



# THE BUCKEYE BULLETIN



*Happy June! Thanks to  
Kiwansians for making  
the world a better place!*



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**SUBMIT STORIES VIA:**

<https://k20.site.kiwanis.org/article-content-submission/>





# Your spirit of service inspires me

By *Marcia Copeland Hudson, Ohio Governor*

As we journey through life, we often find that "service is the rent we pay for living" -- a poignant reminder from the pioneer Shirley Chisholm.

Today, I want to take a moment to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary volunteers in our district -- each of you are devoted workers, selflessly sacrificing time and energy for the betterment of our communities.

Your commitment does not go unnoticed. Last May, you truly became superheroes, rallying together in our membership drives to find those eager souls ready to give back. Let's channel that same passion for civic service into meaningful action this month!



Whether it's building beds for that 9-year-old boy who never had one, providing nourishment to a young girl waiting in a summer lunch line in the park or fitting children for shoes through the Shoes for the Shoeless program, each act of service reflects your deep compassion. Each time you lend a hand, you are keeping dignity alive and bringing joy to families. Imagine the sparkle in a child's eyes, the warmth of a smile that says, "Thank you for being here."

You are always willing to step out of your comfort zone. You do this because you care, because each of you understands that community welfare is part of your very DNA. It drives you to care for others, to be there for those who need an encouraging hand when taking that next step can feel overwhelming!

Let's ensure our members receive the appreciation they truly deserve. By recognizing each contribution, big or small, we inspire each other to keep raising our hands in service. Remember, "Every act of service, no matter how small, makes a difference."

This month let's celebrate the power of service. Together, we can create lasting change in our community. Come, join us in uplifting those in need -- because your time and talents inspire.

Thank you for all that you do. Your invaluable efforts shape our communities and inspire positivity. Let's continue to make our home a better place, together.

With heartfelt gratitude,

**Governor Marcia Copeland Hudson,**  
Ohio District of Kiwanis International





# District has important dates coming up

Happy June, Ohio Kiwanis Members!

As in my past article, I have asked you to be aware of your club's Annual Meetings and Elections. Your club should be completing that now. Just to confirm, they are not complete until your club secretary reports the results in our Kiwanis Engage system under next year's tab 2026-2027. Once that is completed, you should also notify our District Secretary, Robin Gagnow, so the district directory can be updated. Reporting both in Kiwanis Engage and to Robin must be made even if the officers are repeating.

We still need to identify a Lieutenant Governor for the Cleveland area in our new division, formerly part of Divisions 15 and 24. The clubs involved are Beachwood, Brecksville, Cleveland, Greater Euclid, Independence, Lander Circle-Pepper Pike, Richmond Heights, Solon, and Southeast Cleveland. I'm expanding our reach. Our Bylaws permit an individual to serve as a Lieutenant Governor from another division, provided they live nearby, are qualified, and are approved by the District Board.

There are several things upcoming for our District. The ODKF Golf Outing is happening in July, and the planning for our District convention in August is well under way. Workshops are set. We have been preparing topics and presenters for our workshops, all focused on membership, good mental health, and marketing. I hope you participate in these while you are in attendance, as they are a great way to update your Kiwanis knowledge and make new connections.

This year, we will be installing the 2026-27 Leadership team during our DCON. It will be held Sunday morning, after the Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation annual meeting. There were several reasons for having it at the convention. Saving our time and resources were the biggest reasons taken into consideration for holding it at the convention. Our Kiwanis International Trustee Jo Schwartz will be performing the installations, ending with a speaker to help motivate us to propel us forward.

As for a Governor's project – you guessed it – increased service to our youth through membership. We are planning to offer incentives for clubs to add to their service budgets. Stay tuned for more details.

A highlight for our new Kiwanis year is a visit from our Kiwanis International President, Hope Markes, in October. Please consider joining us for dinner in her honor. Take a look at your DCON program and your DCON swag bag for your invitation, or on the District Website.

I look forward to our District finishing the year and to providing greater service to the youth in our Ohio Kiwanis District in 2026-2027.

Remember, membership matters. In Kiwanis Service,

***Judy Raub,***  
Governor-Elect



## 2026 District Convention

**August 14th-16<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

409 Altair Pkwy, Westerville, OH 43082



# Register today for DCON!

Planning for 2026 DCON is well under way, with lots of information either already posted on the district [website](#) or coming soon.

It will be an exciting weekend of enrichment, inspiration and good old-fashioned Kiwanis fellowship Aug. 14-16 in Westerville.

