

Rotary News, April 12, 2021, Submitted by Charles Ofstein

President Seth Weeldreyer called our meeting to order at approximately 12:15 PM. The National Anthem was played by Rotarian John Dillworth.

Our invocation was presented by Rotarian Steve Charnley. His invocation appropriately focused on spring. He compared the season's renewal to Rotary's commitment to "planting" leadership both at the club, district, and national levels.

Arts News was presented by Rotarian D. Terry Williams. Information about all the featured events, including the ongoing contemporary Japanese ceramics exhibition at the KIA, can be found at <https://www.kalamazooarts.org/>.

There were no visiting Rotarians or guests this week.

Announcements:

- President Seth identified all the Paul Harris Fellow Recipients in our club. We intend to honor these commitments to "service above self" at a future in-person gathering. But for now, all were honored with a virtual round of applause. The Rotarians honored during our meeting were as follows:

Paul Harris Fellow

- Jeff Murphy
- Sid Ellis
- Larry Deniston
- Martin Velten

Paul Harris Fellow +1

- Cindy Stewart
- Seth Weeldreyer

Paul Harris Fellow +2

- Lisa Anspaugh
- Rex Bell
- Richard Voorman

Paul Harris Fellow +3

- Bob Boughner
- Jeff Ross
- Bryan Zocher

Paul Harris Fellow +4

- Steve Kreider

Paul Harris Fellow +5

- Steve Duisterhof

Paul Harris Fellow +7

- Jim Cupper

Paul Harris Fellow Major Donor

- Jim Woodruff

Congratulations to all and thank you for your service!

Happy Bucks:

- Rotarian Ann Fergemann contributed a "felicitous fin" for a glimpse of normalcy this past week. She was able to travel to Chicago and see her son and his family. She had not been able to hug them for over one year.

- Rotarian Troy Thrash contributed a happy buck in honor of the disaster that was averted this past week. It turns out that an asteroid came within 16,000 miles from Earth! That is the closest that an asteroid will come for the next century.
- Past President Joe Brogger announced that the USTA National Tennis Tournament IS coming to Kalamazoo this year! Stay tuned for more details.
- Rotarian Jeff Ross was happy to announce that his daughter is coming back home from an extended trip to Scotland.

Presentation:

Rotarian Amy Remmert introduced our speakers, Laura Lam and Steve Brown from the Foundation for Excellence. The duo provided us with an update on the City of Kalamazoo's 2015 Master Plan ("Imagine Kalamazoo") and the Foundation for Excellence itself.

Laura and Steve described the mission and vision of Kalamazoo's Foundation for Excellence. The Foundation is funded by \$500M of private donations. Its primary goal is to bring the Imagine Kalamazoo master plan to fruition. The Foundation is structured as a unique 501(c) charity, with the City of Kalamazoo being the only beneficiary available to use the charitable funds.

The Foundation's specific priorities include supporting and stabilizing the city's budget, lowering city property taxes for all residents, and supporting investments in aspirational programs in the city. This last priority includes several sub goals, such as addressing poverty and youth development.

Laura and Steve described the successes of this unique public-private partnership across the priority areas. They are aware of the Foundation's unique position between philanthropy and government. By way of example, the 15-member board that oversees the charity is subject to the Open Meetings Act. That presents both challenges and opportunities.

Additional information about the Foundation for Excellence can be found at <https://www.kalamazoocity.org/ffe>. It was noted during the presentation that virtually every dollar that has been spent by the Foundation can be accounted for through a dashboard on the site. The dashboard drills down by various categories, all the way to the neighborhood level in terms of investment.

Thank you, Laura and Steve, for enlightening our club about all of the ways that the Foundation for Excellence is benefiting Kalamazoo residents!