

The History Bay Village Kiwanis Club

by Jim Potter November 9,2017

Kiwanis International was founded in Detroit in 1915 by two businessmen, with the objective of trading within the club. There was to be only one grocer, lawyer, dentist, shoe maker, etc. The name of the organization was Supreme Lodge Benevolent Order of Brothers. They changed the name in 1917 to Kiwanis, which was taken from an Indian word meaning We Trade. The motto was changed in 1945 to We Build and now the mission today is Serving the Children of the World.

From this one club, the organization has grown to 7300 clubs with 600,000 members in 80 countries.

The second Kiwanis Club was formed in Downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

The First offshore club was in Windsor, Canada and the first Club in Mexico was Tijuana.

The Bay Village Kiwanis Club was formed on January 3, 1950 with the sponsorship of the Rocky River Kiwanis Club. There were 33 Charter members, including three doctors and one Pastor.

The Charter Night was held on February 28th, 1950 at the Westlake Hotel. There were 240 guests for the Charter Night Program. The first president was Harley McNeal, an attorney for RTA.

Kiwanian Bill Walsh started our local community involvement in 1952 with the Stay in Bay, a program to encourage residents to stay at home during the national gas shortage. The name became Bay Days. Tony Dostal became Chairman in 1976 and has been Chairman for 41 years. In the early days of the program, the Kiwanis members went door to door in the city asking for donations for the Fourth of July Fireworks. Later the city paid for the fireworks, which now is funded by civic donations.

We began selling Christmas Trees in 2004, stepping in when the Bay Jaycees ceased operations.

Like Kiwanis Clubs worldwide, we have one or two Pancake Breakfasts a year. We also sold coloring books, pictures of kids on a pony.

The Bay Village Kiwanis Club is part of the 14th Ohio Division made up of nine Kiwanis clubs. There are 26 Districts on Ohio. Each District is headed up by a Lt. Governor, who is elected annually by the 9 clubs.

The Bay Club began meeting at St. Barnabas Church in 1950 and later moved to Bay Presbyterian and now meets at Bay Methodist Church.

The Bay Club has been benefactors to many groups in the city. Each year the club raises about \$25,000.00 to be used in Bay Village projects. We donate annually to the Community Services Caring and Sharing program. This project helps families going through a temporary bad time.

The Bay Kiwanians have been long time supporters of the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center and made a substantial contribution to the planetarium renovation. We have also done painting and electrical work to the site.

We did a refurbishing and painting to the Fuller house a part of the Bay Arts community.

We were the first group to support the Village Project, which cooks meals for local families affected by cancer. We also donated an industrial strength dishwasher and reusable food containers for the delivery of the meals. They currently are serving meals to families each week.

We have been involved in the upgrading programs at the High school, most recently with the new garden located on campus.

Our Bay Village Kiwanis Foundation provided funds to complete the playground improvement at Normandy School and we recently helped repaint some of the playground equipment.

Speaking of the Kiwanis Foundation: This is a separate function of the Club with separate officers that provides funds to projects within Bay that the club refers to refer to the Foundation. It is an out-growth of a fund founded years ago as the Bay Youth Foundation. It derives funds from donations and fund transfers from the club.

Other community projects conducted by the Kiwanis Club include:

* Donating and installing mailboxes for each resident of the Knickerbocker Apartments. We also donated a three-wheel bicycle for use by the residents.

*We donated to the city Fire Department a compass to help firemen exit a smoke-filled area and a phone camera to aid and identify injuries of patients prior to their transportation to the hospital. We recently donated two special life jackets used to assist fire rescue staff during a water rescue.

* We donated two magazine racks to the Police Department for use in their lobby to provide valuable community safety information.

* Our outreach programs included financial aid to the Gathering Place and Providence House, both facilities serving the needs of Special Families.

The Gathering Place provides emotional, spiritual and social support to individuals and families affected by any form of cancer.

The Providence House provides a crisis nursery committed to child abuse prevention and family preservation.

- We installed American flags on the homes of Senior Citizens and presented two flags to the Police Department.
- Huntington Playhouse benefited from the club with money to repair water damage from a broken pipe. We also donated two large flower pots for their patio.
- There were many other donations and projects, both large and small, made to the many populations that call Bay Village home.

The Bay Club has joined with Kiwanis Clubs from around the World to combat population killing diseases. A few years ago, Kiwanis International joined with UNICEF in raising Eighty Million Dollars to introduce Iodine into table salt. This reduced thyroid disease, which causes goiters and mental deficiency. Our goal was met and the disease has now been reduced substantially.

Our current International project is The Eliminate Project. Its goal is to eliminate Maternal Neo-Natal disease. Kiwanis International is committed to raise 110 million dollars to save 55 million mothers and children from the effects of this disease.

This is a disease that a mother passes on to her newborn. And it can be eliminated with three vaccinations at a cost of less than two dollars. Thirty countries were targeted for the project along with UNICEF and to date 16 countries have had success through the project.

It is not all work. The club has an annual competition with the Westlake Kiwanis Club, where the winner keeps the Gold Plate Railroad Spike until the next year. The winner is determined by which club turns out the greatest percentage of their members to a special meeting. After the tally of members, each club President tells of the projects his club has had the previous year.

Kiwanis at their 1987 International Convention in Tokyo voted to allow women to become members. Today, 26 % of Kiwanis members are women. 2015 saw the election of the first woman at Kiwanis International President Sue Peterson.

In 2004 the club began a Sister Club relationship with the East York, Toronto, Kiwanis Club. During that year groups from each club visited each other's city and attended their meeting or a Major League baseball game. The program only lasted a couple of years but could be reestablished if there was interest.

We have had clam bakes, cook outs, theatre parties, a bus trip to visit a lama farm and attended professional baseball games.

The Bay Kiwanis Club is probably best known for its sponsorship of the Annual Academic Achievement Night at Bay High School. On that night each student with a grade point average of 3.6 or higher is introduced and receives a Certificate of Accomplishment at the event. It is also when Scholarships are awarded to Graduating Seniors. In addition to the scholarships, Kiwanis awards money to students for the highest grades in ten separate fields of study at the school.

Kiwanis is committed to investing in the next generation of community leaders. For 37 years we have sponsored a Key Club at the Bay High School and Builders Clubs at Bay Middle and St. Raphael School. We have just recently begun a K Kids Club at Westerly Elementary School

In summary, Kiwanis is a substantial contributor to the Quality of Life in Bay Village.

If you feel that you would like to know more about Kiwanis or are interested in membership please see Patrick Mosier.