

Rotary



Club of Washington

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

April 13, 2021

The Rotary Club of Washington met by Zoom

Present were: **Brad Montgomery, Tom Drewitz, Dave and Shirley Moore, Dave Hart, Dorothy and John Tecklenburg, Andy Goudy, Kathy Sabol, Angeline East, Mary Jo and Rich Podgurski, Ken Baker, John Quayle, Lars Lange, Joe Piszczor, and Susan Priest.** Guests are former Rotarian **Bruce McDowell** and our speaker, **Cherise Sandrock** from the Greater Washington County Food Bank.

Pre-Meeting

There was very little chit-chat until the **Podgurskis** joined us. As members may know, **Mary Jo** has been posting a different national day on Facebook every day. In fact, she even got a new national day onto the list: Each Person is a Person of Worth Day, which can be celebrated every year on her birthday, March 24. **Susan Priest** said that she had just learned of a day, DEAR day, Drop Everything and Read day. Mary Jo googled it and found it is not listed on any register of national days, but it is celebrated on April 12. It was created by an organization called Reading Rockets.

At this point we heard **Dorothy Tecklenburg** before her video started, and she seemed to be scolding us. In fact, she was dealing with their resident insole thief, Kyanite, who loves to get insoles out of shoes and chew on them. Dorothy displayed her latest prize. Kyanite was trying to hog **John Tecklenberg's** seat on the couch, but was evicted.

John Quayle joined us and Susan Priest asked him how many games he had umpired so far this year. His answer was that he had no games yesterday (Monday) because of the weather, but had games almost every day, and two this past Sunday. Today he will be at Purkey Field in Bethel.

On the subject of baseball, **Mary Jo** said that her grandson attended his first Pirate game of the season. He is very much a fan. He really enjoys the Pierogie Race. When he returned he told her that he **ate everything they had.**

Dorothy Tecklenburg told us that she had received a call about Pup Night tickets for the Pirates, and after making sure that this was not a scam call intended to get her credit information, she got tickets. The Pirates are only offering 50 Pup Night tickets, and the Tecklenburgs are planning to take both dogs.

Getting Started

At this point, **President Brad Montgomery** began the meeting, asking **Dave Hart** to give the invocation. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. The flag President Brad used was one in front of Marco's Pizza in Girard, Ohio. He chose that flag because it flies across the street from a Rite Aid pharmacy where he received his second shot.

Announcements

- Last Saturday saw several Rotarians and family members helping on the greenhouse project. They are making sure that the foundation is right. Once that is done, the greenhouse should go up quickly. In regard to the greenhouse, **Dave Moore** said that he has received the matching District funds in reimbursement, which helps the bank balance.
- At present it is planned to have an end of year celebration (in place of Presidents' Night) on Tuesday, June 29. **President Brad** would like to have it as we did last year, in a pavilion at the park with box lunches. If anyone would like to help plan this, get in touch with Brad.
- **Owen Standley** has had to cut short his Polio fundraiser, walking the whole of the Appalachian Trail. He has managed to raise about \$41,000 so far, and the web site is still open for donations. **Susan Priest** said that Owen had shared on the net that he discovered that he needs human contact. He became physically ill as a result of his social isolation.
- **President Brad** asked **Angeline East** to inform the club of options for clean-up. The city has scheduled a community-wide clean-up day for April 24, and the club is due for spring clean-up at the Jessop exit. How did people feel about this? **Joe Piszczor** said that another group has also been working on the Jessop exit area, and they just did so. While that area is always in need of work, he said that the city has said that they could use help both in handing out bags at Wash High, and in the Main Street area. The board will make the final decision, but several seemed to lean toward the Main Street option.
- **Rich Podgurski** brought up that the club has been hiring someone every year to spruce up the Patriots' Pavilion on Main Street. If the club wants to do this again this year, he will give contact info to President Brad.
- The club has received an invitation from **Stephanie Urchick** and the McMurray club. They meet once a month for a fellowship

walk in the North Strabane part near the township building. They meet at 9AM and chat together outside for about half an hour, then walk for another half hour. This Saturday, April 17, is the date for April. **President Brad** plans to attend and hopes others might want to do so as well.

- **Dave Moore** said that he has heard from **Bob Wicker** that quarterly statements will soon be our mailboxes.

