



President Taylor Huie started the meeting at 12:15 with the Pledge of Allegiance. There was not invocation.

The Arts News was presented by Bryan Zocher who asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Kalamazoo Rotary Past President Tim Kilmartin.

Guests: Dave Rachowicz, Director of Kalamazoo City Parks and Recreation was the guest of Sandy Bliesener. We also had a guest from Kzoom.

The Foundation Minute highlighted the International Convention for Rotary International.

Happy Bucks: D Terry Williams presented a check in honor of Don Flesche's 90th birthday. In turn, Don also gave a big donation in honor of his birthday. Nancy Peterson was also celebrating her birthday and gave a happy buck. Bill Rose gave in honor of Earth Day and announced a rally taking place at Heritage Hall at WMU for Earth Day. Bruce Justin gave a happy 10 also celebrating Earth Day and the Sunrise Club's continuation of the clean-up of the Kalamazoo River Valley Trail. (Check the Rotary event calendar for date and time). Rob Peterson gave a happy buck celebrating the Euchre fundraisers reaping nearly \$1000 in support of Operation Ray. Jack Hopkins gave a buck for D Terry Williams show. Nick Boyd gave a buck for the matching done to support the Dominican Republic volunteer trip and his kid's birthdays. Joe Brogger gave to honor the NATS and the voice of the NATS – Don Flesche. Aaron Bradford gave for the Program Team. It was a BIG DAY for HAPPY BUCKS.

PROGRAM: Aaron Bradford introduced our speaker, Maggie Hesketh. Maggie hails from Great Britain and has been a middle school teacher for many years. She is a member of the Junior League and is an advocate for education equality. She is married and has two sons.

Maggie is the Executive Director of the **First Day Shoe Fund** which distributes new athletic shoes to kids who need them attending elementary schools in the Kalamazoo area. The program was started by Valerie Derghel in 2006 when she personally bought 160 pairs of shoes to be given to kids whom she noticed showing up at school with shoes that were frequently too big or too small. There were also kids who were showing up wearing flip flops in the snow season. Today the need is great.

First Day Shoe Fund is the only non-profit in the county that is addressing this particular need. In the first years, they only served children in kindergarten through

1st grade. Today they support preschool through all elementary grades. This year alone, they have distributed over 11,000 pairs of shoes. Shoes are new and are brand names and styles that any kid would wear without hesitation. There can be a stigma with wearing shoes that do not fit into today's fashion standards. Maggie is able to get shoes at a reduced cost with an average price of \$20

Kalamazoo Rotary provided a grant to First Day Shoe Fund to help cover the very expensive cost of shoes designed for kids who wear braces or orthotic's that prevent them wearing normal shoes.

Future Concerns:

Most shoes are produced outside the USA.

New Tariffs will increase cost.

Increased cost will reduce the number of shoes they will be able to purchase and distribute.

Maggie indicated that the work of distribution is done by volunteers trained to properly fit shoes. They have a discreet way to get shoes into the hands of kids. Distribution takes place twice a year – spring and summer.