



# KIWANIS KONNECTION

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



What a year we've had this first quarter! I'm looking at the list of articles in this quarterly newsletter – we have been incredibly busy serving the western Pittsburgh community. Near record crowds at Sheraden Scares and Sheraden Shines events, even with cold temperatures at each of the outdoor events, we had a majority of our members turn out to serve. Our new service project, reading days at Chartiers Early Childhood Center we partnered with the firefighters of Engine Co. 31 of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire to first read about the firefighters in our community and then tour a real firetruck and meet firefighters outfitted in all of the gear they wear to fight fires, also in unseasonably cold weather. And we can't forget our Flags over Sheraden crew who show up early in the morning to hang and take down our American and holiday flags in November and January! We are not only hard-working but a truly hardy bunch of Kiwanians! Thank you all for your willingness to serve, even in adverse conditions. You are AMAZING! Maureen Reynolds - January 2026

Every year we try to make the holidays special, and this year was no different. In November, Sandy Maker, Melisa Cardillo, and the Wysocki Family got to work and made Kiwanis Korner festive for the holidays. This year we added more garland, some new decorations, lots more bows, and some holiday flags to Kiwanis Korner to help it stand out. Then on a snowy December 5th, the Sheraden community came out to party. Sheraden Shines was held down at Kiwanis Korner by the Sheraden Community Council and Kiwanis Club of Sheraden. This is our annual way to welcome in the holiday season. As usual, there was great music, food, and lots of good cheer. Santa and Mrs. Claus came out to light up all the Christmas

decorations and greet the many families that came out in the cold. They also provided the kids with a treat bag and lots of holiday spirit. Many Kiwanis volunteers were there to provide books, toys, hats, gloves, and a few different crafts to keep the kids busy. The Community Council handed out pizza, cookies, and hot chocolate.

The City of Pittsburgh brought out some emergency vehicles for the kids to check out too, and Commander Rippole was happy to provide rides in his sidecar. There was some snow on the ground that some would argue made the night a little more festive, and it was definitely cold out, but that didn't stop the crowd from enjoying themselves.

It was a great event and a great night to see lots of neighbors in the holiday mood.



Merry  
Christmas



# Sheraden Shines

# Food Pantry Collection Contest Pizza Party



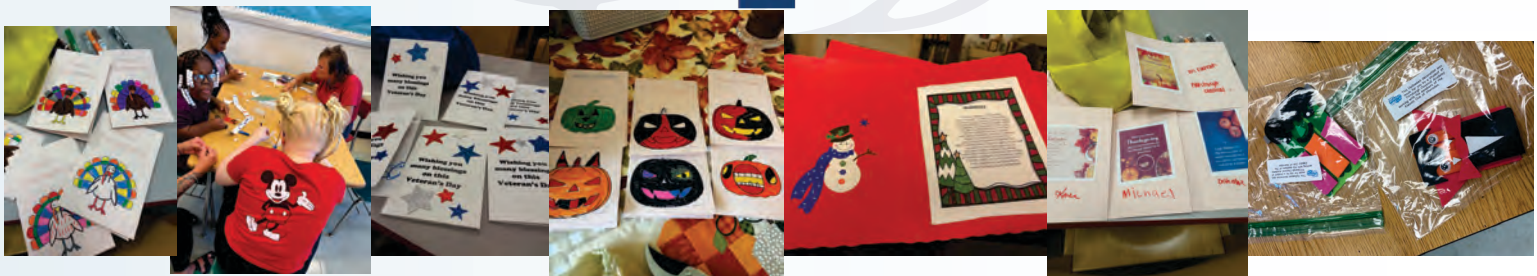
Pittsburgh Classical Academy Builders Club sponsored a food collection in November for the local food pantry. They started the project by decorating a collection box for each of the 12 homerooms in the school. The boxes also posted an incentive for the students to enhance the collections. The homeroom collecting the most nonperishable food items during the 2-week collection period would be rewarded with a pizza party in December. Then on Tuesday November 4th they placed the boxes in each of the homerooms to start the contest. On Monday, November 17th, the boxes were collected and the winning homeroom was Mrs. Hanna's 6th grade in room C-34. They collected 111 food items for the Food Pantry. The idea for this project was suggested last May by Anthony, one of the Builders Club members. Thank you to the students who participated and congratulations to the winning homeroom! On Monday December 22, Mrs. Hanna's homeroom students gathered in the library at 11:45 to partake in their pizza party and one of the students mother's baked cookies to add to the celebration.

