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CST#2006766-20 UBN#601220855 Nevada Seller of Travel Registration No. 2003-0279
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KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

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

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MAGAZINE’S PRINT LOCATION

3636 Woodview Trace, Indianapolis, IN 46268

317-217-6196, Fax: 317-217-6196

Email: advertise@kiwanis.org

Website: kiwanismagazine.org

ADVERTISING SALES

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317-217-6196, Fax: 317-217-6916

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Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, June 24-27, 2021

Manila, Republic of the Philippines, June 23-25, 2022

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, June 22-25, 2023

KIWANIS (ISSN 0162-5276) is published monthly except February, May and November by Kiwanis International PDMaster. Send address changes to Kiwanis, 3636 Woodview Tr., Indianapolis, IN 46268-3196. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN and additional mailing offices. (CPE Pub Agreement #40030511) Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to: Kiwanis, 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, ON N8T 3B7.

Member’s annual subscription is US$8. Nonmembers may subscribe for US$12 per year.

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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
POLY LAT • KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Unwavering faith

This has been a year of great challenge and great privilege. Taking care of myself meant less travel to visit my Kiwanis friends. But I can tell you that the test of character affirmed for me that whatever life has in store for you, it’s more gratifying when you have a support system.

Our global Kiwanis team is dedicated to making life better for children. Is there any better mission? We work, serve and have fun together. We are rewarded with smiles, as kids gain confidence and expand their horizons.

Children are our focus and our future. Their happiness rubs off on their families. Their energy and new ideas encourage communities to be better versions of themselves. What we do in Kiwanis pays off in so many ways!

While we have continued to open clubs, there’s more growth ahead, more opportunities to create. I am pleased that club openings continue at a strong pace and that we have surpassed 200,000 Kiwanis members. We are hitting goals as we grow Kiwanis from good to great. Thanks to everyone for their contributions, with a nod to the work of the Membership & Education team and the strategy of 2017-18 Kiwanis International President Jim Rochford.

As I pass the baton forward, I know Kiwanis is in capable hands with the continuity of leadership. The rapport I have with President-designate Daniel Vigneron and President-elect-designate Art Riley is excellent. We congratulate and welcome Peter Mancuso as our new vice president-designate. As the world evolves, these officers will have new issues with which to deal, though our mission will not change.

Thanks to each of you for your patience, assistance and positive thoughts as I have dealt with my medical condition. Your compassion has made me a better person and a better president. We’ve tested the true meaning of continuity, recognition and celebration. My vision and faith have never wavered.

I am honored to have served as your president. My family and I were able to share in the excitement of our amazing convention in Florida.

Kiwanians, look to the future with hope and commitment to our mission. Together, let’s celebrate our accomplishments, friendships, and the children of the world who are happier and healthier because of Kiwanis service.

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE
STAN SODERSTROM • KIWANIS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Timely advice

It’s September, and as with every September, each Kiwanis club should be thinking about how the 2018-19 year draws to a successful close and, more importantly, how planning and preparation for 2019-20 is finalized and a new Kiwanis year is launched.

A club’s September to-do list usually includes approval of the club’s budgets for the coming year, a club planning retreat that includes the ACE (Achieving Club Excellence) tools to survey your members and assess your club and re-connection with your Service Leadership Programs clubs for the next school year.

If you were with us at this past June’s Kiwanis International convention at Walt Disney World® Resort in Florida, you may have heard important words of wisdom from some of our speakers.

Renowned author and speaker Jim Collins discussed his “Good to Great” principles and how they applied to a Kiwanis club. He acknowledged we all have to-do lists, but for many of us, we should also consider what a “stop-doing” list might look like. He spoke of things we keep doing because we’ve always done them. But these tasks suck time and resources away from new, bigger-and-better ideas that might propel us forward in ways we never imagined.

Alex Sheen’s “because I said I would” helped us understand the importance of keeping promises. That easily ties to how Kiwanis, in our commitment to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus, is in the home stretch of keeping our promise to the world. But one of my most important take-aways was his message that “yesterday’s home runs won’t win today’s ballgames.”

Finally, Kiwanis International President Poly Lat, who has spent his entire presidential term undergoing cancer treatments while he has served as our president, reminded us all of the responsibility we have in the commitments we have made to serve. He could have stepped down and not served when he first received his medical diagnosis, but Poly felt a higher calling to not quit. I am inspired by his example.

As we prepare for a new Kiwanis year, let’s all show appreciation to those who have helped us create positive impact in thousands of communities for millions of children, youth and family members around the world as well as in our community.

This is a great time to be a Kiwanian.
GIFTS GO FARTHER TOGETHER.

When you give to the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, you amplify your Kiwanis impact. That’s because you’re joining with Kiwanis family members who have done the same. After all, we do more when we do it together. Let’s reach kids who need Kiwanis — all over the world.

kiwanischildrensfund.org
VOICES

Letters

READERS OF KIWANIS MAGAZINE AND ITS BLOGS RESPOND TO RECENT FEATURES.
JOIN THE CONVERSATIONS AT KIWANISMAGAZINE.ORG OR EMAIL MAGAZINE@KIWANIS.ORG.

