INTERNATIONAL BALLET STAR MISTY COPELAND STARTED DANCING AS A YOUNG GIRL AFTER SCHOOL AT A BOYS & GIRLS CLUB. THAT TIME INFLUENCED HER FOREVER.
THEY NEED US NOW.

In times of crisis, kids are always the most vulnerable. A gift to the Kiwanis Children's Fund is one of the most effective ways Kiwanians help them. When you give, you do more than fill bellies and deliver supplies. You bring health and hope to kids and communities. Now they need it more urgently than ever.

GIVE TODAY.
KIWANIS.ORG/HELPKIDS
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Mission Statement
The mission of Kiwanis magazine is to empower and inspire Kiwanis members to make lasting differences in the lives of children — and to share their powerful work with the world.

ON THE COVER
Misty Copeland
Photo courtesy of Under Armour
n the October/November 2020 issue, Kiwanis International Executive Director Stan Soderstrom wrote something that hit home for me: If you need help, ask. If you can provide help, offer.

It’s a message I’ve given my own kids since they were young enough to understand. If you need help, ask for it. Accept it. Then give thanks — and be there to help someone else. Continue the cycle. Ask for help, be the help.

Misty Copeland has done just that. One of six children of a single mom, she found help as a young girl at a Boys & Girls Club in California. After school, Misty spent the hours swimming and attending a woodworking class — and taking her first dance class. The rest, as they say, is history.

Now she’s reaching out to countless young people, giving them hope that their dreams can come true as well.

From the executive editor

KASEY JACKSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

help from others. And so, the cycle continues.

In fact, the cycle has existed for decades within the Kiwanis family. Walter Kiwanis was a young boy who Kiwanis members sheltered, fed and clothed. They took such great care of him that when it was proposed he be returned to his mother, a judge asked the members to make the call: Will Walter stay in their care or go back to his mother?

In his research about Walter, Multimedia Projects Editor Curtis Billue went down a rabbit hole of ancestry sites and news clippings. Who was this kid — and did a Kiwanis club really “adopt” him? The story seemed so far-fetched, but it kept coming up in old magazines and Kiwanis history books. Thanks to Curtis, we now present the true story of Walter Kiwanis.

Also in this issue, you’ll see two articles labeled “YOUR STORY.” These articles and photos were written and submitted by club members.

Want to see your club’s project highlighted in Kiwanis magazine or online? Send us your article and photos (or a summary of your club’s project) for possible use in an upcoming magazine or other official Kiwanis publications. Because we receive hundreds of submissions, we can’t publish them all. So be creative with your pitch! Remember, more people will know what your club is doing if you spread the word. So please submit to shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.

And, as always, happy reading.

KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

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Manila, Philippines, June 22–24, 2022

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, June 21–24, 2023

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How Can Your Kiwanis Discount Program Serve You?

Announcing your new Kiwanis Discount Program! As a Kiwanis member, you now have access to thousands of exclusive discounts that will help you save time and money when you need it most, which we know can be especially important at a time like this.

Whether you’re seeking reduced costs for groceries, products that align with your health and wellness goals, a way to keep children entertained and educated, or something else, make sure to visit your Kiwanis Discount Portal and browse through the tens of thousands of discounts available to you.

A Look at a Few of Our Many Discounts...

On Food
- Home Chef
- Grubhub
- Pet Plate
- Thrive Market

On Health & Wellness
- planet-fitness
- Equinox
- Diamondback
- nutribullet

On Education
- DeVry University
- Knowable
- Rosetta Stone
- TutorMe

On Children’s Products
- CodeWizards
- KiwiCo
- Yumbles

Head to kiwanis.perkspot.com to start saving!
For Kiwanis, the primary form of organizational growth will always be membership — through new clubs and new members in existing clubs. With new members, we have more hands devoted to service in each Kiwanis community.

But expanding Kiwanis is more than that. It also includes working to guarantee that Kiwanis represents all segments of our communities. Club diversity creates multiple benefits and opportunities. It increases credibility in the community. It signifies a desire to meet challenges. It increases club resources. These outcomes boost Kiwanis’ ability to address kids’ educational, security and wellness needs.

Membership growth also increases brand recognition, and that strengthens our service in each community. Such strength requires leadership — and amplifying Kiwanis leadership means expanded training. Our work on a dynamic leadership development opportunity is underway. (Read more about Amplify on page 9.)

The benefits are limitless. In fact, they extend to our youth. Expanding Kiwanis means enhancing the Kiwanis Service Leadership experience for those members. Because of Key Club and CKI, for example, they emerge as stronger leaders. So we’re investing in them. With a member-led CKI Task Force and the Key Club 2.0 Committee, Kiwanis staff is developing new opportunities. Initial results will be implemented during 2020-21.

Of course, growth doesn’t just come from one or two areas. It also means expanding the resources and reach of the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, greater use of social media, increased financial stability — and commitments from each of us to expand Kiwanis. During this holiday season, please renew your pledge to participate in Kiwanis.

As you do, Vickie and I wish you a jubilant season and a prosperous new year.

Through the years, much of the best Kiwanis service has been done in partnership. We’re a community-based organization, after all, and we’re at our best when we work with other community leaders.

In fact, Kiwanians understand collaboration instinctively. Even outside their clubs, members volunteer for boards and committees — serving in local governments and school systems, helping libraries and parks and places of worship. That’s how Kiwanians are wired.

And it’s why Kiwanis club membership is special. We change lives and improve communities, and we do it with like-minded people — adding fellowship to the pleasure of the work itself. But fellowship is available even beyond your club, as are the time, talent and treasure you need to get things done.

This practical fact is part of Kiwanis history. From the early days, clubs raised money with the Red Cross and helped kids in orphanages. Through the years, they’ve sponsored Boy Scout troops and underwritten children’s hospitals. And clubs throughout the Kiwanis family continue to draw on partnerships to reach the kids who need us.

In this issue, you’ll see why our partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America matters today — and how the organization shaped the life of the great dancer Misty Copeland.

As you read, consider your club’s possibilities. Think of local leaders in the public, private and nonprofit sectors who could be valuable partners in major projects and campaigns. And contact other Kiwanis clubs — because we often achieve things together that no club could by itself.

Remember: If you need help, ask. If you can give help, offer. Now more than ever, seek out the power of partnership.
TIME TO SAY THANKS.

Make a lasting statement with one of our beautiful men’s or women’s watches. These are gifts that let people know they are appreciated every second of every day.

kiwanis.org/store
What’s happening
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Children of all abilities in Worthington, Minnesota, will soon have an all-inclusive playground at a local park — the only playground of its kind in the community of 13,000.

The playground project is the winner of the seventh annual Legacy of Play contest, sponsored by Kiwanis International and Landscape Structures Inc. For submitting the winning contest entry, the Early Risers Kiwanis Club of Worthington will receive US$25,000 in playground equipment.

