson sees her fellow Bellevue-Offutt, Nebraska, Kiwanis Club members leaving handprints on the lives of children through their sponsorship of one K-Kids club, three Builders Clubs and three Key Clubs. But one of her favorite handprint stories is about an 11-year-old boy they sent to camp.

“As a toddler, he was abandoned, and the only person they could find willing to take care of him was his elderly relative,” she starts. “That child had the oldest eyes I’ve ever seen. But when he came home from camp, he jumped off that bus, ran over and wrapped his arms around his caretaker and yelled out, ‘That was the best week of my life!’

“I looked under his hat to make sure he was the same child. His eyes weren’t old anymore. His eyes were dancing.

“That’s what I mean about leaving a Kiwanis handprint. We left our positive handprints on that child’s life.”

FAMILY TIME


Maya Jane Schau sits cross-legged on an orange blanket in green grass, watching her brother Gavin play soccer. She dips chips into yellow, melted cheese. She’s smiling big time because this is a rare treat. She’s splurging tonight, she explains, because she doesn’t know how much she’ll feel like eating the next morning when her doctor will reset her broken nose.
Children and grandchildren join Jane and Gus on the convention stage this past June (top right). But Jane also is proud of her far-flung Kiwanis family: Emma Betz, one of her former K-Kids members, went on to become Key Club and Circle K governor and is a student at the University of British Columbia; Key Leader alum Brian Francesco joined a 2010 Kiwanis-family team on an Eliminate Project site visit to the Philippines as CKI’s representative; and Carolyn Macaulay now uses Key Leader lessons as a middle school teacher in North Carolina. “That legacy,” Erickson says, “is what excites me about Kiwanis.”
Somehow—between her job and her responsibilities as a Kiwanis officer—Erickson finds time to watch grandson Gavin’s soccer game (and console him after a loss); introduce her mother, Bernie (top right, in the middle), to her Kiwanis club; host a pink party for granddaughter Maya Jane and lend a steady hand while her father repairs her backyard arbor.
While she was practicing backflip dives, Gavin advised her to tuck her knees tighter. She did, into her nose.

So, instead of a planned pink party with her “grandma-nator” (one of the family’s many nicknames), Maya Jane noshes on nachos while working up her courage for the next morning’s procedure.

“You’re going to be fine,” Grandma-nator Erickson says, cupping her granddaughter’s face as she examines a bruised left eye. “I’ve been through the same thing. Next time, tuck your knees beside your face, not into your nose.”

Maya’s story likely will become a new page in Erickson family lore. Another favorite tale is the one about the elevator ride at the 79th Annual Kiwanis International Convention.

She was Jane Andrews Moritz back then and had traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, as a delegate from the Fort Dodge, Iowa, Kiwanis Club. A friend suggested she meet this guy from Nebraska. She wasn’t interested.

“I said I didn’t need to meet a guy from Nebraska or from anywhere else, for that matter,” she huffs. “I was doing just fine.”

But for fun, she, her sister and oldest daughter agreed to be on the lookout for “this guy from Nebraska.”

And Gus Erickson literally walked into her life.

“I met Gus on an elevator,” she likes to tell people. “Going up! Still are!”

The two Kiwanians married on December 7, 1996, merging his family of two daughters and a son, her two daughters and a total of seven “g-littles.” Add to that blended family her parents, Wayne and Bernie Andrews. “They are,” she says, “the dearest, most wonderful, phenomenal role models you’ll ever meet.”

Moving from a community of 25,000 to a metropolitan area of nearly 900,000 was a little overwhelming, Erickson says. But she and Gus quickly became a notable team on the Bellevue scene. Gus had been a member of the Bellevue-Offutt Kiwanis Club since 1975 and served as governor of the Nebraska-Iowa District in 1995-96. He’s also a retired intelligence officer of the United States Air Force from nearby Offutt Air Force Base, which is headquarters of the United States Strategic Command. And he spent eight years on the Bellevue City Council—two years as its president.

