FROM BIG CITIES TO FARM COMMUNITIES, MILLIONS OF FAMILIES LIVE WITH FOOD INSECURITY
Give the most important gift of all.

When you give to The Eliminate Project, your gift will help protect women and babies from maternal and neonatal tetanus. Honor a loved one, a business associate or a fellow Kiwanis member with a gift in his or her name. Whatever your inspiration, it’s a holiday gift that can save a life. Learn more and make your gift at TheEliminateProject.org/gift.
Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time.

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< On the Cover

A look at the problem of food deserts and how Kiwanians can help. Photo by Amy Toensing.
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
SUE PETRISIN | KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

OUR COMMITMENT: A WORLD WITHOUT MNT

The mothers sat around the room, swaddling their children, as a UNICEF Cambodia representative pointed out different features in the building. My eyes were focused on those mothers and their babies—precious lives saved from maternal and neonatal tetanus.

I met one mother who showed me her baby book. Neither one of us could understand what the other was saying, but I like to think she was thanking Kiwanis for giving her the gift of a safe birth. There was a photo of a nurse vaccinating her against tetanus. A certificate to prove she had the required three shots was next to a photo of a doctor listening to a baby’s heartbeat. Finally, there was a photo of the woman with her newborn daughter. She was grinning ear to ear. It was a picture worth much more than the US$1.80 needed to protect her and her future children from tetanus.

When Kiwanis unveiled The Eliminate Project in 2010, there were many mothers and babies in Cambodia dying from tetanus. That’s not the case anymore. In September 2015, the World Health Organization declared MNT eliminated from Cambodia. That’s a major victory for mothers and babies.

A lot can happen in five years when Kiwanis gets involved. As of this past October, 17 countries have eliminated MNT since 2011. We will continue to make progress in the 21 other countries where women and babies are dying from MNT. As long as we continue to provide UNICEF the needed funds for vaccination campaigns, mothers and babies will not suffer the fate of so many before them. I can’t imagine the heartbreak that mother in Cambodia would have suffered if her daughter died from MNT shortly after her newborn’s photo was taken.

I’m committed to seeing the end of maternal and neonatal tetanus worldwide. I want every mother everywhere to be able to swaddle her baby and have a grin that stretches from ear to ear. Children are counting on us.

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE
STAN SODERSTROM | KIWANIS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MAKING HISTORY

This month is an important milestone for Kiwanis. We’ll complete the fundraising campaign of The Eliminate Project. As we approach our US$110 million goal, I’d like to reflect on what we have achieved over these past several years.

In 2009—following a successful worldwide service project to virtually eliminate iodine deficiency disorders (IDD) in 2005—Kiwanis International issued a call for project proposals for another global campaign. A careful review of the more than 200 responses reduced the list to three: neglected tropical diseases, malaria and maternal and neonatal tetanus. After several more months of research and due diligence, the three proposals were posted online for the Kiwanis world to study and indicate preferences via an online vote.

In April 2010, the Kiwanis International Board selected MNT as the next global health cause Kiwanis would solve, and the selection was unveiled as “The Eliminate Project” at the June 2010 convention in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The organization, especially the Kiwanis International Foundation, spent the next year preparing for a multi-year fundraising campaign. The campaign was launched in July 2011 at the Kiwanis International convention in Geneva, Switzerland.

In our first year of fundraising, US$11 million was raised in cash and pledges. The second year almost doubled that amount. By August 2015, we had surpassed the US$100 million mark. More importantly, the combined Kiwanis and US Fund for UNICEF funding now exceeds US$102.5 million, the number of nations validated as tetanus-free since 2011 has fallen from 38 to 21, and untold millions of mothers and infants (born and unborn) have been saved and protected.

We are in the final weeks of the campaign, yet I continue to make a year-end gift to The Eliminate Project. We are so close to our goal and need every member and every club participating. Go online to TheEliminateProject.org, and make a gift with a credit card. It’s that simple.

We are about to make history. Be a part of it. Thank you for making our life-saving work possible. Thank you for giving.
Club website got you in over your head?

Get your club website up and running quickly. For Kiwanis clubs, Portalbuzz is the best option for public website and club management. You’ll get Kiwanis-branded templates that are newly updated, professional-looking and easy to refresh. The Portalbuzz website comes with a member portal. As a Kiwanis club, your membership is preloaded—making it easy to get started. Get simple tools for administrative tasks. And get more time for the service and fellowship you love.

Enjoy a free 30-day trial at portalbuzz.com/kiwanis.  
See Kiwanis websites that use Portalbuzz at pinterest.com/portalbuzz.
New Kiwanis countries

Kiwanis International has opened clubs in Malta and Fiji, increasing the number of Kiwanis countries and geographical areas to 79. Learn more about where Kiwanis clubs are located in the world by visiting kiwanis.org/2015nations.

Cambodia eliminates MNT

The World Health Organization confirms: Cambodia has eliminated maternal and neonatal tetanus. "Step-by-step, we are winning the battle against tetanus," says Randy DeLay, The Eliminate Project chairman. Learn more at TheEliminateProject.org.
Key Club expansion

Join us in welcoming the United Arab Emirates to Key Club International! The UAE is among several nations to join Key Club in the past two years, including China, Ecuador and Hungary. Learn more about Key Club at keyclub.org.

Stars and stripes

Kiwanis International has teamed up with Atlas Flags to aid in Kiwanis’ Signature Project of American flag subscriptions. If your club is located in the United States, learn more about the flag project fundraising opportunities at kiwanis.atlasflags.com.

