Kiwanis Magazine
TELLING THE KIWANIS STORY SEPTEMBER 2021

BRINGING HOPE
KIWANIS GROWS IN UGANDA

ARE YOU READY?
THE NEW KIWANIS YEAR BEGINS SOON

LISTEN UP
KIDS CHAT WITH VOLUNTEERS

DINO DISCOVERY
CHILDREN AND DINOSAURS HAPPILY CO-EXIST AT A KIWANIS-FUNDED ADVENTURE PARK
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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.
From the executive editor

I’ve met so many amazing people while reporting and photographing stories for Kiwanis magazine. When I sat down to write this piece, I thought about a couple of stories we share in this issue — one about the amazing work being done by Kiwanians in Uganda and one about resiliency. Together they made me think of Mama Evah, one of the most resilient people I’ve ever met.

I met Mama Evah in 2015 when I had the opportunity to travel to Uganda to visit the Destiny Orphanage and School. I went to learn about and share the story of the growing number of children there and how the Kiwanis Club of Sentinel in Missoula, Montana, came to befriend Mama Evah and help her improve the lives of children.

Before arriving, I had pictured sad children. But that was far from what I found at Destiny. The children were happy. They loved school — and Mama Evah. Mama Evah, whose real name is Evah Mugerwa, started the orphanage and school with her husband John Michael. Both were pastors, and both wanted to provide shelter, food and education to the children of church members who had been orphaned during the AIDS crisis in the 1990s. They started by taking 13 kids into their own home.

By the time we visited in 2015, Evah’s husband had died, and she was taking care of more than 1,500 children on a campus with more than 20 buildings.

She reports there are now 2,100 students at Destiny. Due to the pandemic, she’s dealing with food and medicine shortages. And they need many more data bundles for online learning.

She does have help — from staff and global donors (some backed out due to the pandemic). But it’s far from easy. Mama Evah is a mama to every single one of these children, who range in age from infancy to 19. She’s seen an idea grow into a project that was literally built with bricks handmade on site. And she watched proudly as And she watched proudly as

She’s resilient through tragedy and trouble. What person in your life has taught you about resilience? I hope you’ll think of them as you explore this issue of Kiwanis magazine.

Happy reading.

KASEY JACKSON
EXECUTIVE EDITOR
FOR ALL THEY DO.

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Empowerment emerged as a hallmark of the 2020-21 Kiwanis year — and it was the common theme during the Education and Leadership Conference in Salt Lake City. Four keynote presentations highlighted the importance of Kiwanians capitalizing on the power of service through the development of personal strengths, responsibility, mentorships and early-childhood education.

These principles are the reason Kiwanis is emerging strongly from the coronavirus pandemic. Leaders are applying them as they evaluate needs and seize opportunities. Governors understand that membership expansion through club opening is a district responsibility, and they’re inspiring clubs to increase membership through innovative service, member retention and recruitment.

To achieve these objectives, members have developed techniques that will foster success. For example, Kiwanis Amplify and the initiation of the Global Leadership Certificate Program are significant steps toward personal empowerment. Members can apply their new skills to personal, business, school and Kiwanis activities. In addition, Kiwanis Amplify graduates will help evaluate the program to make it even more relevant as it expands.

During this Kiwanis year, I have been privileged to serve each member. As we plan a strong, smooth transition into 2021-22, I appreciate the scores of Kiwanians who have helped advance our organization. Their work will be viewed as a positive contribution to the Kiwanis legacy. Vickie and I look forward to continued Kiwanis fellowship in the years ahead.

As the Kiwanis year winds down, we can see clearly how the “new norms” have taken hold. It’s evident in society generally, but also within the Kiwanis family specifically.

Of course, most of these norms are matters of necessity. Living with the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve been quarantining, social distancing, masking — all the terms and phrases we’ve come to know over the past 18 months.

But sometimes there’s a moment when you really see the reality around you. For me, our new norms became especially clear this summer. At the Education and Leadership Conference in Salt Lake City, for example, we resumed in-person activities for Kiwanis International events. It was a nice return to the days when we could catch up with old friends and make new ones in the same physical space.

But it wasn’t exactly the same. Most Kiwanians were attending online. At the site itself, face masks were available and social-distance measures were in place. All around us, there were signs of the ways that things have changed.

Like you, I hope that many of the recent changes in our world will prove temporary. But we’ve learned a few things that could, or even should, become permanent.

It’s not just at the international level. From the boundary-busting potential of technology to the simple availability of face coverings and hand sanitizer, clubs have found ways to make in-person meetings more comfortable and dynamic for members.

In fact, patience and flexibility have shown us the most important thing of all about on-site activities: We can do this.
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What’s happening
TRENDS, TIPS, FACTS AND FIGURES FROM KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Youth Protection Week coming up
Kiwanis International’s Youth Protection Week will take place October 11-15. As the organization’s annual week for focusing on youth protection, it’s a perfect time to dedicate a club meeting (whether in person or virtually) to required youth-protection training.

You can also familiarize yourself and fellow members with Kiwanis’ dedicated, confidential Youth Protection Helpline, available 24 hours a day to the Kiwanis family in North America.

It’s staffed by experts through our partnership with Praesidium. Kiwanis family members, parents and advisors in North America can call the helpline at 866-607-SAFE (7233).

During Youth Protection Week — and any week — use Kiwanis International’s resources and activities to keep your club updated on training and compliance. Find policies, procedures, background check information and more at kiwanis.org/youthprotection.

In-person Key Leader events returning
The Key Leader program will soon resume in-person events. Weekend experiences are scheduled for September and throughout the fall, from New Hampshire to California.

All Key Leader events are open to high school students and graduating eighth-grade students.

Spread the word among SLP club members and throughout the community. For dates, locations and more, go to key-leader.org/register.
That’s how many Kiwanis clubs have a website. Is your club one of them? Along with social media, a website is part of your connection to the community — and to potential members.

Homecoming materials available
In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kiwanis Service Leadership Programs need Kiwanians more than ever. Kiwanis recently introduced the Homecoming initiative to help Kiwanis clubs and advisors reinvigorate SLPs in schools. Materials for Homecoming are now available. Find them, along with program information, at kiwanis.org/homecoming.

