Kiwanis clubs find that creatures of all kinds present ways to raise funds and serve kids.
Kids need Kiwanis. When you give to the Kiwanis Children's Fund, you help us reach them when they need us most. Warm coats when the temperature drops. Lifesaving vaccines before a child is born. Fresh food even when it's not in season. Make a gift today — and change lives all year long. Let us show you how.

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.
‘d like to tell you about a friend of a friend of mine.

His name is Clyde, and he’s very good at his job. When he walks into a school to help kids with their reading skills, he’s focused and non-judgmental. He’s a great listener and puts everyone at ease.

It’s actually a bit funny to think that Clyde has a job. After all, he’s only 6. And he’s an English springer spaniel.

Yes, Clyde is a dog. A very soft and sweet dog who loves people and enjoys listening to kids read. As a therapy dog, Clyde can visit people at school, in libraries — and even in hospitals.

Therapy dogs are different from service dogs in that they work with their owners — also called handlers — to offer comfort. Service dogs are trained to provide a specific service, such as a guide dog for a blind person or a dog that can detect seizures in a person with epilepsy.

My friend Raygan Golitko is a serious dog lover and Clyde’s owner. She had trained another of her dogs in agility and fell in love with it. But when Clyde came along, she realized he had other ideas.

“He was too lazy to do agility, so I looked into therapy,” she says. “Therapy dogs are born (for this type of work). He was a natural fit. He’s a well-socialized and well-mannered dog who doesn’t bark or lick. He’s just happy to interact with the kids.”

And how do the kids respond?

“Pure joy,” Golitko says. “Kids gain confidence when they read to Clyde, and they’re amazed to give commands that Clyde responds to. It’s empowering.”

Kelsey Burton is executive director of Paws & Think, Inc. She is, how should I say it, Clyde’s boss. (Or Clyde’s owner’s boss.) She says there are lots of ways to work with therapy dogs — many that could become Kiwanis service projects like the others featured in this issue. One way would be to work with families to bring therapy into the home.

“We offer virtual therapy dog visits in our Paws to Connect program that is open to anyone, anywhere,” she says. “Each person gets a 15-minute virtual visit with a therapy dog.”

Visit pawsandthink.org to learn more or search for therapy dog recommendations in your community.

KASEY JACKSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Make your home more comfortable than ever

“To you, it’s the perfect lift chair. To me, it’s the best sleep chair I’ve ever had.”
— J. Fitzgerald, VA

Pictured: Genuine Italian Leather chair chestnut color.

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President’s message

One inspiration throughout this Kiwanis year has been the sight of members continuing to show that spirit during the pandemic. Kiwanians have discovered new ways to serve, adapted service to changing circumstances and embraced new technology that will enable service in the future.

Those adaptations are important. By remaining active, members make growth possible — opening new clubs, helping clubs repurpose their service and coaching clubs of all sizes to recognize new opportunities.

Each step has helped us overcome the adversity of 2020-21 and build the future of Kiwanis. The foundation includes updated leadership education through Kiwanis Amplify, expanded leadership experiences for CKI and Key Club members and greater diversity within clubs.

As we come to the last couple months of the Kiwanis year and the start of the next one, let’s keep up our momentum — attracting new members, opening new clubs and shaping the dreams of kids through Kiwanis.

Executive perspective

In June, I gave my report at the Education and Leadership Conference from the event’s location in Salt Lake City. Of course, many of you saw it online because of the obstacles to travel and attendance created by COVID-19.

Remote attendance at a Kiwanis conference or convention isn’t the preferred option for most of us. But it did make participation possible for many members. And once again, technology struck me as an answer to a key question: How can we guarantee that we’ll be stronger as we come out of the pandemic?

As I noted at the ELC, the pandemic is far from over where people have insufficient access to vaccines and health care. Global prospects regarding the pandemic and Kiwanis’ financial future will have to take uncertainty into account.

But in places where the clouds are lifting, one fact seems clearer: Every Kiwanis club should start thinking of itself, at least in part, as an internet club. Busy people, particularly younger adults, are more accessible via digital devices. It’s time for clubs to adapt, meeting both in-person and with remote options.

At Kiwanis International, we’ve started that process too. For example, we’ve launched online education programs such as Kiwanis Amplify, meeting people where they are and on their schedule.

That’s how clubs will connect with people as well. Throughout our 106 years — including pandemics, depressions, recessions and two world wars — Kiwanis has faced the question of how we can not only survive, but flourish. This recent era of difficulty has given us a fresh reminder of potential and possibility.
Every kid can be a Terrific Kid.

Terrific Kids is a program that helps students modify their behavior and become the best version of themselves. Encourage kids to shine by purchasing a Terrific Kids kit for a school near you.

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

Election results are in for the 2021-22 Kiwanis International leadership team. Peter Mancuso of the New York District was elected president of Kiwanis International. Bert West of the Rocky Mountain District was elected president-elect, and Katrina J. Baranko of the Georgia District was elected vice president during the 2021 Kiwanis International Council, held June 26 in Salt Lake City, Utah, during the Kiwanis International Education and Leadership Conference. The international council elected officers again this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to Mancuso, West and Baranko, new trustees were elected for the 2021-22 year.

Three trustees were elected from the United States and Pacific Canada Region to serve three-year terms: Gary S. Graham of the Louisiana-Mississippi-West Tennessee District, Linda I. Lawther of the Michigan District and Dan Leikvold of the Minnesota-Dakotas District.

One three-year term was filled by Hope Markes at the Eastern Canada and the Caribbean District Convention in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, held May 14-15, 2021, by delegates from the district.

And Éliane Ott-Scheffer was elected from the Europe Region during the Kiwanis International-European Federation Convention, which was held online June 5.

Congratulations to all our new leaders.
The number of applications the Kiwanis Children’s Fund received for the five scholarships it awarded to Key Club and Circle K International members this summer. Applications came from 45 U.S. states and eight countries.