“The cool thing was that it was in Orlando at Disney, so we got to go to Disney World. To kick off the convention, they had a little fairy come in and do a little thing and she made it snow in Orlando in the convention center in June.”


Pass it on
I have been a member of Kiwanis since 1966, and I still attend the meetings (although not perfect). I have enjoyed my association with fine people over the years. I want to compliment you on the June/July edition of the Kiwanis magazine. It is one of the finest pieces I have ever seen reminding people of the need and how and why to serve. This should be a required delivery to every new Kiwanis member, as well as to any and all prospective members. Thank you for caring.

Norman Rasmussen
Kiwanis Club of Long Beach, California

Creative approach
This is a wonderful idea. Creativity is so important.

Philip Drury
Kiwanis Club of Salvo Basso Scordia, Italy

Correction
In the August 2019 Kiwanis magazine, a Back Page quote about a member’s genealogy research was edited in error. The quote, by Lisa Wick of Courtenay, British Columbia, should have read: “At 53, I didn’t even know my father’s name. … My DNA test turned up a match for my estranged half-sister. … We rebuilt our relationship and started finding common names from my mother’s side. … One day, my DNA test results turned up a second-cousin match. My sister followed up (on the information) and called to tell me that my father was still alive!”

Creature comforts
What a commitment, a real passion for Kiwanis.

Boudewijn Oscar Van De Steene
Kiwanis Club of Gent Artevelde, Belgium
A burglary offense occurs every 20 seconds.

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What's happening
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

CKlx Day of Service
On June 27, more than 300 CKI members completed service projects at various locations around the Orlando, Florida, area during the annual CKlx Day of Service event. Members packed hygiene kits, sorted food at two food pantries and cleaned trash and debris around the city. Members look forward to Day of Service each year, and it continues to be a convention highlight.

Nepal heads toward district status
At its June 2019 meeting, the Kiwanis International Board granted district status to the current Nepal Provisional District, noting that the nation’s members should be rewarded for their hard work over the past years.

Since the formation of its first club in 2015, Nepal recently reached 1,000 members in 50 clubs, both of which are qualifications for district status. The provisional district also has outlined strategies for future growth, education and service. District officer elections are scheduled at the annual conference in Kathmandu this month.
Meet the new CKI board

More than 300 Circle K International members from five countries gathered June 26-29 at Disney's Contemporary Resort at the Walt Disney World® Resort in Florida for the organization’s biggest celebration of the year. The 64th annual convention included a Day of Service and concluded with the Awards and Farewell Session, during which the 2018-19 board was retired and the 2019-20 board was installed.

Billy Hackett of the Florida District will serve as CKI president and Sara Al-Midany of the Southwest District will be vice president. International trustees are: Tana Early, Alabama District; Chelsie Higdon, Carolinas District; Maria Landron, Florida District; Jose Leoncio, Capital District; Hannah Negray, Florida District; Don Nguyen, California-Nevada-Hawaii District; and Steven Shaw, Carolinas District.

The 2020 CKIx event will take place in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 19-23 at the Flamingo Las Vegas hotel.

Youth protection

Globally, 25% of youth will experience some form of abuse or maltreatment, including sexual abuse. Kiwanis International takes child protection very seriously. Kiwanis Youth Protection Week is September 9-13, 2019. Visit kiwanis.org/youthprotection for information on how you and your Kiwanis club can be part of the solution.
Key Club International members from around the world gathered July 3-7 at the Baltimore Marriott Waterfront in Baltimore, Maryland, to celebrate a successful year of servant leadership.

The 76th Annual Key Club International Convention included workshops and celebrity cameos, and it concluded with the retirement of the 2018-19 board and the installation of the 2019-20 board (below).

K’lena Schnack of the Nebraska-Iowa District will serve as president, and Kaitlin Cirillo of the New Jersey District will serve as vice president. Board trustees are: Caroline Bushnell, Rocky Mountain District; Alex Drahos, Nebraska-Iowa District; Riley Feng, Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District; Alexis Henry, Florida District; Aminhan Lobster, Missouri-Arkansas District; Brandon Orick, Pacific Northwest District; Conrad Nguyen, New England and Bermuda District; Indigo Parlin, Rocky Mountain District; Hannah Povroznick, West Virginia District; Irin Shim, California-Nevada-Hawaii District; and Rachel Zhang, Minnesota-Dakotas District

The 2020 convention will take place in San Francisco, California, July 1-5, at the San Francisco Marriott Marquis.

Help Key Clubbers make an impact

Here’s how some of the Ross S. Sterling High School Key Club members from Baytown, Texas, spent their spring break: building hand-washing facilities for Guatemalan school children. Consider supporting a Squads Abroad trip for your Key Club. Learn more at squads.ngo/key-club.
Kids need Kiwanis. And sometimes Kiwanians need people who can help us serve them. Kiwanis International has a whole roster of partners whose missions are similar to ours. Team up to extend your reach, increase your visibility — and enhance your club’s next signature project.