“Really? You’re kidding!” exclaimed Loreena Luetgers, member of the Early Risers Kiwanis Club of Worthington, after learning her club had won. She clapped her hands and pumped both fists. “Thank you! I’m about to cry.”

More information: kiwanis.org/lsi.

Kiwanis International announces policy changes
At its meetings held January 16 and February 19, 2020, the Kiwanis International Board has revised policies on criminal history background checks, alcohol guidelines, and endorsement of candidates for Kiwanis International office, and added a new policy affirming that Kiwanis will not tolerate any form of abuse or harassment against any youth.

At its meeting held October 2, 2020, the Kiwanis International Board revised policies on social media guidelines, depraved and unacceptable behavior in relation to children and youth, and endorsement of candidates for Kiwanis International office, and added a new policy about declaring emergency conditions. For more, go to kiwanis.org/policy.
New-member fee waiver ends this month

The Kiwanis International Board voted to extend a waiver on new member fees for existing Kiwanis clubs until December 31, 2020. The board is using its authority to bolster membership and help clubs serve their communities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The waiver only applies to new-member fees paid to Kiwanis International; however, the board encourages districts and clubs also to waive their respective new-member fees.

“We believe there should be no barriers for people to become Kiwanians. People who want to help kids succeed and those who want to make a positive impact on the community are invited to join Kiwanis,” says Art Riley, 2020-21 Kiwanis International president. “These new members are contributing to our organization with their passion, experience, know-how and commitment.”

Give to the Kiwanis Children’s Fund

With the new year just around the corner, many Kiwanians are preparing to make end-of-year donations. If you plan to support the Kiwanis mission through a gift to the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, here is some important information to keep in mind:

- To encourage charitable giving in 2020, the CARES Act included U.S. tax provisions that reward people who donate to charity. If you do not itemize your deductions in 2020, you can still reduce your taxable income by up to $300 for cash donations to any public 501 (c)(3) charities such as the Children’s Fund.

  - Phoned-in credit card gifts must be received by noon EST, December 21, 2020. To make a gift by phone, call 1-800-KIWANIS, ext. 233. For gifts after that date, please go to kiwanischildrensfund.org/give.

  - If you prefer to send a gift by mail, it must be postmarked by December 31, 2020, to count toward 2020 tax deductibility. A printable gift form can be found at kiwanischildrensfund.org/giftform. Mail the form to this address:
    Kiwanis Children’s Fund
    P.O. Box 6457 - Dept. #286
    Indianapolis, IN 46206 USA

Leadership training coming soon

Everyone can identify a great leader. But what makes a leader great?

It takes education and training. That’s why we’re introducing Kiwanis Amplify — a leadership program for new and emerging leaders who want to amplify their skills to help them build and lead a team.

Through Kiwanis Amplify, participants will learn skills to improve more than their Kiwanis club. They’ll get the skills needed to improve communities, careers, schools, the lives of adults and children everywhere.

Visit kiwanis.org/amplify to learn more about the program and suggest members you think would benefit from participating.

Key dates in December

International Day for Persons with Disabilities [3]

International Volunteer Day [5]

Kiwanis International staff holiday [25-January 1]
Three new partners can bring value to your club — or to you

Colonial Flag Foundation, a COVID-compliant fundraiser. Clubs can connect with communities while raising funds and honoring veterans and civil servants with Healing Field® and Field of Honor® flag displays, all of which allow social distancing. (U.S. only.)

PerkSpot, a one-stop online shop that offers savings in 25 retail categories — an ideal option for anyone who's being careful about their budget during the COVID-19 crisis.

VSP offers vision care for Kiwanis members with access to affordable, comprehensive coverage. Kiwanis members have access to more than 91,000 vision service providers across all 50 states ready to provide eye exams, lenses and frames. (U.S. only.)

More: kiwanis.org/partners.

Check in on your classrooms

It’s that time of year when pencils are down to a nub and erasers have little life left in them. So many people donate to schools at the beginning of the year, but teachers will tell you that supplies are needed all year long. Find out how you can support your classrooms with assistance from Kiwanis Warehouse. Shop online at kiwanis.org/warehouse.

Corrections

A story in the September 2020 issue of Kiwanis magazine incorrectly stated that the journalist Frank Whelan, author of the feature “A History of Service” (page 22), is a Kiwanis member.

A story in the October 2020 issue of Kiwanis magazine incorrectly identified Shonda Warner. Her corrected information and photo are below.

Shonda Warner is a farmer, investor and founder of Farmacopia Farms in Oregon. She grows a variety of things, including blueberries, hazelnuts and hemp, which is her main crop. She produces CBD oils and salves — and transports it all from farm to consumer.

“When I started in agriculture, there were very few women in grain trading,” she says.

That didn’t stop her. She followed her passion.
In this unprecedented year, our Kiwanis advisors and sponsoring clubs have gone above and beyond to keep our Service Leadership Programs thriving. We can’t thank you enough. Because of you, leaders of all ages and abilities now know that nothing can stop passionate people from caring about others and serving their communities.
It could be a scene from a holiday commercial. Picture this: Snow is gently falling on a crowded city street. A family of three, bundled in their winter garb, navigates the maze of people moving steadily along the sidewalk, often looking up in wonder at the lights tethered to the poles above. The smell of roasted nuts escapes from an open shop door, along with a sudden gust of warmth. It stops the family in its tracks. While Mom and Dad excitedly point at the colorful sweets in the window, their 6-year-old daughter peers up at a window across the street. Her eyes are bright. Her mouth slowly drops open. Without looking away from the window, she reaches back and tugs on her mom’s coat, unable to say a word. Her mom turns to her little one and follows her pointed, mittened hand up to what — or, more accurately who — stands before them.
It’s a poster of Misty Copeland. Larger than life. Right there in the window of an athletic store.

The Under Armour ad that debuted several years ago was perhaps the introduction for many to the first African American woman to be promoted to principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre in New York City. There she stood, strong and Black and female. And she dominated not only the windows of many stores in cities across the country, but the stage as well.

Her debut Under Armour ad, titled “I Will What I Want,” serves as a testament to the hard work and determination that got her where she is today.

Because life didn’t deal Misty Copeland the easiest hand. In 1996, when she and her five siblings and mother lived for a time in two small rooms in an inn, she did something that would change her life forever. She attended her first ballet class at the local Boys & Girls Club. It was there that she found the courage, discipline and determination to go from a 13-year-old girl in tube socks learning her first dance moves to dancing en pointe only three months later. Within a year, she was dancing professionally.

Copeland didn’t let an unsettled life get in her way.