Five SLP members get scholarships

The Kiwanis Children’s Fund awarded scholarships to five members of Key Club and Circle K International. The recipients all worked diligently during the COVID-19 pandemic to support their clubs and continue serving their schools and communities. In addition, all five intend to further their education in order to serve others.

The Key Club scholarship winners are:
• Yena Suh, California-Nevada-Hawaii District
• Haley Wojtach, Indiana District

The CKI winners are:
• Julia Fan, New York District
• Amanda Lang, Georgia District
• Julianne Shaffer, Ohio District

To learn more about the recipients, visit kiwanis.org/2021scholarships.

CKI elects new leaders

The 2021-22 Circle K International Board was elected in June during the CKI Education and Leadership Conference held in Salt Lake City, Utah.

President — Kyle Lank, New Jersey District

Vice president — Leah Reiser, Georgia District

Trustees
Madeleine Eichorn, Capital District; Chelsea Jordan, Caribbean District; Tyler Kearns, New York District; Alissa McIntyre, Southwest District; Liz Sevigny, New England District; Katelyn Van Buren, Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District; Jonathan Varano, New Jersey District; Isabelle Wang, New York District.

Liew wins President’s Challenge

May was Membership Month for Kiwanis International — and the month of President Art Riley’s membership-growth challenge to lieutenant governors. Sandy Liew of the Queens East Division of the New York District won the grand prize: a free registration to the Education and Leadership Conference.

In addition, 20 other lieutenant governors were awarded for their results with a US$75 gift card to the Kiwanis Family Store.

Congratulations to all the winners of the 2021 President’s Challenge!

Key dates in August

August 10: Legacy of Play contest opens
August 12: International Youth Day
August 19: World Humanitarian Day
Signature Project contest winners

Every year, Kiwanis International recognizes the best signature projects of Kiwanis clubs around the world. The contest contains two levels: Tier I for clubs with 27 or fewer members and Tier II for clubs with 28 or more members. Congratulations to the winners of this year’s Signature Project contest. Learn more about signature projects at kiwanis.org/signatureproject.

Gold
Tier 1: Kiwanis Club of Candelaria, Philippines: Hand Washing Facilities and Safe Drinking Water
Tier 2: Kiwanis Club of Providence-Montego Bay, Jamaica: Breast Cancer Awareness 5K Walk/Run

Silver
Tier 1: Kiwanis Club of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania, USA: Sunset 5K Run
Tier 2: Kiwanis clubs of Calgary, Northmount; Airdrie; Okotoks and Cochrane, Canada: Christmas Gifts and Toys

Bronze
Tier 1: Kiwanis Club of Centennial Hills, Nevada, USA: Color Walk/Run and Car Show
Tier 2: Kiwanis Club of Port Charlotte Sunrise, Florida, USA: Sunrise Kiwanis Shoes for Kids

Legacy of Play contest coming

The eighth annual Legacy of Play contest, sponsored by Kiwanis partner Landscape Structures Inc. (LSI), will begin August 10, 2021. The winning Kiwanis club will receive US$25,000 in playground equipment. Any club that enters and continues its project plans with LSI will receive a complimentary OmniSpin® Spinner, valued at US$8,500.

2021 Legacy of Play contest dates:
August 10: Contest opens
September 10: Last day for entries
September 15-30: Voting period
October 4: Finalists complete survey
October 13: Winner announced on Facebook

For more details about the contest, visit kiwanis.org/legacyofplay.
For more than a year, Kiwanis family clubs found their normal operations disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For our Service Leadership Programs, those disruptions were an obstacle to service and fellowship in two different school years.

From building closures to limits on in-person activities, the pandemic caused drops in membership and cancellations of service projects and fundraisers — and for many SLP clubs, even a slide to “inactive” status.

As a new school year begins, Kiwanis is helping SLP clubs get back to normal with the Homecoming campaign.

Resources include tools for district and club leaders to use when communicating and working with key people. From school leaders and parents to Kiwanis clubs and new SLP members, the cooperation of various groups and individuals will be necessary for clubs to get back to full strength. The tools for working with them are available at kiwanis.org/homecoming.

There’s another crucial feature of the campaign: SLP clubs that were inactive or in “COVID status” during the past school year can reactivate at no cost.

To reactivate, club leaders need to notify Kiwanis International by emailing slp@kiwanis.org or calling Member Services at 1-800-549-2647, ext. 411.

As Kiwanis helps reenergizes members, Kiwanis clubs can help SLPs rebound as well. Kiwanians’ support helps more than 9,400 SLP clubs around the world serve their schools and communities. With the Homecoming campaign, you can help them get back to school, back to service — and back with safety.

Homecoming campaign to help SLPs rebound
Never work with children or animals,” the great film comedian W.C. Fields once advised his fellow actors. But he wasn’t a Kiwanian — and this isn’t showbiz. This is the Kiwanis family.

Unlike curmudgeons such as Fields, Kiwanis clubs often find kids and animals to be a perfect pairing. They’re cute. They make us happy. They make each other happy. And they often need support from people who care.

For years, various Kiwanis clubs have turned this natural combination into a winning formula. From fundraisers to projects and partnerships, members have drawn on people’s love for animals to change children’s lives.

Even in the past year and a half, with the restrictions and ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the attraction of animal-related events has remained as strong as ever. Here are a few clubs that have maintained traditions — and started new ones — by making kids and animals alike a key part of the work they do in their communities.
“We find we can get sponsors to provide funds too. A car dealer, a carpet shop — everybody loves to be involved with dogs.”

COOL DOGS

Last September, the Foothills Kiwanis Club of Boulder Valley, Colorado, converted pet owners’ pride into nearly US$20,000 for its projects and partnerships. In fact, the Coolest Dog on the Front Range contest was a testament to the power of collaboration. Help came from pet owners, sponsors and a local brewery — not to mention an Ohio Kiwanis club that helped make it all possible.