To help make the event a success, we need sponsors – not just supporters from our Kiwanis family, but support from our corporate friends and those in our communities who would like to align themselves with a service organization such as ours!

If you know of a business who could potentially become one of our sponsors, please let DCON Chairman Craig Wallace know so we can share the sponsorship information with them! He can be reached at [ohioatfan@gmail.com](mailto:ohioatfan@gmail.com).

Bookmark this [link](#) and check back for more details on sponsorships, registration and more. Information will be posted here and through our district social media channels soon!

# Kiwanis Family Day

at the

## Great American BALL PARK!

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

REDS VS. A  
DIAMONDBACKS

250th  
Anniversary USA

REDS

KIWANIS

KIWANIS KIDS

Ohio • Indiana • Kentucky • Tennessee Districts

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Get Tickets Now!

<https://www.gofovo.com/event/KiwanisDayattheReds26>



# Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation seeks players for 69th Annual Golf Outing

The Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation and its golf committee are actively planning and excited for this summer's 69th Annual Ohio Kiwanis Golf Outing. This year's event will once again be held at Raintree Golf and Event Center located at 4350 Mayfair Road, Uniontown, Ohio. Raintree is located just off I-77 between Akron and Canton.

This year the event will take place on Thursday July 16, and participation is limited to the first 128 players to register and prepay. The fun will begin at 9:30 a.m. with a shotgun start and a scramble format of play. All registrations and sponsorships are being processed online and you may register or sponsor at [www.odkf.org](http://www.odkf.org) under the scrolling registration and sponsorship tabs.

As in the past, this year's event will feature various levels of prizes by age group and all-female player teams. The net proceeds from the event will be used to help support the Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation projects. As always, this event is open to the entire Kiwanis family and friends of Kiwanis.

The price of this year's event remains \$90 and includes golf, cart, lunch, dinner and prizes. The registration deadline is July 9. To continue to make this event a success and help raise funds for our Foundation and its grants programs sponsorships will again be sold. Sponsorship levels are as follows; a hole sponsorship for \$100, a par sponsorship for \$300 and a birdie sponsorship for \$550.

The hole sponsorship will get a professional sponsor sign on one hole with special recognition in the program and on the Foundation's website. The par sponsor will receive one sign on the course, special recognition in the program and on the website plus golf for two players.

The birdie sponsor will receive two sponsorship signs on the course, special recognition in the program and on the website plus golf for four players. We are in need of strong support in sponsorships to help keep the tournament at the quality level everyone has come to expect and to benefit the Foundation so please seek event sponsors from your club members and businesses you may know who would like to support this worthy cause.

Please mark your calendars and arrange now to take advantage of the great fun and fellowship that takes place at this event every year. The event is held rain or shine. No cancellations can be accepted after July 9. Please encourage your club to send one or more foursomes to this great District event.

If you have any questions regarding the tournament please contact event co-chairs Dave Kuhn or Bill Flinta at [golf@odkf.org](mailto:golf@odkf.org). Thank you for supporting this event and your Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation. We look forward to seeing everyone in July.



## Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Kiwanis Golf Outing

July 16, 2026 - Raintree Golf & Event Center, 4350 Mayfair Road, Uniontown, OH. Shotgun start at 9:30am.

Cost \$90.00 per player includes golf, cart, lunch, prizes, and dinner.

Open to entire Kiwanis family and friends.

Sponsorships available.

**Register or become a sponsor online at [ODKF.org](https://odkf.org). Look for the scrolling golf outing sponsorship and registration links to appear.** Questions, please contact Bill Flinta (330-801-6225) or Dave Kuhn (330-730-6254) or e-mail them at [golf@odkf.org](mailto:golf@odkf.org).

**Hope to see you on the course in July!**





# A brief history of our District Foundation

*By Steve Vrooman, 2025-26 ODKF chairman*

The Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation was incorporated in September 1982 under the IRS Statute 501(c) 3 as a charitable not-for-profit corporation that accepts gifts from various sources to help the needs of the Ohio Kiwanis community.



All active and senior members of the Ohio District of Kiwanis are automatically voting members of the Foundation, which is governed by a Board of Trustees. The 1982-83 Ohio District Kiwanis Board provided \$10,000 from excess reserve funds generated by the annual Ohio District Golf and Bowling Tournaments as seed funding to allow the Foundation to begin projects that were too large for individuals and clubs.

The original objective of the Foundation was to create, support, and promote projects throughout Ohio, the United States, and the world, with a focus on safety, good health, and the education of young children. The Foundation is committed to financially assisting and recommending projects to enhance the commitment to Young Children by Kiwanis Clubs.