Jane established her own foothold in her new hometown, establishing The Wellness & Training Works—through which she has helped people all over the world improve their organizations through bold decisions regarding their people, process and products. She also began volunteering with her Catholic church, developing a strategic plan for coordinating its growth and activities for students from the parish’s 16 high schools.

In Kiwanis, she followed in Gus’ footsteps, joining the Bellevue-Offutt Kiwanis Club and working up the leadership ladder to district governor in 2001-02. She went on to become Kiwanis International Foundation president in 2007-08 and now 2016-17 Kiwanis International president.

“I want to make a positive difference in the world,” she says. “Kiwanis has afforded me that opportunity, and it’s been fun. There has to be some element that has woooo to it or I’m not interested. And Kiwanis definitely has that woooo.”

“Ever since I was a little girl, growing up in Storm Lake, Iowa, I’ve dreamed of a world where every child was happy, healthy, safe and loved.”
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FOUR COUNTRIES. FOUR CULTURES. FOUR EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES. A PHOTOGRAPHIC LOOK AT WHAT’S THE SAME AND WHAT’S DIFFERENT.
Kids! Here and there, they smile when they’re happy. There and here, they frown when they’re sad. Here and there, they inspire us.

Kids! There, a Vegemite sandwich is a preferred snack. Here, niños and niñas ask for churros.

Kids! Some are shy. Others are bold. Some are promising musicians. Others are gifted daydreamers.

Kids! No two are the same, yet they have so much in common.

Kiwanis magazine asked three photographers to capture the differences and similarities among children from four nations. Their assignment: Find children riding a bicycle, reading, eating and visiting a doctor. The results offer an intriguing, pleasant challenge: Find what the children—and cultures—have in common and find what makes each kid—and culture—special.

Photos by:
Catherine Karnow
Vietnam
United States
Delphine Warin
Morrocco
Yadid Levy
Israel
Vietnam
Israel
The house Kiwanis built
The Kiwanis Family House in Sacramento, California, has been a home-away-from-home for thousands of families since its creation—by Kiwanians—more than 30 years ago.

The house had humble beginnings, but its history is quite a page-turner. The idea for the house came when a woman named Leona Bright was approached by a woman who needed a place to stay so she could be near her sick child who was hospitalized at the University of California Davis Medical Center, located about eight miles from the Bright home. Leona turned to her husband, Vern, and asked if there was anything Kiwanis could do for families who needed help during a loved one’s illness. So Vern turned to his Kiwanis club. And Kiwanis came through.

The original Kiwanis Family House, consisting of seven bedrooms, one kitchen and two community bathrooms all made from construction trailers, opened in 1984.

Since then, there have been a few renovations, an expansion and a move to a new location. The house serves as a respite for families not only from California, but from every state in the United States and nearly three dozen countries around the world. As it stands now, the house offers 24 private bedrooms with bathroom, four kitchens, a playground, several common areas, laundry facilities and parking for six recreational vehicles out back. Signs inside the house thank Kiwanians for their support and note which Kiwanis club sponsors each bedroom.

But Kiwanis isn’t simply on the bedroom signs or the sign out front: Kiwanis is this house. And this house is Kiwanis.

Dan Germain serves as the executive director and shares an office with operations manager Charles Bussey. Both men are Kiwanis members and give more than just their time to this place. Their hearts

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KASEY JACKSON
are in this. You can tell by how they talk about the house. The families. The history. Kiwanis is everywhere. From the people who poke into the office to say hello (Kiwanians dropping off donated supplies) to the countless photos of CKI and Key Club members who volunteer many, many hours here.

Germain hands around some items about the house. A small program from the “30th Anniversary Celebration: An Evening with the Stars of Kiwanis Family House” makes note of some of the top donors and volunteers. The Greater Sacramento Kiwanis Club adopted the clothes closet. The Lincoln Kiwanis Club sponsors Room 122, affectionately named “The Lincoln Bedroom.” Members of the Turlock Kiwanis Club donated shower heads and other supplies during construction of the new house. And for 20 years, the Kiwanis Club of Sonora has sent a work crew to the house four times a year to “do anything assigned—the harder the job, the better.”