To enter the contest, people sent photos of their dogs with a brief explanation of why theirs was the coolest. After a six-week voting period, seven winners were announced — with the “Top Dog” professionally photographed and featured on the front label of a beer brewed by Mash Lab Brewing in Windsor, Colorado. The winner’s owner even got to name the beer.

It all started, says Bob Mohling, the event’s committee chair, when club members saw a successful “coolest dog” fundraiser run by the Kiwanis Club of Columbus, Ohio.

“We had been doing golf tournaments for many years,” Mohling says. “It seemed like everyone was turning to golf tournaments, and we wanted to do something a little different. We contacted (the Columbus club) and they were gracious enough to send a packet that they had used. We tailored that to our club.”

The contest is a lot of work, he adds, but that helps engage the whole club. In addition to social media promotion, for example, members drop off flyers with pet groomers, veterinarians and animal hospitals.

Mash Lab Brewing is also “a great partner,” Mohling says. “They advertise for us at their brewery and do a lot on social media. We’ve gotten a large group of entries from Windsor, which is 30 miles from our club.”

The brewery even donated 35 cases of beer, to be given to the winning owners and bought by the contest’s other local sponsors — boosting fundraising even further. Among the many partners who receive those funds is Alert Service Dogs for Kids, which provides “alert” dogs to kids who have Type 1 diabetes or severe allergies.

“The voting brings in the preponderance of funds,” Mohling says, “but we find we can get sponsors to provide funds too. A car dealer, a carpet shop — everybody loves to be involved with dogs.”
A HANDS-ON TRADITION

In Ontario, Canada, the Seaway Kiwanis Club of Sarnia-Lambton had been around for five years when it opened an animal farm and petting zoo in 1964. What began as a partnership with the city of Sarnia soon grew into an area destination spot — and a long-lasting boost to the Kiwanis name throughout the area.

“I don’t think (the Kiwanis members) realized what a treasure they had given to the city,” says club member Donna Kelso, a past club president and current member of the animal farm’s governance committee.

Today the Sarnia Animal Farm is a three-way partnership between the club, the city and the Humane Society, which has handled the care of the animals for the past five years. The Seaway Kiwanis club handles expenses and upkeep, says Kelso. Along with club events, the Sarnia Children’s Farm Foundation helps raise the funds that keep the farm accessible to everyone.

“It started free, and it continues to be free,” Kelso says.

It’s also open year-round. With thousands of visitors every year, it isn’t unusual to see a busload of kids arrive on any given day. But like many public spaces, the farm felt the pinch of the pandemic in 2020. When restrictions eased a bit last fall, 100 people were allowed on the premises at a time. Renewing the connection between animals and people proved to be good for visiting kids — and for the Kiwanians who volunteered on-site to serve as gatekeepers and explain the guidelines.

“The lineup on the first day was huge,” Kelso says. “They were so eager to see the animals again. It was one of the best experiences I ever had.”

In fact, those experiences help make Kiwanis family membership attractive to the community. The Seaway club’s sponsorship of a virtual Key Club results in summertime work opportunities for high school students — one of whom, Kelso says, ended up as an employee at the farm.

The Kiwanis club itself has inducted 11 members since October alone. “As soon as you talk about the farm, they’re in,” Kelso says.
“It’s amazing, the number of animal adoptions there have been during the pandemic. In a scary time, we turn to what gives us a sense of comfort and home.”

PETS TO THE RESCUE
Like so many clubs, the Lima, Ohio, Kiwanis Club found itself making some unexpected changes to its 2020 calendar of events. For instance, the club’s 5K walk/run in October, which supports the club’s sponsored Service Leadership Programs, became a virtual event because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

And with it went a recent additional feature of the day: the club’s pet parade and contest.

The parade and contest started — or more accurately, restarted — in 2019, says Crystal Miller, who chairs the event committee. When the club discussed supplementing the walk/run’s fundraising and sponsorship opportunities, a fellow member, Bob Day, suggested adding the animal-friendly feature.

“Bob brought up the fact that in the past we had had a pet contest that was really successful,” Miller says. “And we realized, well, it is around Halloween.”

In 2020, the Saturday event was on the very day: October 31. Perfect for an animal tie-in that included a pet costume option.

Then the pandemic intruded. So the Howl o’Ween Trick or Trot went virtual. And that turned out to be a benefit to the pet-contest portion of the day: people could send in photos of their pets, and others voted online. The contest consisted of Cute Pet and Costumed Pet categories.

“It seemed to flow better when we did it online,” Miller says.

While the winners got prizes, local animal-rescue organizations — including the Allen County Humane Society — got needed funds at a time when resources were scarce. The club’s reborn tradition will continue this October, when the contest continues as a supplement to the walk/run, which will try again as an in-person event on October 31.

A NEW VEHICLE FOR A CLASSIC EVENT
For Kiwanis clubs, there’s more than one way to do pet parades and contests. And there’s more than one way to adjust when a pandemic takes away your club’s traditional format.

In Los Altos, California, the Kiwanis club’s annual pet parade is a major civic event. It started in 1948 — and each year after that, it sent families and pets marching down Main Street on the Saturday after Mother’s Day. Until 2020. Last year, the Los Altos Kiwanis Club made do, splicing together people’s homemade videos of local pets...
into a single video that was then posted on the club’s Facebook page.

This year, of course, COVID-19 was still around — but vaccinations and the easing of restrictions allowed the event to get outside again, with modifications.

This May, for instance, parade participants used their vehicles. That is, they either drove with their pet or pets inside with them or they made the vehicle itself the star: Participants had the option of “dressing” their autos as their pet or a favorite animal.

It was a way of putting in-person fun back into the event while keeping people healthy, says Elizabeth Ward, the club’s vice president. In fact, “The Healing Power of Pets” was this year’s theme.