You may recognize Copeland because you’ve seen her in that Under Armour ad. The little girl down the street may know her as Clara the Princess in The Nutcracker. Others know her as The Firebird. And others still know her as a bestselling author and from countless magazine covers and morning television interviews.

But many volunteers, staff and attendees of the Boys & Girls Club of San Pedro, California (now known as the Boys & Girls Club of the Los Angeles Harbor), know her as the little girl who had a dream and grew up to be the princess of the stage.
“Having the title of principal dancer, I’m now a very visible and tangible representation for those who came before me and for the future of those who will be able to see themselves through me.”

*Firebird* photo by Gene Schiavone
10 questions with Misty Copeland

① Tell us a little about why you started attending the San Pedro Boys & Girls Club and what types of things you did there. My mother was a single parent with six children, and my club was walking distance from my school. It was a safe place for me and my siblings to go while my mother worked. It was also the first place I’d ever been exposed to tutoring, extracurricular activities, sports and eventually ballet. I fell in love with woodshop class and the pool. It was really the first time I was a part of anything artistic. It changed my life.

② What do you remember feeling that first time you danced at BGCA? The first time I danced at my club was when I would practice my drill team routines in the gym. I loved it! But when I took ballet for the first time in that same gym on the basketball court, it was terrifying. It was the first time I was forced to step outside of my comfort zone. And I never looked back.

③ Do you continue to grow from what you learned through your time at BGCA, and if so, in what ways? I think I realize it more and more, in time and with maturity, what an impact the club had and has on me. It was the first time I saw mentorship and leadership. Those qualities were instilled in me from then on.

④ Why is it important for volunteers to keep places like Boys & Girls Clubs active and thriving? There are so many communities across the country that don’t have a strong support structure, that don’t have a safe home away from home, or a home at all for that matter. So when we have an institution where we can come together from all walks of life, learn from and encourage one another, it is a huge asset to everyone.

⑤ Volunteers were once such an important part of your life. How do you pay it forward to give back to your community? To be in a position of impact and visibility has been a true gift to me. I know it’s not for everyone, but I’ve happily stepped into a role of mentor, leader and representation. I use my voice to share my experiences, the benefits of organizations like BGCA and the importance of the arts in our communities.

⑥ Sometimes we have dreams we think are too big. What would you say to someone who wants to give up on a dream? It’s truly never too late to dream, and there’s certainly never too big of a dream to have. I think that if you know deep down exactly what it is you want for
your life, fight for it! Surround yourself with supportive and uplifting people and approach things one day at a time. Every day is another opportunity to go for what you want.

⑦ Becoming the first Black female principal dancer with American Ballet Theatre has certainly changed countless things about your life. What is the most profound change?
Having the title of principal dancer, I’m now a very visible and tangible representation for those who came before me and for the future of those who will be able to see themselves through me. That, to me, is the most profound.

⑧ You’ve certainly met thousands of young dancers. Can you share with us one particular moment that will stick with you … one memory you’ve held close?
Meeting and becoming friends with a young cancer survivor named Renata. She reminds me daily just how precious life is, how valuable my relationships are and how fortunate I am to get to do what I love!

⑨ What message or advice would you like to give Kiwanis members about the work they do helping children in their communities?
Every single effort toward all of our missions to enrich our communities and opportunities for the next generation does not go unnoticed. I support and champion you because your work, love and support matter! Thank you.

⑩ On days when you just want to sleep in, or the aches and pains of countless hours of workouts and dance have you feeling drained, what motivates you to keep going?
Reminding myself just how fortunate I am, thinking of the young ones watching me, and last, remembering why I do what I do. Because I absolutely love it!
When Kiwanis International officially partnered with Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Canada in 2007, it cemented a meeting of minds and hearts committed to improving the lives of children.

Kiwanis is dedicated to serving the children of the world, a calling reflected in the Boys & Girls Clubs mission “to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.”

Shanna Warren is chief executive officer of California’s Boys & Girls Club of Bur-
bank and Greater East Valley, which was founded in 1995 by a group that included a member of the Burbank Sunrise Kiwanis Club. Warren joined the Boys & Girls Club in 2001 and served as the director of its first after-school program, so her perspective on the Kiwanis partnership has been framed by more than two decades of experience.

“Our missions are aligned, so it’s a natural partnership,” she says. “Your motto is serving the children of the world. We can’t reach that far, but that’s very close to what our mission is. When you can find a service club that has the same core values, it’s a great partnership.”

The admiration is mutual. Since 2009, Donna Ferracane, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Redlands, California, has organized her club’s participation in an annual back-to-school shopping spree for members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside. It’s part of an ongoing relationship between the two clubs,
Fishing trip sponsored by the Burbank Sunrise Kiwanis Club
one that Ferracone says works because of the Boys & Girls Clubs’ professionalism.

“The Boys & Girls Clubs (operation) is organized. They’ve got goals. They’ve got a very set organizational path with the kids. Their staff is excellent. They have good ideas.”

These Kiwanis clubs offer examples of how powerful the collaboration between the two organizations can be — for the adults working on both sides of the equation and, most important, for the young people whose lives they’re changing.

**Making an impact in Toronto**

In Canada, the Kiwanis Club of Toronto’s relationship with its local Boys & Girls Clubs stretches back almost a century — to 1921, when members established what is today the Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Clubs in a church basement. Although the Boys & Girls Clubs incorporated as a separate nonprofit in 1992, the two groups remain closely connected, starting with the basics: The Kiwanians donate more than CA$300,000 annually through the Kiwanis Club of Toronto Foundation.

“It’s meant everything. The general operating funding that we get from Kiwanis is huge,” says Kathy Maney, director of finance and administration for the Toronto Kiwanis Boys & Girls Clubs. “We do a lot of very grant-based projects, where money is given to support specific programs with very specific ties to what the money can be spent on. The Kiwanis core funding gives us a little bit of flexibility to make sure we can keep our lights on, we can pay the hydro bill, we can do all those sorts of things. That’s been hugely important.”

The core infrastructure is key. The Toronto Boys & Girls Clubs serve 1,200 youth annually at four program sites, with opportunities for a fifth being explored.

“The Boys & Girls Clubs (operation) is organized. They’ve got goals. They’ve got a very set organizational path with the kids. Their staff is excellent. They have good ideas.”

Kiwanis funding helps ensure that those clubhouses are open to provide afterschool and evening programs that incorporate physical activity, healthy eating and nutrition education, wellness and personal health support, literacy development, access to technology, experiential learning opportunities and more.

Greg Gary joined the Toronto Boys & Girls Clubs as executive director in July 2020. The former Canadian Football League player and University of Toronto football coach has more than 12 years of experience working in community organizations, including service to at-risk youth. So he knows the difficulty of finding support for much-needed programming — support that is even more crucial as the world deals with a pandemic and its economic fallout.