Program: Greater Washington County Food Bank

President Brad then asked **Susan Priest** to introduce the speaker, and she passed the request to **Ken Baker**, who arranged the date. Ken then introduces **Cherise Sandroek**, Donor Relations Coordinator for the Greater Washington County Food Bank (hereafter the Food Bank), which is working on a transition plan with the Allegheny Food Bank, doing all deliveries until the end of June. He cited the goal of the Food Bank: ♦No one goes to bed hungry.♦

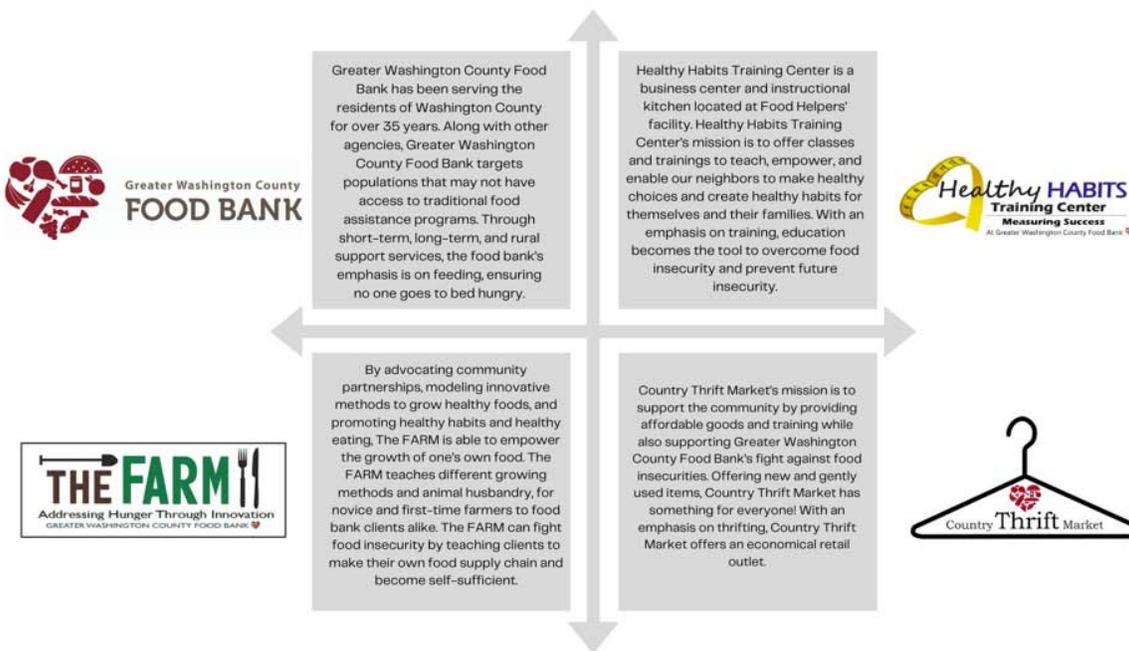
Cherise began by thanking everyone here, especially Ken Baker. The Food Bank relies on the whole community which provides volunteers and donations. They could not do what they do without the community.

Ordinarily the Food Bank serves about 4000 families a month, in the peak of Covid they served over 5000. Over thirty percent who receive aid are under 18, and an additional twenty percent or more are seniors. Last year the spent over two million dollars to meet these needs.

They serve 10 community food banks and 20 high rises. Because of Covid, they had to change their model, and they began the Truck to Trunk program.



But the Food Bank is more than just distributing food. There are other things they do to lessen food insecurity. The slide below gives an overview of the four prongs of service for the Food Bank.



In regard to the Food Bank programs, now that the 10 community food banks will be supplied by the Allegheny Food Bank, they intend to add additional pantries which the Washington County Food Bank will supply. They are targeting more rural areas and have budgeted four sites in Eighty-Four, Avella, Prosperity, and Beallsville. They have established relationship with local farmers, and intend to buy all fresh items locally.

During Covid, the Healthy Habits program had to be put on hiatus because of restrictions on in-person gatherings. When they can resume, these are the programs they have done in the past and intend to do in the future.

In regard to the Farm, they have recently added 544 solar panels. They spend over \$25,000 per year on electricity. They hope to reduce this to zero, which will mean more money going to their primary mission.



The hydroponics program is producing lettuce, and they have egg production from their hens. They plan to expand to lavender and other flowers for sale.

They are also concerned with local farms, where they try to purchase fresh foods for their users. At present the average age of farmers is 68, and not all schools are training young people for a future in agriculture. They are instituting an Incubator Farm program.

Incubator Farm

What Support is Offered?

We will provide hands on education and training in the following fields:

- Crop farming practices, both in the fields and hydroponically
- Animal Husbandry
- Business development including planning, finance, and marketing strategies
- Access to land to grow on incubator sites or through local land owners
- Equipment, tools, greenhouse space, and hydroponic space.
- Connections with local networks including the USDA and Farm Service Agency and local business partnerships
- Access to sell their products at our Farmer's Market

They continue to operate the Thrift Shop, and sell their produce and eggs there. They are planning a Spring Cleanup day on April 22, and any Rotarian who attends can ask for Cherise and she will give you a guided-tour.