But this is just a sample of the work Kiwanis clubs in the California-Nevada-Hawaii District are offering to Kiwanis Family House. To name them all and tell each of their stories would fill a magazine.

While all of this wouldn’t be possible without their hard work and donations, they are only part of the story. We figured you already know how Kiwanis works, so we thought it would be better to instead tell you a little about some of the people who have been helped by Kiwanis Family House.

Sandra Baxter was six months pregnant when she was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia. That was in 2012.

In April 2016, she and her family sat down to tell their story—the incredible journey that got them here, inside this room at the University of California Davis Medical Center, where her husband and young son once had to sleep.

“Doctors did one diluted round of chemo when we got here, while she was still pregnant,” says her husband, Anthony. “We were here a few months, and I slept on the bench in this room with Mark (their toddler son).”

The family hadn’t heard of KFH at this point, but
it was when Sandra was induced and baby Karissa was in the neonatal intensive care unit for a month that Anthony and Mark started staying at Kiwanis Family House.

“She was born at 32 weeks,” Sandra says.

“It was nice to have someone here at the hospital with me, because when I was off chemo, I could go down and see her and hold her. She was so tiny. She seemed so fragile. But she was in good hands.”

Sandra received chemo treatments. She lost her hair. She felt sick. But by May 2013, she was cancer-free and the family went home.

“I was in remission for almost two years,” she says. “I was so close to that two-year mark. But then I started getting severe headaches and couldn’t get out of bed. I came back here and had a bone marrow biopsy and sure enough, the cancer was back.”

A second time, she fought it and won. She was back in remission. But after about three months, doctors gave her the bad news: It was back again.

Anthony recalls what it was like living so far away from the hospital when word came that the cancer was back.
“We lived about six hours away when she had to go through treatment,” he says. “And it got to the point where she might be five or six days late to a treatment. Or she might miss it altogether. They’d tell us to just wait until the next month to come in. We just didn’t have the funds or the proper tools to get here when she needed to be. KFH being right here has made it so much easier. It’s given us hope that we are going to be able to beat it without any question.”

Sandra smiles as she tells her story, never seeming sad or questioning why it is happening to her. Karissa bounces around the room, and Mark draws on a small electronic notepad.

They are like any other family, except that they split their time between a hospital and a trailer parked in one of six spaces offered outside of the Kiwanis Family House.

“I had kicked it in the butt twice before and I was very determined to kick it in the butt again,” she says with a smile. “Yet again, I started treatment and kicked it in the butt for the third time and here I am today. I have finished my treatment and am now waiting for a donor for a bone marrow transplant.

“Without KFH, we’d be in trouble. All of us might be sleeping here in the hospital. Me in the room and Anthony and the kids on this bench. But every single time the cancer has come back, it has set us in the right direction. It puts things in perspective. You have to be stubborn. And I am. I can’t wait to bust out of here.”

In July 2016, we got word that Sandra had finished her bone marrow transplant and was resting comfortably in a room inside the Kiwanis Family House.

“Sandra’s social worker at UC Davis called a couple of weeks ago to thank Kiwanis for saving her life,” KFH Executive Director Dan Germain wrote in an email. “Apparently, her opportunity to stay here allowed her to qualify for the donor list. Amazing.”
“Without KFH, we’d be in trouble. All of us might be sleeping here in the hospital. Me in the room and Anthony and the kids on this bench.”

Since the Baxters (pictured here) lived about six hours from UC Davis Medical Center, they stayed at the Kiwanis Family House several times during Sandra’s ongoing battle against leukemia. Says Executive Director Dan Germain: “This is not a Sacramento project. We have a national and international reach. A question we get asked all the time is, ‘Why’s there only one KFH?’ Other clubs absolutely could replicate this.”
September 7, 2015, was the accident. Ankit Bhuta sits with his mother and father inside the Kiwanis Family House as he recalls the day he cheated death.

He was in the United States for a two-month training to finish his pilot license requirements when a lunch trip with a classmate changed everything.

Riding on the back of his classmate’s motorcycle, the two were heading back to the dormitory when a Porsche 911 appeared, and the car and motorcycle started to race.

