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Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child and one community at a time.

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Cover photo by Lorenzo Tugnoli
**President’s Message**

**Gunter Gasser | Kiwanis International President**

**This Holiday, Light Their Way**

All is calm, all is bright. That line from the Christmas carol “Silent Night” takes on extra meaning for me this year. For generations, families, including mine, have sung that carol together on Christmas Eve. It’s a tradition that ties us to our past. But this year, for me, the song harkens to the future. I see a world where “all is bright” for every child. I see a world where every child has the chance to lead a healthy and happy life.

Your club is changing lives. When you add your efforts to the efforts of our many other clubs, you can see the enormous impact Kiwanis has on the global community. Additional work through the Kiwanis International Foundation and the Eliminate Project is impacting even more lives. Since Kiwanis joined the effort to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus three years ago, the World Health Organization has removed 13 countries from the list of countries where tetanus is still a problem. That’s incredible, but there is still much more to do.

If you’d like to extend your Kiwanis impact this holiday season, make a donation in a loved one’s name to the Kiwanis International Foundation. You can designate the gift for the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, which supports grants given to clubs and our Service Leadership Programs, or direct the gift to the Eliminate Project. It’s a donation that will change the world today, tomorrow and forever.

There’s also the opportunity for you and your club to volunteer for an extra service project or two this holiday season. Many organizations need help as they spread holiday cheer to others. Invite a friend or family member to join you. You’ll spend quality time with a loved one while making a difference in your community. Maybe that person will then want to join Kiwanis and continue making lives and communities better.

We have many great holiday traditions in Austria. I look forward to eating Vanillekipferl and sampling Glühwein while waiting for the Christkind on Christmas Eve. But the most important tradition is spending time with my family. I hope you get time to spend with your loved ones. From my family to yours, happy holidays.

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**Executive Perspective**

**Stan Soderstrom | Kiwanis Executive Director**

**The V Word**

It’s December. In most parts of the Kiwanis world, we have moved from a season of thanksgiving to a season of celebration. Kiwanians have a long history of giving, especially at this time of year. Volunteering, as you’ll read in “Help Yourself” (Page 22), is actually healthy to those who give. What a surprise. And as I’ve noted before in this column, our clubs have developed as many ways to give as we have members.

Analysis of data from our thousands of Kiwanis clubs reveals the following:

- Nearly 50 percent of our clubs sponsor a Service Leadership Program club.
- 44 percent of our clubs perform service projects that support the educational development of children such as literacy, tutoring and the delivery of school supplies.
- 37 percent of our clubs support recreational programs for children, such as sports teams, playgrounds, parks, camps, swim lessons, runs, walks and bikeathons.
- Perhaps my biggest (and most pleasant) surprise came from learning that half of our clubs engage in projects around holidays (like Christmas, Hanukkah, Halloween, Easter and Passover). Most of these provide food and clothing for those truly in need.

When we say “Serving the Children of the World,” it’s obvious we’re helping children of all ages. We do most of our work for school-aged children. We’re helping them be active, healthy and better students. But our hearts seem to grow all the more during holidays. We enjoy bringing joy.

This isn’t new. As a matter of fact, the cover of the December 1923 Kiwanis magazine is a beautiful illustration of a Kiwanian making a difference for families and children at Christmas (Page 50). That year, Kiwanis International President Edmund F. Arras called all members to “begin our worship with the merry day (Christmas) and continue it throughout the year, not giving in material things alone but giving of self and service.”

Now, 90 years later, those words seem as appropriate as ever as a seasonal call to action for all Kiwanians.

Thank you for serving. May the blessings of the season be upon you.
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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

“Waking up at 4:45 for Kiwanis meetings. There are very few things I love this much.”

Twitter
Emily Sharp
@keyclubemily

194,672
the number of lights lit simultaneously on a Christmas tree, achieved by the Kiwanis Club of Malmedy Hautes-Fagnes, Belgium, on December 10, 2010, to make it into the Guinness Book of World Records—and the record still stands today. The club used 350 garlands measuring 9 feet, 10 inches long and fitted with 576 lights. Using voltage calculations, witnesses were able to ascertain exactly how many lights were successfully lit throughout the required five minutes.

MORE COUNTRIES FREE OF MNT

In September, the World Health Organization confirmed that Sierra Leone and Gabon have been validated as having eliminated maternal/neonatal tetanus. Since Kiwanis joined global efforts in 2011, 13 countries have eliminated MNT.

FINDING THE PERFECT FIT

“We can bridge the generational disconnect and declining engagement if we recognize the growing differences in member needs, preferences and values. Then we must do something about it.”

Susan A. “Sue” Petrisin
Kiwanis International Vice President

SERVICE THAT BRINGS A SMILE

“Though we may never meet the person we help, knowing that somewhere in the world a smile has come upon someone’s face is what keeps us going. This is what the Kiwanis family means to me.”

Raeford Penny
Key Club International President

Read President Raeford Penny’s thoughts about the Kiwanis family at http://kwn.is/kcifamily.
**Policy Changes**

At its meeting October 5, 2013, the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees adopted two interpretations of the Kiwanis International bylaws, as well as several new policies.

**The new interpretations provide:**
- Under what circumstances Kiwanis International will accept a criminal history background check conducted by a district.
- How guaranteed trustee representation on the Kiwanis International Board will be provided for the Canada and Caribbean Region while one of its two districts has an officer in line of succession to become president.

**Policy changes provide:**
- The process for Kiwanis International to accept a criminal history background check conducted by a district.
- Additional best practices for nonprofit organizations, including document retention and destruction, whistle blowers and disclosure and integrity of information.
- Use of private information contained in the Kiwanis International directory.
- Regular reporting by districts that receive grants from Kiwanis International.
- Basic parameters for handling funds or gifts donated to Kiwanis International (not the foundation).

View the complete text of these new provisions at http://kwn.is/kipolicies.

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**Playground Under the Sea**

Kiwanis International created a marriage made in playgrounds between partners Landscape Structures and Nickelodeon. After Enterprise Elementary, Enterprise, Florida, entered and won Nickelodeon’s Worldwide Day of Play contest, LSI got to work to create a custom SpongeBob SquarePants-themed playground, complete with a pineapple house for SpongeBob and his pet, Gary the snail. Nickelodeon personalities and characters visited the school for its grand opening in the morning while the children enjoyed their new playground.

