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STORY

FRIEND OF
THE FAMILY

2019-20 KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT DANIEL VIGNERON
FOCUSES ON BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH FRIENDSHIP

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You have a friend in Kiwanis

Cover photo of Daniel Vigneron by Stefan Hobmaier
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
DANIEL VIGNERON • KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

Show your team spirit

After a great deal of planning and preparation, I am excited to launch the 2019-20 Kiwanis year!

I’ve formulated my key messages and goals. I’ve met with many members and staff, recorded videos and visited districts. It’s been eye-opening and, at times, a little overwhelming.

Now, I am ready. We are ready. And I will stay true to my motto: Res, non verba.

It means “Actions speak louder than words.”

When you are part of a team, putting in the hard work, you have visible results. That, to me, defines a good Kiwanian. Let your actions speak louder than words.

When you are part of a team, you have visible results. That, to me, defines a good Kiwanian. Let your actions speak louder than words.

As our organization grows, we must make our clubs and activities fresh and innovative to keep members involved. We open the front door to welcome new members, but we don’t want veteran members leaving through the back door. We want them to feel engaged. They are valued and have invested their time and resources as Kiwanis members.

In addition to fulfilling work and club growth, it is very important that we all cooperate to achieve our goals. Kiwanis works best when we are friends who collaborate. We must treat one another with respect and compassion. Follow the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

I want our team spirit and global perspective to reinforce our good work. Let’s use our differences as assets, to strengthen our organization and open more possibilities for more kids. Kiwanis fellowship has been, and will continue to be, a leading source of meaningful projects to serve the children of the world.

EXECUTIVE PERSPECTIVE
STAN SODERSTROM • KIWANIS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Inclusion takes effort

At the Kiwanis International convention in June, the delegates amended our organization’s bylaws to reinforce our organization’s commitment to inclusion and diversity — and our stand against discrimination.

Article 1, Section 10, of the Kiwanis International Bylaws now states: “Kiwanis clubs shall not discriminate based upon race, color, creed, national origin, age or sex, including sexual orientation and gender identity, when considering membership or during any of their activities or operations and shall conduct business in compliance with local nondiscrimination laws.”

On one level, this is perfectly straightforward language. For any organization that intends to be welcoming and inclusive in 2019, it’s a logical — perhaps even routine — position to take.

But I think it’s more than that. In fact, it goes beyond a piece of business put before the House of Delegates. It stands as a proclamation of our values, a statement of our place in the world.

Previously, our lack of restrictions or definitions for membership was our way of showing that we’re inclusive. The board’s explanation of this new wording expresses something significant: Having a stated nondiscrimination provision can raise consciousness among clubs of the importance of diversity and inclusion.

In other words, it sometimes takes specific attention and effort to fulfill those values. We’d all love to simply fling open the doors and instantly attract people of all races, religions and identities. In reality, we often have to be active and intentional about showing people in our communities what we do, who we are — and why they should join us.

Today, many clubs in the Kiwanis family have a true diversity of members. For most of them, it’s because they’ve worked to make it happen. It reminds me of one of my favorite quotes, from John F. Kennedy’s challenge to go the moon: “We do these things not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

It’s a belief that good work ultimately proves its worth. And it’s as true as ever. This increasingly diverse world shows what the future looks like. For Kiwanis, it should also show how crucial an active commitment to inclusion is to us.
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Letters

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

Clean hands, open hearts
As a former U.S. diplomat, I enjoy reading about Kiwanis clubs engaged in international projects like the August 2019 issue. “Clean Hands, Open Hearts,” by Kasey Jackson is an excellent article about how a Key Club at Ross S. Sterling High School, Baytown, Texas, traveled to Guatemala to address sanitation by building a hand-washing facility.

Traveling and working abroad as a U.S. diplomat aided my professional development and gave me insights to the challenges faced by people in other countries. International work pays dividends to people in other countries and those, like the students from Sterling High School, who go to serve an important need. Hopefully, some of these students may seek international careers.

Jim Patterson
Kiwanis Club of Shepherd Park,
Washington, D.C.
Life member, American Foreign Service

Family affair
Regarding the June/July “Pass This On” edition of Kiwanis magazine, I couldn’t agree more with the fact that we should be passing every issue of this magazine on. Having said that, I think we should ensure that this publication showcases all the good we do in this world. Kiwanis clubs are doing so much for children and families of communities around the globe. This leads me to wonder why we feature articles such as “Family Affair” (August). The article was fascinating and as a student of history I understand the importance of tracing our family roots, but this particular feature took up six pages of space that could have otherwise been used to showcase our service or dedicated to featuring our Service Leadership Programs.