“Resources have become more and more scarce. And I think they’re going to get tighter and tighter,” he says. “(Kiwanis clubs) have an organization that can give you the resources to deliver programming. It’s invaluable.”

Kiwanis funding — from the Toronto club’s foundation and generous individual members — also helps Boys & Girls Clubs members pursue their goals through scholarships.

“We’re taking a look at some of these young people and not just supporting the first year, but actually supporting their journey through post-secondary,” explains Maney, “so we know that we get them to the finish line as well.”

Kiwanians also support an annual “hamper” (or basket) program, which provides holiday meals to families who otherwise couldn’t afford them. The funds are appropriately dubbed “happy dollars,” says Tim Simpson, the Toronto Kiwanis Club’s immediate past president.

“If you’ve got something good happening in your world, as you’re announcing it, you give a dollar or two. Every time someone has a birthday, they give their
We try to be as positive and inclusive as we can."

The Toronto Kiwanians give more than financial support. They contribute time as volunteers, grilling up burgers and spinning cotton candy at the Boys & Girls Clubs’ annual summer barbecue and overseeing bounce houses at the winter holiday bash. And on a day-to-day basis, the Kiwanians provide mentorship and friendship to kids who need the dependability of a caring adult in their lives. It’s about being “an impact person,” Gary says.

“It’s that one person who comes in and says, ‘You know what? You could probably survive at a university and get a degree. We’re going to make sure you make it through high school.’ Nobody’s really ever given them that hope yet. Those few words are so valuable to somebody who’s looking for hope.”

**Family ties in Burbank**

Like its Canadian cousin, the Boys & Girls Club of Burbank and Greater East Valley in California has been associated with Kiwanis from its start. In 1995, a member of the Burbank Sunrise Kiwanis Club joined a member of the Burbank City Council and others to launch the Boys & Girls Club in a converted firehouse. It wasn’t long until other Kiwanis members got involved — and stayed involved.

“We’ve never stopped giving,” says Donna Anderson, immediate past president of the Burbank Sunrise Kiwanis Club.

Over the decades, the Kiwanians have sponsored and chaperoned field trips to Disneyland, the circus, museums and fishing trips. About 10 years ago, they launched a K-Kids club at the Boys & Girls Club. As the Burbank BAGC has expanded to 23 locations serving 3,000 kids annually, the Kiwanians have purchased vans for transportation.

Recently, the Sunrise club pledged US$25,000 to support the Boys & Girls Club capital campaign to purchase a building that will serve as its new, larger home base.

The partnership with the Sunrise Kiwanians has been so beneficial that the Boys & Girls Club has reached out to two additional Kiwanis clubs, the Burbank club and the Glendale club. BAGC staff have joined those clubs as well.

“The Kiwanians, in my experience, want to roll their sleeves up, they want to get in there, they want to engage with the kids, they want to see the impact that they’re making,” Warren says. “So they’re excellent partners.”

Anderson and her fellow club members wouldn’t have it any other way.

“How are you going to know what the real kids of Burbank need if you don’t get involved with them?” Anderson says. “These kids know us because they see what we give to the Boys & Girls Club. They’ll always remember Kiwanis. And they will join eventually. I really believe it.”

**Bonding in the Inland Empire**

In 2001, P.T. McEwen became president and chief executive officer of California’s Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside — and a member of the Kiwanis Club of Redlands.
For many years, the Redlands-Riverside Boys & Girls Clubs partnered with Mervyn’s, a California-based department store chain, to treat BAGC members in need to a back-to-school shopping spree. But in 2008, Mervyn’s filed for bankruptcy, and the Boys & Girls Clubs needed a new partner.

McEwen’s fellow Kiwanians had already helped out with BAGC projects in the past, so the CEO approached them again, and the club immediately agreed.

The club now teams with Kohl’s, a U.S. department store chain. An area Kohl’s opens early for a shopping time exclusively for the Kiwanians and kids.

Kiwanian Donna Ferracane organizes the event each year, recruiting volunteers and matching them with a child. For the 2020 event, the Kiwanians, along with some of their family members, helped 50 kids select new outfits. In the era of COVID-19, all shoppers donned face masks, used hand sanitizer and underwent temperature checks before hitting the racks. The shopping process, Ferracane says, can be humbling.

“Some of the things you hear, like ‘I’ve never had a new pair of shoes before’ or ‘You mean I get to buy my own underwear?’ Just things that really make you think. They’re kids that don’t get to experience some of the things that our kids and other kids get to experience all the time.”

As the event has grown, another Kiwanis club has answered the call to help. For the past decade, members of the Kiwanis Club of San Bernardino have attended the shopping spree. They sponsored an additional 30 kids in 2020.

The conversations between the adult/kid teams often are as valuable as the wardrobe selections, says Mark Davis, senior vice president of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.

“It builds a close bond in the relationship, and it gives an opportunity for the Kiwanian to not just know that they’re doing something, but they’re doing something that makes a big difference in a child’s life. Because that child is going to remember that for the rest of their life.”

Elizabeth Silvius is immediate past president of the San Bernardino Kiwanis Club.

“I’ve enjoyed meeting the children when I have helped with this event,” she says, “and love talking to them about what they are excited about in the coming school year. This year, I shopped with a young girl who loved math, which is what I studied in college, and it was fun to give some encouragement to a future female mathematician.”

The experience is so moving that some Kiwanians go above and beyond the US$100-per-child budget.

“A lot of the Kiwanis members are generous,” says McEwen, who served as the Redlands club president in 2019-20. “Kids might go over (the spending limit). And it’s very, very common for a Kiwanis member to just pull out their credit card and pay the balance.”

Neither Kiwanis club limits its involvement to the shopping spree, however. For example, the Redlands club has supported the Boys & Girls Clubs summer camps and other programming, provided Thanksgiving meals to BAGC members and worked craft booths at fall festivals. The club also sponsors a K-Kids club at the Boys & Girls Clubs. In San Bernardino, Kiwanians have helped with BAGC transportation and made monetary donations.

In 2020, social distancing requirements have also inspired them to get creative.

“At our division installation, which our club hosted virtually, we held a trivia contest to get to know our new lieutenant governor, Rex Ramsey,” Silvius says. “We collected donations from our members, and the winning trivia team was allowed to designate a charity in the area to donate the money to. The winning team chose The Boys & Girls Club, and we sent them a $250 donation.”

It’s just one more example of what happens when two groups with complementary missions merge their passion, talents and support.

“I just can’t say enough good things about our partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs and the way that we’re able to help kids,” says Ferracone.

Concludes McEwen, “Boys & Girls Clubs are all about kids, and so is Kiwanis. I think that’s the easiest and most beautiful thing.”