Legacy of Play deadline approaching
The last day to enter this year’s Legacy of Play contest is September 10. Sponsored by Kiwanis partner Landscape Structures Inc. (LSI), the contest awards US$25,000 in playground equipment to the winning Kiwanis club. Any club that enters and continues its project plans with LSI will receive a complimentary OmniSpin® Spinner, valued at US$8,500.

The contest’s voting period will be September 16-30. The winner will be announced on Facebook on October 13. Learn more at kiwanis.org/legacyofplay.

Key Club International elects new leaders
The 2021-22 Board of Trustees for Key Club International was elected in July.

President: Salma Eldeeb, Spruce Creek High School, Florida
Vice president: Melanie Kim, Lambert High School, Georgia
Trustees: Aliya Ali, Ed W. Clark High School, Nevada; Ava Chae, Manhattan High School, Kansas; Emily Leonard, Peak To Peak Charter School, Colorado; Anton McDonald, Aquinas College, Bahamas; Ellie Nussbaum, Ames High School, Iowa; Lena Oswald, Morton High School, Illinois; Natasha Shrestha, Auburn High School, Illinois; Cheyenne Stewart, Terre Haute South Vigo High School, Indiana; Subashree Venkata-subramanian, Pullman High School, Washington; Kathy Ye, Lambert High School, Georgia; Sana Yoosseh, Hagerty High School, Florida.
California Kiwanians win Boys & Girls Clubs award

The Kiwanis Club of San Clemente, California, has won the 2021 Kiwanis Club Impact Award from the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The award is presented each year to a Kiwanis club for excellent collaboration with a local Boys & Girls Club.

The San Clemente club was nominated by the Boys & Girls Club of the South Coast Area (BGCSCA), which lauded the Kiwanians for helping the BGCSCA continue its service during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Kiwanis club’s support included assistance with a meal-delivery program throughout the first 10 weeks of the pandemic, as well as funding and in-person work for barbecue lunches served to summer camp members last summer.

The award was presented during the California-Nevada-Hawaii District Convention in July.

Prorated dues begin in October

**Important reminder:** The New Member Fee will be eliminated from Kiwanis International and all Kiwanis districts on October 1. After that, anyone who joins a Kiwanis club during the Kiwanis year will be charged prorated dues and fees, based on the month they join. On each subsequent October 1, all members will then be assessed the annual dues-and-fees amount. Find more information about dues at kiwanis.org/dues.

New items in Kiwanis Family Store

Kiwanis-branded gear is an easy, affordable way to spread the word that Kiwanis is behind all the good work you do. And now, new items are available at the Kiwanis Family Store — including Kiwanis-branded bags, tumblers, polos, fleece pullovers, tees and more. Check them out at store.kiwanis.org.
We are excited to begin our new partnership with Kiwanis International.

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A new kind of dinosaur has been discovered in North Carolina: the Kiwanisaurus.

OK, it’s not a real dinosaur. But Kiwanians have certainly made dinosaurs rule again — by funding a high-touch, low-tech outdoor exhibit called the Kiwanisaurus Treehouse Adventure at the Greensboro Science Center.

Last fall, the Kiwanis Club of Greensboro and the Greensboro Nat Greene Kiwanis Club were looking for a way to celebrate their centennials, says Dixon Johnston, president-elect of the former club.

“We wanted something that would benefit kids, generate positive media coverage for Kiwanis and be long-lasting. The Greensboro Science Center met all our criteria. They’re the biggest and most successful organization in our area by far.”

Johnston’s club had already sponsored the augmented-reality (AR) “Kiwanis Keeper on Call” program inside the center. Using cell phones, visitors can see and hear dinosaur “keepers” talk about the prehistoric animals in their care.

A new outdoor exhibit would comple-
ment the AR exhibit, along with an existing outdoor space called Skywild Treetop Adventure, an aerial obstacle course for ages 8 and up.

“The center wanted something the littlest kids can do,” Johnston says. “We didn’t envision a treehouse at the time. We thought it was going to be a park.”

Instead, the adventure is an enticing mixture of four treehouses and four crow’s nests, all linked by steps to climb up, slides to slip down, rope nets to scale, hoops to crawl through and swinging wooden bridges to cross (all safely, of course).

But ... are there dinosaurs?

“Of course there are dinosaurs!” says Martha Regester, the science center’s vice president of education. “We have four nearly life-sized, full-color dinosaurs: a Brachiosaurus, a Spinosaurus, a Triceratops and, of course, a Tyrannosaurus rex.”
The dinosaur replicas loom beneath the walkways, giving kids an eyeball-to-eyeball encounter with the prehistoric past.

And though “Kiwanisaurus” sounds like a real dinosaur species, it’s just a name that Johnston created to reflect Kiwanians’ long-term commitment.

To raise the needed funds, the two clubs conducted a capital campaign that included a Kiwanisaurus lapel pin manufactured just for this effort.

“We reached out to our members and asked them to donate US$2,000 to get a Kiwanisaurus pin that shows they took an extra step,” Johnston says. “About a third of our donors did so, and very few gave less than $1,000.”

Regester wasn’t surprised that Kiwanians came through.

“They’ve always had a big interest in children’s education here at the science center,” she says. “We’re privately run, so we rely on our community to visit us and to support our vision. We couldn’t do what we do without Kiwanians sharing some of that vision.”

To keep such vision alive in the future, both Kiwanis clubs are targeting younger people as potential members.

“All service clubs are victims of the changes in our society,” Johnston says. “It used to be that companies encouraged employees to join a service club and even subsidized their membership. They don’t do that much anymore, and today everybody is trying to get five things done at once and can’t find the time to join.

“We’ve done outreach at the college level, to students who might be interested when they graduate. We also focus on people later in their career, and then on retirees too.”

Kiwanians of all ages will have plenty of chances to help in the future. Already, the science center has added an aquarium, a virtual gymnasium and a world-class zoo with conservation and research.

“The science center is projecting 600,000 visitors this year, and it won’t be long before they’re seeing a million visitors every year,” Johnston says. “We should have a long partnership.”
When COVID-19 struck Uganda in 2020, it created difficulties that people around the world would recognize. And for Kiwanians in particular, the basic problem would have seemed familiar: More families needed help than Ugandan Kiwanis members could reach.