“He started to show the car that his bike was more powerful and then the car was speeding up and in a few seconds we were at about 150 mph,” Ankit says. “It happened so suddenly. Since this wasn’t a planned race, I was completely unaware, and I realized I couldn’t hold onto the bike. There’s not much space on a superbike for a passenger, and my helmet started to come off and it came up to my nose and it kinda freaked me out. There was a strap and it was starting to kind of choke me. There wasn’t

“We have our whole family here now. This is now our second house. I wouldn’t have been able to stay so long without Kiwanis Family House.”
much to grip onto on the bike, and it was scary to let go. When I tried to fix my helmet, I fell off the left side of the bike. Maybe if I had fallen off the back, it would’ve been much worse than what it is now, because that would have likely impacted my head directly. Instead, my left arm took almost all of the impact. To this day, my physical therapist says this is the most metal he’s seen in an arm from any accident. He’s never seen anything like this before in his life.”

Ankit immediately blacked out after hitting the concrete and skidding to a stop somewhere in the median. When he regained consciousness, he saw people surrounding him, telling him the ambulance and police were on their way. When the emergency workers arrived, they told him there wasn’t much they could do. He’d need to be airlifted to UC Davis.

“I had no spine injury. No head injury. My ankle was fractured, and they only had to put in one plate. The worst injury was to my hand. The doctor was surprised my hand was still attached when he saw me.”

Ankit’s parents, Tushar and Nita, secured an emergency visa within 48 hours to travel to the United States from India. They dropped their bags at the Kiwanis Family House and immediately went to his bedside.

“I felt things most people will never feel,” Ankit recalls. “When I woke up and saw my parents, I didn’t know what was going on. It would’ve been really difficult going through this without them being here with me. Doing this without support is something I can’t imagine.”

Ankit spent almost two months in the hospital. He had four surgeries on his shattered left arm and one on his left foot. He needed multiple skin grafts. During one procedure, he lost so much blood that he needed to be resuscitated. He was given five units of blood to stabilize his body. Ankit moved into a room with his parents at the Kiwanis Family House at the end of October 2015.

“The people here have been so helpful, and everyone takes care of everyone,” Ankit says of his time at the Kiwanis Family House. “Being with Kiwanis has been a part of God’s plan to help us get through these bad times. I can’t say enough to show how much it has helped us.”

Ankit is 29 years old. He knows he has a tough road of recovery ahead, but he’s not giving up on his dream to become a commercial pilot. His next steps are to continue to heal and to eventually have a medical exam to see if he can fly.

The Bhuta family left the Kiwanis Family House in May 2016 after an eight-month stay. Ankit’s father credits KFH for keeping his family close during this tragedy.

“We were able to be here to support him,” Tushar says. “We have our whole family here now. This is now our second house. I wouldn’t have been able to stay so long without Kiwanis Family House, I can tell you.

“All of the staff here, they’re all angels to us.”
This year, Canadian Kiwanians celebrate the organization’s 100th year in the Great White North—a saga that began with the chartering of the Kiwanis Club of Hamilton, Ontario, on November 1, 1916. But in truth, Canada’s contributions to the organization go even further back.

Indeed, it’s safe to say that the nation’s DNA was baked into Kiwanis from Day One.

According to John R. Button, 2014-15 president of Kiwanis International and a member of the Ridgetown, Ontario, Kiwanis Club, his country’s most notable early contribution came in the form of Canadian-born Donald Johnston, co-founder in 1915 of the fabled Detroit Kiwanis Club No. 1.

“Johnston grew up about 15 miles from where I’m sitting,” Button says. “He was raised on a farm, near the same village where my wife was born and raised (Dawn-Euphemia Township). He was the last of about eight children, so he had no future on the farm. He had a brother on the West Coast who was a teamster, and he decided to head out there, but he only got to Detroit before he ran out of money.”

