



Kiwaniis®

KISHWAUKEE DEKALB

Volume LV, Number 7 December 10th, 2025 Editor, Joe Gastiger www.kishkiwanis.org

LUNCH: Roast pork with stuffing and gravy, macaroni and cheese, green beans, salad, dinner rolls, cookies
Today's Meeting: Led by Caroline Collins **Invocation:** Bob Hoffman

Officers for 2025-2026

President	Caroline Collins
President Elect	Sue Doubler
Vice President	
Treasurer	Bob Hoffman
Asst. Treasurer	Al Mueller
Secretary	Ken Doubler
Asst. Secretary	Jerry Wahlstrom
Imm Past President	Mike Mooney
Lt. Governor	Jean Erlenborn
District Governor	Mary Zeronas

Kishwaukee Kiwanis Meetings

2nd, 3rd, 4th, Wednesdays, 11:45 a.m.
Faranda's Banquet Center
302 Grove St.
DeKalb, IL

K-Family Events/Meetings

Circle K Every other Thursday at
6:00 p.m. in HSC 506 or via
Teams Online.

AKtion Club – 2nd Wednesday, 3:45 at
Opportunity House
357 N. California St
Sycamore, IL

Defining Statement

Kiwanis is a global organization of
volunteers dedicated to improving
the world, one child and one
community at a time.

Flag Salute

As our flag signifies purity, valor, and
justice, may we as true Kiwanians
exemplify these virtues as we serve
the children of the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gary Vander Meer thanked everyone who rang a bell for the Salvation Army last weekend. We spread good cheer, raised money for a worthy cause, and didn't get frostbite this time. Thankfully, it was warm and dry over at Schnuck's.

Bill Finuacane reported that last week's Freezing for Food campaign brought in 5,917 pounds of food, and donations of \$16,969 to stock local pantries. That raises the overall value of this season's contributions to \$141,669. Once again, Bill and TD Ryan weathered the arctic cold.

PROGRAM

Shadow Gentry introduced Tom Matya, Executive Director for the past five years at Opportunity House, an agency that's helped provide work, safe affordable housing, and life-skills training for people with developmental disabilities in northern Illinois.

Over the last 60 years, Opportunity House has expanded its network of services to serve more than 180 clients currently. Most — 102 — are signed up for weekday programs that offer limited paid employment; some are now living in group homes with full-time professional staff. There is, of course, a waiting list — the agency is adding some housing, refurbishing older homes — but there are more applicants than there are spaces.

Opportunity House directs the Special Olympics program here in DeKalb, and helps clients schedule and find a way to get to medical appointments.

Tom noted that Opportunity House faces some key challenges this coming year, and is about to launch a major capital campaign. For one, new employers coming to DeKalb — META, and other big operations — are able to offer higher starting salaries than not-for-profit agencies. This makes it more difficult to recruit and hold on to qualified staff.

For another, new legislation — the Dignity in Pay Act — takes effect quite soon, and this will have a major impact on clients who are hired through the agency. For many years, Opportunity House has contracted with companies — such as Ideal Industries — to offer supervised, paid work to disabled adults. Clients at the agency's workshop are paid for each switch or gadget they assemble, rather than a set amount per hour, since some workers are able to produce a lot more items than others.

The Dignity in Pay Act will end that practice, and though its intent — to raise the minimum wage for the mentally handicapped — is hard to dispute, most local contractors are already pulling away. Piecework at Opportunity House is down to half of what it once was.

This means that the agency will have to redouble its efforts to find community employment for the clients it currently serves and those who come to the door. Opportunity House's capital campaign will help create a new workforce development and training center. This will include a STEM exploration program (the first of its kind in the state), updates to the gymnasium, and an auditorium for group presentations.

Tom pointed out that Opportunity House is far more robust and better supported than almost any comparable program anywhere in the U.S.

Need a ride to Kiwanis?

Several Kiwanis members have volunteered to give a ride to our meetings if needed.

(Please give them a couple of day's notice if possible.)

Bob Gilmore 815-764-9010

Kathie Davis 815-751-9085

Bob Hadley 815-739-8869

Bob Hoffman 815-742-3765

Jerry Smith 815-751-6265

Thought for the day

(via Bob Hoffman)

"What I like about Christmas is that you can forget the past with the present."

-Bob Hope

UPCOMING PROGRAMS: (*Why not invite a guest?* – that could mean a prospective member!)

December 3: Board Meeting

December 10: Tom Mataya-Opportunity House

December 17: Steve Lundin-DHS Band

December 24: No meeting

December 31: No meeting

2026

January 7: Board Meeting

January 14: Anna Scott, Neighbors House After school program

January 21: Key Club (tentative)

January 28: Dan Templin, DeKalb Community Fund

February 4: Board Meeting

February 11: Wendy Pesavento, Toastmasters

	Kish Kiwanians (in person) 27
	Zoom: Garrison Eckhardt, Virginia Naples, Misty Haji-Sheikh
	Guests: N/A
	Outside Speaker: Tom Matya, Executive Director, Opportunity House
	Total 31