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KIWANIANS IN ICELAND SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVE WEEKEND RETREAT FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN THE REYKJAVIK AREA.

Story by Inga Pórunn Halldórsdóttir and Konný R. Hjaltadóttir • Photos by Guðrún Arinbjarnardóttir

Bicycles splashing in water sounds fun and indeed not an everyday thing, yet at Vinasetrið (Friends Center) in Kaldársel, Iceland, children get to experience and do things they never dreamed of.

Vinasetrið is a weekend home for children 6-12 years old in need of emotional and social support. Annually, about 100 children get the opportunity to stay there. They come from various circumstances; some are in foster care, while others face hardships at home, such as poverty, illness or lack of support. Many of the children are socially isolated, with few or no friends.

“Getting the opportunity to spend a weekend at Vinasetrið, in a safe and inclusive environment, engaging in play and work, can truly alter the lives of many disadvantaged children,” says Inga Pórunn Halldórsdóttir, president of the Kiwanis Club of Dyngja.

This story and accompanying photos were submitted by the Kiwanis Club of Dyngja, Iceland. Tell us what your club is doing at shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.
The Kiwanis Club of Dyngja, chartered on December 12, 2012, is a 13-member female club in the Iceland-Faroes District. In the spirit of the Kiwanis mission of helping children locally and globally, the club has been an active participant in many of the district’s joint projects from the beginning, while also launching a special partnership with Vinasetrið. Despite being a small club, it’s very active, vibrant and engaging. In fact, it has been a distinguished district club for the past five years.

The Vinasetrið project was the district’s most notable service project in 2019, and selected as the district’s entry in the 2020 Kiwanis International Signature Project Contest. The general sentiment of the membership is to be humbled by the laurels, but extremely proud of the acknowledgement of their hard work.

“The purpose of Vinasetrið is to give every child the opportunity to experience joy, despite sometimes dreary circumstances or difficulties, in order to learn to trust others and their environment and to receive spontaneous and caring intimacy,” says Guðrún Arinbjarnadóttir, the manager of Vinasetrið.

Vinasetrið has a motto: Joy – Trust – Inclusiveness. As a nonprofit organization, it operates on the philosophy that every child is unique, deserves the best in life and should have an opportunity to have a bright and successful future. That philosophy is also crystallized in Kiwanis’ definition and motto — as well as in the Kiwanis International and Iceland-Faroes District strategic plans — and has an indisputably strong harmony with the vision of the organization: “Kiwanis will be a positive influence in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and the world, so that one day all children will wake up in normal home, yet without any smart devices or TV. A positive and caring atmosphere is essential for the children to feel comfortable — and to realize that they have been chosen to be a part of it, instead of being sent away. All facilities are well suited for playing and enjoying the outdoors in the diverse and stunning natural paradise of Kaldársel, where the home is located, offering the children various opportunities for leisure and a variety of experiences that many of them miss in their daily lives. Today it could be baking, cooking, reading or cycling. Tomorrow they may go swimming, hiking, bowling, to a theater or a museum.

“It is healthy to be outside, to try different things and get an outlet for creativity and experience the joy of play,” says past club president Konný R. Hjaltadóttir.

Is a new environment a challenge for the children? Here’s what one child says:

“When I am at Vinasetrið, I can just be myself — play without having to worry about anything.”

From the friendship between children and adults to challenging new tasks, role-playing games, help with housework and various social activities, there’s no shortage of ways for the kids to become more socially skilled. Thus, it is also possible to break the social isolation confronting many of them. The children are at Vinasetrið on their own terms.

“Kiwanis will be a positive influence in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and the world, so that one day all children will wake up in communities that believe in them, nurture them and provide them with the necessary support they need to thrive.”
“The purpose of Vinasetrið is to give every child the opportunity to experience joy, despite sometimes dreary circumstances or difficulties, in order to learn to trust others and their environment and to receive spontaneous and caring intimacy.”

The Dyngja Kiwanis Club has supported the activities of Vinasetrið since 2013. The collaboration is outstanding, and a close friendship has developed. Twice a year, the Kiwanis members organize bingo nights with an attendance of 80-100 enthusiastic players. These events are open to the public, with all proceeds going to Vinasetrið. Members collect prizes and gifts from local businesses, many of which are very supportive and positive toward Kiwanis, the club and the project. Many also have donated gift certificates directly to Vinasetrið. Club members also frequently donate items, such as furniture, toys, household goods and clothing, as well as movie and bowling tickets. They also regularly visit Vinasetrið, and in turn its employees attend Dyngja meetings, bingo nights and other events.

To the great delight of the staff of Vinasetrið, children’s “dirt bikes” were donated this year. The children use the bikes extensively for longer and shorter rides. Thus they have the opportunity to try new things, solve tasks, learn about the environment, appreciate nature and rejoice in victories and discoveries. The Iceland-Faroes helmet project has provided every 6-year-old in the country with a safety bike helmet since 2005. Vinasetrið is no exception and annually receives some helmet donations.

Club members have wholeheartedly embraced the project and unselfishly support the process. They acknowledge it as their club’s long-term signature project and a valuable partnership in continuous development. It also is the future of the club. In fact, the partnership is in the spirit of Kiwanis — supporting activities that enhance and enrich the lives of children in need. The club’s sponsorship of the home is very important to the children, of course, but it also warms the Kiwanis hearts of the club members who serve them.
every organization has an origin story. Kiwanis is no different.

Founded by Allen Simpson Browne in Detroit 1914, Kiwanis began as a fraternal club for business, with Joseph G. Prance, a successful tailor, as the first member. Meetings were held for men to discuss business.

About four years later, Kiwanis would switch its focus from a businessmen’s club to a service club specifically dedicated to children in need. And the story of how it happened would become Kiwanis legend.

It started with a Polish child who had been abandoned by his father and “adopted” by the Detroit No. 1 Kiwanis Club. They called him “Walter Kiwanis.” They took care of Walter, clothed and fed him, treated him as if he were their own child.

The tale of Walter Kiwanis would then be told, forgotten and rediscovered over the decades.

But who was Walter Kiwanis, and what really happened to him? And did a club’s generosity really refocus the entire organization?

Immigrating to America

Wladyslaw “Walter” Nalaski was born on Christmas Day 1909, in Plonsk, Russia. (Poland wouldn’t
regain independence until 1918, when it became a republic after 123 years of being partitioned between Russia, Prussia and Austria.)

His parents, Wiktorya “Victoria” Olszewska Nalaski and Franciszek “Francis” Nalaski, also known as Franz or Franc, also had two other children, Steve and Marie.

On March 17, 1910, Franz Nalaski arrived at Ellis Island on the ship Frederick the Great, from the German port of Bremen, according to Liberty Ellis Foundation records. He then made his home at 690 Frederick Street in Detroit, Michigan.