This school year, our Builders Club has grown to our largest membership to date. We have 52 students on the roll sheets, most of which attend each week. We meet in the school cafeteria on the first and third Mondays of each month to accommodate the large group and to provide a good working surface for our projects. The students' age levels range from kindergarten to 8th grade and come to us through the Life Skills program at the school. Because of the varying age levels and skills of the students we try to complete projects that all of the students can successfully manage. Our focus audience are the residents of the Aspinwall VA facility and the Allegheny West Meals on Wheels recipients.



The various holidays during the year provide the topic of our service projects and range from greeting cards for each holiday, decorated placemats and Halloween decorations. We also compile teacher appreciation bags in May and make snowman soup bags before Christmas for the kindergarten students at the school. Each week, Tracy Smith provides a snack to reward the students for their diligence in completing each project. The kids look forward to that special recognition for their efforts.

Kiwanians: Karen Byerly, Marianne Muraska, Tracy Smith and Di Stoehr are our club advisors to this Builders Club. Tracy and Marianne chartered this club on November 11, 2013, and have been advisors since that time. Langley previously had a K-Kids Club at the school, but as changes were made in the school, so did the SLP.



# Installation Banquet



*Our 2025-26 Kiwanis year was kicked off with our annual Installation of Officers and Board Members and Awards Banquet on October 9, 2025. The location this year, thanks to member Evelyn Novak, was the Pennsbury Village party room, and was catered by our friends at Hanlon's Catering, with an amazing cake for dessert by Giant Eagle bakery thanks to member Meg Hough. We were joined by our Immediate Past PA District Governor Tom Harp for a very good reason – to present our Club with the Governor's Home Club banner as distinguished member Barb Carter is now the 25-26 District Governor! This is the first time in our 75 years of existence to be the home club of the District Governor.*

*There were many cheers and a few tears (happy ones) as our Club and members were honored with multiple awards. We were the recipient of multiple District awards for our 24-25 Club Communications for the great work of Marianne Muraska, Doug Woods and Iain Gillespie, as well as 23-24 Distinguished Club, 23-24 Distinguished President Keith Smith, and 24-25 Distinguished Members Barb Carter and Maureen Reynolds, which were presented by Immediate Past Region 2 Trustee Shawn Smith. Legion of Honor recipients John Roell (30-year member), Maureen Reynolds (35-year member) and Rob Bott (35+ years member) were also recognized. We were also honored to have the District's Hero In Service award presented to member Sandy Maker by Division 5 Lieutenant Governor Wayne Meyer. Because of Barb's willingness to take on the essential role in Kiwanis of District Governor, she was awarded the Kiwanian of the Year by President Maureen. And to honor "retiring" secretary Marianne Muraska, the Club presented her with a PA District Kiwanis Lifetime Membership.*

*It was a great night and I wonder if the founding members 75 years ago could have dreamed that the Kiwanis Club of Sheraden would achieve this level of excellence!*



# Pancake Breakfast

*We had our fall pancake breakfast on November 8th! It was a beautiful sunny day and we had a nice crowd and we made a nice profit! The best part of the day was when our little cousin came in and spotted the overstuffed unicorn in our auction baskets! She immediately ran over and was hugging it most of the morning! The best though is when she won it...she was extremely excited that she gets to take it home!! The day was a true success because of the volunteers who come and help me make the day run smoothly!! A huge thank you to everyone!!*



## Message from Lt. Governor Wayne Meyer

*There is an old story in the New Testament concerning a tax collector by the name of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a ruthless tax collector and cheated people to the greatest extent that the law would allow. Consequently, he was not the most popular person in the region. One day he heard that this man Jesus was going to be coming into town and Zacchaeus wanted to see him. So on the day of the arrival of Jesus, Zacchaeus ventured out into the crowd which would have taken a great deal of courage. Imagine how the townspeople would have reacted upon seeing him so vulnerable. A punch, here, a jab or a shove there, anything to get back at Zacchaeus. They even tried to keep Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus by standing alongside the road. Zacchaeus was a man short in stature and he could not see over the crowd. So, he climbed up a fig-mulberry tree, he had the courage of determination and nothing was going to deter him from seeing Jesus.*