The original Bylaws called for the Governor of the Ohio District to be the Foundation President, with the Foundation Board Members being the same as the Ohio District. The need for a new structure for continued development was recognized in 1986-87 when, upon a recommendation of the IRS, the Board and officers of the Foundation were separated from those of the Ohio District.

The Foundation Board elected 6 members for 3-year terms (staggered), with the remaining 2 members selected by the District Governor of the current District Board. In 1990-91, the Board members were elected from the membership of the Ohio District Kiwanis at the annual meeting to serve the following administrative year. The Secretary/Treasurer continued to be the current Ohio District Kiwanis Secretary. In 2004, the Ohio District Kiwanis Secretary decided not to serve as Foundation Secretary/Treasurer.

The Foundation Board decided to make a change. IRS guidelines were consulted to determine the best structure for the Foundation. The Board decided to set the number of elected Board members at 12, sponsored youth representatives from Circle K and Key Club were made voting members of the Board, the Ohio District Past Treasurers were asked to select a voting member to the Board, the Ohio District Governor was asked to appoint 2 Lt. Governors to represent the ODK Board as voting members, and the Ohio District Leadership was made non-voting ex-officio members.

A volunteer was asked to serve as Executive Director, and an elected member of the Board became the Secretary/Treasurer. In 2015, the Secretary/Treasurer position was divided into two separate positions.

***Continued on next page***

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The Foundation was asked to publish a regular communication for the members of the Ohio District of Kiwanis International. The Buckeye Bulletin was published bi-monthly in a newspaper format and sent to all members of the District Kiwanis Clubs. For some years, a publication called the Buckeye Banner was sent to Club and District leaders to provide specific information for the leadership. In 2004, the bi-monthly publication was changed to a magazine format and named the Ohio District Kiwanis Magazine. In 2008, the Foundation ceased publishing a printed publication for the District. The District began electronic transmission of the magazine.

The 1985-86 Foundation Board initiated matching \$500 scholarships for the Ohio Key Club and Circle-K recipients with Kiwanis International. Today, KI does not provide a match, so the Foundation awards \$1000 scholarships to both Key Club and Circle K. The Foundation has made grants to the seven Children's Hospitals in Ohio and other worthy projects to assist with their needs. The Foundation has also distributed Pediatric Emergency Reference Cards to paramedics and EMT squads in the State of Ohio and assisted Clubs in supplying Pediatric Immobilization Boards to local Fire Departments and EMS squads. Kiwanis Clubs have sponsored numerous projects in the State of Ohio after receiving grants for local efforts to improve the lives of children. In 2003, the Board determined that the focus of the Foundation's efforts would be the support of pediatric trauma education and prevention.

Funding for the permanent endowment funds of the Foundation has grown from Club contributions, special awards in honor of Ohio's Kiwanians who have served as International President, memorial gifts, and individual donations. In 2006, the Ambassadors Program was instituted to allow members to make continuing gifts in smaller amounts. The First Family Project, since 1986, has used the Foundation to support numerous projects in the State of Ohio. The District operated a "craftsy corner" at the District convention to raise funds for the First Family project. In the early 2000s, this activity was changed to a "Silent Auction and Basket Room," and the Foundation was asked to take over this activity.

This change in focus and supervision resulted in the Foundation raising significant funds for grants to Kiwanis Clubs as a part of the Safe and Healthy Kids initiative. In 2004, Club Advised Funds (CAF) permitted Kiwanis Clubs to invest their funds with the Foundation for use in future service projects of the Club. This partnership with the Foundation provided each participating Club with nonprofit status as a sub-fund of the Foundation. Approximately 50 clients, with an investment of more than \$1,800,000, use this option as their Club Foundation.

In 2007, the Foundation became the beneficiary of the annual Ohio District Golf Outing. This activity has contributed to funds that are used to provide grants to Kiwanis Clubs. A special recognition program was developed to honor those who contribute as sponsors for this event. In 2011, the Legion of Honor Society was instituted to honor and promote gifts from Kiwanians whose membership had extended over 25 years and every five years thereafter. In the 2014-15 year, the Pediatric Trauma Project name was changed to "Kiwanis Safe and Healthy Kids."

Throughout the years, the Foundation has accomplished and met its objectives, purposes, and mission by providing a number of support services to the Ohio District and its Clubs as requested by Club and District leadership. The history listed shows how the Foundation has changed over the years to support the Ohio District and its members. (text from the ODKF Policy Manual)

# Keep sharing your good news to help Kiwanis grow in your community!

We love seeing Kiwanis service and volunteer activity get the attention it deserves! People need to hear and see what we are doing before they can decide to join us in our fun and work!

