



Kiwaniis[®]

CLUB OF OLYMPIA

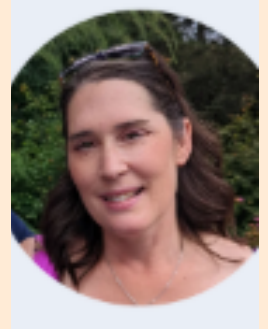
Kiwaniis Club of Olympia October 2026 Newsletter

**“We can’t just hope for a brighter day, we have to work for a brighter day.” —
Dolly Parton**

President’s Letter

Note: This month’s essay consists of President Anna Knudson’s slightly revised remarks from the October 1, 2026 Installation Dinner.

As I look back over the past several years, I am struck by the excellent leadership that has been provided by recent Presidents and their Boards. Special thanks to former Presidents Karen Fraser, Matt Grant, Shawn Myers and Jonathan Lindsay and to all of their officers and directors. It is because of them that we are in such good shape now.



**President
Anna Knudson**

As a starting point, it's crucial to recognize what has been working well and stay the course in those areas. I am cognizant of Karen Fraser's appreciation a year ago of the Club's many important contributions to our community, and its presence as a community in and of itself, with strong camaraderie. At the same time, I can still hear Matt Grant's advice – based on his own experience in the early years of leading Olympia High School (OHS) – to Change or Die. C.O.D.

As a Club and Foundation, we cannot be afraid to make the changes we may need to survive in the long term. We need to keep evolving to continue meeting the needs of children and youth in the region, whether that is by feeding them via the Food Bank, mentoring them in Key Clubs, delivering firewood to their families or in other ways. There is a natural tension between maintaining what works and evolving to meet current and new challenges.

As President, I have two goals.

First, continue growing in an efficient, strategic manner. We need to grow strategically.

The growth is already happening:

- The Installation Dinner on October 1, 2026, was planned and implemented in part by Key Club students from five schools, Tumwater, River Ridge, Timberline, Capital (CHS) and OHS. In prior two years, we worked only with CHS and OHS.
- In the 2026-2027 budget, the Board just approved \$10,500 for trade scholarships, seven scholarships of \$1,500 each for students entering the trades. There is one for each high school in the Tumwater, North Thurston and Olympia school districts (Tumwater, Black Hills, Cascadia, Timberline, North Thurston, River Ridge and Avanti). We thus expanded our scholarship reach beyond OHS and CHS high school students and now provide extra support for those students entering the trades. This continues an initiative started in the 2025-2026 year which resulted in giving out two trades scholarships.
- The Kiwanis Food Bank Gardens have grown from three locations to four. In addition, the Board just approved \$7,000 in additional funding to support a second Thurston County Food Bank employee and nearly \$3,000 more for garden operations.
- We've partnered with the South Sound Reading Foundation to assist with book cleaning for two hours on the third Tuesday of each month.

Going forward, we envision perhaps sponsoring all of the other Key Clubs in the Tumwater and North Thurston school districts. This will require additional funding and will also mean finding Key Club Advisors – one for each Key Club.

We already have two outstanding Advisors. Special thanks to Joellen Wilhelm for continuing to be the Advisor for OHS, which she has done with great skill and enthusiasm for many years. And thanks to Keith Huntley, a new Olympia Kiwanis member who just agreed to be the Advisor for both CHS and Tumwater. At CHS, Keith replaces Rose Bossio, who did a wonderful job as Advisor for the past three years.

There are many other ways in which the Club and Foundation can continue growing and expanding. I welcome those ideas. At the same time, we need a principled plan to guide us as we continue growing and finding creative ways to help youth and children in the area.

Along those lines, the Board has agreed to have a Board retreat to conduct some strategic planning. We are now in the beginning phases of planning for such a retreat. We'll keep you posted on our progress.

My second main goal is far less exciting but is just as important. We need to ensure we are good stewards of the Club's and Foundation's fundamental functioning. Compliance is not fancy, but it is necessary for the health of these entities. In other words, we have to stay the course with the boring stuff.

What does this mean?

- Let's have a fiscal review of the Club's 2025-2026 finances. Thanks to the leadership of Shawn Myers, and the help of Wendy Endress, Tom White and J.J. Olson, there was a Fiscal Review Committee for the 2024-2025 year.
- Let's ensure that youth protection training is taken by every Club member on an annual basis. We will be showing a short video at one of our upcoming programs to meet this requirement.
- Let's revisit our bylaws and policies to see how they may need to be updated and changed.

These are just some of the ways we can improve on the club stewardship front. I welcome additional ideas and suggestions.

To summarize, my vision for the next year is two-fold:

- Grow strategically, based on the goals and priorities developed at a Board retreat.
- Maintain the bedrock of our Club and Foundation by being the best possible stewards of these organizations.

Finally, I want to share one more thought.

Setting aside all the good work that Kiwanis does in the community for children and youth, please keep this in mind as we head into election season. By participating in Kiwanis and Key Clubs, we are strengthening democracy.

We are a group of people spending time together, fixing problems in our corner of the world, despite the fact that:

- We vote for different candidates.
- We worship different Gods (or no God).
- We have diverse interests and pass times.
- We are diverse in other ways.

Non-profit organizations like Kiwanis are an essential part of our society -- indeed they are civil society -- that allow bonds between people who have different perspectives. More than ever, we need places where people with different politics can come together to share common values and goals. Kiwanis does that.