Eat (pan)cake

Save the date! March 8, 2016, is IHOP National Pancake Day. Since beginning this celebration in 2005, IHOP (a Kiwanis International cause marketing partner) has raised more than US$16 million to support various charities, including Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals. For more: ihoppancakeday.com.

Top honors

Kiwanis magazine received two first-place prizes at the prestigious FOLIO: Eddie & Ozzie Awards, winning for Best Feature Design (August 2014 Ukraine Unrest) and Best Use of Photography (April/May 2015 Germany Circus). The magazine was a finalist in four categories.
Kiwanis Travel: Book early and save

Are you ready to chart a course to new destinations? Marvel at Ireland’s neolithic ruins, explore iconic Italian landscapes, cruise the mighty Danube River or immerse yourself in the magical city of Barcelona?

Members and guests are invited to explore Kiwanis Travel’s 2016 destinations. Itineraries—arranged in partnership with AHI Travel—will take you to the profound and famous places everyone must see, show you the secret gems only locals know about and provide blissful breaks for you to realize your own plans.

Reserve your trip by the following deadlines to save (prices noted are per couple):

- Danube: December 1, US$500
- Ireland: December 15, US$500
- Barcelona: January 12, US$1,000

Note: Registration is open beyond these early-bird dates. Learn more at kiwanis.ahitravel.com.

Photos from top:
View of Danube River and Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest, Hungary
Historic Blarney Mansion at Blarney Castle in Cork, Ireland
Street in the Gothic quarter in Barcelona, Spain
We’re creating Kiwanis’ future with The Formula. It starts with what you care about. Your club. Your service projects. The children you impact. And it works because you share that with others. It’s your formula for increasing Kiwanis’ impact—in your community and the world.

Because when you’re making the world a better place, passion is the one thing you can’t start without.

The Formula starts with what’s in your heart.

kiwanis.org/theformula

LOVE IT. SHARE IT. LIVE IT.
news

TIP:
If introducing a new community to Kiwanis sounds like something you’d like to get involved with, check out kiwanis.org/newcommunities.

IT’S FOR THE KIDS

Former teacher and member of the Gimli and District Kiwanis Club, Manitoba, Sam Sekhon knows the value of empowering youth. When he saw the impact of the K-Kids and Builders Clubs in his community’s schools, he decided that these should be not just extracurricular activities but part of the curriculum itself.

"After it was in schools for a couple of years, we invited the superintendent of schools to a Kiwanis meeting when the (K-Kids and Builders Clubs) were going to give a report on what they had done for the year," he says. "When he listened to those kids, what they had done and what they had fundraised for, he was very impressed. He was sitting at my table, and I knew that this was the time to get to him."

Inspired by his club’s success, Sam Sekhon now shares Kiwanis’ child-focused service with other communities by helping to open new clubs.

"The whole thing is so invigorating … to see the enthusiasm of the people when you talk and explain Kiwanis," he says of the process of visiting potential charter members.

Soon after organizing, for example, the 17-member Selkirk and District, Manitoba, Kiwanis Club, initiated “You Can’t Spoil a Child” to collect baby items for new families.

The community members aren’t the only ones to benefit.

“Being in Kiwanis, you really get to see the needs in the community, in the society, and that’s what keeps you in,” Sekhon says.

Sam Sekhon
short takes

• The Kiwanis monthly report, to be completed online by club secretaries each month, has been revised. Corresponding district reports will be available soon at kiwanis.org/reporting.

• Do you love to travel? Are you interested in traveling in the near future? Do you need some tips? Be sure to keep an eye out for the March 2016 issue of Kiwanis magazine, which will feature several travel-themed articles.

K Corps

Global Community Service Exchange

Help Kiwanis Teens Go Global

K Corps, Kiwanis International’s new two-week international exchange program for Kiwanis-family teens (15-18), is looking for members to serve as club coordinators.

• Expose clubs and the community to foreign cultures.
• Guide teens through cultural adjustment.
• Design and execute group service projects.
• Strengthen your community and facilitate fellowship.

Become a club coordinator today!

800.721.7474 • www.kiwanis.org/youthexchange
FOOD DESERT

FOR MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, DINNER IS WHATEVER IS CHEAPEST AND MOST ACCESSIBLE. MOST LIKELY “JUNK FOOD.”

STORY BY MELISSA PASANEN
PHOTOS BY AMY TOENSING AND JUSTIN MERRIMAN

Teenagers blend up banana-strawberry smoothies in East Los Angeles. Senior citizens tap grocery orders into their smart phones in South Carolina. Peruvian potato farmers learn how to cultivate green vegetables in the high Andes. Fresh produce coolers bloom in Pennsylvania corner stores, and healthy recipes are demoed at general stores in rural Vermont.

Diverse as they might seem, these are all examples of community-customized responses to a single public health challenge faced around the globe where there are barriers to obtaining nutritious and affordable food. Commonly called “food deserts,” these geographic designations can exist in urban neighborhoods where corner stores carry plenty of processed foods, liquor and cigarettes but offer few whole ingredients for healthy meals. They can also exist, ironically, in rural agricultural communities, where—even in regions not quite as remote as the Andes—sparse populations cannot support food markets and, often, gas station convenience stores become the default grocery source.

It is easier in most of these places to buy potato chips than sweet potatoes, orange soda than a fresh orange—and the health implications are significant.
“A STEP TOWARD BETTER HEALTH”
In the United States alone, based on distance from the closest supermarket, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts and more than half of those (13.5 million) are low-income. While risk factors are complex, the USDA submits that food deserts “contribute to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease.”

A 2009 US National Academy of Sciences report summarized: “Solving the food desert problem might not alone improve health or necessarily change what individuals eat. However, understanding where food deserts exist in the United States can provide guidance on where changes can be made to improve the availability of affordable healthy food options … (and) will be a step toward better health for all Americans.”