But in southeastern Uganda, an area of the country already stricken with extreme poverty, the level of devastation was unusual. So the Kiwanians in Uganda took an unusual step — by quickly organizing another Kiwanis club to address it.

Then again, it’s not so unusual for Kiwanians to band together in Uganda. Officially, there are nine Kiwanis clubs in the country, with a total of about 170 members (as of July 1, 2021). But by combining efforts on service projects, this small but mighty group makes an outsized impact.

When the pandemic began, the Kiwanis Club of Wakiso was distributing food and supplies as quickly as possible in the villages near Wakiso. But they knew they had to do more. And they knew the problem wasn’t limited to their own part of the country. Businesses were closing. Public transportation had shut down. Nobody was allowed in or out of the country. Public gatherings were forbidden. Parents were losing jobs — and many, of course, were being hospitalized.
“The Kiwanis Club of Wakiso felt there was a need to help many kids in the country, but they alone could not handle it,” says Albertcook Isingoma, president of the Kiwanis Club of Nakawa in Kampala.

“I was asked, as president-elect of the Wakiso club, to spearhead the formation of the Kiwanis Club of Nakawa in order to spread the gospel of Kiwanis to different parts of the country.”

The Kiwanis Club of Nakawa Uganda was organized in February 2020. With help from a Kiwanis Children’s Fund grant, the club was serving families by May. And they have no plans to slow down now. Not even for a pandemic.

Here’s just a glimpse into a few of the many projects being done by the Wakiso and Nakawa Kiwanis clubs.

WAKISO KIWANIS CLUB:
In October 2018, the club decided to support the St. Lillian Home of Children with Disabilities Gayaza. When the club started this partnership, there were 27 kids in the home. There are now more than 35. “Some are disowned by their parents who still see it as a shame in society to have physically disadvantaged kids,” says Past President Catherine Namusisi.

Others are found thrown at the gate, and others are brought by police as they are found dumped on rubbish pits. These are the very kids in despair for health treatment who need medical support.” (The Nakawa Club also supports the St. Lillian Home.)

Through the club’s Elderly Support Project theme, the club decided to permanently support Nkoko Kaddu (right), a 94-year-old former Catholic priest who has no family. “We managed to bring a smile to Mr. Nkoko Kaddu,” says Namusisi. “The club always stocks household items including foodstuffs, fruits and vegetables, clothing, bedding and charcoal for cooking.” The club also ensures Mr. Kaddu receives proper healthcare.

Club members also supported
single mothers who are the only income earners in their families. More than 55 women were given household items, food and counseling from the club.

NAKAWA KIWANIS CLUB:
To celebrate Kiwanis One Day 2020, the club inducted five new members and set out into the community. Members visited the maternity ward of Naguru Hospital, an orphanage for girls and a home for kids and seniors — donating necessities, food and much more to each location while visiting with residents.

"Kiwanis One Day is dedicated to service," says Isingoma. "And though COVID-19 affected how we do it, it couldn’t affect what we do, and this makes a lifetime of difference. Nakawa Uganda volunteers with a giving heart, a cheerful spirit and an open mind — coupled with empathy, tenacity, dedication and love — carried out these three successful projects in one day, bringing hope to the less, last and lost in life."

In August 2020, club members visited children in the biggest slum in Kampala. Members donated necessities, educated kids on maintaining a safe environment and also met orphans and widows hit by the pandemic. "It was a huge success attended by the local politicians and religious leaders and other civil societies," Isingoma says.

In December 2020, club members held a We Care, We Serve Christmas Project at the Budondo Health Centre in Jinja, Uganda. During this event, the community and Kiwanis volunteers were encouraged to donate blood to Budondo Blood Bank and to help the Budondo Maternity and Children’s Hospital. The community was also educated on the importance of good hygiene and healthcare practices — with reminders to be vigilant during the pandemic.

OUTSIDE HELP
As the African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” For Kiwanians, sometimes those villages are in other parts of the world. Consider the ways members have come together to help children in Uganda:
• Children’s Fund grant: A grant from the Kiwanis Children’s Fund helped the Kiwanis Club of Wakiso distribute maize, beans and soap to 600 vulnerable households in three villages to sustain children and families. Maize, or corn flour, is a major staple food in Uganda, providing more than 40% of the average daily calorie consumption. Club members also collected rice, sugar, salt, tea, clothing, shoes and bedding for the villagers. “Kiwanis was very much appreciated for showing love and care to such a huge number of homesteads that are living below the poverty line and were severely affected by the lockdown effects of COVID-19,” Past President Catherine Namusisi says.

• Austria steps in: Helmut Beran (below), a member of Kiwanis Club of Mödling in Austria, met Catherine Namusisi from Uganda via Facebook and told her about Kiwanis. She was immediately interested: “We need Kiwanis in Uganda!” Together they looked for other interested people, and both the Mödling and the Wien Belvedere clubs began co-sponsoring the Wakiso club. Helmut offered a start-up donation for the charity fund at the charter celebration on October 28, 2018, in Uganda. The organization Pharmacists without Borders also donated a large amount of medicine to families.

• Island helpers: Kiwanis Club Ralia Koumac from New Caledonia helped the Wakiso club members purchase tents for the Uganda national referral hospital at the Cancer Institute for Children in February 2019.

• Italian patron: Domenico La Mantia from Italy agreed to be the patron of the Nakawa Kiwanis Club.
A worldwide pandemic. The loss of a loved one. A rocket attack. A lingering speech disorder. While vastly different in scope and effect, these diverse challenges — and many others — have two things in common: getting through them depends on resilience and develops resilience.

Beth Payne is a former U.S. consul in Iraq. One early morning in October 2003, a rocket slammed into the Iraq hotel where Payne was staying. The guests were plunged into chaos, and Payne — clad in blood-covered pajamas — helped dozens of her colleagues escape to safety. For years afterward, she struggled with trying to sleep, irritability and a sense of emotional distance, until she was diagnosed with and treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. Her experience led her to study resilience so that she could help other U.S. ambassadors and senior officials who were going through similar traumas, and she eventually partnered with colleagues at the National Foreign Affairs Training Center to create the Center of Excellence in Foreign Affairs Resilience.