Kiwanis is good for kids, for our community and for strengthening civil society. Even AI (Gemini) agrees when asked about civil society, "Kiwanis is a classic example of civic participation that builds social trust, community networks and social capital."

Committee Leadership Updates

Program Committee

After more than 20 years as chair or co-chair, Sam Reed is stepping down from committee leadership, along with Dave Peeler. Both will remain committee members. Thank you, Sam and Dave, for years of enriching programs—and Dave's memorable committee BBQs!

Deb Clemens and Wendy Endress will take the helm, bringing deep community roots, educational expertise and fresh energy. Thank you both for stepping into this vital role!

Human & Spiritual Values

Sam is also stepping down from the human & spiritual values committee and Dave Peeler and Charles Shelan are now taking over. Thank you to Sam for your attentive care of our members and thank you to Dave and Charles for stepping into this important role.

Key Club Advisor

Thank you to Keith Huntley for stepping into the Key Club advisor at both Capital **and** Tumwater high schools! Olympia Kiwanis now officially sponsors Tumwater's Key Club, which has been without a Kiwanis advisor since the Tumwater club dissolved.

More Key Club advisors and helpers are still needed!

ROUND UP FOR SCHOLARSHIPS



Support the Scholarship Endowment
Kiwanis Club of Olympia

Round Up for Scholarships!

Starting in October Olympia Kiwanis is introducing a voluntary Round Up program to help grow our Scholarship Endowment, which supports scholarships for students at area high schools.

How It Works

When paying for lunch or your meeting fee, simply tell the receptionist you'd like to round up your payment by \$1 or more, in whole dollars. Your contribution will go directly to the Scholarship Endowment.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and you can give as much or as little as you like.

Why Round Up?

Thanks to generous members and strong investment returns, our endowment has recently generated enough income to fund scholarships without drawing from general Foundation funds. Growing the endowment will help protect against market fluctuations and support more scholarships in the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Is it required?** No. Participation is completely voluntary.
- **What's the minimum?** \$1, in whole-dollar increments, with no maximum.
- **Can I support another program?** No. Round Up contributions are designated exclusively for scholarships.
- **Are contributions tax-deductible?** Yes. Receipts are available upon request.
- **Will small gifts really matter?** Absolutely! Just \$25 per meeting over 20 meetings adds \$500 to the endowment each year.

Kiwanis & Key Club Installation Dinner

Thanks to all who participated and attended this year's event at Capital High School. For the first time we had **five** area high schools participating. Capital, Olympia, Tumwater, River Ridge and Timberline High School Key Clubs showed up with their positive energy and commitment to service.

If you attended on Oct 1 please take a moment to [COMPLETE THIS SURVEY](#) to let us know how you felt about the event and how we can improve it next year.

If you were unable to attend, please consider making a donation to the [SCHOLARSHIP ENDOWMENT](#) to support area youth in achieving their dreams!

TAKE THE SURVEY!

SERVICE UPDATES

South Sound Reading Foundation - Volunteers Needed!

Tuesday, Oct 13 - 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

[South Sound Reading Foundation 200 Sleater-Kinney Rd. NE](#)

Firewood Bank

Jon Halvorson says: Members should come out Saturdays 9am - noon at 3839 11th Ave NW Olympia to stack, split and deliver firewood!



Food Bank Gardens

Four volunteers harvested over 150 pounds of carrots at the Capital Campus gardens. Thank you to all who coordinate and volunteer to provide fresh produce to our community!



Get Involved!

Have time and skills you would like to devote to serving our community? Check out these open positions within the organization. Contact President Anna if you are interested or see a need and want to step up!

- Board of Directors Member
- Key Club/Circle K Advisors
- Assistant Bookkeeper
- Assistant Secretary
- Communications Committee Chair
- Distinguished Kiwanis Committee - new ad hoc committee!
- Events and Fundraising Committee Member

MEETING SCHEDULE

Club Meetings

[Click for list of all upcoming programs](#)

12 pm at Tugboat Annie's

- Oct. 12 Timberland Library ballot measure
- Oct. 26 Thurston County Auditor
- Nov. 9 Puget Sound Energy
- Nov. 23 Arctic Circle Presentation
- Nov. 30 No Meeting
- Dec. 7 Holiday Luncheon with Olympia Rotary Club

SEPT 2026 Club and Foundation Board Brief

Board Brief — September 24, 2026

The Club and Foundation boards approved their 2026–2027 budgets unanimously, supporting continued investment in scholarships, food security and club activities.

Club Highlights

- The approved Club budget projects a \$5,000 deficit and includes funding for communications, a board retreat and possible participation in the June 2027 OSD Band Bash.
- Deb Clemens and Wendy Endress will take over as Program Committee co-chairs. Thank you to outgoing leaders Sam Reed and Dave Peeler for their many years of service! Leadership is still needed for the Human and Spiritual Values Committee.
- A voluntary scholarship “round-up” contribution option will be offered at Monday lunches beginning in October.
- Members contributed \$631 to support Spokane-area disaster relief through the PNW District Foundation.
- The upcoming board retreat will include discussion of club fundraising to support administrative expenses.

Foundation Highlights

- The new budget increases funding for scholarships and Kiwanis Gardens by \$10,000 each. Garden funding will support equipment needs and Food Bank garden staffing.
- Fundraising revenue reached \$46,000, exceeding the \$29,000 budget, thanks in part to a recent \$4,000 Caring for Kids donation.
- The approved budget projects a \$23,142 deficit. Johnson Fund earnings are being evaluated to help cover expanded programs.

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