*We have two clubs that are just like Zacchaeus and are determined to keep their clubs going and are working diligently to achieve their goals.*

*The first is the McKeesport/White Oak Club. They are small in number and are mostly well past retirement age, yet they work by serving lunch to young people through the Salvation Army; they sold hotdogs and various food items in front of Busy Beaver; they collect stuffed animals and books for the local library and are now planning a spaghetti dinner.*

*The other is the Pittsburgh Club. Right now they have only two members, yet they too are determined to keep their club going. They are constantly making phone calls, they have sent mailing to former members and people they think might be interested in Kiwanis and they have met regularly with the trustee and Lt. governor.*

*These two clubs are determined to keep the values and principles of Kiwanis alive and well.*

*Finally, I want to lift up the new club start in Beaver. Right now, they have twelve people who make up the charter members of the club. Our Governor and her committee have worked tirelessly to get this club open. I have met some of the charter members and they are excited about Kiwanis and look forward to a new beginning.*

*Let's support these clubs with our thoughts and our prayers and may their determination be an example to all of us.*

**Rev. Wayne Meyer - Lt. Governor, Division 5 - District Chair, Human and Spiritual Values**

# SHERADEN SPOOKTACULAR



**Was held on Saturday, October 25 at the Kiwanis Korner in Sheraden and was a tremendous success! The weather was perfect for this event.**



**A count was established of 120 children attending, plus parents and grandparents. Also, there were 39 volunteers. Event overall was improved over last year. The crafts were busy, all of our books and many early learning guides were taken by attendees, and the treat distribution went smoothly, with most of the treats given away as well. I know there were several children that came without costumes but were able to receive candy so the number could be a bit higher. Special thanks to Cindy and Doug Woods as project co-chairs, Aimee Wysocki as the liaison with Sheraden Community Council, Shawn Smith as master of ceremonies, and to all the members who were there to help out. Looking forward to next year to a larger event that would collaborate with the Truck-or-Treat event.**



Our club is made up of students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. They arrive by bus, car and some walk across the street. They have been very busy completing service projects for meals on wheels, veterans, homeless and the local library to name a few. They make pudding or a baked food and beautiful placemats for Meals on Wheels. The pack lunch bags for the homeless to be distributed at the Light of Life Mission and cards for our Veterans. They recently celebrated Thanksgiving with a full course meal made by the students at their individual school sites. WE have a lot of projects on the books for the remaining of the school year.

**Kiwanis**  
**Aktion Club** Service in Action



# Sheraden United Methodist Church

It has been a long 6 years since the Sheraden United Methodist Church was destroyed by a fire. After many setbacks and road blocks we finally celebrated the ground breaking for the future new church.



Approx. 50 church members, neighborhood residents and friends braved the cold on 12/9/2025. We invited all into the church parsonage for hot chocolate, coffee and donuts. Trucks rolled in about 2 weeks later to begin the process. We are very excited for the Sheraden Community as a breath of fresh air is here. From the ashes we arose.

# ★ **Kiwanian of the Year** ★ **District Governor Barb Carter**

*Barb Carter is the embodiment of the adage “If you want something done, ask a busy person”. Since joining Kiwanis she has served the Sheraden Club as Board member, President-elect, President, and as Community Services Committee chair, has chaired our large scale service project, the Kiwanis Kids' Day Health Safety and Fun Fair for the past 10 years, has in the past chaired our Sheraden Shines community Christmas holiday light-up and festival as well as chaired our Halloween Parade and costume judging for several years. She has served as Game Master at our annual community picnic and has even “refereed” the gift exchange at our Club's annual After-Christmas Christmas Party every January.*

*Her Kiwanis service expands well beyond our Club as she served 2 terms as Division 5 LTG (2016-2019), Region 2 Trustee (2019-2022), District Aktion Club Administrator for 9 years, is a Certified Club Leadership Trainer and served as the President of the Past Lieutenant Governors Association.*