Here are a few “public relations wins” we spotted during the past month or so:

[\*\*Gazette covers Conneaut Kiwanis receiving its charter!\*\*](#)



[\*\*Bed Build earns Wellington Kiwanis award\*\*](#)

[\*\*Salineville Kiwanis students of the month\*\*](#)

[\*\*Zanesville Kiwanis offers opportunity to trade flags\*\*](#)

[\*\*Allen County leaders meet with Lima Kiwanis\*\*](#)

## Reporting of Support Hours

As you are volunteering at your local Ronald McDonald House this year, we ask you to complete the form on the ODKF website to collect how many members have supported the First Family Project in Service



Scan the QR code to get access to the ODKF First Family project page and link to support hours!

# Important Announcement!!

Announcement: Reopening of Nominations for the position of Ohio District Kiwanis Governor-Elect 2026-2027

This is an official reopening of nominations for the position of Ohio District Kiwanis Governor-Elect for the 2026-2027 term as of April 28, 2026.

If you're interested in serving in this vital role, please follow these steps:

1. Request a Nomination Packet by contacting the Ohio District Secretary Robin Gagnow at [secretary@ohiokiwanis.org](mailto:secretary@ohiokiwanis.org).
2. Complete the Nomination Form. Submitted it via email by the deadline of July 15, 2026.
3. The election will be held at the 2026 Ohio District Convention, taking place August 14-16, 2026, at the Renaissance Columbus Westerville Hotel, located at 409 Altair Parkway in Westerville, Ohio, 43082.
4. For more information or to obtain your nomination packet, please reach out to Robin Gagnow at [secretary@ohiokiwanis.org](mailto:secretary@ohiokiwanis.org).

Thank you for your commitment to serving the Ohio District Kiwanis!

Sincerely,  
Robin Gagnow  
Ohio District Kiwanis Secretary



**Kiwanis**<sup>®</sup>

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## HELP WANTED:

The Ohio District Kiwanis is seeking a trained Leadership Development Coordinator for the remainder of the 2025-26 term. The LDC will:

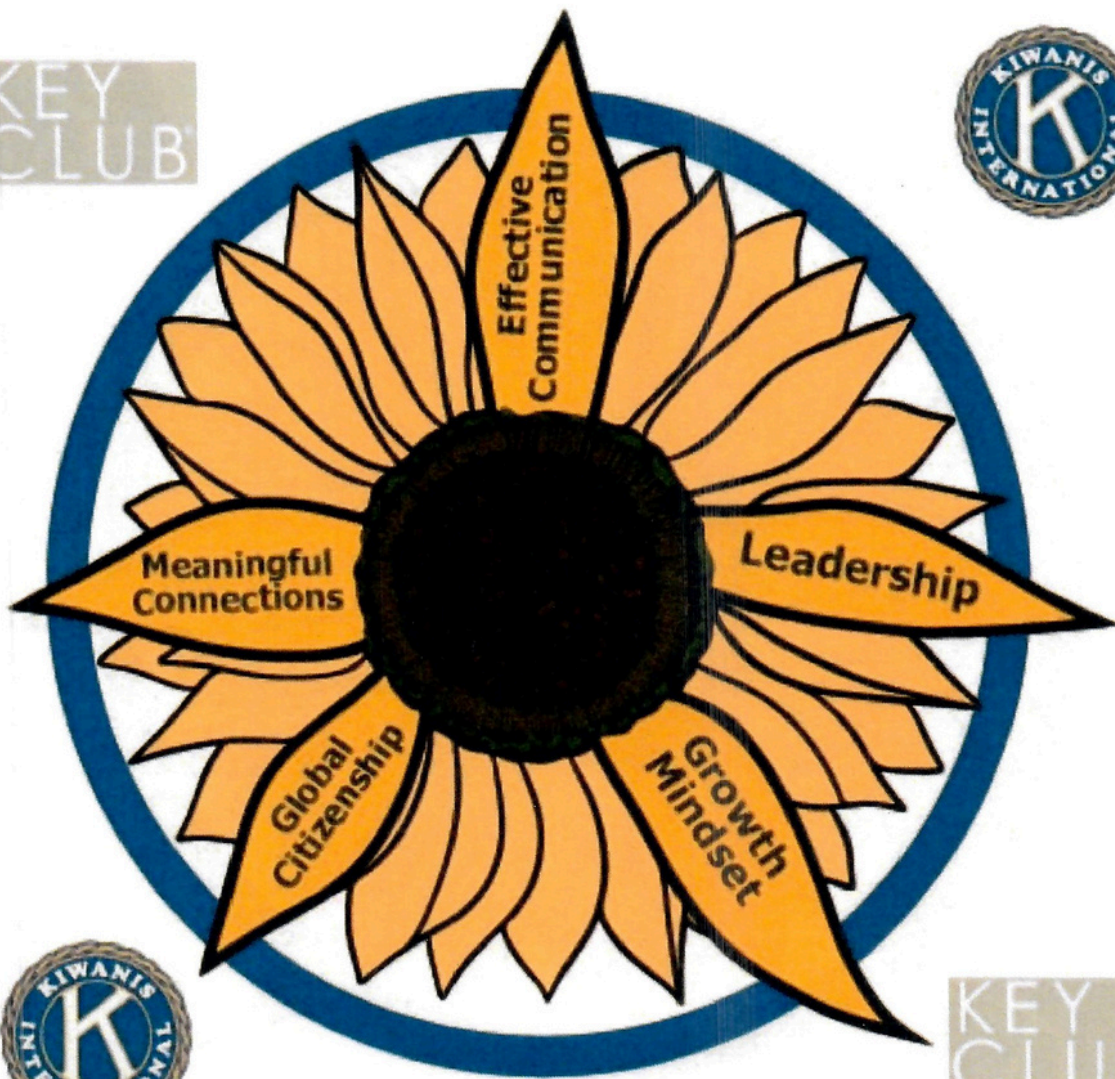
- Ensure club and division leaders are well-trained.
- Organize Club Leadership Education (CLE) and lieutenant governor training.
- Manage certified instructors and align activities with Kiwanis International's mission.