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**Army Strong**

“We look forward to continuing to work closely with Kiwanis to pursue our common goal of molding our nation’s next generation of leaders. Our Army ROTC staff at our university-based programs will be working in synergy with Recruiting Command personnel and with the local Kiwanis leadership to make this happen.”

Colonel Michael Armstead director, U.S. Army Cadet Command Marketing and Outreach programs

Read more about Kiwanis’ three-year partnership with the U.S. Army at http://kwn.is/kiarmy2013.

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**On Social Media**

Kiwanis on Facebook

“Setting goals is an excellent way to put your club on the path to success. Has your club set goals for the coming year?”
“We may be a good example of what to do when the rug gets pulled out from underneath you. Back in the 1970s, the club was over 100 members, made up of businessmen from all over the city. As Garland has changed, things changed. Our club became a guinea pig for a new type of membership: one aimed at individuals who couldn’t come to traditional meetings but still wanted to be involved. We began a fifth meeting per month in the evening, and added nine members. We began a FLIP (an acronym for a district program focused on ensuring fun, leadership/learning, interest and planning/programs). Our work in the schools became our main message. We also stopped meeting at noon. We put together three teams: One puts together prospect lists, one recruits and one follows up. It is our goal to increase our club by 25 percent in the first quarter of the new year.”

Susan Hennum
Garland, Texas, Kiwanis Club; USA 3 Region chairwoman, Global Campaign for Growth

CARD GAME
2013 Kiwanis convention attendees expressed their love for their clubs and communities (above). Now, we’d love to hear how your club builds membership. Share your tips via shareyourstory@kiwanis.org

SUCCESS STORY
Signature Projects that Inspire

There’s no better way to impact your entire community—children, families and organizations—than to help build a new or update an existing playground. It’s a rewarding experience that will enhance your community for years to come. With the New Year upon us, it’s the perfect time to begin planning for Kiwanis One Day. Consider a playground as your next signature project and request your playground planning guide from Kiwanis Vision Partner Landscape Structures at playlsi.com, or call 888.438.6574 or 763.972.5200.
ARTIST CHALLENGES PERCEPTIONS OF AFGHANISTAN BY CREATING A LIVING SCULPTURE WITH BALLOONS.

STORY BY BRETT A. HALBLEIB | PHOTOS BY LORENZO TUGNOLI
was 5 a.m. on a Saturday in Afghanistan, and Yazmany Arboleda found himself in a room that was filling up quickly.

A steady stream of students and activists were arriving. They’d volunteered to help Arboleda carry out a “living sculpture” on an unlikely canvas: the streets of Kabul. Until they walked through the door, though, Arboleda wasn’t certain how many would show up. Eventually, they all did.

The room also was filling up with pink helium balloons—10,000 of them, to be exact—all tied together in large clusters and each one containing a note of warm wishes from a stranger.

But as the room grew crowded with noise, balloons and volunteers, Arboleda was struck by the presence of something else filling the space: hope. It was the very thing he wanted his balloons to spread on the streets of a city weary from war.

Kabul is the latest chapter in Arboleda’s balloon project called Monday Morning, so named for the time and day it typically occurs. The idea is to disrupt the daily grind by handing out balloons, thus creating wonderment and hope through a living sculpture. Arboleda, a 32-year-old artist based in New York, is a past Key Club International trustee and now a member of the Key Club International Alumni. He has orchestrated Monday Morning in four cities so far, with three more planned.

“Everywhere in the world, balloons mean the same thing,” he says. “They represent celebration. They’re with us for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings. They punctuate life in a specific way.”

Balloons, however, do not typically punctuate the start of the workweek. In fact, research has shown Monday mornings often raise blood pressure and increase stress. The British Medical Journal reports a 20 percent increase in heart attacks on Mondays.

To Arboleda, whose artistic interests gravitate toward work-life connections and movement in public space, this was a blank canvas. “Wouldn’t it be interesting,” he thought, “to insert a visual celebration into the monotonous patterns of work?”

By introducing that celebratory “language” of the balloon to people getting on a bus or heading into the office, he
might “shift the way people think about Monday morning.” Or perhaps shift the way people think about Kabul.

ANOTHER IMAGE OF KABUL

“People never hear anything good about Afghanistan,” says Nargis Azaryun, a 19-year-old law student and volunteer. “War, explosions, the Taliban—every time I hear news on Afghanistan, this is the only thing I see. That doesn’t represent my nation. We want to give people another image of Kabul. If we can distribute 10,000 balloons, it’s possible 10,000 other things are happening here you don’t hear about.”

The balloons help people see—or at least imagine—something bigger.

“We’re not used to seeing a grown-up holding a balloon on the way to work,” Arboleda says. But by holding the balloon and recognizing others holding the balloon, “you identify with them.”

Plus, balloons allow for anyone to engage with the project. On a deep level, “it represents belief. If you hold on to it, you’re holding on to something beyond yourself—and that is, how you see yourself in the context of a community, as a part of something bigger.”

Even if recipients saw no deep meaning, Arboleda says they can appreciate a balloon at face value. “And they can say, ‘Once in Kabul, 10,000 pink balloons were given away, and I was there to see it.’ It’s simple yet grand, the feeling it provides for people who are a part of it.”

Arboleda injected a symbolic element into the Kabul project by seeking donors for each balloon at US$1 apiece. Each donor could write a note, which was inserted into a balloon. For example, a donor named Ryan wrote:

We all love balloons
A common bond
Connecting us
In joy,
Let us enjoy
The balloon
Together.

Donors to the Kabul project could finance only one balloon (at a cost of US$1) with a special message inside and post a photo to the project’s website, webelieveinballoons.com. The special message was “meant to symbolize an international reaching out to the Afghan community over the course of its long struggle.”
Arboleda limited each supporter to US$1 apiece in an effort to create equal ownership. The donations symbolized the world reaching out to Afghans. “Every balloon stood for a person who believed in the idea of art and culture in Afghanistan, not war,” Arboleda says. “Every person who held up a balloon that day was holding the hand of another human being around the world who believed in them and believed in their community.”

