

Minnekotan

Minnesota Dakotas District of Kiwanis
International
September 2025



A Message from the Governor

Greetings to our MNDK Kiwanians!

We had a wonderful convention in Willmar, and I want to thank all of you who were able to attend and participate in the many and varied events that were planned for us. I want to especially thank our Convention Chair Jason Stewart and our District Secretary Cindy Braseth for their good work in helping to plan our convention. I also want to give a Big Shout Out to the Willmar Kiwanis club for your good work in planning and hosting a wonderful weekend for us. Our convention is a great time for us to join and spend time together learning as we enhance our experience with Kiwanis.

Congratulations to John Rheinberger who will be serving as our Governor for the 2025-2026 year. Special congratulations goes to Karen Davis who was elected as our Governor Elect for the upcoming year. I look forward to continuing to work with our Leadership team in our new year.

As I look back at this year as MNDK Governor – I am truly grateful for the opportunities I had traveling across our

District to meet so many of you and continue to learn about the amazing service we provide to the youth in our communities. I am also excited about our new club opening in Williston, ND this year. I want to thank Past Gov. Brad Knudson who also worked hard as our Club Opening Administrator for his efforts in getting our new club opened. We are getting close to opening a new club in the Black Hills area in South Dakota at this time!

Let's continue to work together as we are serving the youth in our communities and Celebrating our Successes!



Used Book Sale Thank You

Laura Tjomsland,
Coordinator

Thanks to everyone that brought books for the used book sale. AND, special thanks to those of you who purchased books. It is always so fun to hear folks share stories about books they have read. I got some new suggestions for authors that I have never read before. So, keep on reading! We raised \$400 for the District Outreach Program to support Key Club and Circle K.



A Message from the Secretary Treasurer

The District Convention is a Wrap and it was a blast. Even for me as I ran around with Convention Director Jason Stewart and his assistant, wife, Samantha, to make sure everything ran smoothly! And it did thanks to Jason, Samantha and several volunteers from the Willmar Kiwanis Club who showed up and kept the registration and information desk organized! Thank you, thank you, we couldn't have done it without you all. Special thanks to Stacey Holwerda and Wanda Stallman from the Willmar Club for organizing the volunteers.

I won't repeat any of the items that others have commented on in the newsletter. Some other notables are:

- We honored the Star Award winners from each division along with 15 clubs that received the Distinguished Club Award for 2023-2024. The program for the Awards Luncheon and a list of Distinguished Clubs can be found on the MNDK website at: <https://k13.site.kiwanis.org/dcon/>
- The Lt Governors and Exec Team met for training and planning the day before to get ready for the new Kiwanis year.

- The 2024-2025 Board met where we reviewed the events and successes of this past year and approved changes to the district bylaws.
- The 2025-2026 Board met to approve the appointment of several district positions (including mine) along with the operating budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
- We convened our annual House of Delegates to elect the 2025-2026 Governor, John Rheinberger and Governor Elect Karen Davis.
- The minutes of both board meetings and the House of Delegates can be found under District Governance at: <https://k13.site.kiwanis.org/resources/>

Please take the time to review the minutes of the board meetings and House of Delegates. This is your organization and you need to be informed.

Now, on to some business going forward. September is the last month of our Kiwanis year.

- Please start reviewing your member rosters and re-affirm with current members that they plan to remain members. Contact those you haven't seen at meetings for a while and get them on board. If there are deletions that you know about, take care of that now.
- Make sure your officers for the coming year are entered into Engage.
- Is your budget done for next year?
- Do you have your membership plan written with some specific actions your club is going to take?

Doing these things now will make for a smoother transition in 2025-2026!

Sharon Scudder
District Leadership
and Development
Coordinator



A Month of Growth and Learning

Happy Labor Day to all. "Work is no disgrace; the disgrace is idleness". (A Greek proverb) We can play our part by taking time to learn and educate ourselves and others on how to be your better self. Take advantage of Kiwanis International Resources that are provided for learning and development, such as Club Leadership Education (CLE) training videos, membership videos, and Service Leadership Programs (SLP) videos----- it's all free and available at Kiwanis.org.

With the new Kiwanis year beginning, take a peek at the new CLE training videos for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Chairman, complete the form to send to be certified. Call me if you have questions.