Learn about them at kiwanis.org/partners.
Bicycles, bicycles, everywhere, bicycles. They come to Cambodia from across southeast Asia by the thousands. They’re worn out, broken and unwanted. Stacked eight feet high on tuktuk trailers, they’re pattered through the congested streets of Phnom Penh to Heng Ly Market, where stall after stall and street after street are packed with bicycle-recycling shops. There, their dérailleurs are replaced, wheels are re-spoked and faded frames are painted. If they’re lucky, a bell and basket are attached to their handlebars, and they’re given to the best kind of owners on Earth: children.

On a warm June Wednesday, Cambodia and Japan Kiwanians arranged 50 bicycles handlebar-to-handlebar in a shaded corner of Sen Sok Primary School’s spacious courtyard. Students rang bells, plucked chains and rubbed down tube labels that read “Kiwanis Club of Fukuoka, Japan.” Bolder kids jumped into the seats and, with the kickstand holding the rear wheel off the ground, pedaled in place.

Six members of the Fukuoka Kiwanis Club flew to Phnom Penh from Japan to present the 50 Heng Ly Market-restored bikes to 50 Sen Sok students. It was a special day for the children, who
have faced a lot of difficulties in their young lives. Many of them formerly lived in an inner-city area where fires were frequent and sometimes tragic. Recently, the government relocated the residents to Sen Sok, a new community being built on the northwestern edge of the capital city. Though they now live in safer surroundings, the families still must cope without some basic needs.

“Some families can’t afford to buy the uniforms their kids are required to wear to school,” says Thor Koeun, past president of the Kiwanis Club of Phnom Penh. Founded in 2013, the Phnom Penh club has established a reputation for serving children, regularly distributing supplies, delivering food and purchasing uniforms for area schools. Through their involvement in the Kiwanis

“The Cambodian children were unusually excited, and the fact our project could be that effective gave us confidence that it was beneficial.”
Asia-Pacific region, the Cambodian Kiwanians have plugged into an interest among other Kiwanians to help. Working with area schools, the Phnom Penh club compiles and shares lists of needed items with other Asian clubs, whose members visit Cambodia with gifts of soap, shampoo, sugar, rice and, perhaps most popular among students, bicycles.

Three years ago, the Fukukoka Kiwanis Club established a sister-club relationship with the Phnom Penh Kiwanians and arrived to give away 50 bikes to students at Hun Sen Kompong Phnom High School. This past June, they returned to Cambodia. This time, to Sen Sok.

“Sen Sok Primary School has more than 1,000 students,” says Uk Chanveasna, president of the Phnom Penh Kiwanis Club. “Of these, the school identified 165 poor children. Because we had 50 bikes, they narrowed the list
down to the poorest of the poor. The other 115 children received school supplies."

Following a ceremony of introductions, remarks and a song performed by the children, the Kiwanians led the 50 chosen students one-by-one to their new bikes. One girl claimed her green 10-speed with a tight hug around the basket. A boy pulled his ride out of the pack, walked around the corner of a classroom and checked it out in private. Tires were pinched. Brake levers were squeezed. And the jingle of handlebar bells played across the courtyard.

Fukuoka Kiwanis Club President Naofumi Sato was happy. “The Cambodian children were unusually excited,” Sato says, “and the fact our project could be that effective gave us confidence that it was beneficial.”

The Facebook messages began pouring in 24 hours after baby Riley died in the pediatric intensive care unit of a Western Australian hospital.

They told Riley’s grieving parents, Catherine and Greg Hughes, to shut up about the death of their son. They accused the Hughes of murdering Riley for profit. One called the couple Nazis.

It was an onslaught that began in February 2015 and continues to this day. Catherine Hughes calls the thousands of messages that have assaulted her Facebook feed and email inbox “a big pile of ugliness and lies.”

What grave sin had drawn such vitriol? Riley became ill with whooping cough when he was 28 days old. Despite the medical staff’s best efforts, the disease progressed into pneumonia, and he died four days later. At the time of her pregnancy, Hughes was not aware that pregnant women can receive a vaccine for whooping cough, thus also protecting their babies until they are old enough to be vaccinated themselves. When she posted about Riley’s death on Facebook, she encouraged other expectant mothers and unvaccinated adults to get the vaccine. And that brought on the swift wrath of those who were vehemently against vaccinations.

“We were shocked that people would attack parents who’d just lost a baby,” says Hughes, who would later help found The Immunisation Foundation of Australia and its Light for Riley campaign, which resulted in a free government vaccination program for pregnant mothers. “We knew that some people didn’t agree with vaccinations, so we knew that not everybody would agree with us. But we didn’t expect the
The subject of vaccinations has taken on an urgent spotlight in 2019, sparked by measles outbreaks in countries where the disease had once been eliminated. Vaccination rates for children have been dropping, along with a corresponding loss of herd immunity. And that means measles rates are up — way up.