For interest, contact Robin Gagnow at [secretary@ohiokiwanis.org](mailto:secretary@ohiokiwanis.org). More details can be found in the job description here: [Leadership Development Coordinator Job Description](#)



# Coming to Ohio Kiwanis One Day Key Leader

KEY  
CLUB



KEY  
CLUB

**Contact Coordinators Below to Volunteer!**

**Cindy Champer**  
**CindyChamper@aol.com**  
**419-350-0477**

**Tish Keegan**  
**tkeegan@lamar.com**  
**419-545-3418**



# District joins in mourning for former governor Kelch

The following obituary for David Kelch, former governor of the Mighty Ohio District, was published by the Robert Funeral Home of Logan, Ohio.

David Franklin Kelch, aged 76 of Logan, Ohio, passed away at the Pickering House in Lancaster, Ohio on Thursday, May 21, 2026.

Born January 18, 1950, he was the son of the late Roy Earl and Leta Joyce (Hulse) Kelch.

During life, David was a policeman with 26 years of service and former Police Chief for the City of Logan. He was a former member of the Logan Kiwanis Club and had served as Governor and as Lieutenant Governor of the Kiwanis 9th Division.

David is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Kathy Jean (Humphrey) Kelch; son, Christopher Kelch of California; grandchildren, Rebekka Kelch, Emily Kelch, and Samantha Kelch; and brothers, Roy E. (Karen) Kelch Jr. of Logan, Ohio and James (Sue) Kelch of Texas.



A Celebration of David's Life officiated by Pastor Jack Johnson was held at the Shepherd of the Valley United Brethren in Christ Church in Logan, Ohio at 12 Noon on Wednesday, June 3, 2026. Visitation was held at Shepherd of the Valley from 10 AM until time of service on Wednesday, June 3, 2026.

Arrangements by Roberts Funeral Home- Logan, Ohio.

In lieu of flowers, the Kelch family suggests donations in David's memory may be made to support the food pantry at the Shepherd of the Valley United Brethren in Christ Church, 297 Riff Avenue, Logan, OH 43138.

Letters of condolence may be shared at [www.robertsfuneralhomelogan.com](http://www.robertsfuneralhomelogan.com).

Former Governor Kelch and many other Kiwanians who were lost during this past year will be honored during a special Memorial Service on the Sunday of District Convention weekend, Aug. 16, at the Renaissance Hotel in Westerville/Polaris.