“I have a two-factor definition of resilience,” Payne says. “One is the ability to function effectively and adapt and be flexible during a period of crisis or adversity. You want to be able to perform and do well. The second is to be able to bounce back when there is a negative — maybe even bounce forward. People who are resilient are able to bounce back so much easier than those who aren’t resilient.”

Weathering the storm

WHILE TRAUMA AND TRAGEDY CAN DERAIL YOUR LIFE, PRACTICING RESILIENCE CAN KEEP YOU MOVING FORWARD. Story by Julie Saetre
PAYNE has since extended her resilience training to the general public. She’s not the only expert to realize that the need for such education has never been so crucial.

Zaheen Nanji’s road to resilience began when she developed a stutter at age 7. Through the years, she did her best to hide it, but by the time she traveled from Kenya to Canada to attend college, she realized she wouldn’t excel in her classes by employing her usual avoidance tactic of limiting verbal interactions. Nanji sought speech therapy, where she was advised that she had a choice: remain stagnant in life or use available resources to face her fears and live differently. She chose the latter and today is a professional speaker, trainer and coach who calls herself a “resilience champion.”

“Just like a car steers through traffic, resilience is the ability to steer through life challenges and find ways to overcome those and thrive,” Nanji says.

The good news is that, like Payne and Nanji, we can all learn to be more resilient. Resilience isn’t an innate talent or gift that you are born with or without.

“Resilience is a lifestyle,” Payne says. “It’s not one and done. There’s no quick fix. It’s how we live our lives that makes us more or less resilient.”

“Resilience isn’t what you have. It’s what you do,” stresses Dr. Margie Warrell, founder of the leadership consultancy organization Global Courage and author of five books on leadership, courage and resilience. “I often think of it as a resilient rubber band. You pull it, you stretch it, you twist it, and it bounces back. All of us have the capacity not just to bounce back into the shape of who we used to be, but actually into an even better version of who we were.”

Warrell had to put her own words into action last year. In March 2020, she was in Singapore, preparing to mark the release of her latest book, “You’ve Got This,” when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the pause button on activities around the world. Two of her four children were living on a school campus in the U.S. and had to move in with friends’ families (people Warrell had never met) when their residence halls shut down. Her husband flew into Singapore from the U.S. just before the borders closed — only to be promptly diagnosed with COVID-19, one of the earliest patients to test positive. He was hospitalized for over a month.

“I had been due to fly to start a book tour,” Warrell says. “And instead, I was locked in quarantine in a small apartment in Singapore. My husband was in the hospital. And I was like, holy moly. I’ve got this book ‘You’ve Got This,’ and I’m having to practice everything that I’ve just written about.”

Fortunately, practice is key to enhancing resilience — and to calling on it when we need it most. Life certainly provides plenty of opportunities for us to up our game.
“It’s an ongoing process,” Nanji says, “because we are faced with different challenges in different areas of our life, whether it’s health, whether it’s career or financial or with your family and loved ones. And the way we deal with those is different in every aspect. So practicing and getting access to resources that can help you overcome those is what it’s all about.”

For Ashley Bugge, those resources included support from family and friends — but at first she was reluctant to access the assistance. In 2018, Bugge, then 34, was living in Hawaii with her husband, Brian, a Navy member who was working for the U.S. Pacific Fleet’s Integrated Undersea Surveillance Systems department. Bugge was six months pregnant with the couple’s third child when she received news that Brian had been in an off-duty diving accident. She rushed to the hospital, where she learned he had died.

“At the very beginning, I knew I couldn’t do it alone, but I didn’t want to ask for help,” she says. “I didn’t want anyone else to watch my kids. I didn’t want anyone else to fold my laundry. Because I didn’t want anyone to feel pity on me. I should be able to do this stuff myself. This wasn’t their responsibility.”

That’s a common reaction, experts say. It’s also counter-productive to developing resilience. “I think the misperception is that resilience is about grit. It’s about sucking it up and suffering the trauma,” says Payne. “And it’s like, ‘no, no, no.’ Resilience isn’t just about me. Resilience is about a group of people taking care of each other and helping each other be resilient.”

That’s what Bugge discovered when she finally accepted support and help from her loved ones. “The truth is, we watch each other struggle and we want to help,” she says. “And allowing people to help is not just a gift to ourselves, but to them. Accept and embrace other people wanting to help you. Admit and acknowledge when you need that help and lean on your trusted circle of family and friends. All of that ties into resilience. You can’t do this alone.”

Accepting help is so important that “social support” is one of five factors Payne says are crucial for building and maintaining resilience, along with self-care, problem-solving, meaning and purpose, and a positive outlook.

Self-care is as simple — but as challenging — as making sure you’re getting enough sleep, eating healthful foods, getting

“Just like a car steers through traffic, resilience is the ability to steer through life challenges and find ways to overcome those and thrive.” — Zaheen Nanji
physical exercise and taking time out to give yourself a mental respite. When you’re taking care of yourself, it provides a stronger base from which to work on solving the problem at hand — and that means learning what you can and can’t control.

“When there’s a lot of uncertainty,” Warrell says, “a lot of things are outside our control, and we can’t always control what happens to us. That’s just life.

“But we can always control how we respond to what has happened to us, focusing on the things that are within our control. We can always choose the mindset that we bring to things. We can always choose how we want to engage with other people. We can choose how we will spend our time or how we will apply new skills we may have learned.”

After her husband’s accident, Bugge turned to writing as a response to loss and grief. She began by pouring her experiences and emotions into her blog, where she wrote about Brian’s death, her heartbreak, the challenges she faced, the birth of their daughter Adeline, her family’s move back to the mainland and the subsequent restructuring of her life. That blog became the basis for her 2020 book, “Always Coming Back Home: An Emotional Tale of Love, Adventure, Tragedy and Hope.”

Bugge has also co-produced a documentary, “If Only … ” about Brian’s accident, and she speaks to groups about building resilience.

“It became something to invest myself and my time in,” she says. “It gave me purpose. When you go through traumatic events, you lose your confidence and you feel like you can’t do this, you’re in it alone, you’re not the same person you were before.