The club arranged with a local TV station to help stream the event live on Facebook, with participants stopping at a designated intersection to talk with a pair of local hosts. There was even a contest for the decorated vehicles, with judges doing their work in a nearby parking lot.

The parade reflected the pandemic’s effect — and the community’s response — in other ways. The club approached the local El Camino Hospital and allowed them to suggest this year’s marshals. The hospital’s choice, Mel and Mady Kahn, longtime volunteers and donors to the hospital, rode with their two adopted dogs in an antique fire engine.

In general, the concepts of resilience and support were more apt than ever. And the role of pets was never more fitting.

“It’s amazing, the number of (animal) adoptions there have been during the pandemic,” Ward says. “In a scary time, we turn to what gives us a sense of comfort and home.”

HEARTS AND HOOFS

Clubs in Kiwanis Youth Programs have also found ways to serve others through animals. During the 2018-19 school year, for instance, Builders Club members in Taylorville, Illinois, raised money for a local organization that uses miniature horses for therapy.

The partnership with Heartland Hoofs resulted in more than US$2,000 for feed, hay, grooming items and more. The club even accompanied the horses on a visit to a nursing home, bringing homemade valentines to residents.

SUPPORTING A SHELTER

Animals need support too. That’s what makes partnerships between Kiwanis clubs and animal shelters a natural connection.

In March, the Kiwanis Club of Tysons, Virginia, helped its local shelter with a quick, fun project: Members got together on Zoom for a virtual toy-making project for animals. Joined by the Kiwanis Capital Legacy e-Club, Kiwanians made dog toys, rabbit toys and comfort blankets for donation.

The Tysons club then posted some of the results on its Facebook page, along with links to instructions and supplies for anyone wanting to try the project themselves.

Tell us about your club’s animal-related projects. Send us an email at shareyourstory@kiwanis.org.
Imagine an island where COVID-19 virus infections are largely nonexistent. Palm trees sway in the soft, warm winds as joyful Kiwanians from clubs around the island enjoy a picnic on the beach, sharing dishes from the island’s many cultures.

Can you guess where we might be? Need more hints?

It would take approximately seven hours to drive from the island’s northern tip to its southern end, and about 1.5 hours to drive from the west side to the east side of the “Island of Eternal Spring.”

This territory of France in the southwest Pacific Ocean encompasses a large island, which the locals call le caillou (the pebble), as well as smaller islands.
Now you’ve got it: We’re in New Caledonia. The island has a striking diversity of people: the original inhabitants, the Kanak; people of European descent; Polynesians; Southeast Asians; as well as some people originally from North Africa.

Kiwanians there reflect that diversity, from their ethnicities to the range of their ages, professional backgrounds and more. Another striking thing is what so many have in common: New Caledonia has one of the world’s highest percentages of Kiwanians among its general population.

“At Kiwanis, we meet people from all walks of life who come together around the same cause, with the same values,” says Sandrine Baille, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Tiare Païta. “We build lasting friendships. We have the impression of being part of a great family. It’s motivating, rewarding, socially fulfilling.”

Each club has chosen a distinct color so that its members are recognized, and those members proudly wear Kiwanis-branded shirts in that color, no matter where they go. They also have a dark-red division outfit. For the last Asia-Pacific conference, they even wore a traditional Kanak outfit, also Kiwanis-branded.

“We’re small, but people see us all the time,” says Julien LeRay, past president of the Tiare Païta Kiwanis Club. Annually, the division’s clubs invest about XPF15 million in multiple service projects.

You name it, they’ve done it: foot races, boat races, fairs, special events at Christmas or Easter, events at retirement homes, food collections, donations of furniture, clothing and linens for people affected by
hurricanes, a magic show at the hospital ... and on and on.

There are so many events and activities throughout the year that the division makes a joint Kiwanis event calendar available to help the general population keep track. In fact, the local press and various town halls regularly cover the clubs’ activities, which help New Caledonians get together to delight children and adults — and foster a culture of exchange.

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF PROJECTS
As you can imagine, the volume and diversity of Kiwanis members result in a great variety of service projects and events.

For instance, La Régate des Touques (The Drum
Regatta) is a festive event for which Kiwanians from different clubs build a raft representing Kiwanis out of metal container drums, to which they fix a sail. A race is launched off the large beach in Nouméa, the capital. It’s a fun event because the precarious rafts often fail, to the delight of thousands of spectators. During the last regatta, Kiwanis was in the lead, but then its sail broke and other rafts caught up. The event narrator shouted on microphone “Go, Kiwanis, go!” for a very long time, putting the Kiwanians at the center of attention despite their unlucky circumstances.

The Ralia Kiwanis Club is well-known for its themed evening events where people dance and partake in local delicacies prepared by Kiwanians. The club also holds a yearly country ball, for which participants don cowboy boots and hats and line dance; an 80s-themed evening, where all guests dress in 1980s-style clothing and dance to retro tunes; and a Full Moon Party, complete with outdoor lighting and hot main dishes, desserts and drinks sold by club members during a concert.
Popular dishes served during these parties include nems (Vietnamese-style rice paper fried rolls), bami (Indonesian-inspired fried noodles with vegetables and meat), bougna (a Kanak specialty containing vegetables, such as yams and taro, and meats or seafood, wrapped in banana leaves and buried to cook in a ground oven) and many classic French dishes, such as quiches. One ingredient New Caledonians couldn’t go without? Soy sauce!

Members organize several outdoor sports events that help New Caledonians discover the island and its nature. Indeed, New Caledonia has the richest bird and plant diversity in the world per square kilometer. The Érythines Trek is organized by the Érythines Kiwanis club as a fundraiser at the Déva nature preserve. The trail faces the lagoon and the second-largest coral reef in the world.