Johnston made his livelihood selling insurance and got into Kiwanis on the ground floor. His interest in...
philanthropy and community improvement helped shape the club’s future. In an early dispute over the Detroit club’s purpose, Johnston resigned as president and demanded a vote: Is Kiwanis to be a “trade group” or men who “operated under the main principle of the Golden Rule?” The latter won the day, and Johnston was restored to the presidency.

“Between Donald Johnston and Joseph Prance (the first official Kiwanis member), they’re the ones who really turned Kiwanis into a service organization,” Button says. “I’d like to think that someone with a bit of Canadian background had a little to do with that.”

He wasn’t the only Canadian to make a lasting impact. In 1940, Walter Zeller, the self-made owner of a thrift store chain who hailed from Waterloo County (near Kitchener, Ontario), kicked-started the nascent Kiwanis International Foundation in a novel and toothsome way.

A lifelong philanthropist, Zeller served as the Montréal, Quebec, Kiwanis Club president and governor of the Quebec-Ontario-Maritime District. At Kiwanis’ 25th anniversary celebration, he decorated a cake with 25 Canadian silver dollars, which were auctioned off for approximately US$625 as a “nest egg” for the foundation. The cake itself, instead of being eaten by the guests, was parcelled out to Detroit-area orphanages.

Throughout the decades, American and Canadian Kiwanians have worked to strengthen the bonds of fellowship, not just within the organization but between their two nations. The fourth Kiwanis convention in 1919 included the first Canada Hour, which put a spotlight on the friendship between the U.S. and its northern neighbor. Over the years it morphed into the U.S.-Canada Hour and the Canada-U.S. Goodwill Week.

To further dramatize the fact that Canada and the United States coexist peacefully while sharing the world’s longest unfortified border, the Harding International Goodwill Memorial was erected in 1925 inside Vancouver’s Stanley Park. The monument, which honors U.S. President and Marion, Ohio, Kiwanian Warren G. Harding, was conceived and funded to symbolize friendship between
the two nations. In addition, over the years more than 30 “peace markers” have been placed by Kiwanis clubs along the U.S.-Canada border.

Today, there are about 7,000 Kiwanians in approximately 300 clubs in Canada. The challenges they face, Button says, are the same as those with which their U.S. counterparts contend: strengthening membership, attracting the younger generation and helping Kiwanis find its role in the 21st century.

But when it comes to attracting attention, Canadian clubs enjoy one high-profile advantage over their south-of-the-border neighbors. Decades ago, Canadian Kiwanis clubs became intimately associated with music festivals, which showcase the talents of young, amateur musicians nationwide. (See “Patrons of the Arts,” June/July 2016.)

It’s hard to overestimate the cultural impact of these gatherings. Performers as diverse as Gordon Lightfoot, Sara McLachlan and Justin Bieber have performed on Kiwanis-sponsored stages. The Toronto, Ontario, Kiwanis Music Festival draws more than 30,000 competitors alone.

Kiwanian F. David Thamer served as president of the Toronto festival for two years and now handles promotional work for the Kiwanis Music Festival of London, Ontario, on behalf of its organizer, the Forest City-London Kiwanis Club. About 10,000 kids participate, from five-year-old violinists and pianists to university students, showing off their skills with everything from pipe organs to drums.

“The whole idea of the festival, as it is, I think, in all of our cities, is to encourage, nurture and support performances and educational activities, where musicians can enhance their interpretive and musical styles as a means of strengthening character development and celebrating the enjoyment of the arts,” Thamer says.

The Canadian music festival movement actually predates Kiwanis by a few years, with arguably the first established in Edmonton in 1908. However, Kiwanis clubs were quick to either found or link up with them, so that now almost every urban center of any size boasts one.

Singer/songwriter Gordon Lightfoot, whose hits include “The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald,” told the Toronto Star several years ago that he...
still has the two plaques he won at the Kiwanis Music Festival of Toronto back in 1951 and ’52.

“It was an experience that stayed with me the rest of my life,” he told the *Star*.

The very first Canadian Kiwanis club, the one that helped change Kiwanis to Kiwanis International, is active still today. The Kiwanis Club of Hamilton resides in a former police station. The now-inactive indoor shooting range houses boxes of club memorabilia dating back to the early 20th century.