As of June 20, 2019, the United States had confirmed 1,077 cases of measles since the year began. That’s the greatest number of cases reported in the country since 1992, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. By comparison, in all of 2010, the CDC confirmed 63 cases nationwide; in 2018, 372.

In February 2019, the BBC summarized data from the World Health Organization showing that measles cases in Europe tripled between 2017 and 2018 to 82,596 — the highest number recorded this decade. More than 53,000 of those cases were confirmed in Ukraine, where vaccination rates are low due to a combination of vaccine refusal, unavailability and lack of access.

And in Australia, which was declared measles-free just five years ago, cases have climbed from 81 in 2017 to 103 in 2018 and 92 by April 9, 2019. Vaccination rates for children in Australia are high — 93 percent in 2017 — but many residents born between 1966 and 1994 received only one dose, rather than the now-recommended two. Those adults are vulnerable to contracting measles when they travel to areas with lower vaccination rates.

The situation has become so troubling that the World Health Organization called vaccine hesitancy — the reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the availability of vaccines — one of the top global health threats in 2019.

Measles is a highly contagious disease. The CDC reports that up to 90% of “susceptible people” — those who haven’t been vaccinated — will contract it on exposure. The disease once caused an estimated 2.6 million deaths each year, according to the World Health Organization. In 2017, approximately 110,000 people worldwide died from measles, most of them children under the age of five.

But the measles vaccine, developed in 1963 and refined in 1968, is highly successful. One dose is about 93% effective; the rate rises to about 97% with the second dose. Children can receive the first dose as early as 12 months of age.

So why, in western countries not plagued by poverty, war, political unrest and other serious barriers, are children not receiving the vaccine?

The troubling situation has evolved from a complex combination of elements, including a discredited study, the power of the internet and social media, the influence of celebrities, a renewed mistrust of authority and good old-fashioned human nature.

In 1998, Andrew Wakefield, a London-based physician, published a study of 12 children, linking the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism and gastrointestinal issues. He called this syndrome “autistic enterocolitis.” The prestigious medical journal “The Lancet” ran the study, and Wakefield also appeared at a news conference during which he urged replacing the MMR vaccine with one that vaccinated for measles only. An
In 1998, Andrew Wakefield, a London-based physician, published a study of 12 children, linking the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine to autism and gastrointestinal issues.

explosion of publicity followed, along with dropping vaccination rates in Europe and the U.S.

Subsequent scientific reviews of Wakefield’s work revealed serious flaws, including faulty sampling methods, falsified data and results that couldn’t be replicated. “The Lancet” partially retracted Wakefield’s study in 2004 and issued a full retraction in 2010, the same year that Wakefield was removed from the register of the U.K. General Medical Counsel.

In 2011, “The BMJ” (formerly “The British Medical Journal”) published a series of investigative articles that reported even more disconcerting information. Those findings were recently discussed on the website of “Psychology Today” in a February 2019 blog entry by Dr. Joseph Pierre, health sciences clinical professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and associate director of Residency Education at the UCLA Semel Neuropsychiatric Institute and VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System.

“Wakefield had received over £400,000 from a law firm looking for clients in a class action lawsuit against the makers of the MMR vaccine and had also applied for a patent for a ‘safer’ monovalent (targeting a single disease) measles vaccine to replace the trivalent MMR vaccine,” Pierre wrote in an entry titled “Antivaxxers and the Plague of Science Denial.”

The investigation also reported that Wakefield filed patents for diagnostic tests and treatments for the new syndrome he had claimed to discover.

Wakefield has denied any wrongdoing.

The CDC states that, like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects.
But it reports that multiple verifiable scientific studies have not revealed a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

In April 2019, the American College of Physicians published a study in its “Annals of Internal Medicine” of more than 650,000 children followed over a decade to evaluate whether the MMR vaccine increases the risk for autism. Its conclusion: “The study strongly supports that MMR vaccination does not increase the risk for autism, does not trigger autism in susceptible children, and is not associated with clustering of autism cases after vaccination.”

However, Wakefield’s assertions remain deeply entrenched among some parents. His 1998 report collided perfectly with the launch of social media, which began when the first recognized social media site, “Six Degrees,” was founded a year earlier. As platforms became more sophisticated, so did their ease of use, reach and ability to influence. At the same time, autism became more highly publicized, and parents’ fears of the developmental disorder grew. They were looking for answers, for a way to protect their children, and Wakefield’s report seemed to offer them both.

“I think it’s normal and natural for people to have questions about vaccinations,” says Hughes. “And I think it’s quite a good thing that people ask those questions — as long as they get their answers from very evidence-based resources.”

Vaccine hesitancy had, for some, crossed the line into conspiracy.

“Not all anti-vaxxers are necessarily conspiracy theorists,” Pierre says. “Believing that vaccines cause autism or other ill effects isn’t a conspiracy theory in itself. The conspiracy belief is that the government, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and physicians are in cahoots with the pharmaceutical industry to suppress that information from the public.”