“So finding a purpose or finding a new thing that you always wanted to do or wanted to try, and investing yourself and your time into that — it really just made a huge difference in my life and made a huge difference in my kids’ lives. And more often than not, it’s a tangible representation of that resilience, which has been huge.”

Finding meaning and purpose, of course, is one of Payne’s five factors of resilience. That means Kiwanis family members have a head start on building their own reserves.

“Volunteering is an important element of finding meaning,” Payne explains. “When I help other people, when I am altruistic, I build my resilience. There’s a lot of research showing that people who volunteer, people who give to others, are more resilient than people who don’t. When you help other people, you have meaning in your life. When you care about your community, you have meaning in your life. And meaning is critical. When you lose meaning, you lose resilience.”

When you volunteer, Warrell says, you also gain new perspectives on your own struggles.

“When we focus on how we can be of service to others, it actually can take our mind off getting pulled into self-pity or ‘woe is me,’ into some of the negative emotions.”

Experts stress that choosing to find ways through a challenge, no matter how difficult or painful, does not minimize a loss or its impact. Rather, it acknowledges the significance of the situation and gives you permission to get through it to something positive.

“When you are faced with a challenge, a lot of people who don’t practice resilience may go
into a negative spiral,” Nanji says. “‘Why has this happened to me?’ Or they can go into a victim mindset. And there’s nothing wrong with going there first. I find our brains are wired to think of negatives first, or to the victim mindset, and that’s totally OK. What I’m saying is that we don’t stay there forever.”

Of course, that doesn’t mean it’s easy.

“It is a very hard thing to wrap your head around, especially if there’s a terrible circumstance,” says Bugge, who admits that she has experienced conflicted feelings when her book wins an award or her speaking engagements allow her to travel the world. “I have to remember, I can’t change the fact that (Brian) passed away. His death could either consume him and me and I could be shriveled up in a hole, or I could use that circumstance to make myself an award-winning author and push myself, my kids, my community to do better and to want more. It’s just not thinking of yourself, but instead accepting and embracing the event and then using that to push yourself in this next step.”

Bugge is experiencing what Warrell calls post-traumatic growth, which happens when people face a major adversity or trauma and emerge with an enhanced sense of wellbeing, a deeper level of connection in their relationships, a more optimistic outlook for the future and the ability to enjoy life.

Sometimes that growth makes those positive feelings even greater than they had been before the crisis.

“It’s important to say that it doesn’t negate that people may have suffered or experienced pain. It also doesn’t mean that they’re not experiencing a level of stress,” Warrell says. “In fact, it can actually exist in parallel with post-traumatic stress. People can still have some stress from what they’ve experienced, but they’re able to channel the experience in a way that actually gives them an enhanced sense of just simply being alive and their experience of life.”

By making a daily effort to build resilience by caring for ourselves and others, focusing on what is and isn’t in our control, reframing negative situations we face and finding new ways to get through tough circumstances, we can help ourselves and others face life’s many challenges, together.

“We don’t have to be perfect. It’s OK if you’re suffering. It’s OK if you’re struggling,” Payne says. “Reach out to people. Ask for help. We’re not robots. We’re human beings, and this is hard. Don’t feel bad. Say, ‘Yeah, this is hard, and that’s OK.’ Take that pressure off.”

The bigger point, Warrell adds, is to give yourself permission to feel your own vulnerability — to embrace your uncomfortable emotions as a way of embracing your humanity.

“Sometimes life is hard,” she says. “But just because life is hard doesn’t mean it’s all bad.”

K
everyone’s Kiwanis experience is different. Some people join for the service to kids and the fellowship of meetings. Some people join to be community leaders, and maybe even to run for district or international leadership positions.

For each member at every level of involvement, the new Kiwanis year begins on October 1. As 2021-22 approaches, here’s a checklist of things you can do to make it the best year it can be for you.

**LEARN ABOUT YOUR LEADER**
Did you know you are part of something way bigger than just your club? You also have leaders in your division, district and globally. Chances are, you know your club president (if it’s not you!), but who are your leaders at the district and international levels?

For a list of who’s who on the Kiwanis International Board of Trustees, visit kiwanis.org/leadership.

For district leadership, visit your district website.

**ASSESS COMMUNITY NEEDS**
A lot of things changed in the past year. The pandemic slowed things down — or closed things down — and generally affected everyone. How will this change how your club works? Talk about this in your next club meeting. And make plans to reach out to community leaders: schools, elected officials, club partners, other service organizations and agencies that help children. Find out what their needs are and how you can help. And what are your own club’s needs? Discuss and take notes. Use the tools at kiwanis.org/acetools.

**MAKE SOME MONEY**
Your club wants to serve its community, but that often takes money. A fundraising event is one way to bring it in — while improving your profile. If this is the right solution for your group, make sure your fundraiser is fun, effective and profitable. Fundraising expert Lora Hoover, director of development for the Kiwanis Children’s Fund, says a successful fundraiser should:

1. **Be fun!** It’s important to have fun every step of the way, from planning to clean-up. If you don’t enjoy and embrace every aspect of a fundraising event, it might not be the right project.

2. **Be sustainable.** Regularly assess your event by asking yourself:
   - Is this event aligned with our capacity?
   - Have we chosen an event that has potential for long-term growth?
   - Are we making the best use of our resources and relationships?

3. **Promote your organization’s goals.** Your fundraising event may be the first opportunity for a member of the public to learn about your organization. Make sure that every aspect of your event represents your organization’s culture and purpose.
4. Highlight your community’s culture. We often fall back on the same kinds of fundraising events: golf outings, galas, wine tastings. Find something unique and lean into that.

5. Engage your community in various ways. Your event can be led by your organization and benefit a cause it’s passionate about, but that doesn’t mean you have to go it alone. Here’s a pro tip: Ask community members to serve on the event’s organizing committee. Community partnerships can lead to deeper engagement.

6. Don’t leave money on the table. People come to fundraising events knowing they’ll be asked for a gift. But don’t be afraid to raise money in other ways. Some ideas for enhancing fundraising include:
   - Admission fee.
   - VIP experience.
   - Raffle, auction, gift certificate board, wine pull, diamond dig.
   - Merchandise sales.
   - Concessions.