Please consider making this great publication a better one by making it even more relevant for multiple uses.

Matt Wise
Kiwanis Club of Bald Eagle and Nittany Valleys, Pennsylvania

Maker space
Excellent article about a great partnership between a small, dedicated Kiwanis club and a school with clear needs.

Pamela Gibson
Henderson, Nevada

“One of the most wonderful memories for me with the Kiwanis Club of Sheraden was going to the Pennsylvania School for the Blind and observing how the funding from our club was helping the students engage with the community and be able to enjoy so much more of their world because of Kiwanis.” — Jolene Edwards via Facebook
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What’s happening
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Consider a reading project

Scholastic offers the Kiwanis family a wide range of programs and packages that promote and support literacy projects in communities. Whether you are ordering books for a literacy project, opening a Reading Oasis or helping with a Book Fair, Scholastic is there to support your club’s efforts to “Open a World of Possibility” to children in local communities through reading.

As a way of leaving a lasting impact on your community, keep this partnership in mind when creating your club’s signature project or celebrating a major club anniversary.

More information is available at kiwanis.org/scholastic.
Holiday service project ideas
• Purchase warm blankets and extra socks from Kiwanis Warehouse.
• Give the gift of literacy and donate books from Scholastic to community centers.
• Buy popcorn from your local Boy Scouts and share with your family at holiday meals.
• Sponsor a life-changing service adventure for your Key Club with Squads Abroad (right).
• Host a holiday party with your local Boys & Girls Club and purchase supplies from Office Depot.
• Form a caroling group and entertain children and families at your local Children’s Miracle Network Hospital.

Learn more at kiwanis.org/partners.

Prematurity Awareness Month
Kiwanis supports the March of Dimes all year by hosting service projects, raising funds and educating communities about preterm birth. Get involved by wearing purple to club activities in November — especially on November 17, Prematurity Awareness Day. Visit marchofdimes.org.
Will your club project be a winner?
It’s time to get prepared for the 4th annual Signature Project Contest. Start gathering information now to submit your top club signature project to represent your district in the 2020 contest. The online contest form will open on December 15, 2019, and will close on February 4, 2020. Winners will be recognized at the Kiwanis International convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, in June 2020. For project inspiration, visit kiwanis.org/signatureprojects.

At right: The Kiwanis Club of Montgomery’s Alabama National Fair, the 2019 Signature Project Contest winner.

New board member
Chian Chu-Ching “George,” left, of Taichung City, Taiwan, will serve another year on the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees. The 2019-20 Kiwanis International Board appointed him to fill a vacancy created by the death of trustee-elect Teh Cheng Lian.

Teh, from the Malaysia District, was elected to a three-year term at the 2019 Kiwanis Asia-Pacific Convention in March 2019.

As outlined in the Kiwanis International Bylaws, the board appointed Chian to serve the first year of Teh’s term. Delegates at the Kiwanis Asia-Pacific convention in March 2020 will select the person to serve the remaining two years.

Chian has been serving on the board since October 1, 2016. His term was set to expire September 30, 2019. He is a musical instrument manufacturer and active in the Taiwan community, previously serving as the president of the Shang-Jen Philanthropy Association and the Taiwan traditional Folk Relics Association. He reads and collects antiques in his free time.

Be scary good for UNICEF
Key Club, Aktion Club, K-Kids and Builders Club members soon will haunt their neighborhoods to collect donations to save and protect moms and babies from maternal and neonatal tetanus. CKI will raise money for the WASH project. Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF is an easy and fun way for the Kiwanis family to raise funds.

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FRIEND OF THE FAMILY

DANIEL VIGNERON, 2019-20 KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT, FOCUSES ON BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH FRIENDSHIP.

Story by Jack Brockley • Photos by Stefan Hobmaier and Jack Brockley
Welcome to the annual Seafood Soirée, the most unlikely dinner you’re likely to enjoy. Here we are in Vielsalm, Belgium, up in the Ardennes mountains in a train depot without locomotives, eating *fruit de mer* far from the saltwater lairs of lobsters, crab and shrimp while early-20th century flappers and Fitzgerald gents roam among the guests of this extravagant 21st century affair.