People are more vulnerable to conspiracy theories than you might
“There’s good evidence that we are living at a time of significant mistrust in institutions of authority, whether we’re talking about the government, the media, scientists or physicians.”

Dr. Joseph Pierre, professor, Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA

“This isn’t to say that mistrust of these institutions has never been higher; only that we’re riding a wave of populism in this country that frowns upon ‘elites’ and discounts the authority of experts.”

So it might not be so surprising that modern times offer a kind of perfect storm to help conspiracy theories thrive.

“There’s good evidence that we are living at a time of significant mistrust in institutions of authority, whether we’re talking about the government, the media, scientists or physicians,” Pierre says.

think, even in a world with access to vast databases of scientific evidence at the touch of a keyboard.

“Belief in conspiracy theories is very common,” Pierre says. “Around 50% of the U.S. population believes in at least one, a prevalence that has held steady for at least several decades.”

Karen Douglas, professor of social psychology at the U.K.’s University of Kent in Canterbury, specializes in research on conspiracy theories and co-authored the study “Belief in conspiracy theories: Basic principles of an emerging research.” She says findings show that the single best predictor of belief in one conspiracy theory is a belief in a different conspiracy. “Moreover,” her study reports, “throughout history people have believed conspiracy theories particularly in impactful societal crisis situations, such as during fires, floods, earthquakes, rapid societal change, violence and wars.”

So it might not be so surprising that modern times offer a kind of perfect storm to help conspiracy theories thrive.

“There’s good evidence that we are living at a time of significant mistrust in institutions of authority, whether we’re talking about the government, the media, scientists or physicians,” Pierre says.

The Dunning-Kruger effect also comes into play.

“The Dunning-Kruger effect is a finding from psychology research that almost everyone overestimates their level of knowledge...”
When the Kiwanis Club of Oswego, Illinois, received its charter in 2015, members immediately set a crucial priority: establishing Key Clubs in the city’s two high schools. The club at Oswego East High School took off especially quickly, thanks in part to students there with parents in the new Kiwanis club.

The teens set out to determine a fundraising strategy that would support their service mission, and in the Key Club’s first year, they landed on the idea of a food truck festival — not exactly a simple first project. Still, they were undaunted.

“It was a good way for them to, when they were first starting out, really make a name for themselves with a big event,” says Robyn Vickers, Oswego Kiwanis Club member and the Key Club’s advisor.

Following that “go big or go home” strategy, the Key Club approached the owner of Brew Avenue Events, an Oswego-based event management and production company that specializes not only in its namesake craft beer festivals, but also food truck gatherings.

“He offered to work with them as one of his community-charity, giving-back (events),” explains Vickers.

“It exploded from there. It’s turned into a huge event that people come to from really far around.”

Now held each April and October on the high school grounds, the Oswego East Food Truck Feast regularly books to its capacity of 18 trucks. As part of their event contracts, truck owners agree not to sell beverages, leaving that duty as a money-maker for Key Club members. The students also raise funds through free-will donations from parents whose children participate in face painting, pumpkin decorating (in the fall), seed planting (in the spring) and other...
pursuits in the Family Zone. Meanwhile, a DJ spins tunes, and adults browse through booths staffed by local businesses at the Vendor Village.

“It’s turned into more of a community event,” says Vickers, “rather than just ‘get your food and go home.’”

And before guests leave, they can raise funds for the Key Club in one more way: voting with cash for their favorite food truck.

To be named “Beast of the Feast” has become a heated competition among vendors.

Fall proceeds go to a national or international cause — in November 2018, it was The Eliminate Project — while spring funds benefit something closer to home. This past April’s festival gave a boost to the high school’s extended special-education programming. The donation helped the family of an Oswego East student battling cancer. Funds from each feast average around US$700 but have topped out as high as $1,200 — worthy numbers for a fledging club, Vickers says.

“They’ve learned a lot. They’ve got the process down. It’s really fun to hear people say, ‘Oh, I came from Schaumburg,’ which is 30 miles away. And it really is a student-led event. It’s pretty impressive, I think.”
Want to help your Key Club host a food truck festival — or hold one of your own? Try these tips gleaned from the Oswego East Food Truck Feast:

Get the high school’s buy-in. Oswego East High School supports the Food Truck Feast in numerous ways, from allowing the use of school grounds to scheduling the event at a time when an on-site dance competition, track meet or other draw will provide a built-in core audience.

Invite other student groups to participate. Add value to your event — and keep potential donors around longer — by arranging for other high school clubs to sponsor activities. At the feast, the school’s art club does face painting for young guests, while the future-teachers’ group reads stories aloud.

Book a variety of trucks. The wider the appeal, the more people you’ll attract. Include popular staples (burgers, pizza, tacos), but also think bigger — and smaller. Two of the most popular trucks at the Food Truck Feast have been a simple stand selling homemade-marshmallow-based s’mores and a lobster truck with a signature sandwich carrying a US$25 price tag.