7. Include a follow-up. People who attend your fundraiser may be interested in a closer relationship with your organization. Don’t waste the opportunity to engage!

   □ IDENTIFY YOUR SIGNATURE PROJECT
   Signature projects elevate awareness of Kiwanis, engage current members and remind them why they joined Kiwanis. A signature project is:
   - Recurring. At a minimum, the project should take place annually.
   - Brand-enhancing. The project should be designed to elevate the Kiwanis brand in the local community with opportunities for public relations activities, such as using the Kiwanis name on the project, media mentions, etc.
   - High-impact. The project should have a demonstrable positive impact on the community; this impact should be measurable in monies raised or children served.
   - Membership-focused. The project should support opportunities to strengthen membership and develop new partnerships.

Invite potential new members to your signature project. Learn more at kiwanis.org/signatureprojects.

□ WORK WITH SLPs
Probably the single most important thing you do as a Kiwanian is positively change lives. One way to do this is to sponsor a Kiwanis Service Leadership Program. Sponsoring an SLP gets your club engaged with schools and the community, and it gives your members a chance to mentor and provide service and leadership opportunities for Kiwanis family members of all ages and abilities. Here’s a rundown:
   - K-Kids for elementary school students ages 6-12.
   - Builders Club for middle school students ages 11-14.
   - Key Club for high school students ages 14-18.
   - Circle K International for university students.
   - Aktion Club for adults with disabilities.

Many Kiwanis clubs sponsor more than one SLP. Learn more online at kiwanis.org/charter.
APPLY FOR GRANTS
The Kiwanis Children’s Fund provides club grants three times a year for established programs and for new endeavors. The types of projects vary, but they must be Kiwanis-led and meet a need in the club’s community. The complete set of eligibility requirements is available in the Guide to Club Grants at kiwanischildrensfund.org/clubgrants.

IDENTIFY PARTNERS
Kiwanis International partners with several organizations, but your club should look into local partnerships as well. Reach out to like-minded organizations, schools, community centers — the list goes on and on. Generate ideas by talking about partners in one of your upcoming meetings. Learn more at kiwanis.org/partners.

ATTEND TRAININGS
Kiwanis means working with children in communities, and those communities change rapidly. Seek out club, divisional, district and even international education and training opportunities offered by Kiwanis International or your district. Work with your district’s leadership development to find out about upcoming offerings. Learn more at kiwanis.org/education.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE CONVENTION
Don’t miss the 2022 Kiwanis International Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA, where there will be entertainment, education, speakers, elections and more surprises. Dates are June 8-11, 2022. This is your chance to help shape the future of the organization! Learn more at kiwanis.org/convention.

In addition to the checklist, there are some things you just need to know. Here are a few of the most important:

YOUTH PROTECTION
Each year, more than 300,000 youth take part in Kiwanis Service Leadership Programs like K-Kids, Builders Club and Key Club. And Kiwanis reaches millions more youth around the world through club and district service projects.

Kiwanis members must know how to protect the youth with whom they interact. When we all share this commitment, we also protect ourselves and the organization we value.

Kiwanis International has taken extensive action to equip Kiwanis clubs, districts and Service Leadership Programs with the tools to provide safe and secure environments for youth. This includes background checks, training, procedures, rules and more. Learn more at kiwanis.org/youthprotection.

WE NEED YOU
As a member, you are the heart and soul of Kiwanis. We encourage you to seek out leadership roles within your club — including committee membership and officer roles. And we hope you’ll consider positions beyond your club, such as lieutenant governor, district governor and district committees, and even a leadership role at the international level. We need dedicated Kiwanians to step up and take the lead. And we’re looking at you.

BIG CHANGE IN DUES STRUCTURE
Soon your club can spend more time improving your community — and less time figuring out how much to charge new members. A simplified dues policy begins October 1, 2021. On that date, the New Member Fee will be eliminated by Kiwanis International and all Kiwanis districts. Instead, anyone who joins a Kiwanis club during the Kiwanis year will be charged prorated dues and fees, based on the month they join. On each subsequent October 1 (the first day of the Kiwanis year), all members will be assessed the annual dues-and-fees amount.

The elimination of the New Member Fee was decided by the Kiwanis International Board in October 2019 to take effect on October 1, 2021. For more information, visit kiwanis.org/dues.
Everyone wants to be heard. We humans are social creatures, and we all want to be appreciated and understood. So how do you and I help make the children we serve feel appreciated and understood? We can start by actively listening to them.

“Active listening is about being fully present to someone else,” explains retired counselor Marie O’Rourke. “We must concentrate on what the speaker is saying and let that person know we’re fully present.”

This type of listening, along with a question/response dialogue, results in the ultimate goal: authentic communication.

Dr. Mable Barth coined the concept of active listening in Denver, Colorado, in 1979, when she realized there was no place for college students to “sound off” without the conversation becoming a matter of school record.

What Barth started at a portable table on one campus in Denver, she soon instituted at the high school level as well, dubbing it “The Listening Post.”

After a rash of student suicides across the U.S. in the 1980s, Listening Posts began appearing in elementary and high schools as well. In 1989, The Listening Post was incorporated as a nonprofit organization. Although it’s no
longer organized as such, its legacy remains active through Kiwanis clubs — particularly in Southport-Oak Island, North Carolina.

A PROGRAM IS BORN
In February 2006, Kiwanian John Kelso found a way to put his effective-listening training as an FBI hostage negotiator into action for kids. Kelso was president of his local club that year when he read a Kiwanis magazine article, “Students find place to express feelings.”

Learning about the ways Barth was spreading effective listening all over the country, Kelso saw the Listening Post as consistent with his club’s mission. He ran it by his club’s directors, and they agreed.

He then called Barth directly and set up a training session by speaker phone — with Barth on one end and six local volunteers on his end. During that meeting, Kelso remembers, one statement Barth made about The Listening Post’s ultimate purpose stuck with him.

“When kids talk to us adults,” she said, “whether parents, teachers or rabbis, we can get accusatory and judgmental. When teens are looking for help, they need listeners, not advisors.”

Kelso and crew implemented The Listening Post program after gaining permission from administrators at South Brunswick Middle School (SBMS) in Boiling Spring Lakes, North Carolina.