Daniel Vigneron is here, just as he was in 1990 when he was president of the Vielsalm Kiwanis Club and organized the first of these annual seafood feasts. This evening, as in 1990, he seems to be everywhere in this refurbished, repurposed train depot. He’s guiding first-time guests through a preview of the evening’s banquet in the buffet room. He’s talking cars in a conversation with the befeathered and tuxedo crowd, whose attire complements the evening’s “Gatsby” theme. He’s sitting at his table, enjoying a laugh with his wife, Faby, and their Italian and American companions.

It’s obvious that the 2019-20 Kiwanis International president enjoys the company of people. Vigneron has been described as “unassuming,” a “gentleman,” “kind”… but most frequently as “a friend.” He learned many of the traits of friendship — loyalty, teamwork, sportsmanship, cooperation, compromise — on the field hockey grounds, tennis courts and horse-riding trails of his childhood hometown in the Belgian Congo, the mining community of Jadotsville (present-day Likasi in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

“It was a great place to grow up,” he recalls. “There was a sports complex near my home. My friends would ride our bicycles there and play. I spent a lot of time there.”

The Congo also was where Vigneron was able to add Swahili to his family’s French. Today, he can converse in English, Italian, Dutch and German, as well as a bit in Spanish.

Being multilingual is one reason he has friends worldwide.
To be fair to Etna, Don Canaday started it. Canaday, a past Kiwanis International president, is a retired U.S. Army general, and he’s sitting on a couch in the Vignerons’ family room. He reaches to the floor to scratch the dog’s ear. Etna loves the attention and places a paw on Canaday’s lap. Enjoying an encouraging scratch around the neck and a brisk belly rub, Etna squirms farther and farther into Don’s lap.

Etna is 90 pounds of enthusiastic American Staffordshire terrier and quite a lapful.

“Etna! Get down, Etna!” Faby and Daniel have entered the adjoining dining room. Faby, carrying drinks, scolds the dog, who escapes to a nest of cushions beneath the stairway. Daniel is bearing a platter of ultra-thin-shaved salumi bergamaschi, an Italian salami compliments of houseguests Piero and Valeria Grasso.

“I met Daniel at a Kiwanis training conference in Indianapolis in November 2002, when I was governor-elect of the Italy-San Marino District and he was governor-elect of the Belgium-Luxembourg District,” Grasso says. “There was an immediate understanding between us.”

That weekend, the two became friends and agreed to meet for New Year’s Eve. Every year since, the Vignerons and Grassos have alternated 10-hour drives between their homes in Belgium and Italy to celebrate together the arrival of another new year.

“Daniel’s a great leader,” Grasso says. “He listens to all ideas and thinks about it. If he thinks your idea is better than his idea, he’s able to change. That’s not easy to find in a lot of people.”

Jean Claude Burton relates a
similar Vigneron encounter.

In July 1975, Burton moved his Citroën garage to a new location in Luxembourg. His new neighbor was Daniel. Car talk facilitated introductions.

“Very quickly,” Burton says, “we got to know each other. Over the years, I have become a full member of their family.”

In 1988, he also became a member of the Kiwanis Club of Vielsalm, with Daniel as his sponsor.

Three years before inviting Burton to join Kiwanis, in April 1985, Daniel was introduced to the Vielsalm club by a business associate. Five years later, he was club president and suggested the club organize a seafood dinner fundraiser. One hundred people attended. Nearly 30 years later, the event sells out annually with 250 attendees and netting 15,000 euros.

On October 1, Daniel begins a one-year term as Kiwanis International president. He has chosen as his motto for the year, “Res, non verba.”

The Latin proverb means “Actions speak louder than words.”

“People can talk so much without saying anything,” Daniel says. “It’s when you are part of a team, putting in the hard work that has visible results, to me that defines a good Kiwanian. Let your actions speak louder than words and have a stronger, more positive impact on the lives of others.”

Since those days of playing field hockey in Jadotsville, Daniel has proved himself a man of action. He has been a licensed skydiver and glider pilot. As a certified scuba diver, he and his brother meet every year in Spain to swim among the colorful coral, shy crabs and mysterious octopi in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea. But his “action” goes beyond physical feats. He’s also a Kiwanian of action. The type of Kiwanian who participates in the fellowship of the club and the global organization. The type of Kiwanian who works set-up to closing at the annual Vielsalm Seafood Soirée. The type of Kiwanian who steps up to lead. To lead as our 2019-20 Kiwanis International president.
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It’s an early May evening in Toms River, New Jersey, and more than 60 children and adults have gathered in an auditorium at the Ocean County Library. Despite the setting, they’re not waiting for story time or a step-by-step craft class. In a matter of minutes, the sounds of trumpets, trombones and tubas will fill the air, thanks to a Kiwanis club sponsored event called Blazing Brass.