Research also underlines that addressing food deserts builds more vibrant, healthy communities overall. The Philadelphia, Pennsylvania-based non-profit Food Trust drew four main conclusions in its 2010 report, “The Grocery Gap: who has access to healthy food and why it matters.”

- Access to healthy food is a challenge for many Americans—particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and rural areas.
- Better access corresponds with healthier eating.
- Access to healthy food is associated with lower risk for obesity and other diet-related chronic diseases.
- New and improved healthy food retail in underserved communities creates jobs and helps revitalize low-income neighborhoods.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL
Solutions, not surprisingly, are not one-size-fits-all. While it might seem that attracting new grocery stores and supermarkets would be an obvious fix, that is often not economically sustainable or a good fit for the community. Farmers markets, farm stands and community gardens can help but are usually seasonal and not always perceived as accessible or affordable. Improving transportation options to existing nearby stores—or providing free or affordable grocery delivery—can work in some situations.

Many successful efforts have focused on increasing and promoting a healthier range of food choices in smaller, existing stores where people are already comfortable.

“Behavior change is hard enough,” explains Katherine Sims, who founded a nonprofit that works in some of the poorest rural areas of northern Vermont with challenges around transportation, limited food budgets and lack of food preparation knowledge. “We believe it makes the most sense to work with people where they are already shopping.”

“RE-FRESHING” THE LOCAL STORE
Vermont’s Green Mountain Farm Direct, an arm of Sims’ Green Mountain Farm-to-School umbrella organization, works as a regional consolidator and distributor of locally grown whole foods into schools, retail outlets and institutions such as hospitals. “When people know where their food comes from they’re more likely to try it,” Sims points out, also noting that kids are often the most successful in convincing their parents to taste new foods.

The nonprofit’s Lunchbox food truck hits the road each summer to visit remote Vermont towns where it serves up fresh-cooked, federally-supported free meals to children. The truck also offers tastings and education at meal sites and retail grocer partners along the way. In the fall of 2015, GMFTS piloted a new grant-funded program offering extra dollars to those qualified for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps) specifically to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local general stores and other small, independent food markets. Those items are always going to be harder for a limited-income shopper to choose.

“Potato chips are cheaper per calorie than a pepper,” Sims acknowledges.

Across the country in inner-city Los Angeles, Michael Prelip, associate dean of the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, observes similar dynamics at play. Public transportation can turn a supermarket trip into a several-hour expedition, he explains, and locally available fresh fruits and vegetables, where stocked, are relatively expensive and not always high quality.

Rather than the term “food deserts,” Prelip uses the term “food swamps” to indicate that unhealthy options dominate. While there is some healthy food in local stores, “it is being diluted by so much other unhealthy...
Green Mountain Farm Direct is a regional food distribution system that provides Vermont food products to schools and other institutions. Its Lunchbox food truck brings free food to remote areas and provides families a chance to learn about food, where it comes from, how certain foods taste and why fresh food is best.

23.5 MILLION U.S. RESIDENTS LIVE IN A FOOD DESERT
food, it isn’t the easy choice,” Prelip notes. “It’s become easy to eat poorly.”

As in Vermont, UCLA’s Corner Store Project works closely with store owners to improve offerings at existing neighborhood markets, but Prelip acknowledges that simply providing more healthy options is not enough.

“If you just make environmental change, you don’t see change,” he says. “There needs to be personal behavior change too.”

The coalition behind the project works closely with corner store owners to help them stock more fresh produce and improve their store environments overall while also engaging teenagers as key partners to develop nutritious recipes and effective marketing messages.

“It’s about everyone working together,” Prelip says. “It’s not just about adding healthier foods. It’s also about building awareness and understanding.”

**NEW MODELS**

Deirdre Kane and Dora Walmsley met while volunteering in the community vegetable gardens in Lawrenceville, Pennsylvania, a working class neighborhood of Pittsburgh. Kane grew up there frequenting the corner store, which had been a fixture since the early 20th century until it closed a few years ago. During a series of community planning meetings, it became clear that its closure had left a hole.

“At the top of the list,” recalls Kane, “was a place where people could buy staples year-round, including fresh produce that looked good.”

In the spring of 2014, the pair opened their 52nd Street Market in the former corner store with the support of crowd-funding campaigns and a nonprofit lender. Kane continues her day job while Walmsley works part-time for the market and also as outreach coordinator for the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council. The 800-square-foot store offers staples like bread, milk and eggs with only a low mark-up, bulk dried goods and coolers of fresh fruits and vegetables. The market hosts a dietician monthly and while it does carry higher-end foods that appeal to some in the transitioning neighborhood, the primary goal remains “to provide healthy food to our neighbors at a reasonable cost,” says Kane.

One measure of success: “There are a couple of sisters in their late 80s a few doors down and we’re their grocery store.”

In Chester, South Carolina, Gloria Kellerhals, co-chairwoman of the Catawba Farm and Food Coalition, notes that seniors, particularly, struggle to reach grocery stores. Accessing healthy food regularly is a challenge in the area, which has high unemployment and poverty levels. Prompted by the always-long lines at the food pantry, Kellerhals and her coalition have tried a variety of tactics, including mobile and farmers markets to which, she admits, “Nobody showed up.” She’s now focused on ironing out the wrinkles in an online grocery market where customers can shop from the comfort of their own home, using SNAP benefits if needed, and either pick up their groceries at convenient locations or receive deliveries from local senior services volunteers.