“We’re a pretty low-key club, but we’re proud of what we have and what we’ve done,” says Don Turner, the club’s three-time president.

Current club projects include providing small garden plots where the underprivileged can grow vegetables, and participation in an annual reenactment of the Battle of Stoney Creek, a dustup with American troops that took place during the War of 1812. (Watch for a photo feature about this event in the March 2017 issue of Kiwanis magazine.)

The club, which held a big bash to commemorate its 100th birthday, also deals with issues familiar to clubs all over North America. Hamilton currently boasts about 13 members, but only a few years ago the roster had dwindled to just two. The group countered the problem by moving from downtown Hamilton to the suburb of Stoney Creek, which was closer to its membership base.

“We moved here to build the club, which worked,” Turner says.

The goal now, as it is with other clubs, is to do more. But Canadian clubs, Button says, are up to the task—and are hungry to help Kiwanis finds its way around the world.

“One of the things I will say about Kiwanis in Canada is that we have a more global definition of community,” Button says. “We feel that communities don’t stop at town limits, and so we embrace the global nature of Kiwanis service.”
BOO AT THE BARN
DOUBLE THE HOLIDAYS, DOUBLE THE SERVICE.
STORY BY ARIANA GAINER

For the past 20 years, the Chalmette High School Key Club in Louisiana has participated in an annual project to provide families in need with Thanksgiving meal baskets. But this past year, members wanted to do more. So, they thought, why not use another festive holiday as a reason to perform even more community service?

That’s exactly what they did, hosting the inaugural Boo at the Barn! Halloween event to collect canned goods and money for their Thanksgiving meals project.

“The event was hugely successful,” says FacultyAdvisor Alison Schroeder. “We had a crowd of over 2,000 people attend. Kids were able to pick a pumpkin from our pumpkin patch, play games, trick-or-treat at 10 custom-made trick-or-treat stations, make assorted crafts, participate in costume contests and dance the night away to the music of our DJ.”

By the end of the evening, the club had collected more than 1,000 canned food items and US$2,200 to fund the entire Thanksgiving meals project. Schroeder also says a portion of the money raised will be donated to The Eliminate Project.

“It was the perfect family event,” says Christy Cusimano, a mother who attended the event with her three children. “The Key Club worked very hard and provided a first-class experience for the children of our community. It was truly a great time for a very worthy cause.”
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

KIWANIS AND SISTER CITIES SEND SIX TEENS ON A MISSION TO LEARN THE VIRTUE OF GLOBAL UNDERSTANDING.

The fate of the world rested in the hands of Lukos Stefan and other countries’ representatives at a last-hope peace conference in Washington, D.C. Like the other diplomats around him, Stefan had arrived at this meeting as a firm advocate of his nation’s agenda and his personal convictions. Nuclear war was imminent. Compromise was not an option.

OK. Not really.

But that was the scenario of mock peace talks at a Sister Cities International Youth Leadership Summit in D.C. this past July. Stefan and five other California high school students met other teens from around the world on a trip made possible, in part, through a partnership between the newly formed La Cañada Flintridge Sister Cities Association and the Kiwanis Club of La Cañada. After hearing a presentation by LCF Sister Cities Association President Victoria Schwartz, Kiwanian Mike Leininger believed the two organizations could and should work together. Sister Cities International is a Kiwanis International Community Partner.

The teens’ trip included a reception at Japanese Ambassador Kenichirō Sasae’s residence, tours of the capital, a meeting with U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff and interacting with other students from around the world. One highlight, Stefan reported, was attending a motivational leadership panel discussion.

“(2016–17) Kiwanis International President Jane Erickson revealed an underlying theme that peaceful international relations begin at a local level, with a strong and supportive community,” he says.

At the mock peace conference, as talks foundered, Stefan said the students fought for a solution.

“My mind shifted from personal concern to an appreciation of the new and foreign people surrounding me,” he says.