She said that many people think that all their programs are limited to people who meet the financial requirements for food distribution. This is not true. The thrift shop and programs, when they become available again, are open to all.

At this point she opened for questions.

- **Dave Hart** asked what were the financial criteria to receive food.
 - **Cherise:** The family or person must have an income less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Limit, but She was not

- exactly sure of the exact numbers. For a single person it is a bit above \$1,500/mo.
- For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$4,540 for each additional person.
- If you multiply the limit by 130%, you can see the requirement a family must meet.
- In any case, they were lifted for Covid. Last April they saw 700 new families in one week.
- **Dorothy Tecklenburg** asked about whether people in rural areas who unused land could offer it in some way for use in farming.
 - **Cherise:** Yes, that would a great way to ease food insecurity and help young people get started in farming using the Food Bank's farm incubator program. There are tax credits for people who lease land for agricultural purposes.
- **Mary Jo Podgurski** spoke about how the Teen Center teaches about cooking and growing food. She says that if one has a 2x3 area, one can plant tomatoes and garlic. These teens usually have no models of home gardening.
 - **Cherise:** The Food Bank is looking for ways to encourage K-12 agricultural training. She said that Mon Valley system has a good agricultural Vo-Tech program.
- **Dave Hart** asked if the stimulus has eased pressure on the Food Bank.
 - **Cherise:** They are seeing a decline from the height of Covid, thanks also to the increase in food stamp (SNAP) funding.
- **John Tecklenburg** asked about the locations of the 10 pantries.
 - **Cherise:** Coal Center, Claysville, Charleroi, Monongahela, Canonsburg, McDonald, Burgettstown, Meadowdale (Washington Fair Grounds), and the Lemoyne Center and Community Circle Food Pantry in Washington. Check the web site for exact locations and days of distribution.
- **Rich Podgurski** asked how they were managing with the loss of \$250,000 in funding when the commissioners gave the money to Allegheny County to use in distribution to Washington County.
 - **Cherise:** That money covered about 14% of the budget. Their main funding comes from grants and donations.
- **Dave Hart** asked for her reaction on the transfer of funds.
 - **Cherise:** There are pluses and minuses. Plus: Allegheny is good at what they do, and Washington has partnered with them before. Allegheny supervises 11 other counties and has experience. Minus: The Food Bank would prefer to do it themselves. They feel that they are good at what they do.
- **Dorothy Tecklenburg** asked if the Food Bank would be open to a reverse decision in the future.
 - **Cherise:** Of course. They feel it is important to buy locally and increase local food production.
- **Mary Jo Podgurski** commented that the children she serves don't take for granted things which her children did, and her grandchildren do. She spoke of a 15-year-old who was in tears. Her father had entered the workforce, and for the first time she could pick off the shelves in the grocery store whatever she wanted. Mary Jo talked about her children and grandchildren who always had a chance to have ice cream, or expensive fruits such as watermelon.
 - **Cherise:** When the Food Bank had programs they tried to buy treats for kids, such as Combos and Girl Scout cookies.
- **President Brad** asked if clients disliked the prepacked boxes. Were there things they didn't want?
 - **Cherise:** In fact, people were grateful for the convenience of boxes. Sometimes something was not what they wanted, but most gave positive feedback. In packages for seniors they included recipes for items which were included. She said that sometimes when people get their food, they give one or two dollars to help the Food Bank.

President Brad thanked Cherise for a very informative program.

The meeting ended with the Four Way Test, led by President Brad.

Speakers

April 20th
Drew Manko
Ross Farm Update

April 27th
Brad Montgomery
Club Assembly

May 4th
Rea Andrew Redd
Abandoned Tracks: The Underground
Railroad in Washington County

May 11th
Betsy West
Main Street Farmers Market

Events

No Events found

Club Leaders

[David Bradley Montgomery](#)
President

[Brandi B. Miller](#)
President -Elect

[John P. Hopper](#)
Vice President
Vocational Service Chair

[Lars Lange](#)
Secretary

[Susan E. Priest](#)
Assistant Secretary

[Robert K. Wicker](#)
Assistant Treasurer

[David W. Moore](#)
Treasurer

[David A. Hart](#)
Rotary Foundation Chair

[William J. Mesler](#)
Membership Chair

[Diane L. Ambrose](#)
Club Service Chair

[Thomas C. Drewitz](#)
Webworker

[Angeline Anyango East](#)
Community Service Chair

[Dorothy Curley Tecklenburg](#)
International Service Chair

[Antonio Zuloaga](#)
Assistant Governor

Club Meeting

Washington
Meets at W & J College, The Commons

60 S. Lincoln St.
Washington, PA 15301
Time: Tuesday at 12:00 PM