Plan for the weather. In its short history, the Food Truck Feast has seen temperatures soar toward 90 degrees Fahrenheit and frigid days fill with snow. The Key Club always has access to an area inside the high school where activities can be held and guests can cool off or warm up in case Mother Nature acts out.
Members of the Wheatland Kiwanis Club in Wyoming knew they were doing something great when they began hosting their annual Discovery Day event three years ago. And while it was destined to be a success, they just might have underestimated how much of an impact it would make on the community, as well as their own club.

The early summer event serves as a hands-on educational outing for families and children with help from local businesses and various agencies. In 2019, nearly 500 residents came out to play along with 31 businesses, law enforcement members, government officials and nonprofit organizations. These numbers are especially impressive given Wheatland’s small population of 3,800, and the high participation makes for unforgettable events.

Discovery Day activities include climbing in fire trucks and police cars, inter-
acting with police dogs, sorting letters in mail trucks, wearing lineman gear, checking out farm machinery and learning how to climb a power pole. The goal is to have fun, educate families and children and make safety officials — and their equipment — less intimidating.

“Although children see all of these vehicles (and officials) in action within the community, it is very rare for them to interact with them or have the time and encouragement to ask questions,” explains the Wheatland club’s Past President Gail A. Thompson. “Children walk away with more knowledge about the vehicles, and our display partners take the opportunity to stress public safety issues.”

The event also fosters an environment for exceptional family bonding. Club members often see multiple generations from the same family interacting with one another to create lasting memories.

“Year after year, we hear such great feedback from the families in attendance about how excited
the children are and how much they get out of participation,” Thompson says.

And there was one more unexpected but much-welcome, bonus: The club has enjoyed a notable boost in membership as a direct result of the event. Since Discovery Day’s inauguration, the previously aging club has been reinvigorated with young parents and has nearly doubled its membership. ☑
It all started in 2012 with Superstorm Sandy.

New Yorkers — and the rest of the country — watched helplessly as the hurricane slammed the East Coast of the United States, flooding homes, subways and businesses; causing electric and cell service outages across the city; and forcing thousands to evacuate from hospitals and homes.

The aftermath was grim.

“You constantly read and saw and heard stories about people whose homes were completely destroyed, or how they were now living in the attic because their first two floors were underwater,” says Jason Steiner, treasurer of the Kiwanis Young Professionals Club of New York City and a past club president.

“Then we saw stories about all the contractor fraud.”

Club members knew they had to do something.

When they found two local organizations helping to rebuild homes in The Rockaways area of Queens and parts of Brooklyn, they jumped in.

Soon, groups of up to 15 volunteers — including members from sponsored Key Clubs and CKI clubs — were trekking up to two hours via public transit every six weeks or so to get their hands dirty (literally) by plastering, painting, laying tile, installing insulation, putting up drywall and more.

“Some of these kids didn’t know how to hold a paintbrush,” Steiner says. “But it became one of our favorite projects because it was hands-on, and we often got to meet the owners. For a lot of projects, that’s not always the case. So it was a nice bonus to see who we were impacting.”

The Kiwanis crews were trained and supervised by volunteers who taught them how to do the construction-related task of the day before putting them to work. And because every home was at a different stage of rebuild, work varied widely with each visit — and there were a lot of them.

“Six years later, and we were still fixing homes in New York from Hurricane Sandy,” says Ryan Dang Hong, a member of the club’s board of directors.

Finally, though, the project pool began drying up. That’s when the club heard about an opportunity in Puerto Rico to rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Maria.

“Since we were already experienced with the organization here in New York, it opened the opportunity up to the club to see who was interested,” Dang Hong says.
In February, he and Steiner represented the club in the rebuild for Netzy Lucianis Cruz — a young, recently unemployed teacher in Loiza, Puerto Rico.

Though Dang Hong and Steiner had spent years helping to rebuild homes, what they saw in Puerto Rico surprised them.

"Almost all of the homes in the (Villa Cañonas) neighborhood were in some state of repair," Steiner says. “Every single home was being worked on. The entire area was affected. And people’s entire homes were being rebuilt from the ground up.”

According to SBP — the group with which Dang Hong and Steiner volunteered — Cruz was able to save only a backpack’s worth of belongings before the hurricane ripped off her roof. Though she spent the duration of the storm at an aunt’s house, she returned to live in her home afterward, even though conditions were dangerous.

More than a year later, Cruz’s home still had only a blue tarp where a roof should have been.

“We didn’t come to any homes in The Rockaways where roofs were gone and entire structures were almost destroyed,” Steiner says. “They may have been uninhabitable, but they were standing structures. But not here in Puerto Rico.”

During their weekend there, Dang Hong and Steiner reinforced the home’s walls and panels. A Team Rubicon crew of military veterans fixed the roof, and other crews — including volunteers living on the island — replaced the wooden walls with concrete ones more able to withstand future storms and fully restored Cruz’s home.