“There are many things that I find touching at the Érythines club,” says Éric Buama, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Érythines. “First of all, interacting with longtime Kiwanians. Presenting awards. Every project with children is always heartwarming when you see how amazed they are. I really like the sports and nature trek we organize. It’s a lot of work for a good cause.”

For the past 20 years, the Trail de l’Espoir (Trail of Hope) is a successful fundraiser organized by the Kenu Kiwanis Club and the Goro tribe in southern New Caledonia and run on the red dirt that is so typical of soils rich in nickel and iron.

During the yearly Teddy Bear Fair, each club
proposes free activities for children: inflatable bounce houses, face painting, small carousels, a knock-down-cans game and more. Kiwanians host a restaurant booth where thousands of attendees can purchase kebabs, cake, popcorn, sandwiches, French fries and grilled sausages. The mayor of Dumbéa generously allows Kiwanians to hold the event in the town-hall park free of rental charge.

Because airport traffic has nearly ground to a halt, Kiwanians started putting together solidarity baskets to distribute to airport employees who find themselves out of work. Baskets typically contain items collected from the general population, such as fruit, vegetables, cans of food, flour, sugar, rice, pasta, toothpaste or soap.

At the 2020 Nouméa carnival, a popular multicultural event, Kiwanians built an ocean-blue float named Kiwanis Ocean, bearing a sail. Members danced to the rhythm of music while parading down the streets lined with more than 25,000 onlookers who gathered to see 17 total floats.

And even when Kiwanians take on the mundane task of gathering entrance fees to a city fair, they spice up the task by entertaining fair attendees with singing and synchronized dancing to the song “Jerusalema.”

Conviviality and friendship are key in New Caledonia. Kiwanians there aren’t just club members. They’re a community of friends who participate together in the island’s kaleidoscope of projects and fundraisers. And in doing so, they become a united family in paradise.

Wondering about New Caledonia cuisine? Try the shrimp curry recipe on page 50.
Imagine being a child with a love of dancing but living with a disorder that can make even walking difficult, if not impossible. That’s the real-life situation 6-year-old Ilyana Debaine of France was facing in 2020.

Ilyana has spastic cerebral palsy, which inhibits her muscle growth. This condition can cause muscle contractures and orthopedic deformities; in Ilyana’s case, it was affecting her legs, and her parents feared it would become worse.

For Ilyana to get the best help possible, she needed highly specialized surgery in the United States. Such an undertaking is daunting in ideal circumstances, with financial needs, travel, language barriers and a four-week stay abroad to navigate.

But the situation for Ilyana and her parents, Laetitia and Julien, became even more formidable: She was scheduled for surgery in January 2021, as the COVID-19...
pandemic continued to drastically impact day-to-day activities, travel and lives worldwide.

A dedicated group of Kiwanians, however, joined forces in an international effort to ensure Ilyana’s dancing dreams would not be derailed.

Ilyana’s parents had learned that if a child with spastic cerebral palsy has her spasticity reduced while she is young, any deformities can become less severe. St. Louis Children’s Hospital in Missouri specializes in such a surgical procedure, known as selective dorsal rhizotomy (SDR). Dr. T.S. Park, a neurosurgeon and director of the hospital’s Center for Cerebral Palsy Spasticity, has studied and refined SDR extensively and is known internationally for his expertise in the technique.

Laetitia and Julien wanted to give their daughter every chance to live her fullest possible life, so they began raising funds for the trip to the United States and SDR surgery, as well as a follow-up, minimally invasive tendon-lengthening procedure that would allow Ilyana to recover more quickly.

That’s where Kiwanians in the France-Monaco District joined forces to help. Jean-Marc Henry, president of the Issoire Kiwanis Club in central France and then lieutenant governor of the region, learned about Ilyana through regional media. His club wanted to donate funds to help. But with the pandemic lingering, club members knew they would not be able to hold the sixth edition of their flagship fundraiser, a 5K walk/run.

“Given the state of our club’s finances, we thought that the union of the clubs in the division would help more,” Henry says. “The mobilization of several clubs also allowed us to make a request to the KFE (Kiwanis France Entraide) foundation, which was accepted.”

The KFE foundation provides support to children and adolescents in need, and those funds joined others in the Kiwanian-led effort for Ilyana.

“There was a great sense of pride in having been able to help Ilyana and her parents,” Henry says, “especially since all of the city’s service clubs and all the sports, industrial and associative forces also mobilized to reach €75,000.”

Between the funds raised by the Kiwanians and the Debaines, the family now had sufficient funds to cover international flights and surgery costs. But they still needed somewhere to stay for the four weeks during which Ilyana would have both surgeries and time to recover.

Daniel Vigneron of Howald, Luxembourg, who served as president of Kiwanis International during the 2019-20 administrative year, knew exactly who to contact. Barb Thompson, membership coordinator for the Missouri-Arkansas District, lives in St. Louis. Vigneron asked if she could find a host family for the Debaines during their stay.

Normally, Thompson says, that wouldn’t be a problem. But that was before the pandemic. With health officials still asking people to limit activities and avoid close
“Her life has changed a lot since the operation. She no longer has pain in her legs. She is able to do new things every day and is very proud of it.”

contact with others, hospitality was taking a backseat to safety concerns.

“People were sympathetic,” Thompson says, “but they really weren’t ready to host a family.”

She then tried to assist the family in securing a stay at the St. Louis Ronald McDonald House, but hit another roadblock due to pandemic restrictions. So Thompson began looking for hotels instead. She discovered that Dr. Parks could arrange a discounted stay at a hotel near St. Louis Children’s Hospital, complete with an in-room kitchen for preparing meals.

Thompson then turned to Carla O’Brien, current governor-elect of the Missouri-Arkansas District, and the district’s Kiwanis clubs for help. O’Brien distributed a flyer outlining Ilyana’s situation and led a fundraising effort to cover the family’s hotel stay. Clubs responded with donations. One Kiwanian gave US$3,000, and her son matched the amount.