In 2017, the Kiwanis Club of Greater Toms River committed US$30,000 for a three-year initiative with the Garden State Philharmonic to create the Kiwanis Music for Young People program. That year, the partnership resulted in the orchestra’s first youth chorus. The Garden State Youth Orchestra debuted in year two, and 2019 brought Meet the Music, a monthly series of hands-on educational sessions/workshops for children ages 6 to 12.

In addition to May’s brass-focused program, Meet the Music included Beat the Drum (percussion), Wild and Wacky Woodwinds (flutes, oboes, clarinets,
bassoons, saxophones) and Strings and Things (violins, violas, cellos, basses). After all four instrumental groups had been covered, Meet the Music concluded with a concert performed by the Garden Sate Philharmonic Youth Orchestra to showcase how all instruments come together to form a symphony of sound.

The partnership with the philharmonic developed through a mutual goal of introducing children to the joys and benefits of music.

“Music is really a life skill that kids can utilize to improve their lives, improve their concentration,” says Marshall Kern, a Greater Toms River Kiwanian who helped develop the Kiwanis Music for Young People initiative. “If we can interest kids and nurture kids to learn music and get involved with education programs with music, it helps kids focus on becoming better students. It creates discipline if you take lessons. You have to have a certain discipline to achieve in music.”

Studies support Kern’s views. In 2018, the Arts Education Partnership — a coalition of more than 100 education, arts, cultural,
government, business and philanthropic organizations in the United States — released an updated version of its 2011 report, Music Matters. Upon review of multiple research studies, AEP found that music education equips students with foundational learning skills — bolstering student engagement and achievement in other academic subjects and developing abilities they will need for lifelong success.

The list of specific benefits is impressive, including enhanced fine motor skills, working memory, vocabulary, critical thinking, attentiveness, perseverance, creativity and self-esteem.

Members of the Garden State Philharmonic and its youth orchestra led each of the first four Meet the Music sessions. First up was a history of the featured instruments, followed by the youth and adult musicians demonstrating how to play each one. Then children and their families had the opportunity to test-drive a tuba or sample a saxophone, thanks to instruments provided by retailer Music & Arts.

“It sounded noisy,” says Mary Alice Smith, a Kiwanian who also worked closely with Kiwanis Music for Young People. “But everybody was laughing, smiling and just in awe of the beauty of the instruments.”

Adds Kern, “The faces glowed.” Kiwanis members, decked out in club-branded gear, provided guidance and encouragement. In fact, a side benefit to the three-year endeavor was increased exposure for the club itself. The Garden State Philharmonic promoted Kiwanis Music for Young People and its components prominently in concert programs and educational brochures and on its website and social media.

The Kiwanians did their part to raise awareness as well, spurred on by Kern and Smith. “We really got the word out through our social media,” says Sam Mangiapane, the club’s imme-

“We really got the word out through our social media. That recognition alone was getting the Kiwanis name out there to hundreds, if not thousands, of people.”
diately past president. “That recognition alone was getting the Kiwanis name out there to hundreds, if not thousands, of people. So people are constantly seeing that this is just another way that we’re giving back to the community and helping local families and children.”

Meet the Music so enthralled some families that they returned for multiple sessions.

“It was an opportunity for the children and their parents to have an activity that they’re both enjoying, versus a parent saying to a child, ‘You need to take a musical instrument lesson,’” explains Smith. “You could see the parents were very open for their children to try out different instruments. It was a very positive interaction.”

The youth chorus, youth orchestra and Meet the Music combined to make such a successful three-year project that the club’s board voted unanimously to extend its support of Kiwanis Music for Young People for a fourth year. The result: a new $10,000 commitment for 2020.

“Maybe children learn about musical instruments in school,” Smith says, “but this is a whole different way of learning. It’s become fun. And I think it’s something they’ll always remember.”

Last spring, after becoming frustrated by a this-is-going-nowhere text exchange with the man she was dating, Samantha Simpson posted a brief question to her Facebook friends.
“Do you ever get lonely?”

It was 11 p.m. on a Thursday. By early Friday, the 38-year-old lifestyle coach from Indianapolis, Indiana, had more than 100 responses.
“More than I’d like to admit, one man commented. Even around people.

Sometimes, but that is what my guitar is for! a woman wrote. She heals all wounds.