WHY PINK?
Passing out 10,000 balloons in an organized fashion requires work. Arboleda spent six months planning the Kabul event and recruiting volunteers. He even drew storyboards of his vision.

On the morning of the event, the Afghan volunteers took turns. Starting at 6 a.m., about 50 volunteers went out each hour, passing out 1,667 balloons per shift. The rules were simple: adults only, and volunteers had to engage in conversation with balloon recipients.

Azaryun spent several days helping to train and organize volunteers. She notes that they deliberately distributed the balloons in a working-class area of town, “not the fancy area.”

When people asked about the balloons, Azaryun told them they were for “a peaceful Afghanistan” or “a better life in Afghanistan.” Or she would discuss gender equality.

“We walked out, and we challenged the image that women belong at home,” she says.

Each Monday Morning project has had its own symbolic color. Arboleda chose pink balloons for Afghanistan. “To me it’s important to talk about gender issues and female equality in Afghanistan,” he says. He also notes the bright pink color contrasts beautifully with the dusty brown and yellow color palette of the city.

CONNECTING HUMANITY
Arboleda plans at least three more Monday Morning installments: spring 2014 in Brussels, Belgium; fall 2014 in Medellin, Colombia, where he lived for several years as a child; and 2015 in New York City, where he now resides.

He’s already orchestrated Monday Morning projects in Nairobi, Kenya; Yamaguchi, Japan; and Bangalore, India. Though the locations sound exotic, Arboleda hopes his ideas transcend geography.

“A huge part of the work I do is to connect the dots of our shared humanity and bring people together,” he says. “I love the idea that we are all bound to one another. A lot of the same things that drive other people drive us.”

People everywhere have different opinions, different religions, different skin colors, different languages, but “at the end of the day, I want to make everyone conscious of the fact we are one people.”

One people who all love balloons.

16 KIWANISMAGAZINE.ORG
AZMANY ARBOLEDA (left) credits membership in Key Club as being “a huge part of the artist I am today.”

The experiences taught him about building enthusiasm for ideas as well as how to “empower individuals not only in the U.S. but around the world. I wouldn’t be doing this if I hadn’t been involved and engaged in the Key Club experience,” he says.

Arboleda is a member of the Key Club International Alumni and holds a master’s degree in architecture from the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He’s also studied in London and Milan. He occasionally writes about art and culture for the Huffington Post, and he is the founder of the Glassless Glasses Studio in New York (www.glasslessglasses.com).

Learn more about the balloon project at www.webelieveinballoons.com.
**GOOD EVENING, ATASCADERO. TONIGHT’S FORECAST CALLS FOR TEMPERATURES IN THE MID-50S WITH A 100 PERCENT CHANCE OF SNOW IN THE 6200 BLOCK OF PALMA AVENUE. GRAB YOUR BOOTS AND MITTENS. IT’S TIME TO GO SLEDGING!**

**STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY JACK BROCKLEY**

Thursday, December 15, 1988. Atascadero, California, newsman Lawrence “Lon” Allan was covering an automobile accident on the highway that passes through his hometown.

“I noticed a few flakes on my shoulders, and soon the road was covered in white.”

It was, he remembers, his first snow. Like Allan, many Atascadero residents can recite where they were and what they were doing for every snow day in their life.

Over the past 12 Decembers, however, the Kiwanis Club of Atascadero has defied its community’s snow-stingy climate and buried a stretch of a downtown street in a hill of white for one magical, fun, friendly—surreal— evening of sledding:

An island of white rises from the street’s black asphalt to a summit nearly 10 feet tall. It’s surrounded by children and adults, many of whom are bundled against the 56-degree chill in coats, boots, scarves and big animal hats with long ear flaps that tie beneath their chins. They reach out tentatively with wool mittens to tenderly touch the snow. Beside them, too-cool-to-be-cold teenagers in T-shirts and shorts are just as curious, testing the flakes with their bare fingers.

At the top of the hill, two brothers jump aboard a plastic saucer and squeal with delight as they’re pushed away for a 10-second ride down the icy slope. From the sidewalk, friends and strangers urge catastrophe with chants of “Wipe out. Wipe out.” The siblings hit a bump and “catch air.” Arms sway and legs flay, nearly satisfying the crash-calling crowd. But the pair land their toboggan and slide to a stop.

“Again! Again!” they both scream.
In just four hours, an estimated 6,000 kids and adults take that ride down the Kiwanis Snow Slide.

Twelve years ago, Atascadero Main Street conceived the idea of a Winter Wonderland festival for the first weekend of December as a way to promote downtown businesses. There’d be live music. Santa would visit. Families could purchase tickets for children to play in bounce houses and ride ponies. Shops would stay open late. And the big attraction would be snow. And plenty of it. Enough to go sledding. For free.

There was one question: Who could make it snow in downtown Atascadero? The answer was obvious.

“Steve Martin was hired to be the director of Main Street and he happened to be a member of Kiwanis,” recalls 2012–13 club President William Vail. “He knew we have a pretty good record of showing up and helping; so, he came to us with this idea of building and running some snow slides.

“It’s been successful from the very beginning.”

Like most endeavors in Atascadero, community cooperation is key to the success of the Winter Wonderland snow sliding hill. A farmer loans bales of straw to build the slope. A transport company hauls the straw downtown in the morning and back to the farm at the end of the day. Main Street pays the bills, including hiring an ice company to grind and shoot 40 tons of ice from three semi-trailers onto the stacked straw hills. Atascadero High School Key Club volunteers run up and down, up and down, up and down the hill, retrieving empty toboggans. This past year, Home Depot employees built a second set of steps and PG&E contributed a sponsorship fee so the Kiwanians could add more bales, spread more ice, widen the hill and add a third sledding lane to reduce waiting times.

In just a dozen years, the Kiwanis sledding hill has become a place of traditions and memories. Albert Almodova, who chaired the project committee between 2009 and 2013, has his favorite stories, including one of his own.