“He knows that Kiwanis is very important to his mom,” Thompson says.

Ultimately, the St. Louis-Arkansas District raised US$6,900. Not only was it enough to cover the Debaines’ hotel and grocery expenses, but it also allowed for the purchase of shoes that would accommodate the post-surgery splints Ilyana would need. And the district was able to purchase a Hypervibe, a machine that provides whole-body-vibration physical therapy (WBV), and had it delivered to the Debaine home in France. WBV can help those with cerebral palsy reduce spasticity, increase muscle activation and strength and improve walking and functional mobility.

As Ilyana and her family prepared for their trip to St. Louis for the scheduled January 5, 2021, SDR surgery, Laetitia and Thompson coordinated plans, despite the fact that Laetitia does not speak English and Thompson does not speak French. Laetitia can read and write in English, so they communicated through WhatsApp, an app that allows users to send messages using an internet connection, avoiding expensive text fees.

That would prove especially useful when the Debaines attempted to board their flight from Lyon-Saint Exupéry Airport on December 28, 2020. Travel was still restricted in and out of Europe due to the pandemic. The Debaines had obtained special documents to allow an exception for Ilyana and her parents due to the scheduled surgery. But airport officials in Lyon had other ideas.

“I got a WhatsApp from (Laetitia) in the airport in Lyon, and (airport officials) wouldn’t let them out of the country, even though she had special papers,” Thompson recalls. “They wouldn’t let them board. So she messaged me and said, ‘What can I do?’ Well, everything that I thought of, she’d already done. My only suggestion was that Lyon is a smaller airport, and maybe if they could fly through Paris, they would be more familiar with such letters of exception. So that’s what she did, ultimately, and they left two days later.”

Ground transportation didn’t prove much easier to procure. Thompson at first asked a friend who was a ride-share driver if he could transport the family to and
“I was really glad that we were able to serve them and try to make this an easier experience for them. I was so impressed by the family. I just admire them so much, and the sacrifice that they were willing to make to guarantee their daughter a brighter future.”

from appointments during their stay. But he wasn’t comfortable knowing that the family had traveled through three airports to get to the U.S.

Undaunted, Thompson began calling taxicab companies and located one which had installed Plexiglas between passengers and the driver and sanitized the cabs after every ride. She called that company throughout the Debaines’ six-week stay, even arranging a ride during a heavy snowstorm so Ilyana could make it to an important medical appointment.

“They grew to know me, and they were very nice. Eventually, I knew all the dispatchers,” Thompson says with a laugh.

Thanks to the combined and determined efforts of Kiwanians, Ilyana successfully underwent both of her surgeries as scheduled. The first lasted three and a half hours; the second only 30 minutes. Thompson and her husband purchased groceries for the family each week and delivered them to the Debaines’ hotel lobby, where staff retrieved them.

Thompson met the family only once during their stay. They stood outside in a parking lot, socially distanced, and used Google Translate on their phones so they could understand each other.

Now that the Debaines are home in France, Laetitia sends Thompson videos of Ilyana’s progress. And it’s impressive.

“Her life has changed a lot since the operation,” Laetitia says. “She no longer has pain in her legs. She is able to do new things every day and is very proud of it. On the other hand, it’s also difficult for her, because she goes to school every morning and goes to the physiotherapist every afternoon, which is very hard physically some days. But she hangs on because she knows that this is the way to progress further.”

Things are different for mom and dad Debaine, as well.

“What has really changed in our life since the operation is that we are less afraid for her future, although nothing is certain,” Laetitia says. “We know we made the right decision for her. And we are proud to see that she fights every day and always exceeds her limits.”

For Barb Thompson’s part, she admires the family’s dedication and drive.

“I was really glad that we were able to serve them and try to make this an easier experience for them. I was so impressed by the family. They are so resilient. I just admire them so much, and the sacrifice that they were willing to make to guarantee their daughter a brighter future.”

Today, Ilyana rides a bicycle without assistance. She participates in sports at her school. And she dances — thanks in no small part to an international effort by Kiwanians who wanted to help a little girl despite an ongoing worldwide pandemic.

“We were extremely happy with how we were welcomed, with the help of everyone we met,” Laetitia says. “It is truly an experience that has marked us for life.”
Justice for all
THIS INDIANA KIWANIAN IS ON A MISSION TO CREATE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.
By Erin Cozad

Justus Coleman Kelley began volunteering with Kiwanis as a student at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. The first time she attended a club event, she immediately felt at home — just as she did when representing her school as Miss Indiana University, among other titles she held over the following years.

Now a member of the Kiwanis Club of Bloomington and the Kiwanis Club of Central Indiana and a holder of two new titles — Mrs. Indiana and Mrs. America runner-up — Kelley often finds that her work with Kiwanis and her pursuit of her title platforms intertwine.

Kelley’s Mrs. Indiana platform centers around the goal of “Building Inclusive Societies.” Her love for people, combined with the personal experiences of feeling excluded, inspire her to help create communities where every person feels heard and comfortable being their authentic self.
“There should be an emphasis on recognizing the differences we all have. Not to look down on those differences, but to see the opportunities and beauty in them.”

Kelley grew up with the emphasis that people are more alike than different — which she says is a great callout.

“But there should also be an emphasis on recognizing the differences we all have. Not to look down on those differences, but to see the opportunities and beauty in them,” she explains.

In her efforts, Kelley has traveled to all 92 Indiana counties this year. Always welcomed with Hoosier hospitality, she’s visited grade school classrooms, granted wishes for students, attended community events and volunteered with local organizations throughout the state — including Through2Eyes Indiana, an organization that hosts tours around Indianapolis and explores the community’s history.

Kelley brings collaboration and project ideas to her Kiwanis clubs as a Mrs. Indiana and Make-A-Wish Foundation representative, and club members seek to connect her to opportunities that further her platform. In fact, it was a Kiwanis mentor who invited her to serve on the Kiwanis International Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Board Committee.