“I felt the need to connect with people that night,” Simpson says, “and it was too late for a heart-to-heart call with a friend.”

Starting the Facebook conversation took some courage. Most people see their feelings of disconnect as a personal failing, especially in a world where your social value is measured in likes and followers.

But Stephanie Cacioppo, a behavioral neuroscientist and director of the Brain Dynamics Lab at the University of Chicago, estimates one in three people feel lonely, with one in 12 “severely affected.” In 2017, former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy warned that...
“Feeling excluded threatens your sense of security, and that causes stress. Too much stress can lead to inflammation, which has been linked to diseases such as cancer, dementia and heart failure.”

loneliness had reached “epidemic proportions.”

The growing sense of isolation has spun off creative solutions around the globe. Last year, the U.K. appointed a “minister of loneliness” after research showed that 9 million people, or about 15 percent of the population, felt lonely “always or often.”

In Japan, agencies rent out “replacement” relatives — actors who convincingly portray grandkids, parents or even a fake fiancé. One lonely widower, featured in a 2018 New Yorker article, paid for a stand-in wife and adult daughter to join him on outings. Often, they just ate dinner and watched TV together in his home.

Worldwide, a professional cuddling industry is embracing people’s need for caring, platonic touch. From Canada to Australia, men and women are paying $80 to $100 an hour to be held, hugged and nurtured in non-sexual ways by trained practitioners.

“Touch is a very under-utilized tool for addressing loneliness,” says Epiphany Jordan, a professional cuddler who gave a talk at the 2019 SXSW Conference in Austin, Texas. “A lot of times, people don’t realize it is the thing they are missing. We need to be close to others.”

Yet it’s increasingly easy to avoid human contact, thanks to food-delivery drones, Hulu, Peloton bikes and driverless ride-share services. Humans are wired to be socially dependent. Feeling excluded threatens your sense of security, and that causes stress. Too much stress can lead to inflammation, which has been linked to diseases such as cancer, dementia and heart failure. The “scariest” statistic Murthy offered is this: Chronic loneliness is worse on your health than smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

“This is a profound issue and it has public health implications,” he told the Washington Post. “People who are lonely live shorter lives.”

The social reasons given for the loneliness epidemic are broad. Too much work, and not enough life, on the work-life balance scale. People are marrying later, if at all. Families are spread out geographically. Once-valued civic institutions, including churches and service organizations, are losing members. More people are living alone.

But being physically alone doesn’t mean being lonely. Loneliness is a state of mind, a disconnect between what you want from your relationships and what you experience in those relationships, Cacioppo says. People who are married can feel profoundly lonely. So can Instagram influencers who have 3 million followers. For Simpson, loneliness peaks when she compares herself to others, or struggles to appear relevant and interesting in social situations.

“It’s the feeling I get after having said something that pushes another person away,” she says.

Loneliness is often associated with single people, along with the elderly — the widowed or retired. Often overlooked are children and young adults. A surprising 2018 Cigna study of 20,000 U.S. adults declared Generation Z, ages 18 to 22, the “loneliest generation.” That same year, the U.K.’s National Office of Statistics reported that one in 10 kids ages 10 to 15 feels lonely.

People are quick to point fingers at Instagram, Facebook and other social media platforms — and the idea that the fear, rage and envy they can provoke leads to distrust, not connection. Researchers have found correlations between heavy social-media use and feelings of isolation among teens and young adults, but say more studies are needed to answer the question: Do
“Young people are more susceptible to loneliness during life’s major transitions — the shifts to middle school, to high school and to college and then onto the demands of DIY adulting.”

lonely people tend to seek out a lot of online interactions, or do online interactions make people feel excluded?

Young people are more susceptible to loneliness, the U.K. report found, during life’s major transitions — the shifts to middle school, to high school and to college, and then onto the demands of DIY adulting, which could partly explain Gen Z’s struggles. Parents, teachers and other adults should keep a special eye out for children who are bullied, grieving, facing chronic health challenges or living in single-parent households.

The study also found that kids in cities feel lonelier than their peers in rural areas.

The questions the U.K. researchers asked during their in-depth interviews could inspire open conversations with children, who often feel shame because they think loneliness is their fault. Things to ask: How often do you feel that you have no one to talk to? How often do you feel left out? How often do you feel alone?

Working with children now can prevent a lifetime of loneliness. And treating loneliness — in our children, our parents, our neighbors, even strangers — is our “collective responsibility,” said Cacioppo, who, along with her late husband, John Cacioppo, pioneered research into loneliness. She and other scientists at the University of Chicago are doing clinical trials on a pharmacological intervention, or “loneliness pill,” to treat the ways chronic isolation affects the brain and body.