**BEYOND THE DESERT**

Several years ago, Stockbox, a fresh foods store squeezed into a 160-foot-square shipping container, opened in the parking lot of an apartment complex in Seattle, Washington. It caught the attention of the national press for its innovative approach to “solving” the food desert problem. Unfortunately, the concept had more success in the media than it did on the ground. Co-founders Carrie Ferrence and Jacqueline Gjurgevich have used that experience to evolve into a 2,000-square-foot bricks-and-mortar store in a mixed neighborhood with a large hospital as well as subsidized housing. Their goal “to bring fresh staple foods back into urban neighborhoods” has not changed, says Ferrence, but their strategy has.

They learned that they needed more space to be viewed as a one-stop grocery store and that a mix of customers helps keep produce and other perishables like fresh meat moving for the benefit of all. The high-ceilinged, bright store carries everything from sugar-frosted cereals to kale to freshly made grab-and-go salads, catering to all who live and work in the area.

With the perspective of years working in sustainable community development, Ferrence believes the term “food deserts” can actually do a disservice.

“Low-income communities get a lot of labels and that is just another negative one,” she says. “We need to be building positive spaces around food. It’s not just about access to food. It’s access to an experience and resources that every other community has.”

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**2.4 MILLION**

**HEART DISEASE DEATHS PER YEAR, OFTEN CAUSED BY EATING POORLY**

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While the issue of food deserts, defined as lack of nutritious options, has received much attention in the United States, it is also becoming a problem in developing nations where basic access to enough food of any kind had previously been the major challenge. As these countries modernize, positive trends in health are paired with some negatives related to nutrition, explains Alex Bozzette, program manager for the US-based, public health education non-profit Population Media Center. Diets of fruit, vegetables and proteins like beans or fish are being replaced by imported, processed foods high in refined carbohydrates, sugars and saturated fats. Public health experts have dubbed this, “the nutrition transition,” Bozzette says. “There is too much of the wrong kinds of food in some places. Undernutrition, overnutrition and malnutrition are happening in the same places all at once.”

High in the Peruvian Andes, a different example of nutrition desert exists where there are plenty of potatoes but very little else to eat, according to Simone Heemskerk, co-founder of Por Eso! a nonprofit she cofounded with Jolanda Buets in 2007. In the mountains 3,770 miles above sea level, one child in three is chronically undernourished, Heemskerk explains, in addition to lacking safe drinking water, healthcare, housing and education. The pair is helping community members grow fresh foods for their families by building communal greenhouses, establishing vegetable gardens and offering farming and cooking classes. Weekly lunches cooked with vegetables from the greenhouses feed 500 children, and their work in nine communities has reached 750 families.
Land of plenty

FACING FOOD INSECURITY, ONE VERMONT FAMILY LIVES OFF THE LAND. PHOTO ESSAY BY AMY TOENSING

Chad and Meg Thompson and their six children are often hungry. The family lives in a food desert, and because of mounting bills, they have zero budget for groceries. They make it work—barely—by coming up with creative ways to make ends meet when times get tough. And it gets tough often.

As shown in this photo essay, the family works their own land and enjoys the fruits of their efforts, especially during the growing season. During peak harvest times, the family meal consists of produce from their garden, meat from animals they raise or hunt and homemade bread using dairy from their milking cow. But this is how it looks when the food is plentiful.

Early winter to mid-winter is the hardest time of the year. Sometimes during the coldest months, dinner is a bowl of rice with an egg and some applesauce. Despite the constant challenge of making sure there's enough to feed everyone, Meg and Chad have made it a priority to teach the kids about the value of healthy, whole foods and to "always know where your food comes from." But when times are at their toughest, Meg tries to make a game of it, asking the kids to see how little they can eat some days to stretch the supply. "I never want the kids to feel like there's not enough," Meg says. "But if worse comes to worst, we could always kill the chickens."

See more photos on the Kiwanis magazine app, free for download on Google Play or iTunes.
The Thompson family has, in the past, relied on government assistance to supplement what they provide from their farm. They do utilize many of the food programs offered by Green Mountain Farm-to-School. “You don’t realize how much you miss something as simple as a peach, when it’s something you can’t afford to just run out and buy,” says Meg Thompson.
“I like to hunt. I like to be able to get my own food.” — Charlie Thompson, 10
“Meg and I love to sit down for a meal with the whole family and evaluate how much food we sourced from the land. It makes us proud.”
Meg and I love to sit down for a meal with the whole family and evaluate how much food we sourced from the land. It makes us proud.” — Chad Thompson
Church bells chime, filling the chilled mountain air with a glorious call to worship. The scents of ginger, cinnamon and pine waft through streets lined with half-timbered houses. A night watchman leans his lantern forward to illuminate your face. He smiles and greets you: Willkommen bei Erbacher Schlossweihnacht.

In December in Germany, Christmas markets are everywhere. In the north, a fairy tale forest beckons visitors to Lübeck. In the south, Munich boasts a festival that claims 14th-century roots.

Up in the Odenwald mountain range is one of the smallest of German markets: Erbacher Schlossweihnacht. There, tucked in a corner off Städtel Straße is a garage. That’s where you’ll find the Kiwanis Club of Erbach-Odenwald.
A lively young club, proud of its reputation as the “silliest WhatsApp group south of Frankfort,” Erbach Kiwanians capitalize on romantic legends to increase sales of a popular Yuletide sprig. “You know you have to be kissed when you stand below a mistletoe?” Uhrig asks. “Our president had the brilliant idea to put up a sign reading, “Kiwanis mistletoe. Success is guaranteed.”

It worked. Setting off a flurry of kisses, sales helped the club surpass its 22,000-euros fundraising goal for the year. “How do I say this without sounding too cocky?” Uhrig says. “We raised over 41,000€ (this year).”