“About five years ago, someone came into my auto parts store and asked me to help build the snow slide,” he says. “I said, ‘Sure, I’ll be there.’ When I saw those kids coming down the hill with the biggest smiles on their faces, I knew I wanted to be involved with this club. So I joined.”

Now, Almodova is the club’s Key Club advisor and Kiwanis club president. His wife, Ronda, and daughter, Angelina, are Kiwanians too.

Kiwanian Lon Allan laughs as he describes his role as the club’s official “crash test dummy.” Every year, after the bales of straw are stacked and after the ice is crushed, sprayed...
and shovel-shaped into three trough-shaped lanes, Allan grabs a toboggan and takes the first trial run down each track. If he crashes, repairs are made and he rides again.

As the evening nears its end, a mother watches from the sidelines as her children wait their turns in adjoining lanes, ready to race. “We’re from Munich,” their mother says. “We see snow all the time, but this is so fun!”

A shout rises from the crowd, “He’s proposing.”

At the top of the hill, a man rises from his knees to kiss and embrace his date. Three daughters dance excitedly around the couple. One at a time, they all swoop down the hill and gather in a group hug.

“I wanted it to happen at a place we could go every year and remember,” the groom-to-be tells the crowd.

“We’ve done this (sledding) for the past 10 years,” his fiancée adds. “We got to the top of the steps, and he pulled out this little red box. I said yes.”

The crowd cheers and applauds.

“We knew,” the three daughters gleefully chime in. “He told us he was going to ask her. We knew, but we couldn’t tell!”

Saturday, December 8, 2012: another snow day in Atascadero. 

Decked out in snow gear, children get ready for an ice-cold ride down the Atascadero Kiwanis snow hill. The club is also at the forefront of many other community causes, such as replacing a bandstand, erecting a veterans memorial and participating in—and winning—the library’s annual Dancing With Our Stars contest.
THE TYPICAL KIWANIS MEMBER

expects nothing in return for his or her volunteer service. That’s why it’s called “volunteering.” But a growing body of evidence indicates that those who devote themselves to worthy causes reap huge psychological, emotional and physical dividends.

Just ask Betty Arney, whose membership in the Folsom Lake, California, Kiwanis Club transformed her life. Back in 2005 she was caring for her husband, Leo, who suffered from end-stage Parkinson’s disease. Sorely in need of a break, she helped her brother, Russell, a 48-year Kiwanian, staff a concessions booth at a nearby sports arena. The proceeds helped support the Kiwanis Family House in Sacramento.

“I worked as a cashier and discovered that it was a lot of fun,” Arney recalls. “So I decided to become a permanent volunteer.”

Before long, she became a Kiwanis member. After her husband passed away, she continued helping at the stand, where she befriended the volunteer in charge, Pete Arney, a widower.

“We could share our experiences of taking care of our spouses,” Arney says.

HELP YOURSELF

WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER, YOU MAY THINK YOU’RE SERVING OTHERS, BUT SOMEONE ELSE BENEFITS FROM ALL YOUR ACTS OF KINDNESS: YOU! | BY SAM STALL
Both had vowed never to marry again, but one night, on their way to the concession stand, Pete popped the question. “I said ‘Yes,’ and then we continued to the arena and worked the game,” she says.

Her strong Kiwanis connections helped her weather Pete’s own passing in 2012. “I could not have made it without the support and love from our club and division,” says Arney.

Though her story is perhaps more dramatic than most, it illustrates just how much can be gained from giving. A review of recent research on the benefits of volunteerism compiled by the Corporation for National & Community Service spells it out plainly. According to the report, “Serving others may increase longevity, lead to greater functional ability later in life and strengthen one’s resilience when dealing with health problems.”

The reasons are pretty simple. People who volunteer are less depressed because they simply don’t have as much time to dwell on their troubles; are mentally and physically healthier because their work exercises their bodies and minds; and are less isolated, thanks to the interpersonal connections they develop through their good works.

Those benefits seem to accrue most significantly for older adults and retirees, many of whom can use volunteerism to replace social networks lost through retirement. Interestingly, another study indicates that when it comes to increased life satisfaction and better health, older volunteers actually feel more fulfilled than those doing paid work. They also enjoy greater health benefits than younger volunteers.

This isn’t to say that you should wait a few decades before deciding to help others. “Evidence indicates that those who volunteer at an earlier stage are less likely to suffer from ill health later in life, thereby offering up the possibility that the best way to prevent poor health in the future, which could be a barrier to volunteering, is to volunteer,” says the Corporation for National & Community Service.

Marnie Smith, manager of volunteer services for the Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Clubs, says helping your community is as good for the kids as it is for their elders. Children who are Boys & Girls Club members can, at age 14 or 15, become youth volunteers, a job that brings about a remarkable transformation in formerly less-than-responsible tykes. “Sometimes it’s the difference between night and day,” Smith says. “They may be a bit troublesome as members, but over the course of a summer, they become leaders who can take on responsibilities and take the initiative.”

Barb Thompson, secretary of the Kiwanis Club of Florissant Valley, Missouri, says her membership likewise delivered an important wake-up call about the importance of helping others. She’s well aware of the value of volunteering to volunteers, because she’s experienced the benefits herself. “It makes me feel good to improve someone else’s life,” Thompson says. “I feel invigorated and very happy. Just the satisfaction that another’s life has been made better.”

Those who take time to help others may also achieve the biggest perk of all: a longer life. Research shows that community service improves one’s long-term prospects. A Duke University study found that heart attack sufferers who took up volunteer work reported feeling less despair and depression—two emotional conditions strongly linked to mortality in such patients.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Centers for Disease Control also indicates that states with high rates of volunteerism post lower mortality rates and see fewer incidences of heart disease. The states with the highest service rates (and lowest heart disease and mortality figures) are Utah, Nebraska and Minnesota.

So just how much volunteering should one undertake to enjoy this bounty of benefits? Amazingly, science has a pretty clear-cut answer: about 100 hours per year. This magic number, determined by the Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old Survey, translates into a paltry two hours a week. Easy peasy.

Lauren Perlmutter, vice president of volunteer leadership development for the March of Dimes, sees the power of volunteerism every day. In her daily rounds she deals with the parents of children who were born prematurely and needed help from the March of Dimes—a Kiwanis International preferred charity. Now those parents spend hours each week assisting others facing similar crises. “In many ways it’s cathartic for them, because they turned a challenging situation into an opportunity to give back,” she says.