In the early 20th century, Polish immigrant life in America was difficult — because of the language barrier, cost of living, living conditions and the number of immigrants seeking work.

“Many peasants in Poland migrated from partitioned Poland in hopes of land and opportunity,” says Dominic Pacyga, professor emeritus of history at Columbia College Chicago, “only to live in slum dorms, often without running water, with entire families living in one room.”

This was the case for Walter’s family. His case file from the Children’s Aid Society of Detroit tells part of the story: “Walter’s father came over from Poland alone, leaving his wife and three children, whom he promised to send for later. They did not hear from him, so the wife decided to bring the oldest child, ‘Władysław’ (Walter), with her, leaving the other two children with her mother.”

With her 3-year-old in tow, Victoria began the long, arduous
journey to New York to find her husband. They arrived on the S.S. Amerika on January 30, 1913.

“There were three waves of economic migrations from 1850 to 1920,” says Pacyga, “and during that time it would take a family 10 days to two weeks to get from their village to Hamburg, Germany, then take a steamer to New York and finally a train to Chicago.”

Victoria never made it to Detroit. Instead, she fell in love with Frankciszek “Frank” Malkowski from Płonsk and started a new life in Chicago. Soon after, they had their first child, Edward.

She lived with Malkowski for two years and, according to the Children’s Aid Society of Detroit, “when Walter’s father learned of this, he kidnapped Walter and brought him to Detroit.”

A few years later, Walter would be abandoned.

What would cause a father to leave his son? Was it the hardships of working and raising a son by himself? Was it the news that his former wife had remarried and had a second child, Sabina, with her new husband? Or was it a patriotic calling to fight for Polish independence in World War I?

Details are few, but the following facts are known: Francis enlisted for the draft on national registration day, September 12, 1918.

Whatever his father’s reasons, little Władyslaw found himself orphaned on the streets of Detroit.

**Adopting Walter**

In “The Kiwanis Legacy,” a Kiwanis history book by Chuck Jonak, the author writes: “Perhaps the most famous early service project of all unfolded in the city where Kiwanis was born.”

That’s where the Detroit No. 1 club hosted a speaker along with a special 8-year-old guest.

“George R. Bedinger, general secretary of the Children’s Aid Society, addressed the club at Hotel Statler,” reported the Detroit Free Press on October 9, 1918. “He told of the many activities of the society, its purpose, and what it has accomplished in Detroit.

“The club voted to adopt a boy Walter, in care of the society, by subscribing a fund for his maintenance. Walter was in attendance at the meeting and was presented with a Kiwanis emblem and also made an honorary member.”

According to Jonak, the Detroit Kiwanis club was looking for a project to help an underprivileged child. When they learned of Władyslaw’s case, they found a foster home for him, intending him to live there with an elderly couple. And the club members would make sure “Walter” had everything he needed.

“Every member was rushing around trying to see who would have the opportunity of buying the lad a new overcoat, a new suit or a toy. He was the ward of Kiwanis. He was our son, Walter Kiwanis, and we were proud of him.”

Whenever we had a father and son meeting, Walter was right there and we just naturally outdid ourselves,” Johnston said. “We loved him and there is no doubt about how he felt. His mother was proud of him and proud of what the club was doing for him.”

This remarkable level of service motivated some of the club’s members to do even more — at a moment when Kiwanis as a whole was suffering an identity crisis.

Continued on page 48
快樂人生 我拒毒
KIWANIS CLUBS FROM THE TAIWAN DISTRICT PLANNED AND EXECUTED AN ANTI-DRUG PROGRAM THAT INVOLVED ORIGINAL PAINTINGS BY STUDENTS AND ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THEIR ART.

Keeping illegal and unsafe drugs away from youth is a war waged in many parts of the world. In Taiwan, the fight against illegal drug sales and use, especially among young people, reaches all the way to the top.

In her inauguration speech in 2016, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen announced that the anti-drug effort would be one of the societal issues the government would act on. And in fact, within the first part of her presidency, there was a 20% increase in cases related to illegal drugs. Tsai says that Taiwan’s youth is increasingly using drugs and that those not involved in the drug trade should be treated as “patients and victims,” not as criminals.

Taiwan leadership is taking this war on drugs very seriously. And so are Kiwanis members.
“The drug issue is considered a national and social security issue, especially the age of drug use dropping these days,” says Taiwan District Immediate Past Governor Liu Chun-Kuai. “Drug dealing is invading campuses from high school to elementary school. The minimum age of drug users in Taiwan is 10. In the past, the government has given harsh penalties, and nongovernmental organizations also have gotten involved. The Taiwan District of Kiwanis stands on the same page with the government.”

The Taiwan District has dedicated countless hours to drug awareness, and one recent project — a poster competition — brought together 5,000 students, from elementary to junior high, to create...
吸毒一时，灵魂消逝~
posters to spread the antidrug message. They worked with the Education Bureau to reach out to as many students as possible.

“We hoped to emphasize the idea of drugs and their influences through the creativity and imagination of the students themselves,” Liu says.

The Kiwanians sent the paintings to all schools, and the students selected their favorites in the first round. The Taiwan District Kiwanians also created an album for all the selected art pieces and now have an art gallery of the top three posters in each group at the district office, where visiting Kiwanians from every division have the chance to see the pieces.

But this poster competition is just a part of what the Taiwan District is doing in the fight against drugs. For example, Kiwanis members can volunteer for training on how to talk about standing up and saying no to drugs — and then take that message to school campuses all over the country. Members have also recently worked with the Taichung City government, creating a booth where they work with students to promote antidrug education to the public.

“Through the multi-teaching style in antidrug education, Kiwanians volunteer to learn drug abuse knowledge, interacting with students to host a series of events such as the painting competition, an antidrug movie and an antidrug quiz reward,” Liu says. “The antidrug exhibition at the Taichung City government this past September was a nation-
KIWANIS ASIA-PACIFIC

...al event integrating resources and support from different departments, associations and public and private sectors in drug abuse prevention.

“The Taiwan District of Kiwanis set up the antidrug booth on a sunny Saturday morning, with volunteers from Kiwanis, SLP students and an international student group. Kiwanians working together with youth in the antidrug quiz reward at the booth educate the public in drug abuse and promote the Kiwanis brand to the public.”

It’s a lot of work, Liu says, but it’s been worth it to reach so many people.

“It’s the first time for the Taiwan District to host a series in antidrug promotion,” she adds. “All the divisions and clubs in the district worked hard on it. We’ve gotten efficient feedback that it’s all been successful. The Taiwan District widely implements the motto of taking care of kids and society.”
In 1984, the newly chartered Lloydminster Kiwanis Club marked its first holiday season with a nice little project: giving out a “Christmas bag” to 15 local kids with special needs at Randall Park Elementary School.

