

Porta-Rota-Call

by Molly Chase

February 21, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by President Josh Goodlock.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The Four Way Test was recited.

Our invocation was by Ginny Dell.

Our greeter Bill Kaufman introduced our guests Bonnie Hudson, Sarah Gerstner, Elka King, David Dell, Brad DeBoer, Danny Stults and Bo Snyder.

President Josh Goodlock inducted our two new members, Sarah Gerstner and Joseph Winters.

Sarah has a heart for caregiving. She is in the healthcare industry so that satisfies that passion. She has been involved in home health care for over a decade. She is currently working at Visiting Angels, a non-medical hospice organization. She is also involved in animal welfare as well as the unhoused community. She lives in Schoolcraft with many dogs, cats and rescue chickens. Sarah is so excited to join rotary!

Joe is the Donor Relations and Grants Manager of the Kalamazoo Air Zoo. He and wife have a son named Fletcher. Professionally, he writes about airplanes all day which he loves. He is involved in many community engagement activities both personally and professionally.



Ginny Gell and Sarah Gerstner were our speakers. They are volunteers at the Kalamazoo Dream Center. Ginny is proud to volunteer for a charity that operates on donations only. They are currently working on grants to create revenue. There are no salaries paid, they are all volunteer.



Every Thursday, the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission brings a shower trailer onsite for clients. They turn their location into a great collaboration between the two organizations. The dream center is an organization solely run by volunteers who are serving clients with compassion and dignity. Adopt a Block in the Edison neighborhood started with cleanup, offering a meal, etc. That is how the dream center came to be back in 1998. The mission has always been giving a promise of hope by providing necessities to those in need within the Greater Kalamazoo area; sharing the love that Jesus Christ has for the least and the lost. They have no advertising budget, so all volunteers and clients hear about them through word of mouth.

Their vision: We desire to serve the community in which we operate. They were founded in 1998 and in May 2002 moved into 1122 Portage St. In 2007 they became a 501c3 non-profit. Their rent is quite high. Many churches have supported KDC over the years and continue to today.

Who they are today (2023): 95 family dinners, 170 housed families, 216 adults, 351 children, 20 pets, 41 unhoused adults and 22 sheltered unhoused adults.

Bonnie Hudson is their Executive Director. She does an amazing job getting into the community to get to know their clients. Their holiday dinners caused a traffic backup since so many families were able to be served.

Their core volunteer team is about 5 people. In January 2024, 962 individuals were helped, 330 food bags were given out. The majority of people coming do not have vehicles. Their clients bring their whole lives with them when they visit the dream center. They have a housed bag of food for those that have a stove. The unhoused bags have snacks that do not need cooking.

They currently offer their clients clothing, hygiene products, shelf stable food and pet food. They are happy to help people with their animals. Their clients are housed (roof over their head), unhoused (in a tent, in a park, etc.) and sheltered unhoused (couch surfing, in a car, in a shelter setting). Many families are living in their cars.

They are looking for volunteers for their Easter event taking place on Tuesday, March 26th and Wednesday, March 27th. They are looking for donations of cupcakes, cookies, toys, socks, hats, gloves, and personal needs items. They plan on putting 300 baskets together this year for kids.

They are in desperate need of volunteers on a daily basis. They do not want to have to close due to a lack of volunteers. They are also in need of accounting services and board members. Volunteers and board members come and go, but the need remains the same.

Their current list of needs includes peanut butter, cereal, rolling suitcases and duffel bags, individually wrapped toilet paper, cans of hearty soup with pull tab lids, bottled water, travel sized personal hygiene products, all men's clothing, boots of all sizes, underwear, long underwear, blankets, sleeping bags, tents and tarps, baby items and financial support. They are looking for a van as well to pick up donations. They are not picky about their clothing or toy donations. Beat up suitcases are welcomed as well.

Announcements:

- Our 2024 Community Service Award winner is Jose Santamaria!
- Signups were passed around for our blood drive on Thursday April 18th, the Zeigler Marathon on Sunday, May 5th and participating in the Memorial Day parade to present Rotary on Monday, May 27th.
- Reminder that we are still selling tickets for Miller Auditorium. We earn \$10 for every ticket sold if we sell at least 10 of them. You can buy your tickets early, but you must use our URL – millerauditorium.com/portage-rotary-club. My Fair Lady is the next show on March 10th at 6:00
- Board meeting at Michelle's this morning at 7:30. Anyone is welcome to attend
- June 5th will be our scholarship meeting
- Therapy dog update: We thought we had 18 months to raise funds for our therapy dog. Community High is the next school scheduled for a dog so we may now only have a few months to raise the needed funds.
- Dick Hewitt mentioned that we are in need of grant writing help for District 6360. We could be successful with both grants we are applying for if we submit our applications correctly. One of them would apply to the therapy dog costs.
- Kalamazoo Community Foundation has a lot of grant money available for animal needs such as the therapy dog.

Happy Birthday to Josh Goodlock. Happy 56th wedding anniversary to Helen Driver.

Happy bucks and fines collected by Sergeant at arms Wendall Pierce from Chad Schuring, Matt Semelbauer, Denny Stults, Art Roberts, Bo Snyder, Helen Driver, Brad DeBoer, Jose Santamaria, Roy Dangel, Josh Goodlock, and Ginny Dell.

50/50 drawing: Dick Hewitt won \$30.

Ace of spades drawing: Dan Cook didn't find the Ace.

Next program on February 28th will feature Lorraine Zorbo, Director at AdvisaCare Home Health & Tonya Johnson, RN at AdvisaCare Home Health presenting “Understanding and Accessing Home Health Care Services”

Meeting adjourned at 1:04 pm by President Josh Goodlock.

Notice: An Application for Membership in the Portage Rotary Club has been submitted by Bo Synder. He is sponsored by Jim Martin and his classification would be Healthcare. Any member wishing to comment on this Application should do so in writing, either by mail addressed to the Secretary at PO Box 55, Portage, MI 49081 or email addressed to the Secretary at wmujose@gmail.com . The comment period will close seven days after the second publication of this Notice.