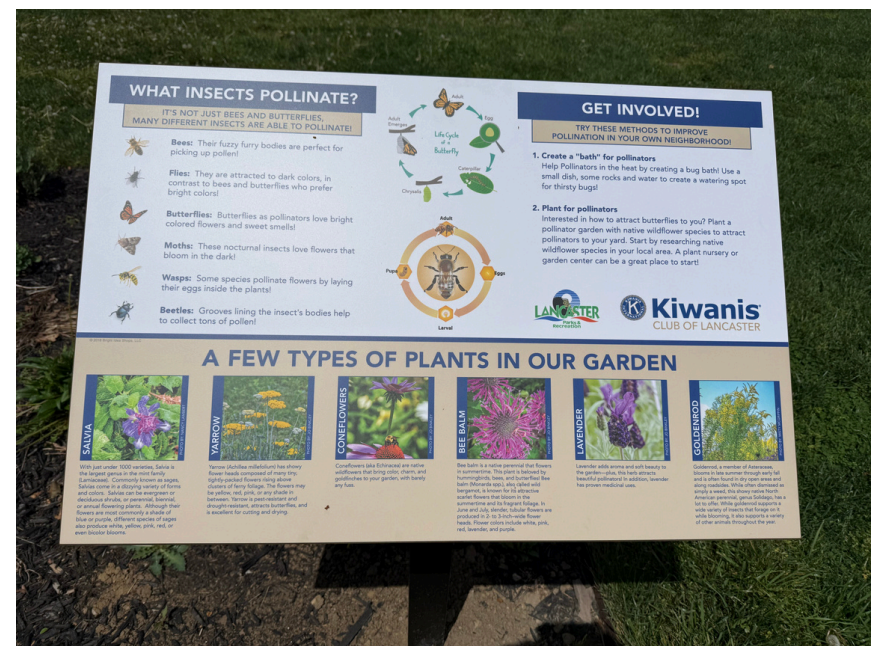


# Lancaster pollinator project continues to bloom

The Kiwanis Club of Lancaster recently added an informational sign and had an official ribbon cutting of its pollinator garden.

The effort was part of immediate past governor Kelly Brown's First Family focus on supporting bees, butterflies and all of nature's pollinators during her 2024-25 Kiwanis Year.

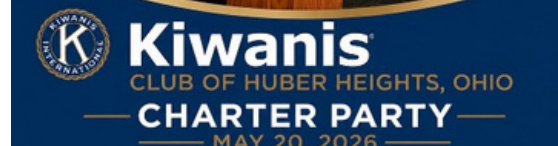
It was planted last year and has come back strong this spring, according to Lancaster Club Secretary Joan Miller.



# Keep up with our Governor on her travels

Governor Marcia and her First Gentleman Larry been on the road , visiting clubs and supporting the Kiwanis family throughout the Mighty Ohio District.

Click here at: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579035076996> and follow her to keep tabs on where she visits!



# Following our Family on Facebook

We have scoured the posts of **Facebook** to see what Ohio Kiwanis clubs have been up to this past month.

Follow the **Ohio District Kiwanis Page**, and join the **Ohio District Kiwanis Group**, to see more posts and add your club's activities! We can learn from each other and better serve the youth in our communities.



Wellington Kiwanis  
May 27 at 7:22 PM · 🌐



Wellington Kiwanis  
May 27 at 5:29 PM · 🌐

Wellington Kiwanis proudly co-sponsored with Wellington Eagles FOE #2051 the 2nd Dynamic Duke Shake luncheon/competition with Wellington Exempted Village Schools 6th

Kiwanis Club of the Jackson Area  
May 20 at 3:05 PM · 🌐

Despite the threat of rain & lightning yesterday, the Kiwanis Club of the Jackson Area was out in force to plant flowers in the long-time-empty baskets at Manpower Park. Unfortunately, the new lightpoles and baskets have not yet been installed in Downtown, so we were unable to plant there, but still thought it was important for the community to have some beautiful color in their city. Please say hi when you see us out in the park watering EVERY DAY till Labor Day. See less



Kirtland Kiwanis  
May 21 at 2:52 PM · 🌐

The Kirtland Kiwanis Strawberry Festival is coming up! We are excited to be back at Kirtland High School for our 67th Year! This year it takes place on Thursday, June 18th through Saturday, June 20th. Here are the times:  
Thursday: 5-10 P.M.  
Friday: 3-11 P.M.  
Saturday: Noon-11 P.M.

The full festival schedule will be posted soon. We are looking for volunteers! We need you in our Food Tent, serving up delicious strawberry desserts, scooping ice cream and a host of other fun jobs. There are lots of times to pick from and each shift is typically 3-4 hours. All you have to do to be part of the fun is click the link below to sign up! We really hope you choose to stop by the festival and give us a hand, have some fun and make it another huge success! You can direct any questions to Rick at Kirtlandpc@aol.com. We can't do it without you!!!