The monies were used to support the Eliminate Project, buy toys for a baby playgroup and acquire a wooden car, in which kindergarten students can read books.

“Our market is very small in relation to those in Frankfurt and Heidelberg,” says Erbach-Odenwald Kiwanian Stefan Uhrig. “But for our region, it is a big one. You have to imagine, we’re 60 minutes from every motorway. We’re very isolated and have a lot of small villages, each with its own small market of three or four booths.”

Erbach has about 60 booths, set up on old stone streets amid half-timbered structures that once served as homes to medieval knights. The Protestant Town Church (right) towers above the crowd of shoppers and gawkers. Unlike other, larger Christmas attractions where booths are operated by professional retailers, Erbach Schloss is set up almost exclusively by local businesses and organizations.
The Erbach-Odenwald Kiwanis Club (left, second photo from top) teams with a Young Professionals group to sell mistletoe, wine and ornaments (left, top). Below, middle: “People dress up in character for the market,” Uhrig says. “They walk around and pose for photos with people. Free, of course; we’re not in Times Square!”

Find more Christmas market photos on the Kiwanis magazine app, available on iPad and Android devices.
A young man of 21 walks quickly along a trail headed toward a row of multiple raised garden beds. Dressed in a bright, orange pullover fleece, he’s part of this beautiful place. He blends into the colorful landscape here. He’s excited—almost running. He wants to show off his garden.

“I like gardening, talking to my friends and planting stuff when I come here,” he says, explaining each plant in his garden. “There are vegetables growing, one herb—which is rosemary. It smells good. There are peas and strawberries too.”

Pointing to a somewhat tall green sprout, he explains, “Those flowers there, they turn into the peas. And there are a few weeds. But not many.”

When visiting Kevin Heinze GROW (Gardening for Recreation, Occupation and Well-being), a facility for children and young adults with disabilities in Manningham—about a 30-minute drive from Melbourne in Australia—it’s as
if you’ve entered the pages of a Dr. Seuss story. Or “Alice in Wonderland.” Things are a bit askew here, yet perfectly right. Broken teapots. Crooked signs. A couch that grows potatoes. (Yes. A real couch potato.)

This magical place started the way many things do: as a big idea. The now-deceased Australian gardening guru Kevin Heinze approached members of the Kiwanis Club of Doncaster-Templestowe (now the Kiwanis Club of Manningham) to request help realizing that idea.

“Kevin came to us as a guest speaker in 1976,” says Kiwanian Alan Wren. “He threw out the idea and the challenge. He told us about a garden he’d seen, and he said we were desperately lacking a similar place here. He said we could build something like that, but it would be strictly for the children and disadvantaged young adults. And he said: ‘Is your club able to rise to the challenge?’

“That sort of set us back on our heels a little bit. But we agreed that’s something we’d like to get involved with. And within four years, we were up and running.”

Kiwanis members have been on the ground at the garden center ever since those first days. Engineers and builders and painters. Planners. Doers. Kiwanians.

“I’m on the Tuesday Team,” says Kiwanian Ray Harman. “We come in and do whatever maintenance is required—might be broken pipes, might be tools that need to be fixed. We spray around the weeds

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Participants maintain their own garden space and get to keep everything they grow. Succulents, flowers and vegetables are most popular. And for those who simply like to dig in the dirt and find things, there are a couple garden beds just for that.

“One of the reasons gardening works is because it’s a HOPEFUL PROCESS. We encourage everyone to be out in the garden.”

~ Amanda Marshall, manager of Kevin Heinze GROW
There are about 80 volunteers at Kevin Heinze GROW and about 350 children and adults with disabilities use the facility. The fun atmosphere encourages staff, volunteers and participants to be playful and open to new ideas and projects. “Our Kiwanis members understand that whatever role they have, it’s crucial to enable everyone to have somewhere to be silly, have fun and take safe risks,” says manager Amanda Marshall.
in the gardens and repair the raised garden beds.”

Those rows and rows of raised garden beds all were made by hand by Kiwanis members. When the garden center grew to have a full-time staff, Kiwanis built a new office where staff members could conduct business in a quiet environment. All along, it’s been a Kiwanis project.

Today, the garden center is a place where both volunteers and visitors come to not only learn about gardening, but also how to grow as people. Staff members work alongside volunteers when interacting with visitors—all children or young adults from special schools, disability support services, rehabilitation services and mental health and aged-care facilities.

“I’m blunt with the teachers who send volunteer students,” says Amanda Marshall, manager at Kevin Heinze GROW. “This isn’t a place you come to do good works. You’re coming here to learn about difference and hopefully to suspend your assumptions about people with differences, particularly in that adolescent age group where everything is about pigeonholing people and making assumptions about people.

“What I say to volunteers when they come in is, ‘Everybody has challenges in their life. What you notice here is that some of them are obvious. If someone has cerebral palsy, that’s an obvious challenge. I don’t know when I’m looking at you that you have severe mental health issues. Or you’ve lost both your parents. So, I don’t know what your challenges are, but everyone has challenges.’

“I’m absolutely adamant with teachers and schools. Don’t send your student (volunteers) here to feel sorry for our guys. You’re lucky to come here, because we’re gonna show you something about yourself, and we’re gonna help you grow up.”

Bruce Entwisle is a Kiwanis representative on the management committee at Kevin Heinze GROW. He’s been coming to the garden center for about 30 years. He helped build those raised garden beds. He’s been at the table for many decisions. (He probably even built most of those tables.) He’s seen this place change—and grow—from an almost-empty field to more than an acre of colorful plants and buildings surrounded by smiling faces.

