Rotary Club of Kalamazoo

Date: 03/31/25
Editarian: Aaron Bradford

Today's meeting was called to order by President Taylor Huie at 12:10 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance: Taylor Huie led us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance

Opening Reflection: President Taylor Huie
- Discussed Rotary's commitment to fostering more just, open, and welcoming communities. Recognizing the challenges ahead, President Taylor emphasized the importance of leveraging Rotary's strength in bringing people together to support efforts toward peace and justice. The club plans to communicate these efforts through various media platforms, including its website, and invited questions and concerns from the audience to encourage further engagement.

Arts News By: D. Terry Williams presented the latest arts news.
- The jukebox show, "A Jukebox for the Algonquin," is described as a delightful and moving production.
- Other events include a Motown musical, "Dream Girls," and a virtual music presentation featuring "Rhapsody in Blue."
- Visit the Arts Council website at kalamazooarts.com for a full list of activities.

Guests:
- Bindi Rajasegaran, Rotary Malaysia and Today's Speaker, guest of Jim Cupper
- Chris Cupper, guest of Jim Cupper
- Stanley Steppes, Senior Brand & Content Marketing Officer Brand at Kalamazoo Community Foundation, guest of Lucinda Stinson
- Rachel Will, Office Manager at Primerica, guest of Nick Boyd
- Chang Kidd Sun (CK), Manager External Partnerships at WMU, guest of Taylor Huie

Visiting Rotarians:
- Ed Schaadt, Gul Lake Area Rotary Club

Happy Bucks:
- Amy Remmert: Jack Hopkins donation of $1,000 match for funds given to Dominican Republic trip
- Sandy Bliesener: River Cleanup sign up and volunteer.
- Rick Briscoe: Recognize Nicks good works and first to give in response to Jack's match.
- Nick Boyd: Thank you for the bottles for Dominican Trip, thanks for help and support
- Jeremy Heavey: 16 year old birthday, trip with wife to Florida
- Marvinetta Woodley-Penn: Podcast participation

- Thomas Hatfield: WMU Broncos Hockey Frozen Four
- Amy Remmert: Finn, for people donating cans

Announcements:
- Rotary for Reading has 9 spots open
- River Clean-up coming up on May 17th

Speaker: Bindi Rajasegaran on Peace Building and Youth Empowerment
- Introduction of Speaker by Jim Cupper
  - Bindi's background and accomplishments:
    - District Governor for Rotary District 3300 in Malaysia since 1997.
    - Appointed Rotary International's Public Image Chair for 2025-2027.
    - Founder of the National Coalition for Mental Wellbeing in Malaysia.
    - Efforts to decriminalize suicide in Malaysia.
    - Advocate for mental health and women's empowerment.
    - Received multiple honors, including the prestigious People Action Champion of Impact Award in 2024.
- Personal Story
  - Bindi shares her family's escape during the 1947 India-Pakistan partition:
    - Her mother, as a young girl, escaped with her family in the dead of night to India for safety.
    - Bindi reflects on how the world still faces challenges related to war and refugees today.
    - Questions the progress made in creating peaceful, safe environments for refugees.
- Global Peace Situation
  - Overview of the world's declining peacefulness:
    - 95 million people displaced by violent conflict.
    - The global youth population (aged 15-24) as the largest generation in history, now 1.2 billion, with increasing decision-making powers.
    - Current number of conflicts at the highest since WWII.
  - Focus on ASEAN (Southeast Asia) region:
    - Countries like Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and others rated as relatively peaceful.
    - Challenges faced by Myanmar and other nations.
- The Connection Between Peace and the Environment
  - Impact of climate change on peace:
    - Climate change-induced displacement (e.g., Bangladesh, Myanmar).
    - Shared environmental challenges in ASEAN, such as pollution and haze from neighboring countries.
  - The importance of addressing ecological issues for sustainable peace.
- ASEAN Rotary Network and Youth Empowerment
  - Formation of the ASEAN Rotary Network in 2021:
    - Collaboration among 42,000 Rotarians from 1,400 Rotary clubs in ASEAN.
    - Focus on addressing climate change, mental health, and peace building.

- o Youth-focused programs:
  - Creating youth peace builders for future leadership roles.
  - The importance of teaching peace building at a young age to foster long-term, sustainable peace.
- Peace Building Program for Youth
  - o Creation of a Youth Builders Program in collaboration with universities in the ASEAN region.
  - o Focus areas of the program:
    - Conflict prevention, empowerment, resilience against extremism, and more.
    - Involvement of young people between 18-29 years across ASEAN.
  - o The goal: Equip youth with skills to prevent conflicts and contribute to peaceful societies.
- Challenges and Solutions in Peace Building
  - o Overcoming the challenge of convincing youth to prioritize peace building:
    - Use of Rotary networks and sponsored programs to engage youth.
    - Emphasis on practical peace-building skills that benefit young people in their careers and communities.
  - o Recognition for participants:
    - Youth ambassadors in peace building.
- The Role of Education in Peace Building
  - o Program syllabus designed in collaboration with Mediators Beyond Borders and the Institute of Economics and Peace.
  - o Key topics covered:
    - Sustainable peace, social empowerment, conflict mediation, and mental well-being.
    - The goal of building a mindset of positive peace among youth, even if they pursue careers outside peace building.
- Q&A and Discussion
  - o Bindi answers questions about the program's effectiveness, challenges in scaling, and its connection to climate change and peace building.
  - o Emphasis on the holistic approach to peace building that addresses both environmental and social factors.
- Closing Remarks
  - o Acknowledges the importance of youth involvement in peace-building efforts.
  - o Urges the audience to support and engage with peace-building initiatives at the local and global levels.

Next week's program on April 7 with speaker Maggie Hesketh, Executive Director, First Day Shoe Fund,