Wellington Kiwanis  
May 27 at 7:22 PM · 🌐



Wellington Kiwanis  
May 27 at 5:29 PM · 🌐

Wellington Kiwanis proudly co-sponsored with Wellington Eagles FOE #2051 the 2nd Dynamic Duke Shake luncheon/competition with Wellington Exempted Village Schools 6th

# KIWANIS DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR!

## Standing dates:

5th of the month- Circle K and Key Club Monthly reports due

10th of the month - Kiwanis Monthly reports due

20th of the month - Buckeye Bulletin deadline for submissions

## June 2026

6 – Ohio Kiwanis Board meeting via Zoom

14 – Happy Flag Day!

24-27 – International Convention in Manilla

30 – ODKF Grant Deadline for August Approval

30 – ODKF Mini Grant Deadline for July Approval



Kiwanis Club of Fairport Harbor

Yesterday at 8:55 PM · 🌐

Looking for a great, inexpensive way to advertise your business or organizatio... See more

STARS, STRIPES & HARBOR LIGHTS FESTIVAL

BE PART OF THE PARADE!

WE WANT YOU!

Businesses, Non-Profits, Student Groups, Classic Cars, Golf Carts, and More!

JULY 5, 2026 | 1:00 PM

FAIRPORT HARBOR

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER!

REGISTER YOUR PARADE ENTRY TODAY!  
VISIT: [KIWANISFH.ORG/INDEPENDENCE-CELEBRATION/](http://KIWANISFH.ORG/INDEPENDENCE-CELEBRATION/)



Stars, Stripes & Harbor Lights Festival and Kiwanis Club of Fairport Harbor

May 12 at 9:00 PM · ⚙️

# Wellington club salutes K-Kids leaders



Wellington Kiwanis

May 21 at 7:31 PM · 🌐



What a wonderful celebration of kids serving the community. An enormous thank... See more



Wellington Kiwanis

May 21 at 5:14 PM · 🌐

These two belong in the K-Kids Hall of Fame. At our annual Service Leadership Program picnic Thursday, we honored retiring Westwood Elementary third grade teacher Cathy Kurtz. Wellington Board of Education member and Kiwanian Ayers Ratliff helped found K-Kids 16 years ago along with his wife and elementary school teacher Nancy Ratliff. Mrs. Kurtz has been our long-time K-Kids Advisor, following in the footsteps of Westwood teacher Nancy Ratliff and Cindy Kodosky. Our K-Kids membership is the largest in Ohio and one of the largest in the country. We appreciate your commitment and dedication. Thank you Mrs. Kurtz. See less

KIWANIS CLUB OF FAIRPORT HARBOR

# SPAGHETTI DINNER

The Kiwanis Club of Fairport Harbor invites you, your family, and your friends to a delicious community dinner.



Where:

**Fairport VFW Post 7754  
540 New Street  
Fairport Harbor, OH 44077**



Date:

**Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026**



Time:

**5:00 PM – 7:00 PM**

**Donations  
Accepted!**

ENJOY A GREAT MEAL OF PASTA, MEATBALLS, SALAD, AND BREAD WHILE SUPPORTING LOCAL YOUTH PROGRAMS.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU THERE! ✨



# Bryan club reinvents itself and grows

by Dr. Shay Pursel, *Membership Chair*

How have we been able to induct 14 new members since Oct. 1? And how is it we are inducting our 15<sup>th</sup> member on June 10?

A lot is happening at the Kiwanis Club of Bryan, Ohio.

Following the pandemic, we found our club deleting members from our roster. Our attitudes were in the pits, and we didn't know why our hearts were no longer in it to win it. Collectively, we were failing.

Individually, we were internalizing our failures. It became personal.

Our club was not getting any younger, and members were actually dying. Our energy needed refreshed and our organization needed to be reorganized. So ... that's what happened. We started over.

Chatter about the reorganization began to happen three years ago. We brought back Committee Day and appointed committee chairs. Everyone joined a committee.

The membership committee specifically was comprised of past presidents. Our only charter member, 101 year-old Carlton Hardy, had been donating money toward new member scholarships in hopes that our membership would grow.

But that effort did not work because those scholarship recipients were not personally invested in the club. But Carlton kept showing up to every meeting with positivity, jokes, advice, and momentum. Carlton believed in us.