La Cañada’s representatives to SCI’s youth summit were, above in the front row, from left: Lenny Pieroni, Luke Stefan and Amr Eissa. Back row: Kelly Steele, Courtney Johnson and Naomi Stephen.
More than 100 Special Olympics athletes, coaches and family members from Taipei, Taiwan, enjoyed a personal taste of southern California when they visited Los Angeles for the World Games. The Hacienda Heights Kiwanis Club ensured the visitors not only had food and lodging, but also recreation, entertainment and cultural activities.

The club organized activities with law enforcement, firefighters and In-N-Out University. They arranged for athletes to shop at a mall, visit a farm and its animals and a chow-down at a Major League Baseball Dodgers-themed barbecue—complete with gift bags, bobbleheads and memorabilia.

“The Special Olympics World Games host town programs provided a meaningful experience for athletes visiting from other countries, while also opening the hearts and minds of people in the community toward individuals with intellectual disabilities,” says Kelly Pond, executive vice president of development and communication for Special Olympics Southern California.

Hacienda Heights Kiwanis Club President Anna Wu, who co-chaired the project with Immediate Past President David Malkin, says she loved interacting with the Special Olympians.

“If we all embraced each other’s differences, the world would be a much happier and beautiful place,” she says. “Once it was done, I can truly say that we succeeded in changing the world one athlete and one team at a time.”

Malkin agrees.

“My life will be changed forever from this experience,” he says. “I gained a whole new understanding that no matter where we live or come from, we have more in common than not.”

Special Olympics athletes from China receive a warm Kiwanis welcome from Hacienda Heights Kiwanians in California.
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PICTURE PERFECT
JONES COUNTY, GEORGIA, ART SHOW DRAWS STUDENT ARTISTS AND CROWD.
STORY BY KAREN PYLE TRENT

A picturesque setting, a sizeable crowd and some serious artwork blended to make the first Jones County Kiwanis Art Showcase in Gray, Georgia, an inspired success.

More than 140 students from the Jones County Ninth Grade Academy and Jones County High School submitted their works of art for the event. Everything from drawings and photography to pottery, sculptures and more was displayed at the historic Gray Gables home. Winners received scholarships, and five students went on to the district competition.

“I submitted a chainsaw-carved bench made out of pine called ‘Everbearing Cycle of Peace,’” says senior Brick Nelson (right), who won Best in Show for his work.

Students submitted up to three pieces each, which added up to hundreds of entries. They relished the opportunity to display their artwork for the community to enjoy and to be recognized for their talents.

“We had over 200 people attend the show,” senior Megan Adams says, “which is a big deal for this being our first Kiwanis show.”

The partnership between the participating high schools and the Kiwanis club proved successful.

“We could never have undertaken such a large-scale show without the generous help of our Kiwanis club,” says Cari Reese, who is an art teacher at Jones County High School. “They helped us acquire a location, publicize, organize, set up, take down and clean up the event.”

Members of the Kiwanis Club of Jones County had been looking for a way to increase their involvement with the Jones County High School and build stronger relationships with area youth. They accomplished both goals through the art show.

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

100TH—1916
Hamilton, Ontario, November 1
Louisville, Kentucky, November 1
Peoria, Illinois, November 6
Racine, Wisconsin, November 24
Springfield, Massachusetts, December 7

75TH—1941
Saint Maries, Idaho, November 21
Abingdon, Illinois, November 25

50TH—1966
North Modesto, California, November 3
Bexley/Berwick, Ohio, November 10
Ski, Norway, November 28
Golden Gate, Naples, Florida, November 29

Alameda West, Jefferson County, Colorado, December 8
Chur, Switzerland, December 12
Foreman, Arkansas, December 16
Kiwassee, Midland, Michigan, December 21
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, December 29

25TH—1991
Three Rivers, Milo-Brownville, Maine, November 6
Yang Mei, Tao Yuan Hsien, Taiwan, November 20
Sioux Center, Iowa, December 3
Groveland, California, December 4

Greater Parsippany, New Jersey, December 5
Vught de Noordelijke Meierij, Netherlands, December 5
George, Iowa, December 6
Alençon, France, December 13
Amelio, Netherlands, December 16
Piombino Riviera Etrusca, Italy, December 16
Lucky Star, Taichung City, Taiwan, December 28
Liège Principauté, Belgium, December 31
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Now We Can Help

Kiwanis Member Benefit Insurance Plans can now help through Hospital Help Plan, Transportation Accident Protection, and Cancer Care.

