



GREETINGS FROM OUR COMMITTEE

What an exciting time of the year! Our teachers are welcoming students back to the classroom all over the world. There is excitement all around and hope that schools can remain open and the virus with its variants will stay away. Parents, educators, and community leaders are advocating various methods to help our children remain safe, most notably masks and vaccinations. And Kiwanis Clubs everywhere are welcoming students with backpacks filled with school supplies and materials. (See the brief project of the Chapel Hill /Carrboro NC Kiwanis Club later in this newsletter.)

We say “Thank You!” with deep gratitude to our outgoing committee members, Kevin Thomas from the Pennsylvania District and Beth Kindschi from the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan District. We welcome two new committee members, Diana Ragbeer Murray from Florida and Ilonka- Christina Lohmer, Switzerland-Liechtenstein.

Happy fall everyone, and thank you for all you do and so very well for our Kiwanis Children.

Barbara Day and Kelly Boswell
Co-Chairs, Young Children Committee

After writing this introduction, our beloved **Dr. Wil** departed from our Kiwanis world. Words cannot express our sadness for the loss of our friend, colleague and gentle giant and his tremendous contributions to Young Children around the world. Please see our special tribute from the International Young Children Committee to him starting on page 5.

IMPORTANT DATES

World Mental Health Day

October 10

Kiwanis Youth Protection Week

October 11 - 15

Kiwanis One Day

October 23

World Children’s Day

November 20

Key Club Week

November 1-5



Kiwanis[®]
COMMITTEE ON YOUNG CHILDREN

FEATURED PROJECT: KIWANIS CLUB PROVIDES SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR LOCAL ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

The school year is starting off a little brighter for four dozen elementary students in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro School System. The week before school started, members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Kiwanis Club delivered colorful backpacks stuffed with school supplies to the principals of McDougle Elementary School and the UNC Hospital School.

This marks the eighth year the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Kiwanis Club has donated the backpacks and school supplies — including notebooks and folders, pencils, erasers, crayons, scissors, rulers and glue sticks — to the schools.



“Improving the lives of children is the heart of Kiwanis, and this annual backpack project is one of the ways our Kiwanis Club supports that mission,” says longtime Kiwanian Barbara Day. “Both the principals, Ms. Howard at McDougle and Ms. Ruben at the Hospital School, were thrilled to receive these backpacks for students who might not have all the school supplies they need, and we were happy to be able to help our children.”

The Kiwanis Club donated 40 backpacks to McDougle Elementary and eight backpacks to the UNC Hospital School. Kiwanis also sponsors a Reading to Children project with UNC Hospitals, where members of the club read to children in the UNC Children’s Hospital playroom (to resume when volunteers are allowed again).

For additional information, contact Patty Courtright, President-elect of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Kiwanis Club, pattycourtright@gmail.com



ADVOCACY:

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROUTINE PEDIATRIC WELL VISITS

Well visits are a very important part of routine medical care for children. Unfortunately, with the pressure to delay all non-essential appointments when COVID-19 first made its appearance in this country, many kids fell behind on these appointments because their annual well visit was deemed non-essential. At the time, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) encouraged pediatricians to continue scheduling all usual well visits for infants and toddlers due to the enormous amount of growth and development that occurs at these ages but to delay annual well visits for children three and up. Sadly, this has left many children behind on both routine well care and vaccines, which are often given in conjunction with these appointments.

As a pediatrician, there are many days where over half my patients present for routine well care, some with concerns and many without. During these same busy days, I typically encounter multiple other patients presenting with symptoms of illness, several of whom are far overdue for a routine well visit. Ironically, sometimes the most complicated of all these is one of the patients presenting with no concerns, which causes me to wonder how much my colleagues and I are missing in the kids who come to see us only when they are sick.

Wellness visits are essential for monitoring each child's growth and development, as well as for the administration of vaccines and various screening tests recommended at certain ages by the AAP. Yet these routine visits often are not a priority to parents who



have no concerns, especially if their child is not due for vaccines. My hope in sharing this information is to impress upon each of you the importance of pediatric well care so you will spread the word within your own families and your communities. Early recognition and treatment of problems related to growth and development can be critical to the overall health of a child.

The AAP recommends well visits for infants at three to five days old, one month, two months, four months, six months, nine months, twelve months, fifteen months, eighteen months, two years, two- and one-half years, three years, and then annually through age twenty-one. An enormous part of a pediatrician's education is focused on normal childhood growth and development: we need to know what is normal in order to identify when something appears to be wrong. Another major aspect of our training is learning what to do once we have identified a problem. Often parents do not recognize these problems either because they cannot see them (like blood pressure and lab results) or because

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YOUNG CHILDREN: UPDATE

they are unaware (such as how quickly an infant is expected to grow and what developmental milestones are expected by what age). These unrecognized problems are a primary reason why well visits are critical to the overall health of many children.