“Since the beginning, we have tried to help teens work through issues on their own,” Kelso says. “The concept of allowing students to talk with an adult about anything on their minds, without fear of judgment, really took off.”

Now in its 12th year at SBMS, The Listening Post still uses Barth’s basic set-up during lunch periods: a cloth-covered table, a sign explaining the program and some treats to draw students in.

A NEED IS MET
After a 40-year career as a teacher, Charlie Joyce enjoys giving time during his retirement to The Listening Post at SBMS.

“These days, kids don’t get much time to just talk with their parents,” he says. “So we supplement that face-to-face time here in the lunch room.”

American families get just 37 minutes of quality time together per average weekday, according to a 2018 study of 2,000 parents with school-aged children.

Marie O’Rourke, the retired counselor, says that children in a chaotic and hectic environment may feel that they are not important and that nobody cares how they feel or what they think.

“As a result, they may keep their worries and fears to themselves,” O’Rourke says. “This often results in depression and anxiety that can affect their ability to learn and develop good relationships.”

Herein lies the beauty of The Listening Post. Simply by listening actively, an adult gives...
IN THEIR WORDS

“Herein lies the beauty of The Listening Post. Simply by listening actively, an adult gives the child a feeling of importance, safety and understanding.”

the child a sense of importance, safety and understanding.

This is why Kelso felt that ah-ha moment when he read about The Listening Post originally.

“In my estimation,” he says, “the program helps kids grow emotionally.”

Some minor tweaking was done to the local program under Kelso’s leadership.

“We added women listeners, so that students would have another gender to share with, if they wanted to,” he says. “We also added a third listener to the table so that we could serve the dozens of students we saw in a lunchtime.”

Kelso passed the leadership torch to Ken Bastedenbeck years ago, but he remains proud of the continuous, attentive lineup of listeners on the adult side of the table.

“This is why God gave us two ears but only one mouth — so we can listen more.”

THE NEXT ERA
Bastedenbeck describes his era of leading The Listening Post in this southeastern North Carolina club as educational for himself.

“I remember that it was heartwarming to see students writing notes of affirmation and their signatures on the placards we provided,” he says. “But the most surprising thing for me was the amount of one-parent families. We’d get the kids to talk about that.

“We had a rule that the adults would only listen and let the students say whatever they needed to talk about,” he adds. “That was our purpose.”

Dick Hart agrees. He inherited the helm of The Listening Post program in the Southport-Oak Island area from Bastedenbeck and has led it for the past six years. For Hart, the real secret of a successful Listening Post program is simple.

“Just listen and show an interest in our youth,” he says. That’s it!”

After the success of the program at SBMS, Hart decided to present the concept at another area school last year. After getting approval at Cedar Grove Middle School, the only hurdle he experienced was getting enough volunteers to meet the increased needs of the students in both schools.

With two programs up and running, Hart has a unique perspective to share with prospective directors.
“At various schools, The Listening Post may look very different — and that’s OK,” he says.

At some schools, the table may need to be in the cafeteria, while the stage area might be available at others. Anywhere you put it, a table with a sign and a few chairs is all you need. Add tablecloths, candy dishes and stickers to make the post your own.

As far as personnel, volunteers sign up for three-hour shifts once a week, to cover all of the lunch periods.

INVITE COMMUNITY LEADERS
David Ruth, the principal at SBMS, says the Listening Post is one of many ways in which his students have benefited from Kiwanis over the years.

Thanks to Hart’s diligence and contacts, Ruth says, SBMS students have talked with Kiwanis volunteers, but also with other community members — including government officials, the superintendent of the school district, a school board member, a TV anchor and even a judge.

At Cedar Grove, the second middle school to which Hart took the program, a former firefighter paid a visit as a guest listener this year.

The school principal, Justin Hayes, pops by too.

“The Listening Post has been a huge benefit for our students,” he says. “They want people to hear them, to hear their concerns. Mainly, they want not to feel judged when they share their opinions.”

As Hayes says this, two seventh graders with special needs greet their principal with a fist bump.

IMPORTANT RULE
If a student directly reveals to a Listening Post volunteer that they need help, volunteers are advised to notify the proper staff in the school, such as a teacher, school resource officer or principal.
Outdoor oasis

A Gift of land lets Kiwanians help underserved kids spend time in nature.

By Lydia Johnson

Kiwanians in the Missouri-Arkansas District believe all children deserve a safe place to camp and experience the outdoors, regardless of individual and family circumstances. So when a generous benefactor gave the district a gift of land with instructions to use the acreage for a children’s camp, members enthusiastically embraced the idea.

“Our mission is to serve children, especially underprivileged children,” says Jim Wiltgen, a member of the Conway Kiwanis Club in Conway, Arkansas.

The Beatrice Johnson Kiwanis Youth Kamp became an official nonprofit in 2011, three years after Johnson County, Arkansas, resident Beatrice Johnson bequeathed the 160 acres of land and a year after it was legally deeded to the district. During that three-year period, the Kiwanis Club of Russellville, Arkansas, which has primary guardianship of the camp, led the hard work of forming a nonprofit organization and creating the project from scratch.

The camp’s mission: To fulfill the need for kids to connect with nature through hands-on activities in a primitive environment to equip them with skills and abilities to thrive.

Just how primitive? Until a recent project wrapped up, the camp did not yet have electricity. That same project introduced accessible restroom facilities. But even simple surroundings can be filled with fun. Amenities include hiking trails, a mountain-bike trail (added by the River Valley Ozark Outdoor Recreational Cyclists Organization) and a disc golf course.

The sale of the land’s timber-and gas-income royalties funded the construction of a 50-by-30-foot pavilion that includes running water, as well as the creation of three campsites outfitted with five tent pads each. Eagle Scouts contributed campfire chairs and mapped out interpretive wildlife paths.

Today, scouting groups use the campsites for primitive or day camping and cook meals in the pavilion. Local children, preteens and teens (including Key Club members) visit the site for school field trips or extracurricular activities.

The camp’s board of directors includes Wiltgen and members of his Kiwanis club, members of the Russellville Kiwanis Club and other Kiwanians from Arkansas and Missouri.