But Perlmutter’s favorite volunteerism poster “kids” are a retired married couple, ages 85 and 82, who help out two days a week in her office. Perlmutter says their much-appreciated efforts help keep them vibrant, engaged and active.

“Both of them will tell you it’s had tremendous benefits for them,” she says. “When I see them, I don’t need statistics to prove that volunteerism helps volunteers.”
AKTION CLUB’S MOVIN’ ON UP

THE THIRD TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WAS THE BIGGEST YET.

STORY BY TONY KNODERER | PHOTOS BY GREG WHITAKER

Akton Club is one of Kiwanis’ fastest-growing Service Leadership Programs. That momentum was evident during the program’s third annual Training and Leadership Conference in September.

The weekend brought 150 attendees from 14 Kiwanis districts to Jameson Camp in Indianapolis. It also attracted notable guests and speakers, including Michael Furnish, Special Olympics Indiana President and CEO, and Brandy McCord, Miss Wheelchair Indiana.

In addition, attendees tie-dyed canvas bags, which were sold on-site to benefit The Eliminate Project. As always, fellowship was a key component—from Friday’s Western-themed dance to the evening-ending campfire on Saturday.

“It was an amazing weekend,” says Larry Barringer, advisor for Spokane, Washington’s Lilac City Aktion Club. “Meeting so many others with the same desire to serve really charges our battery to go on.”

Service, learning and laughter. They’re becoming a great—and growing—tradition at Aktion Club TLC.
This year’s TLC offered unique opportunities to hear from guest speakers—and from members themselves, who prepared and then presented information about club activities to the other attendees. The good weather also made for good times, with service, learning and laughter both indoors and outdoors.
SAFE HAVEN

CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES FIND A WARM AND WELCOMING PLACE TO CALL HOME DURING A TIME OF TRANSITION—THANKS TO THE KIWANIS CLUB OF KOŠICE IN SLOVAKIA.

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY KASEY JACKSON

Tucked away on a rolling hill in Košice, Slovakia, dwarfed by the Communist-era high-rise apartments surrounding it, stands a modest building, almost nondescript in appearance.

Inside, staff members scurry about, checking on children in one hallway, families in another. A young boy sits at a desk, getting help with his homework from an adult tutor. He glances over his left shoulder at the strangers standing in his bedroom doorway and smiles. Then quickly gets back to the work at hand.

It was here, in December 2007, that a once-deserted building became home to the Dorka Center.

The Dorka Center offers emergency housing for families and children in crisis, a place for those looking to find their way. Some residents are children who have been taken from their biological parents due to a host of reasons, including poverty, neglect, abuse, crime, substance abuse or family disintegration. Some are people needing temporary shelter. Others are young adults, ages 18 or older, who

At left, Kiwanian Karol Balog greets several children at the Dorka Center. The children staying at the center often create art that hangs on the walls throughout the building, as seen at right and on the following pages.
need somewhere to live after having had to leave another institution or children’s home.

It’s busy here, always changing. The work is very important. The families staying here—and there are many, as the rooms are most often full—rely on the center and its staff for everything from a roof over their heads to food to counseling. And during their journey, right at the center of it all for every step of the way: Kiwanis.

“In the past 12 years, the Kiwanis Club of Košice members raised and donated to Dorka about 1 million euros, mostly thanks to extreme generosity of one of our members, Jozef Ondáš,” says Košice club member Karol Balog. “The money is being used to buy suitable property, for construction and general overhaul of buildings to provide accommodation to families in need, as well as to support the daily functioning of the project. Our members also provide necessary building and construction materials like bricks, windows and doors, construction and reinforcement steel, machinery, trucks and more.”

Ondáš had for a long time organized and supported threatened families and children. Soon, his Kiwanis club decided to join his initiative and take patronage over the Dorka project.

“We feel great personal satisfaction and happiness that we can help to solve or at least to mitigate crisis situations of children or families and to afford opportunity for children to live and to develop themselves in the healthy family-like environment,” Ondáš says. “We carry out our club and individual social responsibility. We follow the old saying, “When you save one life, it is as if you saved the entire world.”

The center operates with 24 employees, including professional foster parents. A sampling of the staff includes six social workers, five caretakers, two doctors/psychologists, one cook, two office staff and, of course, the Kiwanis volunteers. And this is at the Košice Dorka Center alone. There also are Dorka Centers in the towns of Dunažská Lužná, Zvolen, Jasov and Prešov.

Families can stay at the center for a maximum of three years, as long as they show a willingness to make a positive change in their lives. They must have a job, be looking for a job or be on maternity leave. Young adults enter the center as a temporary stop between a children’s home and adult, independent life, and also can stay for three years. And children in crisis go to the center when they are abandoned or taken from their biological families. They have a safe place to stay until they can go to foster care or to a children’s home.

“We feel great personal satisfaction and happiness that we can help to solve or at least to mitigate crisis situations of children or families.”
Adult volunteers visit the center often to help the children during special projects and with their homework. Most of the children attend a school within walking distance of the Dorka Center.
Members of the Kiwanis Club of Košice continue making plans and working hard behind the scenes to help assist the staff at the Dorka Center. Kiwanians often stop in to meet with the families and children at the center as well. At right, several women enjoy an afternoon session of the Getting Ahead class, which teaches many life skills, such as financial planning and health and wellness topics.
Staff at the Dorka Center make it a priority to not only teach the families and children in their care, but also to give them plenty of opportunities for fun. There’s a homework club, sewing class, cooking class, English lessons for children, weekend trips, kids camps, spiritual activities, board games, movies, swimming, climbing and arts and crafts.

“We take the children to many events and programs throughout the year,” says Dorka Center Manager Michala Mrázová. “There’s a Karneval, sporting events, a European barbecue, international children’s day and a benefit concert in Bratislava, where the children get to perform.”

There are also social services, such as a focus group called “Getting Ahead,” which aims to get families back on track.