Some of my most memorable patients are those who presented with no concerns:

- An average size, chatty seven-year-old with a blood pressure of 138/104 - extremely high, especially for her age. My phone call to a pediatric nephrologist led to her having an appointment with him the following day. This resulted in a hospital stay lasting several days concluding with diagnoses of both hypertension and stage 1 chronic kidney disease. Upon discharge, her nephrologist prescribed two blood pressure medications for her to continue taking daily at home.
- A six foot, two-hundred pound twelve-year old whose mother listened when I recommended screening labs due to his high body mass index (BMI). He had no symptoms indicating an underlying problem. With my recommendation, the family decided to have the laboratory tests completed. His blood work revealed a blood sugar level three times greater than normal and significantly elevated liver labs. I directed his parents to take him to a pediatric emergency department for immediate further evaluation and called ahead to that ER to let them know my findings. He was admitted for management of his high blood sugar and, after a thorough work-up by an endocrinologist and gastroenterologist, was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease.
- A two-year-old who spoke no words and had a failed M-CHAT (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers). Rather than hearing my concerns and seeking further evaluation and therapies

to potentially help his daughter's progress, her dad told me, "She is more the quiet type," and declined all referrals.

It is patients like this last one who haunt me: the ones who could likely be helped but go without treatment because their family declines to acknowledge the recommendations that are made. Or because the problem goes unidentified as my colleagues and I are never given the opportunity to find it. There is no joy in telling any parent, especially an unconcerned parent, that there is a problem with their child, but finding these problems is a large part of why all parents should schedule regular well visits for their children.

Schedule your children for their well visits. If you are a grandparent, encourage your kids to schedule their children. When physicians make recommendations, trust there is a reason for each recommendation and seriously consider the potential significance of the concern before declining any further screening or testing. As I often tell my patients and their parents, "Nothing I am saying is to intentionally upset or make you feel badly, but I want you to be aware because I want you (or your child) to live a long, healthy life."

Kiwanians know that every child deserves to live a quality life. The sooner problems are identified and treated, the better the outcome will likely be. Spread the word regarding the value of well child visits. Information can be distributed via day care centers, schools, local health fairs, public service announcements and others.

Erin McIntosh, MD



YOUNG CHILDREN: UPDATE

THANK YOU, DR. WIL BLECHMAN

PAST INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT
FOUNDER, YOUNG CHILDREN:
PRIORITY ONE



“Kiwanis Young Children advocates all over the world are mourning, honoring and celebrating the life of Dr. Wil Blechman, who died peacefully Wednesday, September 15 at his home in Miami, Florida. It is with deep sadness and grateful praise that the Young Children Committee must say goodbye to our friend, colleague and this gentle giant who was our rock and inspiration for many years. Our gratitude is immeasurable as is the impact of his incredible spirit and knowledge about young children. He epitomized the very essence of servant leadership.

Our hearts go out to his family, especially his wife Rachel who is as kind and inspiring as he was. We remember his passion and his dedication to Kiwanis and the warmth of his smile.



His winning smile!

Personally, serving as Co-Chair of Young Children, first as Young Children-Priority One and later as Co-Chair of the International Young Children Committee, I confess that his commitment to serving



Dr. Wil making the big announcement about Priority One as President of Kiwanis International

Kiwanis young children was his love and passion, traits deeply embedded in him. His mentorship with me was exemplary, serving as a source of wise counsel and wisdom. His many telephone calls to me were exciting, filled with new information he had just learned and about how our committee might use these ideas to embrace the total child's well being, building bridges that span the world. He never called me without concluding with, “Give my love to Doug.” (My husband who as Governor of the Carolinas District knew and worked

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YOUNG CHILDREN: UPDATE

DR. WIL BLECHMAN (CONTINUED)

with Dr. Wil.) Our committee also felt his caring friendship and his genuine longing to make a difference.

We will never forget you, Dr. Wil; your voice, motivation and inspiration will not ever be forgotten; your head and heart were in perfect harmony. May you rest in God's love and peace. Godspeed, Dr. Wil. We give thanks for you."