The club is still there today. So is the program. And they’ve both grown in the years since. In 2019, the club packed 2,100 bags for The Santa Project — for all students in preschool through second grade, in all Lloydminster schools.

“The following year, a couple more schools were included,” Gallant says, “and before long, all the public schools were included. By early 1990, all the schools in Lloydminster were part of the program.”

It’s a rewarding project, but it’s demanding. In 2011, the club limited the top age of recipients to second grade so that volunteers could keep up with the need. With preschool kids now included, the Santa Project is a four-day event each December.

For the volunteers themselves, it’s an all-week affair. Club members start gathering at noon on the Monday of Santa Project week. With more than 2,000 bags to pack, they have to get a jump on opening boxes and sorting items. Each bag contains a toy, 10 chocolate bars, a bag of chips, an orange, a candy cane, Life Savers and other peanut-free candies.

On Monday evening, members and friends gather for supper and then start packing the bags. “It’s a great social evening,” Gallant says. “Beginning early Tuesday morning, all the bags are delivered to the schools, and Santa and his elves begin a very hectic week. “Santa most often has to return to some schools two or three times during the week to accommodate the kindergarten and the preschool students.”

Heart-wrenching stories
For the kids, it’s more than a matter of getting a bag. Each child can sit on Santa’s knee for a visit.

“If Mrs. Claus and the ‘elves’ organize the children,” Gallant says. “One elf sits next to Santa and joy we bring to the school.”

It’s not just the teachers, Gallant adds. “We have many people in the community who call to see when we’re packing bags because they want to come and help.”

Working all week
The Santa Project’s growth began immediately. A new member took over in 1985 and expanded it to include all children from kindergarten through third grade.

“Santa’s signature project
THE LLOYDMINSTER KIWANIS CLUB BRINGS TREATS AND CHEER TO LOCAL KIDS EACH YEAR. BY VERA GALLANT, LT. GOV. DIVISION 5, WESTERN CANADA DISTRICT

[Image 412x593 to 610x282]
[Image 23x407 to 234x601]
and hands him the bag, which he gives to the child, and we all sing Christmas carols and just have a whole lot of fun.”

Even Santa couldn’t resist the Kiwanis spirit. “We had the same Santa for 33 years, and he eventually became a Kiwanis member.”

After his retirement, the project has used two Santas in recent years. At first, each one worked two days. This year, both Santas will work all four days.

The number of children they serve isn’t the only change.

“More and more, we hear kids asking for basics like warm socks, a pair of shoes or for Daddy to be home for Christmas,” Gallant says. “Santa and his elves hear some heart-wrenching stories.”

Last year, a young girl asked Santa for food. Volunteers ended up taking two vans full of groceries to the family, along with gifts.

“The Key Club, along with a Kiwanis member, went caroling to the home of that little girl,” Gallant says. “To see this family hold each other as we sang Christmas carols brought us to tears.”

Even small gestures matter. Two years ago, Gallant recalls, Mrs. Claus called a little boy “precious” as she helped him get in line to see Santa.

“He gave her the biggest hug and didn’t want to let go,” Gallant says. “He did the same with Santa. The teacher came to Mrs. Claus in tears as the class was leaving, saying that little boy would never be called any endearment and wouldn’t see Santa if it wasn’t for us coming.”

A community effort

Sometimes teachers approach Kiwanians during the event to ask whether they have extra bags for students who won’t get presents for Christmas. At moments like those, the club’s appreciation for community participation runs high. For instance, it helps keep the budget at about CAD$6,000.

“Even though our numbers have increased,” Gallant says, “our costs have remained the same or less these past two years because of the generosity of our community. The stores help by donating some of the items (for the giveaway bags), and others give us discounts. If we don’t call them, they call us to see how many bags we’re filling this year.”

Such enthusiasm makes the Santa Project a signature project: It attracts the media and it’s a good recruiting tool.

“Once you’ve been part of this project, you truly want to become a Kiwanian,” Gallant says. “Despite all the work, one smile makes it all worthwhile. And we get 2,100 smiles, and almost as many hugs.”

This story and accompanying photos were submitted by the Lloydminster Kiwanis Club. Tell us what your club is doing at shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.
Comforting companions

CALIFORNIA KIWANIANS MAKE SPECIAL DOLLS FOR KIDS UNDER STRESS.
BY LYDIA JOHNSON

Everyone could use a little more comfort these days. Members of the Laguna-Saddle Hills Kiwanis Club in Laguna Hills, California, have comforted kids around the world with handmade “Healing Buddies” dolls since 2015.

“There are so many children in our county who are in desperate need of hope, of love, of joy in their lives because of their situations,” says club member Dottie Jefferies, the sewing coordinator for the Healing Buddies project.

The experienced crocheter and sewer organizes volunteers from her Kiwanis club, the Saddleback College Circle K International Club and Kiwanians across Orange County, California, to make the dolls for kids in need. The 15-inch muslin dolls are cut from a pattern, stuffed, sewn and tagged with a Kiwanis identifier.

Dolls are given to children in pediatric hospitals and to those who have been impacted by natural disasters, as well as young residents in domestic abuse and homeless shelters. Local fire and police authorities and court-appointed special advocates share Healing Buddies with children who have witnessed traumatic events.

The toys come with a certificate, a colorful crochet hat and markers for children to draw their own facial features. “They help them embrace anything that comes their way,” says Jefferies of the dolls.

The Laguna-Saddle Hills Kiwanis Club covers the US$35 material cost per doll. Volunteers and pediatric therapists personally deliver the dolls to children in local facilities. A fellow club member also has distributed dolls internationally to children in Uganda, Jordan, Mexico, Jamaica and Vietnam through his work with medical missions at the University of Southern California, Irvine.

Jefferies says that all children respond the same when they receive a Healing Buddy: “‘Can I really take it home?’ They can’t believe it’s theirs.”

In 2019 alone, members of the Laguna-Saddle Hills Kiwanis Club and the Saddleback CKI Club distributed 1,725 Healing Buddies.

Before the pandemic, volunteers created and delivered dolls year-round. Now they’ve pivoted to sewing face masks for healthcare workers.

Volunteers are ready to get back to delivering dolls as soon as it’s safe. Nothing will keep them from their commitment to uplift children and remind them that people in their community care.

“It’s a heart-to-heart thing,” says Jefferies.
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The coronavirus pandemic not only forced all of us to press pause on our “normal” lives, but also to find creative ways to keep doing the things we love. That’s exactly what many Kiwanis clubs around the world are doing, including the Golden K Quincy Kiwanis Club in Illinois.

In December, the club began collaborating with Children’s Medical Ministries (CMM), a nonprofit organization that assists children and families in poor and developing countries. Their joint goal was to provide high quality, personally fitted Beeline wheelchairs to children with disabilities in Guatemala.