During her travels, Kelley has watched different perspectives come together as community members lean into opportunities, embrace relationships and have conversations that are tough, challenging or unfamiliar.

As Kelley and Kiwanis clubs work to create communities that embrace diversity and encourage inclusiveness, Kelley poses this challenge: Sit across the table from someone whose experience is unlike your own.

Long after her time as Mrs. Indiana is complete, Kelley will continue to encourage relationships that expose the beauty in differences.

“Let’s make this personal,” she says, “and apply DEI to every part of our lives.”
During the Kiwanis International Education and Leadership Conference in June, Kiwanians who attended in person in Salt Lake City, Utah, were happy to see each other for the first time in a while. And one local leader was happy to have them.

Welcoming attendees to Salt Lake City in his home state, Utah Governor Spencer Cox thanked people for coming to the drought-stricken town. “And whatever you did to bring the rain with you,” he added, “God bless you, my friends.”

While the weather cooled down, Kiwanis activities heated up. Captain “Sully” Sullenberger kicked things off with a speech about courage, resilience and doing the right thing.

“In every encounter with another person, there is inherently an opportunity for good, for ill or for indifference,” he said. “We just have to choose which it’s going to be. “At the end of our lives, I think it’s unlikely that we’re going to be counting our money or cataloging the deals we made or the things that we managed to accumulate. I think it’s much more likely that we simply ask ourselves a question: ‘Did I make a difference?’”

Of course, that’s a deeply relevant question for Kiwanians. As another speaker, Rachel Giannini, put it: “You have the opportunity to change the way a child views themself.”

Taking advantage of such opportunities is the key to making an impact, former Survivor winner Ethan Zohn reminded attendees. “Do you know what hope looks like to cancer patients?” Zohn said. “It looks like people showing up.”

In addition to the inspiration, education summits were available for topics such as youth protection, club improvement, fundraising, education and literacy, diversity and more. Kiwanis Amplify also hosted three in-person Capstone experiences with more than 100 people in attendance.

Elections also were held for the 2021-22 Kiwanis International Board of Trustees. (See page 8.)

Ultimately, Kiwanians came away from the ELC with the knowledge and inspiration that makes their service most effective back home. “Don’t just talk about it,” speaker Kevin Carroll told attendees. “Be about it.”
From a Terrific Kid to a Kiwanian

A LONGLTIME KIWANIS FAMILY MEMBER SHARES HER SERVICE JOURNEY.
BY KARISYA “YSA” MORAN-ADAMES

first got introduced to Kiwanis 15 years ago in 2007, when I was honored as a Terrific Kid in the second grade. I was beyond ecstatic and excited to be recognized as a Terrific Kid at Mintz Elementary School in Brandon, Florida. At the time, I had no idea that this ceremony would be one of many encounters that I would have with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon, nor how much of an impact this organization would have on my life.

Fast forward to 2014: I was a shy freshman in high school, looking for a way to volunteer and make a difference in my community. I was then reunited with the Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon as we went on a journey to charter a Key Club at my high school. Through the chartering process, the Kiwanians were very encouraging and helped me to find a voice in myself that I didn’t know I had.

In my sophomore year of high school, I reluctantly took on the position of Key Club president and had no idea how to lead a club or to inspire the Key Club members at my school to exemplify the Key Club motto “Caring — our way of life.” The Kiwanians saw in me, at the age of 15, something that I wouldn’t recognize in myself for years: a leader. As I went on as the Key Club president for two more years, the Kiwanians continued to support me and push me to be not only the best Key Club member, but the best leader I could be.

In my remaining years of high school, the Kiwanis club helped me to be a better leader, and I went on to be recognized as a G. Harold Martin Outstanding Key Club President two years in a row for the Florida District. The Kiwanians also helped me to be recognized as a Tampa Bay Lightning Community Hero of Tomorrow, which awarded me a total of US$50,000 — with $25,000 applied to my education and the other $25,000 to the organization of my choice.

Of course, I chose the Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon to receive the grant, and they have been able to use the money to fund Project SonrYsa, which is named in my honor, to fight food insecurity in the Brandon area.

Since graduating high school and attending college, I have continued my involvement with the organization that has given me so much by stepping in to serve as the social media director and increasing club awareness online — and by increasing my efforts in Project SonrYsa.

Fourteen years after I was first named a Terrific Kid by the Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon, I officially joined the club as a Kiwanis member. The Kiwanis organization has truly been the single most important factor in my life trajectory. The Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon embodies the mission of improving the world one child and one community at a time, and it has inspired me to help serve the children of the world. As a new Kiwanian, I can only hope that I can give back to the Kiwanis Club of Greater Brandon as much as they have given to me.
Give your club officers and committee members the recognition they deserve for all their hard work. Order now so you can personalize their plaque and make it as special as they are.

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CLUBS IN ACTION

Pancake partners

ILLINOIS KIWANIANS TEAM WITH MCDONALD’S TO HOST A MILESTONE EVENT.
BY LYDIA JOHNSON

Last October, the Danville Noon Kiwanis Club in Danville, Illinois, hosted its 70th Pancake Day — despite the COVID-19 pandemic threatening to thwart the platinum celebration.

In recent years, nearly 3,500 people had participated in the all-you-can-eat event at the David S. Palmer Arena. But crowds and the coronavirus made it a no-go. That didn’t stop Mary Surprenant, the club’s president.

Surprenant sought a new direction, hosting a pandemic-proof Pancake Day by forming a partnership with franchises of a local fast-food restaurant. Through her community connections, she was able to request help from Don and Deanna Witzel, who own and operate six McDonald’s restaurants in Vermilion County, Illinois.

“We found a way to make it work,” Surprenant says, “through the help and the generosity of sponsors and, of course, the Vermilion County McDonald’s (franchises). They could literally handle the making, the serving, the delivering — as long as we could figure out the ticket aspect of it.”