Don't forget that AMPLIFY ends on September 30th so be sure to complete your modules before then as there will be no extensions beyond that firm set date. Also watch for registration date for the new AMPLIFY Year.

I would like to share a quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, " Each morning sees some task begin, each evening sees it close; something attempted, some done, has earned a night's repose.

Also as my boss, Tom Johnson, wrote: The best growth isn't about becoming something

you're not, it's becoming more of what you already are, for more people and in more places. Therefore, tune into the Kiwanis International Led training and learn.



Something That Should Make Us Proud

Most of us know very little about our District Educational Foundation. It was founded in 1934 near the depths of the Great Depression and has since brought great benefit to many youth for over 90 years. During this period it has probably given out about \$2.1 to \$2.2 million or about \$10 to \$11 million dollars in today's money. Much of this has come from you, the members, because of your strong belief in our youth. This year the Foundation plans to give away 54 scholarships of \$850 each. Please make your Club a participant during the upcoming year. The Foundation Board is extremely thankful to you for your continued generosity and support.

The members of the 2025-26 Board of Trustees who meet semi-annually are: Governor-elect Karen Davis, Bill Lardy, VP Denis Cornell, David Odette, President Dan Leikvold, Sherry Scudder, Sec/Treasurer Lowell Disrud, Carol Nitschke, and Governor John Rheinberger.



More Members, More Service

District Club Opening Update!

We are excited to announce that our district club opening team is hard at work preparing to launch a new club in the Eastern Black Hills communities of Blackhawk, Piedmont, and Summerset on September 21st-25th. With just three weeks to go, we have started scheduling appointments. This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved early and help shape the future of our District.

The district team has started to work on Faribault MN club opening for October or November and with both areas we need valuable members like you so let us know if you have family or friends in these communities.

Give your club a boost

The club boost checklist offers a structured series of steps to help club leaders prepare for a boost or other club-strengthening event. A club boost box is available containing the resources that help clubs invite new members and engage community leaders. A list of what's contained in the box is available at this

link: <https://tinyurl.com/u328prtn>

Of course, the club toolbox page has other resources for clubs with various needs, including tools for digital marketing, club coaching and more.

What is a Club Membership committee?

This dedicated group focuses on both attracting new members and ensuring the satisfaction and engagement of our current members. Joining the membership committee reflects a commitment to the growth and vitality of our club within the community. Attracting new members and retaining current ones are crucial steps in ensuring our club remains a vibrant and dynamic force. Each member brings unique value, helping to enrich our collective experience and extend our reach in making a positive impact.



By Amanda Thrift,
District Aktion
Club
Administrator

Aktion Club
Advisors don't
forget to submit

entries for this year's Aktion Club awards by the September 15th deadline! Also make sure to complete an annual achievement report to be considered for a Distinguished Club or Honor Club award.

Aktion Club Awards open for entries include the Single Service Project Award, Speech Contest, Poster Contest, Scrapbook Contest and Video Contest.

Please reach out with any questions.



Support the Kiwanis

Children's Fund

Willmar, MN August 8 – 10, 2025

Did we all have fun - Yes and Yes.

We were privileged to have a Trustee from Greenwood South Carolina; Dawn Puderbaugh Hodges join us plus Brad Boyd, North America 3 Area Director. Everybody knows Brad Boyd.

Another great District Convention planned with interesting and important sessions for attendees.

Included at the Banquet, announcements and recognitions for clubs who continued their K Dollar challenge and collected for 24-25 fiscal year. Some clubs brought a check for the total K dollars and some clubs brought the cash. The K dollars presented by 17 clubs totaled \$8,245.00.

The raffle table ticket sales totaled \$1,206.00. The total submitted to the Children's Fund = \$9,451.00

The July 2025 District Giving Report shows \$42,983.00 plus the \$9,451.00 from our convention will

be \$52,434.00. We are so close to the 23-24 Total Giving of \$54,488.00. Contributions for August and September will

included and hopefully the Giving Total will match or exceed the 23-24 total.

Thank you everyone for all you do and having another year of fun with the K Dollar challenge!

Together our impact is amplified

We have lots to celebrate and to be proud of our District Clubs, leaders, members, family and friends.

