

Rotary News – Monday, April 25, 2021

The virtual meeting was called to order by President Seth Weeldreyer. The national anthem was played by John Dillworth.

Invocation was given by Steve Charnley, reminding us of another of Rotary International's focuses—climate change.

Arts News was presented by D. Terry Williams, with several virtual and in person opportunities coming up this week.

Guests: Michael Porter was introduced by Kevin Garrison.

Announcements: President Seth reminded us of examples of things that could be funded around the world by a \$100 donation to the Rotary International Foundation.

Happy Bucks: Don Schmidt in honor of his grandson's achievements; Amy for the Satellite Club meeting his past week; Jim Cupper for Ed Foster forming the Polio Plus Society--\$100 donation by the end of the Rotary year to be a charter member; Annette for her father getting a triple bypass at Mayo Clinic, Denise Hartsough for an informational program coming up Thursday at 7pm presented by the League of Women Voters on the State's Redistricting Commission; and Aaron Winters for 60th birthdays – his and his wife's, who also retired this week.

Program: Greg Ayers introduced Von Washington, Jr., executive director of community relations for the Kalamazoo Promise. The Promise is celebrating their 15th anniversary. It was established by anonymous donors in 2006. Von previously served as Principal at Kalamazoo Central High School from 2007 to 2012, including the year that President Obama came to Kalamazoo for Central's graduation. He introduced staff member Sarah Klerk, Director of Workforce Strategy and Business Collaboration.

The Promise has added to their mission, stating that in order to succeed there is a need for business to invest in the new diverse generation of learners. Sarah's work involves connecting students' interests with the needs of business in order to address the workforce gap.

The Promise now has served 6200 students with a total of \$133 million to date. The KPS schools have shown an increase of 2500 students since the start. They do not run programs, but have several collaborations with other organizations and businesses, including high school pathways and apprenticeship programs with industry partners. There is also a new program with the Northside Association for Community Development which is a neighborhood based training program for CNA's, manufacturing and technology.

Contact Sarah or Von to see how you could be involved in making connections between students and businesses. sklerk@kalamazoopromise.com or vashington@kalamazoopromise.com