“These Beeline wheelchairs are unique,” says Marvin Kerber, the club’s former secretary. “They provide more comfort, as they can be reclined to a position better suited to the child’s body, and the chair can be readjusted as the child grows. It also includes a desktop.”

Not only does this wheelchair provide children the gift of mobility, it also enables them to go to school and pursue their education.

“Children in poor and developing countries are many,” says Tieken. “There is little (or no) government assistance, and children are born with severe disabilities or develop illnesses that develop into mental and physical disabilities. The needs are many and ongoing.”

Due to travel restrictions, the chairs are now fitted via Zoom, allowing physical therapists in the United States to connect with wheelchair technicians in Guatemala. CMM president Mary Tieken says this virtual fitting clinic serves as a prototype for future and ongoing cost-effective wheelchair distributions throughout the world.

So far, the club has gifted three wheelchairs to Guatemalan children in need. For each, they’ve been able to view, via Zoom, the process of fitting and sending these children home with a new wheelchair.

“Kiwanis clubs today do need to adjust to the times. Holding meetings is difficult, and getting attendance is difficult, especially for senior clubs,” says Kerber. “We need to continue being creative.”

This project was initiated and spearheaded by Kiwanis club member Robert Garmer, 91, who recently passed away from COVID-19. He was a beloved member of the club, and for many years was very active in supporting and helping CMM.
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In fact, the Detroit club wasn’t the only one wrestling with the direction that founder Allan Simpson Browne had established for Kiwanis. While Browne wanted it to be strictly a business club with social benefits, others were growing restless.

“Behind the scenes, and prior to the convention, men were maneuvering,” writes Jonak. “Three Kiwanians — displeased with the ‘We Trade’ motto and Browne’s perceived stranglehold on the organization — considered a proposal to abandon Kiwanis.”

With Kiwanis still in its infancy, Joe Prance, Roe Fulkerson and O. Samuel Cummings were building momentum to craft guiding principles for the organization.

“Our code of ethics, our ideals and purposes, have already been expressed in service,” said Cummings, then the international secretary of Kiwanis.

“Let every Kiwanian who is interested in the development of the spirit of Kiwanis put his conception into writing and send the article to me,” he wrote in the December 1918 issue of the Kiwanis Torch, “and get such wealth of material together that we can sift out a most adequate statement of Kiwanis principles and purposes.”

Many members believed the principles of fair dealing, service, civic pride and the “golden rule” should extend far beyond matters such as business and gaining members. For them, selfless acts of service for the betterment of the community was precisely the direction that clubs lacked. One Kiwanis magazine stated frankly that the Kiwanis club is all about service: “To realize more fully that I live not for myself, but for others.”

Walter’s story embodied this expression.

After Walter’s mother married Malkowski, she petitioned the Illinois Children’s Home and Aid Society to regain custody of Walter.

“A thorough investigation of the ability of the stepfather to provide a suitable home for the boy seemed satisfactory,” says Jonak, “but the aid society told her it needed to contact the Kiwanis club to obtain its opinion on the matter.”

The club approved. Indeed they were pleased that Walter would be reunited with his mother.

For the Detroit Kiwanians to have cared for Walter in the meantime, Johnston said, had been “the best thing that ever happened to the club.”

Now they had a new direction. Walter had helped build a vision not only for the club, but also for Kiwanis: to help underprivileged children in the community enjoy a better life.

The fates of Walter and his family
According to Kiwanis accounts, Walter went to school and became a lawyer on the west coast of the United States. But further investigation seems to prove that untrue.

A 1930 U.S. Census record from Chicago states that Walter had not sought higher education. At age 20, he lived with his stepfather, mother and all of his siblings. He was listed as a machinist for an electric company, as was his brother Steve (who had eventually made it to the U.S. with his sister Marie).

On August 11, 1934, Walter
married Adeline Sobolenski. By the early 1940s, he had a house of his own and three children, Ralph, Roberta and William. He had also switched professions and became a cabinetmaker.

Good fortune arrived again for Walter at the end of 1942, when he petitioned for naturalization and became a U.S. citizen.

Walter’s biological father was not so lucky.

Having cut ties with his former family, Francis Nalaski made his way back to Poland. At the age of 60, he suffered the fate of many Polish citizens during World War II: On October 16, 1942, under the Nazi-controlled State Criminal Police in Konigsberg, Franz Nalaski was executed by guillotine.

As Walter’s birth father’s chapter closed, so too did Walter’s. He had one more daughter, Sandra, but then died at the age of 40. His wife lived until she was 81.

During Kiwanis’ early years, there were a few examples of club generosity for orphans and widows of World War I. But none captured the imagination the way Walter’s story did.

In the end, it reminded clubs of the true potential of Kiwanis, inspired a movement to help poor and orphaned kids and symbolized a turning point for an organization struggling with its identity and purpose.

So much of Kiwanis’ mission of serving the children of the world had begun with one abandoned boy: Walter “Kiwanis.”
Value your partners

CREATE A RELATIONSHIP THAT BENEFITS BOTH YOUR PARTNER AND YOUR CLUB.

Partnerships are vital to business, and it’s easy to see how we can accomplish more together. Partners can bring us funding, amplify our message, elevate brand awareness and increase impact. But what can your Kiwanis club offer its partners? Think about who your Kiwanis club works with in your community — and remember to give as much as you receive. From Boys & Girls Clubs to schools, local car dealerships and small businesses, your club probably works with all different types of people and businesses.

Be a catalyst. Explore all the advantages available in the world of partnerships — and go farther, together.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

• Build relationships among your partners. Invite partners to your next project so everyone can meet and mingle.

• Set up a dinner to thank all of your partners and encourage them to collaborate on upcoming projects.

• Take on an extraordinary adventure like mountain climbing or play a game that requires the group to achieve goals through collaboration.

• Surprise and delight your partners every chance you get. When they arrive at your meeting or service site, welcome them with a sign displaying their name. And remember birthdays; people appreciate it when business relationships become humanized. Drop a handwritten note on the anniversary of your partnership. Everybody loves a cause for celebration. Give a partner shout-out on social media. This strategy says to the public: “We care about our partners.”

Discuss this topic at your next meeting. Who are some of your partners and sponsors, and how can you make these relationships more special?
SEE THE
STARS

Captain Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger famously crash-landed a plane in a New York City river. Get insights on preparedness at the Kiwanis International convention — straight from the man himself. And hear how Kevin Carroll combines education and play for social change. Also see Ethan Zohn, “Survivor: Africa” winner and cancer crusher. These stars and others will be there. Will you?

Join us in person or online. Details at kiwanis.org/convention.

106TH KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION | JUNE 23-26, 2021
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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