In all, SBP reports that 76 volunteers invested more than 6,080 hours of work to finish the residence.

“There were many who were very happy to see us and appreciated the help,” Steiner says of the club’s home-rebuilding efforts in New York and Puerto Rico. “But at the end of the day, people just wanted to get back into their homes.”
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The sun will keep shining on the children of Butte, Montana, thanks to a partnership between the Kiwanis Club of Butte and the Butte YMCA. The two groups are working together to ensure that the aptly named Sunshine Camp stays open for years, serving an increasing number of campers each summer and providing safe and fun activities for children whose families may be financially challenged.

The 17-acre property has been in business since 1946, when it was set up as a camp for war orphans, says Tom Waring, a Butte Kiwanis Club member. Its mission evolved over the years, becoming a camp for children from low-income families. “A lot of these children’s parents were incarcerated or (the children were) in situations where they were being raised by single parents,” Waring says. “For those children, it was a chance to be in a normal setting for at least a week.”

The Kiwanis club operated the camp for four weeks in July each year, serving children who stayed overnight for a week. But the camp needed physical upgrades, and the club needed help running activities. Operating and maintenance costs reached about US$35,000 a year. So the Kiwanians decided to pursue strategic partnerships.

First, the Building Trades Department of nearby Highlands College stepped up to help with the physical challenges. Students there were willing to help with repairing and adding onto an existing building. The Kiwanis club worked to raise $115,000 in real and in-kind donations to expand the camp’s available indoor space.

The Butte YMCA provided the other piece of the puzzle. Kiwanians asked YMCA leaders if they wanted to take over the campsite for their own summer activities. They enthusiastically accepted and moved their camp headquarters to Camp Sunshine.

“What the camp really allows us to do is serve considerably more children,” says Phillip Borup, the Butte YMCA’s CEO.

In 2018, the YMCA and Camp Sunshine served 264 children, an increase from 144 the prior year. As the camp entered the summer of 2019, Borup expected to serve nearly 400 children, reach 17,000 camper days and provide as much as $130,000 in scholarships to children in need.

Meanwhile, the Butte Kiwanians stay engaged. Each year, they participate by periodically stopping by to help with lunch.

At this rate, the camp should be sustainable for at least the next 20 years, Waring says.

“Pretty much everything is new and up to code, so I feel like the facility is in a situation where it will not need a large infusion of capital for a long time.”
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When Kiwanian Riley Rude enrolled in a CPR class, he did so as a precaution. As dad to a new daughter, he believed it would be wise to take a refresher course. Still, he says, “I never thought I’d use it.”

The class was taught by Kristi Engelstad, a fellow member of the Kiwanis Club of Lake Agassiz, Fargo, in North Dakota. Teaching the skill had become a mission for her. In 2014, she learned that, within the United States, 40% of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest victims receive CPR from a bystander. (Today, the American Heart Association reports the number is closer to 46%). But in the communities of Moorhead, Minnesota, and Fargo, North Dakota, CPR was administered only 33% of the time.

Engelstad, publicity chair for her club, took the information seriously. As an experienced paramedic, she knew that, when performed quickly, CPR doubles or triples the chance of survival.

So when F-M Ambulance, Engelstad’s employer, launched an initiative to raise awareness and survival rates in the two close-knit communities, she left ambulance duty to provide outreach as a public speaker and teacher. For the past five years, Engelstad has taught hands-only CPR and first aid to groups in schools, organizations and service clubs.

“Hands-only CPR is when you just push on the chest,” she explains. “You don’t have to do any breathing at all.”

As an extension of her community commitment, she began teaching an annual class at her Kiwanis club. After Rude’s daughter was born, he signed up. And the skill he never thought he’d use would become invaluable.

In November 2018, Rude, a real estate developer, was working at a construction site. Suddenly, a man clearing snow at a neighboring property collapsed and became unconscious. Rude went straight to his training from Engelstad. He immediately gave the man CPR, while another bystander called 911. The man lived.

According to the American Heart Association, less than 10% of people survive cardiac arrest outside of a hospital. But CPR can improve those odds. To raise awareness and show appreciation for learning the skill, F-M Ambulance recognizes those who’ve saved a life with CPR.

Engelstad organized a recognition ceremony for Rude at the station. There, he met Rusty Collins, the man he saved, and received a Citizen’s Lifesaving Award in front of friends and family.

Engelstad wants survival stories like Collins’ to be even more common, and she encourages other Kiwanis clubs to contact a local ambulance service for CPR training.

“It’s easy to do and easy to learn,” she says. “Doing something is better than nothing.”

Adds Rude, “It’s such a huge payoff, you’d sure regret just standing by.”

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BIRTHDAYS

These clubs celebrate 25th, 50th, 75th and 100th anniversaries in October.