“You still get the big buzz when you come down here,” he says. “You see the participants, and there’s been a lot of growth in those participants. One we were very proud of—he grew to a stage where he could talk to us, and we even had him running rehabilitation programs for people who had had strokes. He had a shed out back where he’d get up there and work with succulents. He wouldn’t say boo to a grasshopper when he first came here—but he’d certainly say boo to a grasshopper now.”

Exploring the grounds, both
inside and out, you get a feel right away that it’s playful and fun.

Colorful bunting drapes along walls and flags flap in the wind. Mirrors in the garden reflect the blue skies above. A pair of old work boots sit near a door as if in anticipation of someone coming back to wear them. Alas, these boots now sprout tiny flowers, proof that anything and everything is game for growing around here.

Kiwanian Tony Kershaw served as president of the management committee for 23 years, just recently stepping down from that role. He’s walking the trails, pointing out this and that. Over there: Colorful panels in a wall make the sky look pink or orange. And here: a water feature that is “soothing to the visitors. They’ll stand here forever and just watch and listen.” He smiles a lot while showing off just a small example of his work as a Kiwanian.

“I’m very proud of this,” he says. “You just can’t explain it. It’s a happy time to come here every week.”

The stories and history of this place—there isn’t time to share it all. But Kiwanians and staff certainly remember the past and plan for the future. Together.

“Kiwanis is very much the skeleton and like the bones of the whole place,” says Marshall. “I can’t imagine not having a Kiwanis presence. It’d kinda be like you lost a limb, I think, if we didn’t have them around all the time, telling stories and sharing cups of tea. It just wouldn’t be the same.”

Top row, left to right: Kevin Heinze GROW Kiwanis representative Bruce Entwisle, Kiwanian Alan Wren and Kevin Heinze GROW manager Amanda Marshall. Kiwanians have participated in the center’s growth over the years. “We have a distinct preference for doing,” says Entwisle. “If they need manpower, we can swing a hammer, which most of us take a lot of delight in doing.”

Download the Kiwanis magazine app for additional content from this story, including a photo gallery and audio clips from our interviews.
The feel of pavement beneath your feet. Breaking through the barrier of physical fatigue. The training. These are all part of the experience of running a marathon. But few long-distance athletes have endured the ice, extreme freezing temperatures and mental challenge of a North Pole run.

Gilbert Summa has.

And more than 5,500 mothers and babies will be saved from maternal and neonatal tetanus because of his efforts.

This past April, Summa—a member of the Nancy, France, Kiwanis club—was one of 44 competitors in the North Pole Marathon. With temperatures fluctuating between 25 and 40 degrees below zero Celsius, he completed the 42.125-kilometer run in less than eight hours. He also finished with 9,000 euros collected for The Eliminate Project.

“The goal of the result is secondary,” Summa told UNICEF France. “What matters is the process to get to it. During this adventure, I really enjoyed the support from people and the way they saw themselves in my human challenge and made the Kiwanis-UNICEF project their own. My performance doesn’t belong to me, it belongs to all those who work at defending children.”

The owner of technology companies, he used the cold room in one of his facilities to train. “You are completely nuts,” one employee teased after watching Summa—fully attired in goggles and polar gear—striding kilometer after kilometer on his treadmill in the frigid warehouse. In addition...
to preparing his body for sub-freezing conditions, the regimen allowed him to test his clothing and gear.

Having conquered the North Pole (and New Zealand this past October), he now has run marathons on five continents. “My goal is to run a marathon on all of the planet’s continents,” Summa says. “Next year, I think I’ll run in North America, South America, then on the South Pole.”

He chose to add fundraising to his North Pole run because of his Kiwanis convictions.

“I was convinced by the project of the Kiwanis network,” explains Summa. “Helping children means something to anyone with a heart. Children are our part of humanity. I believe that one has to know how to give to others what oneself has received. It’s with great pleasure that I want to commit for those who weren’t as lucky as I was. One has to be able to help, modestly, for sure, but to help share this vision of the world that tends to give hope to children.”

After completing the North Pole Marathon, Kiwanian and Frenchman Gilbert Summa (above and below, right) displays his nation’s flag and The Eliminate Project banner at the finish line.
When Kiwanians in the Niagara, Ontario, region set out to help preschoolers, they looked for tools and resources that form a foundation for the children's academic lives. So perhaps it's fitting that the latest project—STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) kits for 175 child-care programs in the region—is a pillar of support for budding brains, allowing them to explore scientific concepts through play.

"Children are so open-minded," says Bill Irwin, past secretary for the Kiwanis Club of St. Catharines, Ontario, one of several clubs involved in the project. "It starts with 3-year-olds, and we hope it'll pay off 12 years from now when they graduate from high school."

Only about 27 percent of students in Canada are engaged in STEM-related studies after high school. And while the demand for qualified personnel in STEM careers has increased dramatically, the percentage of applications for post-secondary education in these fields has decreased since 2001.

The STEM project is the third the Niagara-area Kiwanis clubs—including St. Catharines, Welland and Stumpford—have implemented since 2007 in partnership with the Early Childhood Community Development Centre, funded in part by an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. What started as Kiwanians reading at day care centers turned into a project providing books to 140 centers; then a two-year project to send numeracy kits to 150 centers, allowing teachers to teach children about time, ages and other such concepts.

When asked for future project ideas, the teachers' feedback overwhelmingly favored science materials. So the STEM project was developed by ECCDC staff and Kiwanians who were former kindergarten teachers. The kits contain magnets, test tubes and other such items for children to play with. The project also funds curriculum training for early childhood educators.