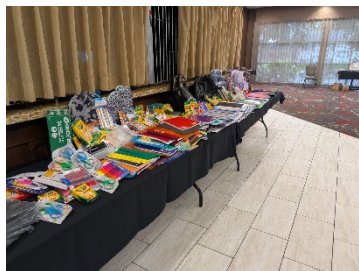
As the District Chair, I am so proud and pleased to represent our District to K I Children's Fund Board.

Spring Valley Kiwanis Collects K Dollars



The Kiwanis Club of Spring Valley collected \$1,075 in "K" Dollars this past year, and donated them to the Kiwanis Children's Fund at the recent MN-DAK District Convention in Willmar, MN.

This project has become a fun way for us to fundraise, and we now have family, friends, community members, waitresses in local cafes, etc. on the lookout for "K" Dollars for us. This photo shows our members at a recent meeting with all of our collected "K" Dollars.



Willmar Kiwanis Club Hosts a Memorable 108th District Convention

The Willmar Kiwanis Club proudly served as the host of the 108th Minnesota-Dakotas District Convention this August, welcoming Kiwanis members from across the region. The multi-day event not only fostered camaraderie and collaboration but also showcased the vibrant community spirit of Willmar.



As part of the convention festivities, the Willmar Kiwanis Club hosted a special club social

event, which saw a fantastic turnout of attendees eager to connect and share ideas. In addition, about 50 participants gathered for a delightful evening at the Barn Theatre, enjoying the play "Drinking Habits" that added a touch of humor and entertainment to the convention experience.

The Willmar Kiwanis Club also extends a heartfelt thank you to all who contributed to the United Way's "Stuff the Bus" campaign. The outpouring of school supplies and donations was truly inspiring, and it underscored the shared commitment of our members to support local children and families as they prepare for a new school year. Donations totaled over 1500 items and \$2200.00.

In all, the 108th District Convention was a wonderful success, reflecting both the hospitality of Willmar and the meaningful impact of Kiwanis service. We look forward to many more opportunities to serve and celebrate together!



Otter Risers of Fergus Falls Celebrate 50 Years

Otter Risers

Kiwanis of Fergus Falls MN celebrated 50 years of community service and fun on July 22 at the Spies Riverfront Pavilion along the Otter Tail river in downtown Fergus Falls.

Over 100 folks connected and reminisced, including current and former members and families, members of our Key Club and Fergus Noon Kiwanis, our sponsoring club 50 years ago. We enjoyed a delicious meal and gave out free books to young children which were hand-selected by an elementary teacher.

President Jeff Drake presented a heartfelt tribute to our club's history and its dedicated members. We honored Vern Johnson, Steve Rufer and Neil Herman current charter members along with a former charter member, Jim Wolfe who joined us from Moorhead.

Otter Risers Kiwanis is more than just a club; it's a vibrant group dedicated to serving our community through volunteering and fostering connections. For 50 years, we've brought people together, made a positive impact, and had a great time doing it – we truly are "the fun club!" Here's to the next 59 years of Kiwanis service!



We Remember! Our 2025 District

Convention Memorial Service honored our district Kiwanians who have passed away during the past year. During the service we remembered the following Kiwanians. Let us remember all the good altruistic work they did during their life for their community as a member of Kiwanis! The complete Memorial Service PowerPoint program with a picture slide and short obituary for each is available for online viewing at <https://k13.site.kiwanis.org/dcon/>

Albert Lea Day Breakers

Dennis "Denny" Duane Lowe
Mark Steven Fenstermacher

Albert Lea Golden K

Lester G. Anderson
Kenneth Everett Gerber

Albert Lea Noon

Duane Troe
Marjory Ann Hamersly

Alexandria Golden K

Lee Everett Doering
James L. Bjerknes

Annadale

Harold G. Wahlquist

Bismarck

Eugene D. Weeks

Blue Earth

Charles Kane Frundt

Brookings

Wilbur E. "Bill" Audley Jr.