*She stepped up to serve as Governor-elect in 2024 so that the District would remain in good standing in the year that the Pennsylvania District was to be the host of the 2025 Kiwanis International Convention. It needs to be pointed out that without her doing so, we would NOT have been eligible to host the Convention. In no small part because of her sacrifice, Kiwanis International hosted the best attended, most successful International Convention EVER here in Pittsburgh in 2025!*

*Her Kiwanis efforts have been recognized as she has been honored with the PA District's Hero in Service Award and as a Pliny Wilson Fellow. She married her good friend of over 30 years, Jeff Carter, 2 years ago, and, of course, sponsored his membership into the Kiwanis Club of Sheraden. She is leading the effort to open a new club in the Beaver area while still serving our Club as a Distinguished member. Thank you, Barb, for all you do to serve our Club and all of Kiwanis!*



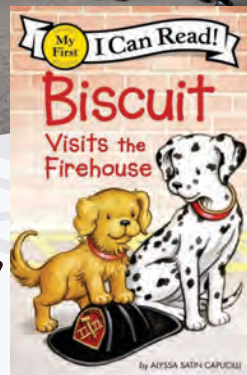
# After Christmas Party Held at the home of Tracy & Keith Smith on January 8, 2026

*We had our annual After Christmas-Christmas party on January 9th at our home! A good turn out and everyone brought a side to share with the crowd! We then gathered in the family room where we had our annual grab bag! As usual it was a fun event.*



## Reading Event

*Our reading event was held January 12 at Chartiers Early Learning Center and I have to say my kids were very much engaged!! The book this time was titled Poppleton in Winter! After reading to my kids they were asking about the fire truck from the event before...I love the small impact that this event has on these kids!*





# ***This year, our club ran a fund-raiser for our community food pantry, raising \$225 for our community's food bank!***

*This donation drive replaced our traditional "Reverse Advent Calendar" project, which encouraged club members to buy or contribute a list of nonperishable food items.*

*We decided to collect cash instead of in-kind food donations for a few reasons:*

- 1. Food banks often have special partnerships with food suppliers, enabling them to purchase more food per dollar than you or I can.*
- 2. In-kind donations often include foods that not all community members can use, such as cake mixes that require access to an oven and storage for items like eggs and oil. Food banks can use monetary donations to purchase items that community members are most likely to use.*
- 3. Monetary donations give food banks the flexibility to fill gaps in their supplies, such as buying infrequently donated items like hygiene products.*
- 4. Monetary donations allow food banks to buy perishable items like fruits and vegetables, which cannot be donated directly. Distributing these items ensures that community members have access to healthy, balanced, and nourishing food.*

*In-kind donations to food banks can still be helpful, especially if you wish to donate quality, unexpired food that you already have in your pantry.*

*But if you were thinking of shopping to purchase food for your local food bank, consider instead giving the cash you would've spent!*



# Clearances for Kiwanians in Pennsylvania (ACT 153 in PA)

*In Pennsylvania for 2026, volunteers working with children must complete three background checks under Act 153, typically renewed every 5 years.*

- *The PA Child Abuse History Clearance (from the Department of Human Services) ACT 33*
- *PA Criminal History Clearance (from the PA State Police) ACT 34*
- *An FBI Fingerprint check (unless exempt by 10-year residency and by signing an affidavit of Residency)*

*These clearances must be obtained before direct contact with children and the first two are free for volunteers.*

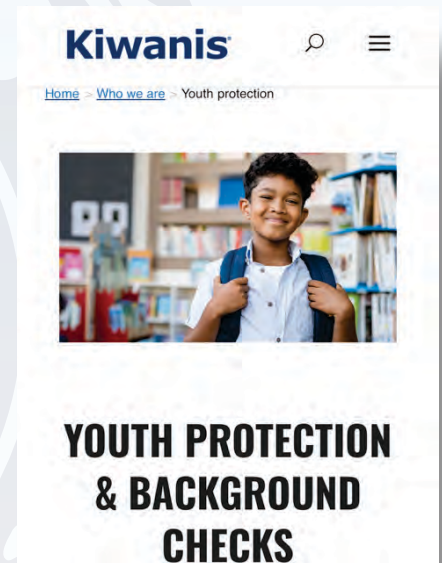
*Validity: Clearances are valid for 60 months (5 years)*

