

Rotary News – Monday, September 27, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President Sid Ellis, at the Douglass Community Association, in addition to virtually. He led us in the pledge of allegiance.

Invocation was given by Rotarian Dan Hartlieb. Dan Sytsma presented the Arts News with reminders of events such as and Bates Alley music Wednesday evening, October 1 Art Hop to be held at the new Haymarket Plaza, and the WMU Theatre production of *Into the Woods* this weekend.

Announcements: President Sid announced that beginning with the next meeting on October 4 we will be meeting at the Travelers' Café, located in front of the Kalamazoo Battle Creek International Airport on Portage Road. Reservations for lunch will still be required online by Friday each week if you want lunch.

Youth Services Report: Denny Stults reported on Rotaract. They had discontinued meeting during Covid but a small group is attempting to regroup and begin meeting again. Referrals for new members from Rotarians would be appreciated. The target group is young professionals, 20's and 30's.

Happy Bucks: PDG Rick Briscoe gave a happy buck for President Sid hosting us at the Douglass the last few weeks; Dan Sytsma for returning to live improv presentations; Denny Stults for his son taking his flight instructor test, Steve Kreider for his Packers, and for his STRIVE student reaching out to him after the summer, and finally Amy Remmert for her grandson passing his drivers' test to get his license.

Program: Rotarian Amy Remmert introduced two guests from the YWCA to speak about the *Cradle Kalamazoo* program. Dr. Grace Lubwama is the Chief Executive Officer, and Komal Ravzi is the Director of Community Health. Dr. Lubwama is from Uganda and has been in Kalamazoo for 8 years as CEO of the YW which is the founding organization for Cradle Kalamazoo. Ms. Ravzi oversees health equity, clinical equity, and community engagement efforts for Cradle Kalamazoo. She has a Master's Degree in Public Health from WMU.

The goal of *Cradle Kalamazoo* is to allow every child to reach their full potential. Because 15 black babies in every 1000 born in Kalamazoo die before their first birthday, the program focuses on black families. This statistic compares to 5 per 1000 for white babies born. The goal in the next 10 years is to bring that statistic down to less than 3 per 1000. Dr. Lubwama stressed that we need to invest in life course perspective by addressing all risk factors with interventions. This is why they have so many partners in *Cradle Kalamazoo*. Research has shown that the more invested early on in a child's life the greater the ROI outcome. Discrimination, housing, income, etc., all impact a child's outcomes. She pointed out that "Generational strategies are needed to address generational problems."