Devils Lake

Penelope "Penny" Ann Knudson

Lawrence "Larry" G. Nygren

Fargo

John Q. Paulsen

David G. Cole

Kent Orville Hockgraber

Hibbing

Wayne E. Thune

Lake City

Carole Therese Berg

Andru Martin Peters

Litchfield

Mark P. Wood

Mandan

Dwight C. Cook

Mankato

Joseph "Joe" Dean Holland

Michael Dwayne Matzke

Minneapolis Downtown

Dale Wendell Bowen

Dwain Curtis Bell

Moorhead

Lowell W. Bennes

Northeast Minneapolis

William "Bill Sr." L. McReavy

Steve Mark Olson

Owatonna Golden K

Berlyn "Stack" W. Staska

Pierre-Fort Pierre

Kevin Tveidt

Pipestone

Dennis C. Hanson

Red Wing Golden K

William "Bill" F. Phillips

Donald E. Felmlee

Rochester

Roger Dean Krsnak

Rochester Day Makers

Lyle Thomas "Tom" Lemke

Beverly A. Livesay

Richard E. Hall

Karen R. Lundberg

Downtown Rochester

Paul Wayne Austinson

Rochester Golden K

Donald Evi Johnson

Frank Richason

St. Cloud

James Thomas Addicott

St. Louis Park Golden K

Jim E. Stumpf

Sioux Falls

Duane Elmer Rauscher

Leonard H. Johnson

Donna Mae Jipp

Ben Masselink

Spearfish

Elwood Geiger

Spring Valley

William "Bill" Albert Rowen

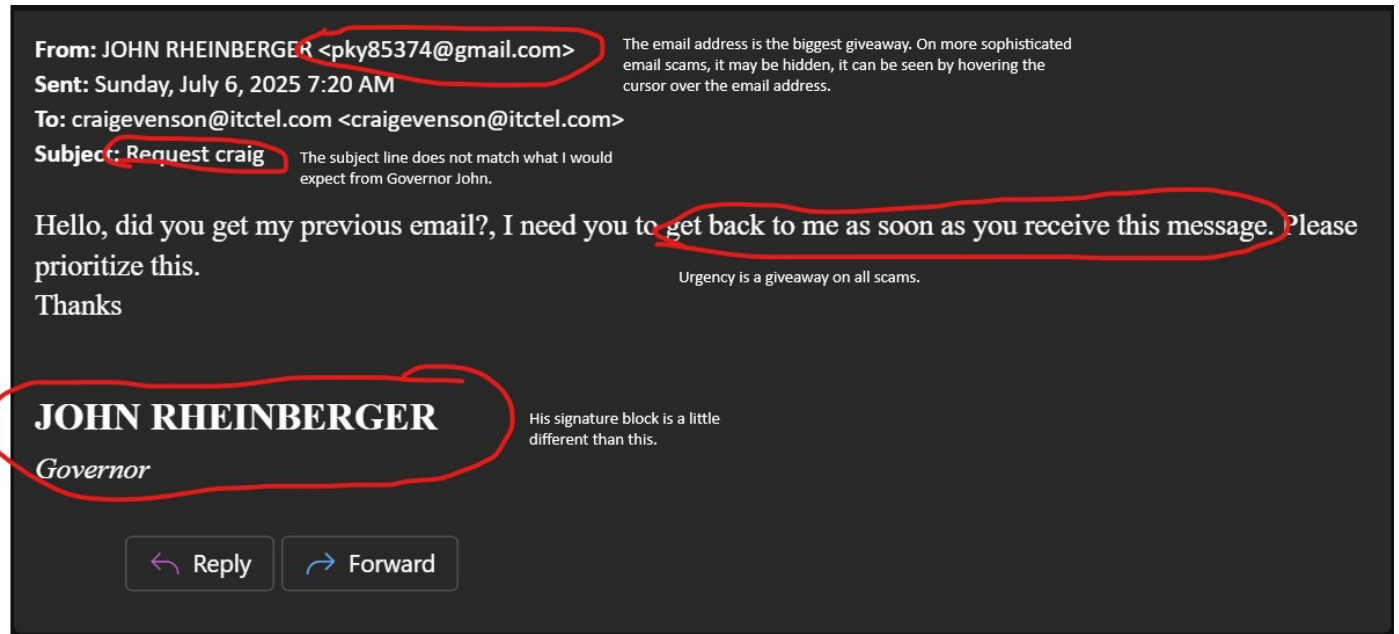
Valley City

Howard Warren Langemo

Harvey Lee Hochhaller

Willmar

Lester "Les" Heike



The Scammers are at it Again

By Craig Evenson, Risk Manager

In the image above, I have highlighted some of the key areas to watch to determine if an email is sent by a scammer. This is an actual email I received. I have placed notations by each area with the specific point making it suspicious.

Be vigilant and keep your information safe! It's a scary world out there!