*Renewal window: begin the renewal process around the 57 month to ensure you're cleared before the 5 year mark*

*Where to apply:*

- *PA Child Abuse clearances and FBI: PA Compass portal*
- *PA Criminal Check: [epatch.pa.gov](http://epatch.pa.gov)*
- *These links are directly accessible on the [www.pa.gov](http://www.pa.gov) website under clearances*
- *The Affidavit for Residency can be given to you at a club meeting. A hard copy of each of these clearances should be given to the club after each renewal.*

*You are responsible for maintaining the original copy.*



## Our Brick Sale is going well

*Aimee Wysocki has been amazing leading the charge on this project and has placed the first order for the commemorative bricks for Kiwanis Korner. We will be using the bricks as part of our efforts to make the property more attractive and inviting to the community.*

*This has been the site of many community events and we want to continue to make improvements. We will also be exploring the best way to do routine maintenance, such as snow removal and grass cutting. We have received a bid to do the work and will be considering the proposal at our next meeting.*

# Signature Project

## Kiwaniis Klassic Golf Outing

Each year Kiwanis clubs all over the world are asked to submit a Signature Project, that is one of our either service or fundraising projects which is recurring, enhances the Kiwanis image, demonstrates significant impact on the community in terms of monies raised or children served, and strengthens membership and partnership opportunities. This year our Club chose to submit our Kiwanis Klassic Golf Outing as our Signature Project.

The Kiwanis Klassic Annual Golf Outing is the primary source of funding for our community service projects. Six years ago the funds raised were utilized to establish and maintain our Sheraden Kiwanis Community Foundation, the 501c3 arm of our Club. With these funds the Foundation has been able to take ownership and maintain a property in the center of Sheraden with a small pavilion to host outdoor community events, now named Kiwanis Korner. In the past 2 years the funds were directed to our Community Service account to cover costs associated with supporting our community service projects. As a result of these additional funds, we have served over 5,600 children and adults each year by increasing our budget by 61.1% in the following areas and percentage increases:

- \*SLPs (Circle K at CMU, Aktion Club and 2 Builders clubs, +53.7%
- \*School-based service projects, +62.3%
- \*Youth-focused community events, +41.8%
- \*Seniors & adult-focused community events, +22.3%
- \*Community spirit and beautification, +80%
- \*Support for other community organizations, +100%
- \*Kiwanis Division, District and KI contributions or sponsorships, +58.4%



The event has grown every year since its inception. While we are limited to the number of golfers who can participate (144 is the maximum to maintain a normal rate of play), the sponsors and donors can be unlimited. In the inaugural year we had 131 golfers and 42 sponsors, netting \$11,000. This year we had 140 golfers and 67 non-Kiwanis member sponsors and netted over \$16,000. This is approximately 10 times the amount we raise through either our Pancake Breakfast or Pasta Dinner fundraisers. Because of the success and popularity of the golf outing, we have increased our visibility in the greater Pittsburgh area and have seen an increase in participation in our other fundraisers and attendance at our community events.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 6-7 PA District Midyear Conference in Boalsburg PA
- March 21 Easter Egg Hunt at the Kiwanis Pavilion
- March 23 10AM Reading Day at Chartiers Early Childhood Learning Center
- April 19 Pasta Dinner 2-6PM at the United Presbyterian Church in Ingram
- May 7 Scholarship Dinner
- May 9 Sam Palombini Garden clean up and planting
- May 10 75th Anniversary of our club chartering
- May 11 10AM Reading Day at Chartiers Early Childhood Learning Center
- May 14 75 Anniversary Celebration
- May 16 Kids Day Health Fun and Safety Fair at Langley Pre K-8 School
- May 28 Election of Club Officers for 2026-2027

## The Kiwanis Mission & Vision

Kiwanis empowers communities to improve the world by making lasting differences in the lives of children. Kiwanis strives to be a positive influence in communities worldwide — so that one day, all children will wake up in communities that believe in them, nurture them and provide the support they need to thrive. Our Kiwanis club fulfills the Kiwanis mission by serving our community through community service projects.

**Interested in helping our children and our community or just learning more about what we do as Kiwanians?**

**Contact us by phone, letter, E-mail, or simply visit our Facebook page!**

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**Kiwanis**  
CLUB OF SHERADEN