"Teachers themselves are thrilled," Irwin says. "No matter where you go, they're so happy to have this material to use with the kids."

"It's been an honor for our team at the ECCDC to work collaboratively with Kiwanis to offer Niagara's early years educators innovative tools to inspire children's play, curiosity and discovery," says Lorrey Arial Bonilla, ECCDC's executive director.
What magical moments will you experience in 2016? Will you savor a glorious sunset along the mighty Danube River, stroll along Ireland’s emerald bluffs, immerse yourself in Barcelona’s alluring sophistication or marvel at Italy’s captivating vistas? We hope you do!

Our itineraries offer the best-laid plans, unique opportunities and blissful respites for discovering those magical moments that elevate a trip to a journey and experience to priceless memory. We take you to famous landmarks and hidden treasures while providing intellectual stimulation and professionalism.

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- Discover the pristine landscapes of Switzerland.
- Immerse yourself in the glamorous Italian Riviera.

Visit kiwanis.ahitravel.com or call our travel experts at 877-572-5159.
SONG ‘N’ DANCE
IOWA AKTION CLUB MEMBERS SHINE IN THE LIMELIGHT.
STORY BY DICK ISENHOUR

As part of its mission, Aktion Club helps adults with disabilities develop leadership skills. In Council Bluffs, Iowa, though, the Aktion Club of Black Squirrel Council Bluffs develops other talents: singing, dancing, acting and playing musical instruments.

Every year, the club stages a talent contest, giving members a chance to show off their artistic sides while raising money for their many projects. “It takes a lot of hands to make the performance possible,” notes Andy Murray, the Aktion Club’s president. “The club spends time making props for the production, and all members participate in making costumes. Everyone performs too. Performances include vocal songs and dance numbers, solos, instrumental solos, plays and skits.”

The event brings in between US$1,500 and $2,000, though the club doesn’t charge admission. Community sponsors contribute much of the total donations by buying advertisements in the show’s program. Aktion Club members also read their sponsors’ names during the intermission and at the end of the show.

A highlight of the program is a performance by the club’s bell choir. “The bell choir performs at least two songs during the program and has become a focal point,” Murray says. “One of the two songs is at the end of the program and is a salute to the military.”

The entire membership takes part in the bell choir, which performs in other community events, including Christmas programs at nursing homes and church and community organizations’ concerts.

They also go on the road to assist other nearby Aktion Clubs with their fundraisers.

The program shows the community what Aktion Club members have to offer, according to Marland Gammon of the Council Bluffs Downtown Kiwanis Club.

“It’s been a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate to the community and society that people with disabilities have a lot to contribute,” says Gammon, who serves as the Aktion Club’s Kiwanis advisor. “The members benefit by improving their self-image, confidence and self-worth. The support the members give to each other is tremendous.”

Murray agrees. “Members gain in confidence and self-esteem,” he says, “and in believing in themselves, while changing the attitudes and expectations of society. “Remember, our Aktion Club motto: ‘Where Development Has No Disability.”
THROUGH THE YEARS, A MINNESOTA STATE FAIR SWEET TREAT HAS BEEN A MILLION-DOLLAR MONEY-MAKER.

STORY BY WENDY ROSE GOULD

Head to the Minnesota State Fair and you'll run into the usual suspects: a Ferris wheel, the grand stand, cultural exhibits and, of course, all those requisite fair foods. It's in the lattermost category that the Kiwanis Club of North Suburban, Saint Paul, has found its niche. And what a niche it is.

Since 1969, the club has served its famous, worth-the-wait malt milkshakes, annually pulling in more than US$100,000 in the 10-day span on the fair’s schedule. Food experts—including The Food Network’s Guy Fieri—and fair-goers all agree: Kiwanis malts are the only ones worth gulping.

The malts come in classic strawberry, vanilla and chocolate, and cost US$5 for a 15-ounce cup. Some patrons donate extra, knowing it’s a not-for-profit establishment, while others do their part by making repeat visits.

“The nice thing is that all of the people who staff the malt shop are volunteers,” explains Scott Johnson, vice president of the club. “That’s a key element in our success and our ability to raise funds.”

He says the 50 to 70 volunteers—a group made up of Kiwanis club members, Key Club members and community members—collectively donate 800 hours of their time every year. Each four-hour shift has about five people working the stand, with more on hand during busier hours.

Thanks to the volunteers, the club is able to reduce its expenses drastically. In fact, after covering costs, they’re annually left with about $55,000 in profits.

“We exhaust this money every year to support local, national and international charities,” says Dale Jensen, the club’s 2014–15 president. Charities include the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Salvation Army and The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal and neonatal tetanus.

“Even if you only take the last 20 years into account, which are the years we've done extremely well, that puts us at over $1 million in donations,” says Jensen.

It goes to show that the smallest things, including a $5 malt milkshake, can make a major difference in the world.
The spirit of Christmas visits Al Boyer every season. Every December, Boyer dons a red velvet suit for the annual Helen Davis State School’s Christmas party. And on that day, with other Saint Joseph, Missouri, Kiwanians at his side as elves and assistants, Boyer becomes Santa Claus.

“Santa is a magical thing in the life of a child,” Boyer says. “Seeing their eyes light up when they tell you how good or bad they’ve been and what they want for Christmas is special. They really open up sometimes.”

“Our club has been hosting a Christmas celebration at the Helen Davis State School for more than 50 years,” notes club member Colleen Kowich. “No one remembers when we actually started; it seems as if we have always hosted a Christmas party.”

The school serves developmentally challenged students from northwest Missouri. As one of only 37 such schools in the state, it serves between 50 to 60 students each year. While most of the students are local, some travel 90 to 120 minutes one way on a school bus to attend class each day. For many of them, the Christmas party is the highlight of the year.