“The focus groups started with moms,” says Mrázová. “Everyone sits around a table with a facilitator, and they talk about health, education, finances … all of those things and more. We teach them how to manage their money. We help them start thinking about how to start a plan for their lives. Families are very thankful that they can come here and learn things and then go on and have a better future.”

While things are running smoothly now, it wasn’t that easy at first.

“In the beginning, there was a strong resistance in the neighborhood,” says Balog. “They were worried people would move in, with alcohol and drugs and such. It took a lot of convincing and networking to convince them otherwise.”

Košice Dorka Center Director Jolana Šuleková nods knowingly, with a smile on her face.

“There are strict rules here for behavior,” she says. “There’s a 10 p.m. curfew. There’s a garden here, so when the children want to go out, they don’t have to go to the neighbor’s. They can play on their own grounds.

“We do have many rules, but we know how to have fun too.”

The Kiwanis Club of Košice has been a key player in the renovation, maintenance and operation of the Dorka Center since 2005, when club members came up with the idea and started its realization. The club has donated more than 1 million euros to the project, which members call “a favorite,” thus far.

“IN THE PAST 12 YEARS, THE KIWANIS CLUB OF KOŠICE MEMBERS RAISED AND DONATED TO DORKA ABOUT 1 MILLION EUROS.”
If you want to attract patrons to a fundraiser, chocolate is a strong draw. Apologies to other Kiwanis clubs, but chocolate might just trump pancakes.

That’s perhaps why the Kiwanis Club of Lititz Area, Pennsylvania, has run its Lititz Chocolate Walk every October for 12 years now. Dubbed the “Chocolate for Charity” event, the Lititz Chocolate Walk showcases some of the region’s most talented chefs, chocolatiers and candymakers, who whip up cocoa confections to raise money for kids’ needs.

Walkers pay US$25, don an official Chocolate Walk button and carry a punch card. They follow maps through historic downtown Lititz, scoring chocolate treats at each of about 30 retail locations. Since 2001, the event has attracted more than 15,000 stalwart champions for chocolate and raised about US$350,000. The event is so popular now (drawing visitors from as far away as Minnesota, California and even Alaska), the club caps ticket sales at 2,000 to keep the lines short.

“We will distribute more than US$50,000 from the 2013 walk,” says Lititz Area Kiwanian Cocoa crazy

OH MY MY! YOU’LL THINK YOU’VE DIED AND GONE TO PENNSYLVANIA.
STORY BY ANDREW MCLAUGHLIN | PHOTOS BY JEFF LAUTENBERGER

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT:

You have to admit:

You have to admit:

You have to admit:
and Chocolate Walk Chairman Mark Freeman. “We hold a special evening every year where we invite our chocolate vendors to come and see what their efforts benefit.”

Some patrons call it “trick or treat for grown-ups.” Others just enjoy the chance to sample chocolate goodies and enjoy the ambience of Lititz, a 257-year-old town that’s packed with heritage—and apparently chocolate.

“It’s a community event that brings people to town and gets them into our many eclectic shops,” Freeman says. “Our host retailers benefit tremendously. Many tell us they have one of their best days of the year on Chocolate Walk day. Some say it’s the unofficial kickoff for the holiday season in Lititz.”

The club shares its success, helping other communities organize similar events. A nearby retirement center now runs a “chocolate stroll” each winter, but the club’s event reigns supreme in the region.

“During our third walk in 2004, we had a torrential downpour, and it did not slow things down,” Freeman says. “No one complained. They were all focused on the chocolate. That was the year we knew we had something special.”

The Kiwanis family can be found everywhere along Chocolate Walk, including chocolate craftsmen (above) and checking tickets (opposite page). The most important job—tasting samples—is managed by the 2,000 chocolate-stalking patrons. Satisfy your sweet tooth with more Kiwanis Chocolate Walk photos at http://kwn.is/kichocolate.
CARDIAC CARE COMES TO SYDNEY
IN NOVA SCOTIA, HEART PATIENTS DON’T VISIT THEIR DOCTORS; RATHER, THE DOCTORS GO TO THEM.

“Joelle” was a three-month-old little girl with a big problem. Born with only one pumping chamber in her heart, she faced certain death if not treated with open-heart surgery within the first week of her life. Thanks to Nova Scotia’s IWK Health Centre, she had the operation. But that was only the start of her healthcare journey.

Children with congenital heart disease often need many trips to a pediatric cardiologist to assess the function of their hearts, check post-surgery progress and update treatments. The only pediatric cardiologists in the Maritimes are based at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax, nearly 400 kilometers from Joelle’s home on Nova Scotia’s east coast.

The burden of traveling over long roads, not to mention the lost time at work, can be significant for Breton Island cardiac patients. Happily, the Kiwanis Club of Sydney makes that burden a lot lighter.

For more than 30 years, the club has covered costs for IWK pediatric cardiologists to travel to Sydney four times a year to conduct clinics, reducing the travel and economic burden on patients. The club also provides a coordinator for the clinic, where the visiting cardiologists and accompanying nurse-sonographers spend two to three days seeing children with various forms of heart disease.

Recently the clinic expanded its services to include adult patients, who are seen in cooperation with Dr. Paul MacDonald, a local adult cardiologist. The Cape Breton Regional Hospital provides the clinic space and use of its echocardiography (heart ultrasound) machine for the duration of the clinics.

“This collaborative effort would not be possible without the ongoing generosity of the Kiwanis Club of Sydney and the community,” says Dr. Andrew Warren, head of cardiology at the IWK.

Recently, after identifying a need for a dedicated blood pressure machine for use in the cardiac clinic, the Kiwanis club agreed to provide one.

“We and our patients are grateful for all of the support Kiwanis gives us, both monetarily and in the time its volunteers spend organizing and acting as receptionists for the clinics,” Warren says. “This is something that makes a real difference in people’s lives.”

Sydney Kiwanians make sure cardiac patients—pediatric and adult—do not need to travel long distances for check-ups and treatments. Instead, a Kiwanis clinic brings cardiologists to Sydney four times every year.
Club Building Grants

For every new adult Kiwanis Club chartered in Canada with 15 new members, the Kiwanis Foundation of Canada will:

• Donate $750 to the Sponsoring Kiwanis Club
• Donate $750 to the newly Chartered Kiwanis Club
• Donate $100 per member above Charter Membership (as recorded at the start of the second year) to the newly Chartered Kiwanis Club

Existing Kiwanis Clubs, currently under Charter strength, that achieve Charter strength status by the end of this Kiwanis year will receive $100 for every new member up to a maximum of $500.