Watertown Kiwanis Partners with Salvation Army

By Stefan Martinson



On July 29th the Watertown Kiwanis Club made a \$500 donation

to support local student through the local Salvation Army backpack program. This contribution will provide much-needed

school supplies. for children in Watertown as they head back to school this fall.

Each year, many families in Watertown face the challenge of purchasing essential supplies for their children. With the support of the Watertown Kiwanis, more students will begin the school year equipped and confident-ready to learn, grow, and succeed!

The Kiwanis Club of Watertown is grateful for this partnership with the Salvation Army in Watertown and our shared commitment to making a difference in the lives of children and families in our area.



Unique Kiwanis Designs Available

The Mitchell club has shirts for sale! Check them out here

<https://k00449.site.kiwanis.org/kiwanis-attire/>

Lots of hoodies and sweatshirts available for the upcoming cold weather!

Email mitchellkiwanis@yahoo.com for info.

United Way Day of Caring in Mitchell SD



The Kiwanis Club of Mitchell SD participated in the Mitchell Area United Way Day of Caring on August 13, 2025. Over 280 people participated in projects around the city for several organizations. The Mitchell club organized two projects. Group 1 built and installed 3 new little libraries in local parks. Group 2 helped tie fleece blankets. These blankets will be donated to Fire, Police, Sheriff offices. Officers keep them in their rigs and distribute them to people involved in emergencies.



Kiwanis Sunrisers Donate Back Packs for Ready Set School

A total of 50 backpacks were filled with school supplies at the Kiwanis Sunrisers club membership meeting on August 13th. Items were purchased by the Kiwanis Sunrisers club along with a \$250 donation from the Thrivent Action Team.

This is the 8th straight year of this club project. All backpacks were given to the Ready Set School organization of Winona County, represented at the meeting by Jackie Stevens and Pam Simon, to distribute to elementary school students in need to begin the 2025-26 school year.

Ready Set School is a non-profit organization located in Winona which works to ensure that all eligible students have the basic and necessary supplies and clothing for school, public or private. More information on Ready Set School can be found at <https://readysetschoolwinona.org/>.

Bob Hermann, Chair of the Sunrisers club Children's Services Committee, coordinated this project with the Ready Set School representatives.

NE Metro Golden K, St Paul Supports Special Projects



One of the Special Projects we supported for the 2025-26 fiscal year is a \$6,100 grant to Northeast Youth and Family Services to develop: 1) a second play therapy room, and 2) a “case management” space for offering essentials to their clients.

The second play therapy room allows twice as many children to be served via this therapeutic modality. It also means two children from the same family can be seen simultaneously rather than parents needing to bring in each child separately.

Partnering with a local food shelf, the case management space will allow Northeast Youth and Family Services to offer select food items, hygiene packs and clothing options for clients in need.

More information about Northeast Youth and Family Services is available on their website: <https://nyfs.org/>

Support Minn-Dak Key Club! Help Us Empower the Next Generation of Student Leaders!



Key Club is one of the largest student-led service organizations in the world, and here in the Minnesota-Dakotas

District, we're proud to help students grow as leaders while making a real impact in their schools and communities. Each year, we host two major events—**Fall Rally** and **District Convention (DCON)**— that bring members together for a weekend of service, leadership training, and connection.

We want to make sure as many students as possible can attend these life-changing events, regardless of financial barriers.

That's where **you** come in. **Your** every bit helps. You or your club can be a Sponsor for MinnDak Key Club. There are 3 levels of sponsorship:

- ✓ Duck Egg Donor \$0-\$200
- ✓ Duckling Donor \$201-\$300
- ✓ Mighty Milford Patron +\$301

For any inquiries contact:
District Treasurer Muntaha Abdelaal Email: treas@minndakkeyclub.org
MinnDak Admin team
Email: Adminteam@minndakkeyclub.org

Keep Up With MinnDak!:

Website: minndakkeyclub.org
Instagram: [@minndak.keyclub](https://www.instagram.com/minndak.keyclub)

You can view the complete Flyer at:
<https://tinyurl.com/5e8vz96u>

In light of the recent school shooting in Minneapolis, we are publishing this Opinion Piece.