In some communities, people are fighting loneliness by creating programs to help people connect. In Vermont, Adult Family Care invites families to open their homes to care for elderly strangers, who pay room and board. The state also pays the caregivers a daily rate. As part of its national strategy to reduce loneliness, the U.K. is looking at giving seed money to neighborhoods so they can organize activities and build green spaces.

And some influential thinkers, including author and media theorist Douglas Rushkoff, are calling for the return of civic organizations and social institutions of earlier times. In his latest book, “Team Human,” he also encourages people to live more of their lives without “digital crutches,” to leave their house and talk to people, and to have real face time, instead of on-screen FaceTime, with friends and family. Making these meaningful connections off-line, he believes, will make people less distrustful of each other.

“I don’t think humans are the problem, I think humans are the solution,” Rushkoff told Nesta.org last year. For him, the cure for loneliness and disconnect could come down to a simple recognition: “Being human is a team sport.”

It was that kind of solidarity that Simpson was looking for when she posted her inquiry on Facebook. She was surprised by the handful of people who said they never get lonely, joking that “they have ascended to a monk-like state of nirvana, or they’re lying.” Overall, the compassion and honesty of the responses gave her hope, especially on a night when she was “feeling shame” about her struggles to connect with people. Now, whenever she’s hit by loneliness, she uses it as an opportunity to work on self-love and social skills.

Recently, Simpson even did a speaking event. The title? “How to Feel Comfortable in All Social Situations.”

“It’s funny,” she said, “how those things work out.”
Fruitful festival

WITH AUTUMN’S ARRIVAL IN ALBERTA, CALGARY CLUBS CELEBRATE ALL THINGS APPLE AND KIWANIS.

Story by Jack Brockley • Photos by Katy Witt for Kristian Jones Photography

If you want to learn a lot about apples — and enjoy a day of family fun — get yourself to the Kiwanis Apple Festival in Calgary, Alberta. While you’re there, you’ll also learn a lot about Kiwanis.

George Taven admits Calgary is not known for the popular autumn fruit, but there was a time when apples were synonymous with area Kiwanis clubs.

“During the 1950s, ‘60s and ‘70s, we were known for selling apples,” says Taven, a Calgary Kiwanis Club member and festival chair. “For Kiwanis’ 100th anniversary in 2015, the clubs of Division 7 (Western Canada District) wanted to do something to honor our past and raise awareness about what we are doing today. That’s why we decided on an apple festival.”

With open spaces and buildings surrounded by dense forest nudged into the elbow of the Elbow River, the division’s Kamp Kiwanis provides a natural setting for the festival. On the third Saturday and Sunday of September, the Kiwanians set up an abundance of apple-related activities and open the camp for festival-goers.

“It’s a country fair atmosphere,” Tav-
en says, “with an apple archery range, apple miniature golf, apple treasure hunt, apple face painting and an apple obstacle course.”

It’s also a learning experience. At the taste-testing table, visitors discover the difference between Fuji, McIntosh and other varieties. Children learn to make delicious and healthful apple snacks and juice. The Calgary Public Library truck is there with shelves of apple-related books.

Taven says that about 150 volunteers are needed to run the festival. “Every club in the division — Calgary, Airdrie Foothills, Okotoks, Red Deer, Northmount Calgary, Calgary Chinook, Cochrane, Calgary Metro, Olds and our Circle K, Key Club and Aktion Clubs — participates,” he says.

Each Kiwanis club shows off its projects, including playgrounds, bike restorations and a Christmas toy program. As host, Kamp Kiwanis is on full autumnal display. Tethered hot-air balloon rides give a 360-degree view of the surrounding woods and beyond to Calgary’s skyline. While deer graze along the trails, guided hikes lead to the Elbow River. Former campers, reliving their youth, search for their names, still inscribed on “K-poles.” These totems have recorded every “kamper” and counselor’s name since 1951.

“Our primary goal is to raise Kiwanis’ profile with a fun, family event,” Taven says. “I think we do that very well.”
usually, the only pleasing acoustics you hear at a playground is the sweet sound of childish laughter — the music of kids lost in their own world of play. But some Kiwanis clubs are adding outdoor musical instruments to the score. Take a look at two harmonious programs at parks in North Carolina and Indiana.