Our past membership chairman, Dick Bruce, gave us the fierce survivorship skills from an historical context. He informed us that we needed a budget and had never had a budget. Our then President-elect Dave Schumm invited guests to lunch but had to pay out of pocket for each guest he invited. It was too expensive to invite people to check out the club.

We asked the club for help. We couldn't spend community funds to grow our club. And one hand went up, another, and another. Club members donated \$1,750 to our cause. We had money to offer guests a free lunch!



**Gov. Marcia Copeland Hudson and husband Larry Hudson join Lt. Gov. Tim Hammel to celebrate charter member Carlton Hardy on his 101<sup>st</sup> birthday.**

*Continued from previous*

Because the Bryan Kiwanis Club allows women in the club now, a certain sisterhood developed for planning and implementation. Shannon, Becky and Chasity became front runners of money and fundraising and overall club-care. New ideas became rational. Acting upon those ideas became normal.



The membership committee developed a newsletter with a mission to grow and retain membership. The club secretary, also a past president who is soon to be president again, created a membership binder from scratch for every member of the club. This binder has information about the club’s current membership and information to share with new membership. Becky put her heart and soul into that binder. We are grateful.

Every member of our club picked a lane all their own. They stayed in their lane and put their best effort forward, not for the praise, but for the reward. The reward is friendships. The spirit and soul of our club has been baptized. And when we handed out an Invite a Guest for a free lunch card, guests started showing up for lunch!

We introduced each guest, gave them an informational folder with an application and fee schedule for prorated dues, followed up, and brought in new members -- 15 new members in about eight months. We are just as surprised as you are.

But even better, our new members are returning and new, younger and older, active, and happy members. We started two years ago with 36 members and are now at maybe 45. We’ve lost count because we are not looking at the numbers. We are looking at the human connection.



Kiwanis is our happy place. We look forward to our regular meetings, selling popcorn at the Bryan city band concerts and high school football games, raising money for our kiddos so they can read books from their school’s book vending machine, beautifying the parks, sharing in good deed, and for the most part, having fellowship every Wednesday over lunch.

If you find yourself or your club struggling to grow or retain membership, please think on this campaign slogan: “Tithe your time.” Give a portion of your time consistently, not everything all at once, and you and your club will be successful. Happy attracts happy.

# Kiwanians can bring joy to families

**By Larry D. Hudson, Ohio District Kiwanis First Gentleman**  
Co-Chair, First Family Project 2025-2026

In the mind of a child, the first sunny mornings of an Ohio June bring a promise of great things to come. School is out, the skies are blue, and time for play and outdoor fun feels like it will last forever. You might remember feeling that way. We were all children once.

Of course, there are many ways that an endless summer can be cut short, and not just by the calendar. Family situations change: a move to a new community, a change in routines, trouble at home. Sometimes the fun of summer gives way to a medical crisis for a child – the sort of serious condition that lands a child in the hospital for a stay that outlasts the season.

The children and families dealing with these challenges are the focus of our 2025-26 Ohio District Kiwanis First Family Project. The project's aim is to make life a little better for the children and families whose lives have been upended by serious medical conditions.

Our project is asking Kiwanis clubs, divisions and individual Kiwanians to help – by donating funds to the Ohio District Kiwanis Foundation to support wishes for vulnerable children and their families. The money will pay for wishes through Make-A-Wish. The project also urges Kiwanians to volunteer at one of the Ronald McDonald Houses serving Ohio. Families of hospitalized children stay at the Ronald McDonald House without charge, making it possible to be near the hospital, enjoy meals there, and meet other families dealing with the same struggles.

Kiwanis Clubs can volunteer to cook meals for Ronald McDonald House guests and provide the pantry items, cleaning products and other items on the House's wish list.

Kiwanians throughout the Ohio District have responded generously since Oct. 1. (The Black Swamp Division provides a great example: a \$2,725 contribution that includes \$400 raised by Lima SLPs and a variety of cleaning products for Ronald McDonald House contributed by a Delphos K-Kids Club.) We're very grateful for all the contributions from Kiwanians districtwide, and send our thanks to everyone.

One third of the 2025-26 Kiwanis year remains, and we have a favor to ask Kiwanis clubs throughout the district: In the interest of granting more wishes to vulnerable children and their families, we're respectfully requesting that you consider making the First Family Project your charity of choice for the fundraisers you plan for the remainder of the Kiwanis year. Let's grant more wishes!

Thanks, everyone, for supporting the First Family Project. We're inspired by the contributions from Kiwanians throughout Ohio – especially the SLP kids. Hope you are, too!

Learn more by clicking [here!](#)