New Member Contest

Every Kiwanian who sponsors a new member and completes a registration card will have a ballot placed in a draw for 2 tickets to our International Convention in Tokyo, Japan. This prize includes air, 5 nights accommodations, convention registration, plus $1,500 cash!

Second Prize: 2 tickets to your District Convention! This includes transportation, 4 nights accommodation, and convention registration.

* Draw ends on March 31, 2014. The winners will be notified by telephone on April 15. Some restrictions may apply. Please see website for details.

www.kfcdn.org
SHOWCASE

PARK PROJECT BRINGS CHARACTERS TO LIFE

BY JULIE CARSON

Once upon a time, children in Marietta, Ohio, would gather in Muskingum Park to listen to stories being read aloud, mingle with costumed characters, get their crafts on, sit still for face painting and generally have a blast for three hours—all courtesy of the Marietta Kiwanis Club and the Washington County Public Library. And while most children’s stories occur in the land of make believe, this one came to life as Storybook Park this past year.

“This project fits right in for me,” explains club secretary and event Chairwoman Linda Eddy. “I’m a retired English teacher with a big interest in literacy and promoting reading among children. I had heard about something like this in another town. I took it to our library with the belief that this would be a perfect fit for Kiwanis. The library people bought right in to it.”

Kiwanians are involved in all aspects of the event, from prepping backdrops that bring stories to life to assisting with registration to reading stories aloud. The library selects five books to be read and handed out, and the Kiwanis club purchases the books and distributes them along with stuffed animals that correspond with each book.

The library and Kiwanis partners promote the project as “free family fun,” so it’s only fitting that other Kiwanis-family members get involved too. Marietta Middle School Builders Clubbers dress up as story characters. They and Key Clubbers from Marietta and Frontier high schools assist with craft activities and paint the faces of kids in attendance. And it all happens in the name of literacy.

“Storybook Park kicks off the library’s summer reading program,” Eddy says. “It’s on a Saturday in June, right after school’s out. It keeps kids reading through the summer, so they’re ready for school to start again in the fall. Last year, we had about 1,300 people attend, and 675 children left with a book. That’s a big deal.”

And certainly no fairy tale.
JULY 17–20

Discover the spirit of Japan

Experience the wonder of a modern culture steeped in ancient tradition. Come to Japan for the 99th Annual Kiwanis International Convention. Enjoy the warm welcome of our host country’s Kiwanians—and the fellowship of members from around the world. It's a perfect way to celebrate 50 years of Kiwanis in Asia-Pacific. Join us for the Tokyo-Chiba convention in 2014.

Learn more—including tour information! Go to www.kiwanis.org/convention.

www.Kiwanis.org/convention
Kiwanians get their kicks out of helping others. Case in point: the Kiwanis Club of Downtown Scottsdale Young Professionals, Arizona, which hosts an annual kickball tournament. About half of the proceeds from the event are earmarked for the Eliminate Project, Kiwanis International’s initiative to rid the world of maternal and neonatal tetanus.

“We were looking for an out-of-the-box idea to help raise money both for a local charity and the Eliminate Project,” says Julieanne Murphy, club treasurer. “This all came together because a lot of us in the club are sports fans and enjoy a little healthy competition now and then.”

“Kickball is gaining in popularity with the 20somethings all the way through the 40somethings. We just figured it would be fairly easy to recruit teams to play.”

Six coed teams, each with a roster of 12 to 15 players, competed in the initial event, Murphy says. To cover all the bases in supplementing entry fee revenues, the club conducted a raffle, and several businesses paid sponsorships fees ranging from US$75 to $500. About $2,000 was left after expenses, which was split between a Scottsdale program to prevent homelessness and Kiwanis’ fight against maternal and neonatal tetanus.

The club hopes to double its results this year, netting a fundraising goal of $4,000 to $5,000 after expenses.
Around the world, the Kiwanis family is making a dramatic difference in the fight to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus. Since 1999, 33 countries have eliminated MNT—and 13 of those countries have achieved elimination in the first three years of The Eliminate Project. That includes Sierra Leone (left) and Gabon, both of which officially eliminated MNT in September. As the pace of elimination increases, let’s keep the momentum going! We’re on the verge of turning a global effort into a worldwide achievement. This is our moment—what will you and your club do to be a part of it?

"Model Clubs make a tremendous impact—not only because they save or protect more than 416 lives per member, but because they inspire people. The legacy value of uniting and making a commitment guides our expression of love for the children of the world—blessing generations to come. Being part of something bigger than ourselves yields contagious enthusiasm, more Model Clubs and greater service to local communities."

—Randy DeLay, campaign chairman, The Eliminate Project

The number of Kiwanis clubs around the world that have pledged to raise an annual per-member average of US$150 or more each year for five years—through any combination of fundraising methods. Any club can take part, no matter how large or small.

$39.4 million

Cash and pledges, in U.S. dollars, as of October 1, 2013

Progress report

Worldwide Report Day took place November 7. See the latest stats from every district at www.TheEliminateProject.org/WWRD.

Top districts

These districts are leading the Model Club charge:
1. Texas-Oklahoma 30
2. Carolinas 28
3. Florida 27
4. Southwest 26
5. Ohio 24
6. Illinois-Eastern Iowa 23
7. France-Monaco 22

See the numbers for every district, including yours. Go to www.TheEliminateProject.org/progress.

*Figures accurate as of October 1, 2013.
A story is to Joe Wheeler what an artifact is to an archaeologist—a window to the past, a treasure, a lesson to be learned.

What draws Wheeler, a longtime Kiwanian and author of more than 81 books, to a meaningful story is the opportunity to share it with his readers. He loves stories so much that he’s accumulated thousands over the course of his career, filling bookshelves, file folders and disc space in his Colorado home.

“I love prowling around anywhere there’s the possibility of finding stories,” Wheeler says. “Often, I’m digging through the years in a race against time.”