- Dr. Barbara Day, Carolinas District



At the booth in Toronto 2016



With Dr. Barbara Day, Co-Chairs of the International Young Children Committee in Las Vegas, 2018; Speaking in Orlando in 2019; Committee Member Beth sharing materials with visitors to our Young Children Booth

"Dr. Wil was an incredible leader and supporter of the KI Young Children Committee. He encouraged all of us to do our best work in support of children and families (especially prenatal to age 5). Kiwanians owe Dr. Wil much in return for his initiation of the Young Children Priority One Program (YCPO) and his establishment of the Kiwanis partnership with UNICEF during his term as International President. Working with UNICEF, the IDD Global initiative was the most successful worldwide service project, identified by the World Health Organization to prevent intellectual disability among children. More recently Dr. Wil had a major roll in supporting the Eliminate Project.

So what can Kiwanians do to honor Dr. Wil's legacy? Please continue your work for young children with the passion and dedication that Dr. Wil did. He was a brilliant, caring and special individual who will be greatly missed by all who had the privilege to know him."

- Ava Adams,
New England and Bermuda District

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YOUNG CHILDREN: UPDATE

DR. WIL BLECHMAN (CONTINUED)



Speaking at the podium at International Convention

“Dr. Wil was a champion of young children who will be sorely missed. His daily quest for knowledge on the subject was a wonderful example to others — showing that even though he was a leader in his field, that there are always new things to learn. Leaders should always have a thirst for knowledge like Dr. Wil.”

- Jen Wolff, Capital District

“Dr. Wil Blechman was a leader among leaders. His passion for the health and welfare of young children enabled him to lead and guide those around him to work towards improving young children’s lives. His legacy is a world that continues to create ever greater safe and healthy environments for our youngest children.”

- Linda & Steve Steinbrunner, Ohio District

“Our grandchildren attended a few International conventions with us. At one of the conventions our grandson Prestin met a past KI President who had a profound influence on him.

He met Wil Blechman.

Prestin told me that two things really impressed him about this unique individual. First was his passion for young child development. Especially brain development. Wil and Prestin spoke for many minutes on how it was important for Kiwanis family members to take on this cause.

Secondly, he loved the bow tie. The tie so impressed him that he decided to adopt this fashion statement whenever he was at a dress up event. When he became Ohio Key Club Governor it was his trademark. Everyone knew Prestin and his bow ties.



KI Past Presidents in Toronto 2016

Prestin is now employed in the public health field with a specialization on family health and education. He is putting into practice many of the things he and Wil talked about at the KI convention.

This is the type of subtle influence Wil had on our sponsored youth. At least on one who was encouraged to become a Key Club leader. Thank you Wil.”

- Alan Penn, 2011-12 KI President, Ohio District
Proud Grandfather

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YOUNG CHILDREN: UPDATE

DR. WIL BLECHMAN (CONTINUED)

“Wil brought great ideas to us such as the World’s Greatest Baby Shower and Reading Corners in laundromats. He was a gentle man, but fierce champion for children. May he continue to inspire us with his innovative ideas on the young child, and guide us from above.”

- Diana Ragbeer Murray, Florida District

“When Jane was President, she assigned a past International President to several of her Governor’s. Wil was my “Love your Gov”. He would call me every couple of weeks to see how I was doing and always asked if there was something that he could do for me. When Mom died unexpectedly just weeks after taking office, Wil was a pillar of strength. We were on one of our calls and he sensed that something was wrong. I told him that I was so busy, I forgot to cry...I mean I cried, but for losing Mom. He told me to let it all out and cry for me. And I did. He stayed on the phone with me what seemed like forever. This is the Wil I remember and he has a special place in my heart. I never shared this with anyone, but now seems like the right time. Godspeed my friend.”

- Kelly Boswell, Illinois-Eastern Iowa District



Dr. Wil was a strong supporter of Young Children Projects like these, presented at the International Convention in 2018



Gathered in our Young Children Booth at convention are Steve Steinbrunner, Jeri Penn, Doug Day, Barbara Day, Dr. Wil, Beth Kendshi and Kevin Thomas.

“I have known Wil since I was a 24 year old Kiwanian. Always, he was a source of inspiration and motivation for me. I am not one to say that this person or that person is a hero but for me, and for Kiwanis, Wil Blechman was and is a hero. Kiwanis is not as strong today as it was yesterday. The world has lost a light. This man did so much for so many children that he never knew and met. Truly, it is a sad day but it is made brighter by knowing the phenomenal good and charity he brought to so many without ever asking what is in it for him.

I am of the Christian faith. Wil was of Jewish faith. But that doesn’t matter. I am sure [when Wil left us] that he heard the Father say, “Well done! Well done, my good and loyal servant!”

- Kevin E. Thomas, Pennsylvania District