Fargo Roughriders Kiwanis Club Supports Gun Safety Initiatives

Opinion Piece By Diana Stavros

Gun violence is a social issue adversely affecting the United States. Children have been especially affected and each day young people face the danger of the number one cause of death in the United States – gun violence. Given that firearm deaths disproportionately affect young people, this is the leading cause of death among U.S. children and adolescents. The number of U.S. children dying by gunfire keeps rising and surpasses drug overdoses, poisonings, drowning and car accidents.

Mortality numbers are only part of the story. For each child lost, there are shattered families and grieving friends; there is psychological trauma and impacts all of us as a society.

Kiwanis Clubs historically take on humanitarian and civic projects that many public authorities are not prepared or able to perform. The Rough Rider Kiwanis Club of Fargo, ND supports sensible firearm safety initiatives and in June 2022 adopted a club resolution.

There are numerous programs available for firearm safety education. Various agencies have safety programs, such as the American College of Surgeons and the NRA. One example is:

—

Be **SMART** program

Secure all guns in your homes and vehicles;

Model responsible behavior around guns;

Ask about unsecured guns in other homes;

Recognize the role of guns in suicide;

Tell your peers to Be SMART

We encourage all clubs in the Minnesota-Dakotas District to consider including firearm safety initiatives in your programs. Ask your local law enforcement agencies to help you identify issues and then create programs appropriate to address those local issues. Collaborate with those agencies to help to promote these programs at local events.

Kids need to grow up in safe communities where they can thrive. This is one area where we can work with others to help make a difference.

Greater Mankato Area United Way's YOUTH UNITED Lend Helping Hands at Kiwanis Camp Patterson A 2025 Annual Week of Action Project - Jill G. Cusick

This past spring, Kiwanis Camp Patterson on the shores of Lake Washington was buzzing with the spirit of community service. Through the efforts of Phil Slingsby, a long time Greater Mankato Area United Way Tocqueville Society donor (along with wife Margie), and Jill Cusick, United Way's Director of Resource & Donor Development, both proud members of the Mankato Kiwanis Club, a special connection was made with YOUTH UNITED. As part of United Way's annual Week of Action, a group of dedicated young volunteers came together to focus their energy on giving back, demonstrating the power of service and community engagement in action.

YOUTH UNITED is a Young Leaders Society for youth from all over the Greater Mankato Area United Way 4-county service region of Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Waseca, with a mission and a focus to give - advocate - and volunteer! This passionate group of school-aged (K - 12) United Way fundraisers and donors work to ensure that the United Way mission is carried out - to unite the community to secure and invest resources to improve and save lives, through basic needs, health, and education. This is a network of engaged youth, primarily under the age of 18, who share a passion for fundraising, helping others, and strengthening our community alongside Greater Mankato Area United Way.

United Way's YOUTH UNITED volunteers joined forces to tackle important projects around the camp, from refreshing facilities by cleaning the vintage summer cabins - beautifying the spaces, ensuring the camp remains a welcoming and vibrant place for future campers and all who visit. The hours were filled with teamwork, laughter, and a shared commitment to making a difference. The volunteer day wrapped up with ice cream treats provided by Matt Norland, the 2025 YOUTH UNITED Hospitality Sponsor, and - you guessed it - also a proud member of the Mankato Kiwanis Club!

Phil shared - "We sure appreciate the time put in to help the youth experience the joy and education in volunteerism. I was fortunate to have parents and friends get me involved with volunteering at a young age. I really didn't understand the in depth cause we were helping with at the time but I did have fun with the people that I was working with and the joy of accomplishing a task that people were grateful for. I think YOUTH UNITED is helping to develop future leaders that will help make the Mankato area a better place to live."

"These partnerships truly embody what Kiwanis, United Way, and YOUTH UNITED are all about. When we combine our resources and energy, we put the pieces of the puzzle together to make a tangible impact right here in our own backyards. Kiwanis Camp Patterson is a very special place in our community. I myself was one a camper here, and so it's even more rewarding to see our younger generation stepping up to preserve and enhance it for future campers." - Jill

The event not only strengthened the bond between the Mankato Kiwanis Club and Greater Mankato Area United Way, but also showcased the power of intergenerational volunteerism - where experienced community members and young leaders work side by side for the greater good.

With the cabins fresh from cleaning completed by YOUTH UNITED members, Kiwanis Camp Patterson was ready to welcome more adventures, memories, and friendships this summer. It's a shining example of how connections and partnerships can turn a day of service during Week of Action into a legacy of impact.