He learned to love sharing literature as a junior and high school teacher and college professor. Many of his published books are anthologies—gathering of stories collected from other authors. “There are no good authors, just good stories,” he says.

Wheeler’s most recent work is a collection of stories that he and his mother uncovered about U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War. Another Wheeler book, “Stinky the Skunk that Wouldn’t Leave and Other Strange and Wonderful Animal Stories,” was one of several offered to third-graders at his Kiwanis Club of Conifer’s 11th Annual Reading Celebration Day this past February. Wheeler autographed each student’s copy.

“For a long time I’ve felt a burden to get kids into reading,” the storyteller says. “Any time you can draw a child into reading, it’s a joy.”

Referred to as a “story archeologist” by one publisher, Joe Wheeler is also a Kiwanian who enjoys sharing tales with young readers.

DIGGING FOR STORIES
BY KAREN PYLE TRENT
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 www.TheEliminateProject.org/holidaygiving.
REACH

The Kiwanis International Foundation belongs to every member of every Kiwanis club. After all, the Kiwanis family is our family—and this is our foundation. It’s where we extend our impact to children around the world.

Annual gifts change children’s lives today through grants that fund Kiwanis youth programs and projects close to clubs’ hearts. Gifts to The Eliminate Project will change the world tomorrow—by helping to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus from the face of the Earth. And planned gifts make your impact last forever.

However you give, whatever the amount, every gift matters. That’s what makes our foundation special. Your generosity reaches children a world away, and it improves lives close to home—perhaps even in your own hometown.

When you give, you change children’s lives. In many places, in many ways. Learn more at www.kiwanis.org/foundation.
A gift makes the year complete

In December, people often remember annual activities or goals they haven’t yet fulfilled. How about you? If you haven’t given to the Kiwanis International Foundation in 2013, a gift is a great way to make the year complete. If you’ve already given this year, consider another gift. After all, every gift matters—and what better time of year to extend your Kiwanis impact?

It’s quick, safe and easy—go to www.kiwanis.org/give.

And don’t forget: through December 31, the IRS allows individual U.S. residents age 70½ and older to make direct transfers of up to US$100,000 from their IRA accounts—without counting the gifts as income for federal taxes. For more information, send an email to plannedgiving@kiwanis.org.

Greg Beard gives back

Greg Beard has a lifetime of Kiwanis history—and Kiwanis impact. He has managed to extend that impact as an active member of the Kiwanis International Foundation.

Greg has been a member of the Kiwanis Club of Alexandria, Louisiana, since 1995. He was also governor of the Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District in 2011–12. In fact, all of his Kiwanis experience has influenced the generosity of Greg and his wife Lisa, a retired special education preschool teacher.

“I wouldn’t stay unless I believed Kiwanis was making an impact on children’s lives,” Greg says. “Before we decide to give, we look at the impact it’s going to make on whomever we’re trying to reach.”

The Beards have reached children close to home and around the world. For instance, Greg’s generosity has been honored with a George F. Hixson Fellowship. And as a Walter Zeller Fellow, he has helped protect lives through The Eliminate Project. But in many ways, early memories of Kiwanis motivate him the most. As an alumnus of Builders Club, Key Club and Circle K International, Greg knows the importance of a Kiwanian’s presence.

“That’s why I’m proud to be a Kiwanian,” he says. “We have something for everyone of every age. We’re taking a vested interest in people’s lives.”

Learn more about Greg and Lisa at www.kiwanis.org/foundation.

This year’s impact

2013 grants

When you give to the Kiwanis International Foundation, you support grants for programs, projects and initiatives that are dear to Kiwanians’ hearts. In 2013, the grants awarded by our foundation’s Board of Trustees again helped clubs and districts serve children—in ways that would have otherwise remained beyond the resources of clubs and districts.

Thanks to members’ gifts:

• The Kiwanis Club of Lake Norman, North Carolina, will provide instruments to at-risk children in an after-school music program.

• The Norden District will support critical facility upgrades at a school in Tor- evice, Albania.

• The Kiwanis Club of Federal Way, Washington, will help Projecto Honduras provide one year of treatment to remove worms and parasites from children of the Cloud Forest.

Of course, there are many more—including the grants that fund Kiwanis youth programs, as well as Aktion Club for adults with disabilities.

Is your club or district interested in a grant for a favorite project or initiative? The next deadline for grant applications is April 15, 2014.

It’s never too early to get started. Find the application, requirements, past recipients and more at www.kiwanis.org/foundation/grants.

Kiwanis International Foundation
Do you recognize Santa Claus in any of these scenes? No, we’re not talking about the brawny, roll-your-sleeves-up mountain man on the December 1932 cover. Nor the December 1935 snowflake surfer hugging children (but you’re getting closer).

Look again at the cover in the upper left corner. There’s the real deal. He’s bearing a basket of food. Around his arm is a wreath to decorate the door, where a mother waits as her children rush to welcome their holiday visitor, a Kiwanian.

That was our “Christmas 1923” magazine, but you’ll likely find similar Santa scenes today in just about any Kiwanis community worldwide.

In his “Christmas Greeting” for that 1923 magazine, then Kiwanis International President Edmund F. Arras urged readers to seek the “overlooked and underprivileged ones.”

“Let Christmas joy be given through the full basket, toys and Christmas party, but, best of all, assure them of a personal interest which shall not be for a day only. May Kiwanis ‘build’ the Christmas spirit through the practical application of the ‘Golden Rule.’”

We hope you enjoy these holiday covers from the early years of our organization. And we invite you to enjoy other Christmas messages and covers from past issues at [http://kwn.is/kigreetings](http://kwn.is/kigreetings).
Kids’ safety is in your hands.

Our guidelines should be too.

Working with young people is a rewarding experience. It also brings important responsibilities. Kiwanis can help you meet them—with youth protection guidelines for all Kiwanians. Get to know the updated guidelines. And make sure your club uses them to train members each year. It’s a key way to protect young people…and the reputations of the adults who serve them.

www.kiwanis.org/youthprotection

Download the Kiwanis youth protection guidelines today at www.kiwanis.org/youthprotection.
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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