**Kiwanis Club of Waynesville**
The Kiwanis Club of Waynesville, North Carolina, was facing sizable expenses for repairs to its 15-year-old playground. The structure was made entirely of wood and had nooks and crannies that prevented parents from seeing their children, says Marti Peithman, a club past president.

She made an appointment with Waynesville Parks and Recreation to see if the department could help fund a restoration. Then fate intervened.

“The day before I went, I saw an article in the paper about them building an all-inclusive, all-abilities playground right next to the Kiwanis playground,” Peithman recalls. “At the same time, Kiwanis was going to be in a contest to win a US$25,000 grant for playground equipment. So we gathered community leaders and media into the rec center and asked for help.”

The Legacy of Play contest, sponsored by Kiwanis partner Landscape Structures, involved getting people to cast votes for their favorite project every day for a certain
time period — and the Waynesville project earned more votes than the second- and third-place projects combined, Peithman says. Though the club didn’t win in the final judging, it did receive nearly $7,000, to which members and donors added enough to purchase adaptive playground equipment that any child can use and three large outdoor musical instruments: a kundu drum, a kettle drum and chimes (shown in photos).

“For our club, it’s the biggest thing we’ve ever done,” Peithman says. “Kids of all abilities can play on the equipment with their brothers and sisters. It’s really made an impact on our community. And the support we got from the community for the contest was amazing.”

Valparaiso Sunrise Kiwanis
While vacationing in Colorado, Valparaiso Sunrise, Indiana, Kiwanis Club member Mary Ann Claesgens was musing about how her club could mark its 30th anniversary when she heard something unexpected: the sound of gongs, chimes and drumbeats coming from an otherwise babbling brook. Exploring further, she found large musical instruments dotting the creek bank.
“Music is so important. It opens so many brain cells. I heard these beautiful sounds and just thought it’s something that would appeal to children, nature, Kiwanis and the community.”

She knew she’d found her answer.

“Music is so important. It opens so many brain cells,” says Claesgens. “I heard these beautiful sounds and just thought it’s something that would appeal to children, nature, Kiwanis and the community.”

The oversized percussion instruments are built to withstand all sorts of weather and kids of all ages and abilities. They’re expensive, so some parks purchase only one or two, but the Valparaiso club received enough funds in grants and donations to purchase three flowers (each petal makes its own gong tone), a manta ray metallophone and a set of swirl chimes.

“We wanted a more orchestral feel,” says Carol Short, the club’s president.

Short says the club will set aside money each fiscal year for additional instruments. A recent Valparaiso Parks Department activity book praised the “magical music instruments” and said, “The legacy of the Kiwanians and the gift of music shall be cherished by generations to come.”

Interested in building a musical playground? Landscape Structures can help. Learn more about this Kiwanis partner at playlsi.com.
The great pumpkin festival
A CANADIAN CLUB’S ANNUAL AUTUMN DISPLAY SUPPORTS KEY COMMUNITY CAUSES.
Story by Julie Saetre • Photos by Darren Stone

At the Oak Bay Kiwanis Club in Victoria, British Columbia, glowing pumpkins are far from frightful. For more than six years, these Canadian Kiwanians have teamed with a local artist to display hundreds of the decorated orbs for mesmerized children and adults alike during the Pumpkin Art on the Avenue event.

The resulting donations have made life easier for everyone from former foster kids to people with disabilities to those in distress.

Darlene Newburg, the Oak Bay club’s community service coordinator, has nurtured the festival for years. It all began when John Vickers, an artist and festival producer, began carving clever designs on polyurethane pumpkin molds and displaying them on his front lawn every October. Each year, he added new models, and eventually the Oak Bay Business Improvement Association began managing the show in Oak Bay’s city hall.

Newburg, a member of the business association, approached her fellow Kiwanians with a suggestion that the club become involved. It was a natural fit, since the club already hosted an outdoor October park party for the community with a roaring bonfire, a costume parade and plentiful amounts of hot dogs and popcorn.

Kiwanis members agreed and committed to a two-day setup process, four to five days of hosting the pumpkin art display in the park and a day of tear-down. And that was no easy task. Vickers’ pumpkin collection had grown to 800 models depicting characters from Disney movies, stars of The Big Bang Theory television show, members of the British royal family and the Oak Bay Municipal Council, among many others.
Kiwanians stacked milk crates in the park to use as podiums, then attached each pumpkin to a crate to hold it firmly in place. The stacks themselves were secured to the ground with rebar so the strong Canadian winds wouldn’t topple them to the ground. Then all the models were lit with miniature orange lights from within, while the milk-crate display stands received white accent lighting.