- **Hospital Help Insurance Plan** –
  May provide cash benefits to help you pay your share of a hospital bill or anything you choose. Plus, your cash benefits can DOUBLE if you go to the hospital due to cancer or need care in an intensive or cardiac care unit.**

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- **Transportation Accidental Death Protection** –
  Covers you whenever you’re traveling … anywhere in the world … on just about any kind of transportation.* In fact, this Kiwanis Member Benefit Insurance Coverage starts the moment you drive away from home.**

*Does not include vehicles operated to carry passengers for hire; and Motor Vehicle excludes motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV’s), motorized bikes, and all other vehicles designed primarily for off-road use (except if the Covered Person is struck while a pedestrian).

**Hospital Help Plan, Transportation Accident, and Cancer Care Insurance underwritten by Transamerica Premier Life Insurance Company, Cedar Rapids, IA. Plans may not be available in all states. Some limitations and exclusions may apply.
Keeping a business like the Kiwanis Family House running is no easy task. It takes the hard work of countless people—not only staff, but volunteers—to ensure the grounds are kept, the floors are swept and the bills are paid. That’s a lot of work, but not too much to ask when you have so many willing and eager helpers.

And all of the donations and hours spent pulling weeds and painting add up quickly. Which is a good thing, when so many families count on the Kiwanis Family House to be their home away from home—and as stress-free as possible.

“A family’s inability to pay is never a reason we don’t take care of them,” says Dan Germain, executive director. “Kiwanis will always, as long as we have a room and a bed available, take care of these families.”

Operations Manager Charlie Bussey agrees. It’s his job to work directly with families on the financial side of things.

“The hardest part of my job is sitting down with a family who can’t pay,” he says. “There are people I know can’t afford to pay but insist on paying. They’re too proud to ask for help. Then there are people who totally break down in tears because you just told them they don’t have to worry about anything while they’re here.”

The Kiwanis Family House asks guests to pay US$50 per night, but those fees can be waived in certain circumstances.

Strong support from the Kiwanis family helps. This past year, the California-Nevada-Hawaii Circle K District adopted KFH as a fundraising initiative, raising about US$15,000. Key Clubs sponsor “Awake-athons” and raise another US$15,000.

And every March, the entire Kiwanis family comes together for a fundraiser called March in March. The day begins with a pancake breakfast and then participants hold hands and try to make a chain all the way around the house. There’s also a “marchathon” where volunteers do “laps” around the house, either running or walking.

“We had our best year this past year,” says Germain. “It’s the second year the Sacramento State Circle K planned and ran it. We had enough people to make it the entire way around the house. We raised $7,000 that day. It was a huge success.

“Before Kiwanis called projects ‘signature projects,’ KFH was one, for sure, 30 years ago.”

**BE COLLABORATIVE**

You, too, can make big projects like this a reality. Consider these things:

- **Don’t be afraid to ask for help.** Invite other Kiwanis-family members to your event. Make a plan and assign roles.
- **Spread the word.** Make sure everyone in your town knows about you and your project.
- **Apply for a grant.** Kiwanis International Foundation grant information can be found at kiwanis.org/foundation/grants.

*Photos by Ronnie Escorpiso, Jr., Sacramento State Circle K*
Need we say more?

July 13–16, 2017    |    kiwanis.org/convention
WHAT’S YOUR STORY?
If your club has a success story, simply email a summary and a few photos to shareyourstory@kiwanis.org to be considered for possible future use in Kiwanis International publications.

KICK START THE NEW YEAR WITH THE FORMULA

Sponsor a new member. Win a trip for two.

Every time you sponsor a new member to a new or existing club between October 1 and November 30, you receive an entry for our drawing to win two round-trip airfare tickets to anywhere in continental North America. So what are you waiting for? Share your love for Kiwanis.

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