Danville Kiwanians, including members of the Golden K Kiwanis Club, sold US$6 tickets to organizations, individuals and McDonald’s customers. Over five days in mid-October, tickets were redeemed for a package of three hotcakes, a sausage patty and choice of a small drink at the Witzels’ Vermilion County McDonald’s locations. Hungry supporters could buy multiple tickets to redeem throughout the week.

Originally, the plan called for tickets to be counted at each location daily to determine the total amount the Danville Noon Kiwanis Club would pay, post-event, for the food served. Thanks to the Witzels’ generosity, however, that changed.

“They did it at no cost for us,” Surprenant says. “After the event happened, they felt that they wanted to do even more, and we were just flattered.”

By the end of the week, more than 2,000 people had been served and $22,000 was raised through sponsorships and ticket sales.

Those funds went back into the Danville community. This past March, 28 organizations and programs serving children received funds ranging from $250 to $2,000 at an awards ceremony.

“Especially being in a worldwide pandemic, the impact is great,” Surprenant says. “The impact will go far.”

And while $6 might not seem like much to a person craving pancakes, every donation made a difference.

“It may not seem like a lot,” she says, “but you drop it into the water and it still makes ripples.”
STYLES TO STACK, WEAR AND SHARE.

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She calls herself Nancy the Nutrition Nut. Spend a couple of minutes chatting with her and you’ll understand why.

Nancy Parkinson, a member of the Kiwanis Club of Oxford, Ohio, is a registered dietitian and nutritionist who also serves as an associate clinical lecturer at Miami University. For several years, she did in-class nutrition presentations for K-Kids and Builders Clubs in the local Talawanda school district. Put her in front of a group, and the enthusiasm is contagious.

“If you’re not excited about it, how are they going to get excited about it?” she says.

Enter the COVID-19 shutdown. With children learning virtually, there seemed to be no way for Parkinson to continue her in-person classroom presentations. That didn’t stop her, though. She created a presentation of “Naanstop Snacks” using the traditional flatbread. Her Miami University students helped research ingredients and prepare handouts. Her husband, Scott, helped gather the ingredients, which were sorted into 60 prep kits containing four naan breads; individual packets of marinara and parmesan cheese for naan pizzas; relish, mayonnaise and a can of cooked chicken for a chicken salad naan topping; and packets of honey, sun butter and a banana for sweet or savory naan snacks. They also threw in two bowls, two plates and a rubber spatula. The Oxford Kiwanis Club covered the US$15-per-kit cost.

Parkinson presented “Naanstop Snacks” in January. K-Kids members signed up through their schools and arranged to pick up the prep kits in advance. They tuned in to follow along with their favorite nutrition nut, often pulling in siblings or parents for the virtual presentation. In March and April, Parkinson made spicy pineapple salsa online for members of K-Kids, Builders Club, Key Club and Circle K International, again using prep kits covered by the Oxford Kiwanis club.

“It was great to have 60 children online making a snack in their kitchens,” Parkinson says.

Parkinson expects to continue working with students virtually, which gives their families a chance to interact as well. She wants to include seasonal items like apples for applesauce, and she hopes to encourage families to grow their own food with hydroponic gardens for fresh herbs for their meals. Any time Parkinson can get people excited about nutrition, she’s going to jump on it.

“We were forced to figure out how to have an in-class cooking experience virtually. I think we did a great job figuring it out.”

Nutrition by Nancy

OHIO KIWANIAN GOES ONLINE TO LEAD HANDS-ON PREP FOR HEALTHFUL SNACKS.

BY LORI ROBERTS
The 8th Annual Legacy of Play Contest, sponsored by partners Landscape Structures and Kiwanis International, is kicking off in August. Watch for further details and enter for a chance to win US$25,000 in playground equipment to be used toward a Landscape Structures playground project of your choice.

Did you know we also offers splash play products through our Aquatix division? Learn more about the benefits of splash play for your community during a future Kiwanis club meeting with the new Landscape Structures speakers bureau. Browse sessions and sign up at playlsi.com/kiwanis.
A taste of paradise
EXPLORE CUISINE FROM NEW CALEDONIA WITH THIS TASTY SHRIMP DISH.

This New Caledonian recipe is named after Sylvie, a member of the Hibbertia Kiwanis Club, and finds its inspiration in Southeast Asian cuisines, with a little French twist.

SYLVIE’S SHRIMP CURRY  Serves 6

Ingredients:
1 kg (2 pounds) of shrimp, peeled
1 tablespoon of vegetable oil
2 onions, about 200 g (2 cups), sliced thinly
A pinch of rosemary, fresh if possible, roughly chopped, or dried rosemary
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tablespoon of fresh ginger root, grated
1 teaspoon of curry powder
1 teaspoon of cayenne pepper powder (or similar) or chopped fresh chili of your choice, for heat
400 mL (1 1/4 fl oz.) can of coconut milk
Salt and pepper to taste, start with half a teaspoon and adjust
3 tablespoons of roughly chopped fresh coriander

Cooking instructions:
1. Shell the shrimp.
2. In a large frying pan or Dutch oven, pour the oil and sauté the thinly sliced onions over low heat with the pinch of rosemary. The onions should become translucent.
3. Add the garlic, ginger, curry powder and chili/cayenne pepper powder and stir until fragrant (about 30 seconds).
4. Add the entire can of coconut milk, then salt and pepper.
5. Stir to combine all ingredients; add the peeled shrimp.
6. Simmer over low heat for 5 to 10 minutes.
7. Sprinkle with the chopped coriander and serve over rice (jasmine is recommended).

Recipe graciously shared by Danielle Desarmagnac, a member of the Sud-Ouest Kiwanis Club who is currently working on a bilingual (French-English) Kiwanis cookbook of New Caledonian recipes, to be published by the end of 2021.
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