“It’s a little more convoluted than what it sounds — just put a pumpkin on top of a crate,” says Newburg. “It takes us quite a few hours to get them all up and ready to go.”

The results, however, made it all worthwhile. Thousands of dollars have been collected and dispensed to The Eliminate Project and other causes, such as a group home for teens who have aged out of foster care, a University of Victoria technology department that creates personalized mobility devices for those with disabilities, senior citizens and Oak Bay’s volunteer water-rescue team.

This year, the festival will have a new look. Vickers has moved to Toronto, and Newburg wants to give the event a fresh face. Area businesses will be able to choose a variety of the pumpkins to display in shop windows, and the public can vote on their favorites.

“We’re going to try something different this year,” Newburg says, “because after six or eight years in the same place and same setup, it becomes a little redundant. This is something that is very dear to me, because I just love being there, watching the kids’ faces.”
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
BIRTHDAYS

These clubs celebrate their 100th, 75th, 50th and 25th anniversaries in November and December.

**100TH — 1919**
Logansport, Indiana, November 7
Rome, Georgia, November 8
Sandusky, Ohio, November 8
Auburn, New York, November 13
New Richmond, Wisconsin, November 26
Roanoke, Virginia, November 26
Winston Salem, North Carolina, November 26
Lawrence, Kansas, November 28
Rock Island, Illinois, December 15
Kankakee, Illinois, December 27
Medina, Ohio, December 27
Maryville, Tennessee, December 29
Columbus, Georgia, December 31

**75TH — 1944**
Lebanon, Kentucky, November 13
Chewelah, Washington, November 29
Saint James, Manitoba, November 30
College Station, Texas, December 7

**50TH — 1969**
Drobak, Norway, November 4
Tonsberg, Norway, November 6
Antwerpen Ter Schelde, Belgium, November 17
Forsyth Monroe County, Georgia, November 18
Hafnarfjörður Eldborg, Iceland, November 27
Limoges, France, November 29
Oberwallis (Visp), Switzerland, December 13
Bregenz, Austria, December 15

**25TH — 1994**
Chauny Tergnier La Fère, France, November 9
Zug Ennetsee, Switzerland, November 19
Greater Davao 2000, Philippines, November 22
Karlsruhe, Germany, November 23

Greater Covington, Louisiana, December 1
Eastern St. Andrew, Jamaica, December 6
Pai Kuo Shan, Chang Hua, Taiwan, December 7
Fen Yuan, Chang Hua Hsien, Taiwan, December 7
Science City, Hsin Chu, Taiwan, December 14
Sammamish Kiwanis, Washington, December 15
Chen Kuang, Pan Chiao City, Taiwan, December 18
Rosalia, Taichung, Taiwan, December 23

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It’s great being a Kiwanian. Improving communities. Serving children. But, as President Daniel Vigneron (see “Friend of the Family,” page 12) and these members can attest, Kiwanis friendships are forever.

A past Key Club and Circle K member, Lindsey Lenhart joined the Kiwanis Club of Fort Myers Metro McGregor, Florida. “I never anticipated that I would gain a best friend through Kiwanis,” Lenhart says. “Rachel Toomey and I serve our community together, play soccer, share holidays and celebrate birthdays, which makes our friendship one that is hard to describe in words but not hard to understand.”

Colleen Biggerstaff of Allen, Texas, and Susan Hennum of Garland, Texas, met as contestants in a Mrs. Texas pageant and discovered each other’s interest in service. “I was impressed by how many service hours she had,” Biggerstaff says. “She said she got them through Kiwanis and asked if I would be interested in joining. There began a friendship that has lasted 24 years and counting.”

Dan Ruffner and Elliott Michnoff met at a Largo-Mid-Pinellas, Florida, Kiwanis Club meeting three years ago. “Dan and I just hit it off from the get-go,” Michnoff says. “After time went on, we just got closer and closer as friends. Now I know his wife and daughter, and he’s met my family as well.”

Laurie and Brian Nappier (below) were both in Key Club and CKI. “We met at a district convention and dated long-distance for two-and-a-half years,” she says. “We now have four kids, and I’m president of the Lake Norman, North Carolina, Kiwanis Club. The Kiwanis family is our family.”

After joining the Kiwanis Club of Thonon Evian Chablais, France, Monique Bochaton found herself surrounded by support. “We went through bad times, like when cancer hit my husband and another club member,” she says. “It’s through bad times that one can count true friends.”

You have a friend in Kiwanis

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