As funding allows, they plan to make more additions so kids can enjoy new outdoor adventures.

“It’s 160 acres — not super large,” Wiltgen says. “But it’s large enough that you can really feel like you’re out in nature.”
Celebrate your club officers and members with pins that tell the world who they are. Choose from traditional styles or make them smile with something less formal. A portion of every purchase contributes to allowing members to improve communities and the lives of children around the world.

[kiwanis.org/store]
In March 2020, players, coaches, referees and staff were poised to attend the 30th Annual Kiwanis Central Coast All-Star Basketball Spectacular. The Kiwanis Club of Santa Maria Valley, California, had worked for months to get ready. Then, just days before tip-off, everything changed.

“We got a call from the host college that events were canceled due to the coronavirus,” says Gary Prober, the club’s treasurer. “We were reeling.”

Gone were event proceeds that funded sports programs for kids in homeless shelters and scholarships for high school seniors. The club’s primary fundraiser, the October Bingo Blast, would be the next casualty, putting all service projects in jeopardy.

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But this 18-member club rebounded. In weeks, they’d set up their first-ever poker game/road rally fundraiser for some socially distanced fun in October 2020.

Poker Rally participants would drive their own vehicles through the vineyards, farmlands and hills of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, stopping to pick up a playing card at each of seven stations (while staying safely in their cars). The person with the best five-card stud poker hand at the finish line would win US$500. All other hands would win tickets for a raffle, with better hands earning more tickets.

“We found out-of-the-way parks and wineries for stations, and we also found community jewels that many people did not know existed,” Prober says. “The Poker Rally would bring exposure to nonprofits like the Orcutt Oasis Senior Center.”

Every club member stepped up to handle responsibilities for the stations, dressing themselves and their tables to match a theme. Stations had treats or prizes for kids, and many gave away themed items, like a salt shaker at the station hosted by a Margaritaville Resort, named after the popular song by American tropical crooner Jimmy Buffett. Past fundraiser sponsors donated certificates for easy (socially distanced) mailing to raffle winners.

“We ended up with so many donations that almost every participant won at least one prize,” Prober says.

An intense promotional effort resulted in 80 participants, five over the club’s goal. The day of the Poker Rally brought gorgeous weather and grateful drivers who had been hunkered down at home during the pandemic.

“So many people thanked us for getting them out of the house,” Prober said.

The rally netted $3,384. On the heels of its success, the club held a second rally in the spring and brought in $2,759, after donations were made to each of the nonprofits used as stations. [**]
SMALL BUSINESS SAVINGS PROGRAM

Pricing Summary & Program Advantages

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CLUBS IN ACTION

Water works
A GRANT FOR A GARDEN YIELDS MORE THAN JUST VEGGIES.
BY WENDY ROSE GOULD

When the Hudson Kiwanis Club in Ohio reached out to Hudson High School to see how the two could collaborate, one of the last things the Kiwanians expected to hear was, “Assist us in the build of a hydroponic garden.” In fact, many club members weren’t even sure what hydroponic gardening involved.

If you’re not sure either, club member Peter Loal explains. “Hydroponics is a way to skip the soil and substitute a different material to support root growth,” Loal says. “(It) uses fresh, recycled water with a specific pH for the plants they are growing, oxygen and root support through a fiber-like material. Nutrients are delivered through the water mixture, (and plants receive) natural sunlight and supplemental artificial light with LEDs.”

Eager to help the high school bring this new addition to its existing greenhouse, the club helped make the vision a reality with a US$20,000 grant. Now, students learn about growing food sustainably, the science of germination and the role of local and urban agriculture in the food industry.

The garden also provides an opportunity for students to develop a work ethic and social skills in an authentic, hands-on way. The hydroponic garden presents moments of problem-solving, collaboration, scientific inquiry and experimentation. The school also has involved the special needs program.

“The Hudson Kiwanians’ willingness to first hear our district’s proposal to fund a hydroponics lab and then following up with additional inquiries to develop a deep understanding of what we were trying to accomplish says much about [our] long-standing partnership,” says Brian Welch, Hudson High School’s principal. “The new hydroponics lab at the high school is a great example of project-based learning that involves students of all ability levels.”

The students grow foods like lettuce, cucumbers and tomatoes, and the school intends to sell some of the produce at the local farmers’ market.

“The project has turned out better than expected,” says Loal. “It’s been a rip-roaring success.”

The club and high school have worked together since the club was formed in 1951, and both look forward to future successful collaborations. 

K I W A N I S M A G A Z I N E. O R G
BACK TO SCHOOL, BACK TO SERVICE.

Students are going back to school. In the Kiwanis family — and in your community — that means they’re getting back to service. You can help! Be an advisor to a Kiwanis Service Leadership Programs club. Or inspire your Kiwanis club to sponsor one. Help people of all ages and abilities become leaders through service.

Visit kiwanis.org/sponsorslp, or email slp@kiwanis.org.
Club checkup

USE THIS HANDY CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU DETERMINE HOW YOUR CLUB IS DOING.

Not all clubs are created equal, and that’s OK. In your club meeting, use this survey to start a discussion about where you are now and how you could do better. Keep notes and refer to them throughout the Kiwanis year. And remember: It’s never too late to sponsor a Service Leadership Program or work with a new partner. Make some short-term goals as well as stretch goals — and put someone in charge of keeping up with how the club is doing. Ask this member to report back each quarter with progress. Have fun!

Are all members engaged in the club?  
Yes  No

Do members socialize together outside of club activities?  
Yes  No

Do members rely on only a few to do all the work?  
Yes  No

Does our club have a mission that everyone knows?  
Yes  No

Does our club have a budget that we follow?  
Yes  No

Does our club have a leadership pipeline?  
Yes  No

Are our leaders prepared for their roles?  
Yes  No

Does our club have activities planned at least one quarter in advance?  
Yes  No

Does our community know we exist?  
Yes  No

Does our club utilize media (news, tv, radio) for promotion?  
Yes  No

Does our club work with our schools?  
Yes  No

Does our club sponsor Service Leadership Programs?  
Yes  No

Does our club have partners in the community?  
Yes  No

Does our club work with official Kiwanis partners?  
Yes  No
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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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