“Each child receives his or her own bag of candy and fruit, as well as a small stuffed animal from Santa’s elves,” Kowich says. “One of our members, Captain Dana Cook of the Salvation Army, leads the children in Christmas carols as Santa enters the gymnasium.”

“And then, of course, they get to spend individual time with Santa.”

“Many of these children cannot see, hear, walk or communicate,” Boyer says. “It’s very humbling and, at the same time, rewarding to be a part of bringing happiness to the lives of these children.”

Kowich believes Boyer is the perfect Santa.

“He gives each child the time he or she needs,” Kowich explains. “He talks with each child or, for those children without verbal skills, allows plenty of time for hugs.”

“Most of them are unable to express their excitement verbally, but you can see by the smiles on their faces the joy this day brings,” says Jennifer Burns, the home school coordinator for Helen Davis. “Many of the students like to touch Santa’s beard and see his bright red outfit. They enjoy hearing his kind words as he visits one-on-one with them and provides a little gift for all.”

“It’s a special day.”

“We can’t imagine our own Christmases without a visit to Helen Davis,” Kowich says. Boyer agrees.

“It is an honor,” he says, “to don the old red velvet suit with the beard and bells and actually become the jolly old elf.”
SCENES OF THE SEASON

SKATING BEARS, JOLLY SNOWMEN AND A NORTH POLE-BOUND TRAIN JOIN SANTA IN AN IOWA HOLIDAY WONDERLAND.

STORY BY WENDY ROSE GOULD • PHOTOS PROVIDED BY KENT THOMPSON, HUMBOLDT INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

It began with a Christmas tree, Santa Claus and a chair in which Santa sat. Now, more than 30 years later, the Humboldt, Iowa, Kiwanis Club’s Christmasland has morphed into a veritable wintry wonderland complete with animated elves, ice-skating bears, jolly snowmen and an 8-by-16 train layout that winds through mountains and villages.

Since it opened to the public in 1982, more than 110,000 visitors from all over the state, plus guests from more than 10 countries, have come to Humboldt to see what Christmasland is all about. This thematic, festive getaway is free to the public, though donations are accepted and are typically funneled right back into upkeep. For Kiwanis members, it’s ultimately all about bringing the community together and putting smiles on faces.

“The most joy you get is to see the look on the kids’ faces,” says David W. Lee, a Kiwanis member who has the privilege of playing Santa at Christmasland. “They’re so excited about every scene, and we let them take all the pictures they want. They especially love the train, and they’ll go through all of Christmasland and then come back to the train just to watch it some more.”

Kids aren’t the only ones who come through the doors, though. There are businessmen, couples, foreign exchange students and entire families who make sure to stop by.

“They’re all just amazed at everything we’ve put together,” says Lee, who estimates the project uses US$120,000 worth of animation.

Putting Christmasland together involves the community as well as Kiwanis. In addition to bringing everything out of storage and recreating scenes, the club also reconditions pieces and adds a new scene every year to keep people coming back. And every year, they do.
These clubs celebrate their 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries in January 2016. For a more complete list, visit kiwanis.org/birthdays.

100TH—1916
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, January 31

75TH—1941
Hardwick, Vermont, January 14

50TH—1966
Windsor, Connecticut, January 20

25TH—1991
Grafton, Virginia, January 10
Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, January 10
Ping Nan, Taoyoan Hsien, Taiwan, January 19
Kuliat, Angeles City, Philippines, January 22
Namyangju, Republic of Korea, January 24
Seremban, Malaysia, January 28
Rockland, Massachusetts, January 30

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Toronto, June 23–26, 2016
kiwanis.org/convention

101ST ANNUAL KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
FOOD DESERTS—WHAT YOU CAN DO

Now that you’ve learned about food deserts (Page 12), chances are you want to do something. Here are some simple steps you can take to get started.

Is your community at risk?
If you live in the United States, find out if you live in or near a food desert: ers.usda.gov/data/FoodDesert

Educate yourself—and others
Did you know that United States First Lady Michelle Obama started a campaign to fight childhood obesity? Her program, Let’s Move, has a goal of eradicating food deserts by 2017. The U.S. government invested US$400 million toward Let’s Move, which will provide tax breaks for any supermarkets that open in food deserts. Learn more about the Let’s Move initiative, including tips on eating healthy meals, getting active and how you can help at letsmove.gov.

Take matters into your own hands
Once you’ve talked to the leaders in your town and done some research, there are ways your Kiwanis club can take action. One great resource is Why Hunger, a leader in building the movement to end hunger and poverty by connecting people to nutritious, affordable food and by supporting grassroots solutions that inspire self-reliance and community empowerment. Get tips on conducting your own community food assessment and download other tools in the fight against hunger at whyhunger.org.

Here are a few other ideas:
• Plant a community garden.
• Promote farmers markets.
• Spread the word about healthy eating.
• Stage food drives/work with a food bank.

What else can you do? Talk to your leaders in government about what’s happening in your city or town. Ask:
• What policy recommendations are on the table at both the national and local levels?
• Are there incentives in place for those wishing to open a new grocery store or supermarket?
• What public transportation is available and how accessible is it to get low-income families to a supermarket?
• How many farmers markets are in your town? What can be done to increase the number?
Your club changes children's lives. When you partner with organizations that have similar missions, you make a difference in even more lives. So reach out to a Kiwanis partner. Create a new bond. Increase your visibility. And enhance your club’s next signature project. Go to kiwanis.org/SPtoolkit.

Have suggestions for other Kiwanis partners? Let us know at partners@kiwanis.org.
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.

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