100TH — 1919
Spartanburg, South Carolina, October 2
Greensburg, Pennsylvania, October 8
Lake Charles, Louisiana, October 11
Battle Creek, Michigan, October 15
Greensboro, North Carolina, October 23
Muskegon, Michigan, October 25
La Crosse, Wisconsin, October 27
Galesburg, Illinois, October 31
Montgomery, Alabama, October 31

75TH — 1944
South Sioux City, Nebraska, October 5
Fredericton, New Brunswick, October 17
Henry County, Georgia, October 20
Baldwin, New York, October 23
Sapulpa, Oklahoma, October 31

50TH — 1969
Worthington, Linworth, Ohio, October 9
Charleroi Promotion, Belgium, October 21

25TH — 1994
Coweta County, Georgia, October 6
on any given subject,“ Pierre explains. “This mismatch between self-rated knowledge and actual knowledge tends to be largest for people with the lowest levels of actual knowledge, whereas it gets reversed at the highest level, where true experts under-estimate themselves. This effect was demonstrated in a recent study about anti-vaccine beliefs — those with the lowest levels of knowledge about vaccines rated their knowledge as on par with that of doctors and scientists.”

There’s yet another element at work in the vaccine debate. The 2015 study “Going against the Herd: Psychological and Cultural Factors Underlying the ‘Vaccination Confidence Gap’” pointed out that vaccine skepticism often goes hand-in-hand with a preference for complementary and alternative medicine and a mistrust of authority. And that happens to form a lucrative market.

“I think a part of (anti-vaccine activism) is definitely embedded into some of the alternative-health industry,” Hughes says. “And I guess there’s money to be made, because differing alternative-health industries can sell alternatives to vaccines — things to boost immunity and that sort of thing. I do think money is part of the reason why some people really get into the anti-vaccine activism. … I have yet to find an anti-vaccine website that’s not trying to sell something.”

With so many influencing factors in the mix, reversing the decline of vaccination rates has no easy fix. In 2016, the Australian government launched its “no jab, no pay” policy, which reduces parents’ tax benefits a certain amount for each unvaccinated child. In July of this year, the University of Sydney and University of Western Australia released a study showing the policy is supported by more than 80% of the country’s public.

In the U.S., some states that formerly allowed parents to bypass vaccinating their children for non-medical reasons are working to reverse that legislation, to very vocal forms of protest. In both Washington state and California, sponsors of bills that would limit vaccine exemptions received death threats; others reported a steady stream of harassment via phone calls and social media.

“Trying to counteract a conspiracy theory can be very difficult,” says Kent’s Douglas. “These are often very strongly held beliefs, and people don’t give them up easily. People are often very passionate about what they believe, and they will strongly defend their beliefs. An expert who tries to debunk a conspiracy theory with scientific evidence might be viewed as being part of the conspiracy.”

Says Pierre, “Part of the reason that belief systems can be so resistant to change is that they’re often entwined with our identities. Changing our beliefs can therefore feel like we’re renouncing ourselves or even losing some important existential battle.”

How, then, can the anti-vaccination mindset be changed? For starters, advises Pierre, stay off the internet, which, due to its anonymous nature, is often a hostile environment. Instead, try a face-to-face conversation that begins with empathic listening: Make a sincere, nonjudgmental attempt to understand why the person believes what they do. If you develop a rapport, that individual might be more open to different information.

“But,” Pierre cautions, “their receptivity will likely depend on whether they’re looking for answers or trying to resolve an ambiguity — so called fence-sitters who might be genuinely willing to learn — or whether they’re just looking for a fight and are on guard to being attacked. For the issue of vaccine hesitancy, these conversations are best had one-to-one between patients and their doctors and other healthcare providers, where trust is earned through open communication.”

Hughes believes governments should become more involved, and so should parents who do vaccinate their children.

“I think governments need to invest in high-quality vaccine-hesitant research,” she says. “It’s really important. And I think we need to encourage parents to step up and be vocal, even if it’s a very adversarial backlash. We need parents to support vaccines, to be brave and stand up and say, ‘Yes, I vaccinate. It’s a great thing. I’m proud to vaccinate.’”
Name that tune

LET MUSIC SET THE RIGHT TONE FOR YOUR NEXT KIWANIS CLUB MEETING OR FUNDRAISING PROJECT.

There is a playlist for every occasion in life. Your first kiss. A road trip during the summer. Celebrating a birthday. Even when Kiwanians get together to build up their communities, it’s a reason to celebrate. Here’s a fun playlist that may capture the spirit of your members and project:

“Let’s Work” by Mick Jagger
“Lean on Me” by Bill Withers
“All Together Now” by The Beatles
“Count on Me” by Bruno Mars
“Todos Juntos” by Shakira
“Humble and Kind” by Tim McGraw

“Try a Little Kindness” by Glenn Campbell
“Hard Work” by John Handy
“Stand by Me” by Ben E. King
“Never Gonna Let You Down” by Colby Caillat
“He Ain’t Heavy, He’s My Brother” by The Hollies
“Movin’ Right Along” by Fozzie and Kermit

What songs and playlist would you play to get your club moving? Tell us at kiwanismagazine.org.
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