

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN - NARRATIVE 2024 WOMAN'S CLUB OF LACEY, INC

Grand Initiative Children's Books Donated

Bridge of Books Foundation is an organization that provides an ongoing source of books to underserved children in NJ. This is the third year Woman's Club of Lacey has participated in this worthwhile book drive. Members bring new or gently used books to the general meeting in November and December. Books were also collected from one of Lacey Township elementary schools that were discarding books or series of books no longer being used. After all the books are collected, the group at the chairperson's house meets to sort and organize the books by age or grade. Over 1,100 books were then delivered to Bridge of Books headquarters in Tinton Falls picked up by teachers and librarians of underserved schools.

Pinwheel Garden

In April in honor of child abuse awareness month, members planted a pinwheel garden in front of the Ocean County Library Lacey Branch for all to see. This is a highly visible sight and frequently visited sight in Lacey.

Operation Smile

The members of the Health and Wellness Department of the Woman's Club of Lacey start collecting items at for Operation Smile at the January general meeting and continued through April. Operation Smile works hand-in-hand with communities worldwide to offering free, life-changing cleft surgeries. After receiving surgery, each child receives a Smile Bag filled with small personal care items including shampoo, a comb, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush and a wash cloth as well as toys, stickers and a mirror to see their new smile. This department teamed up with the Lacey Township High School cheerleaders and AYF (youth football and cheer) to supply over 100 sets of coloring books and crayons for the smile bags. Members also teamed up with the Arts Creative Department to sew Smile Bags to hold the collected items. Members sorted, counted, priced and boxed all donated items for Operation Smile. All necessary paperwork was filled out for pick up.

Autism Awareness Support

The Woman's Club of Lacey has assisted autistic children in the township by funding a Sensory Decompression Room for autistic children in the school district. Each month a fifty-fifty raffle is held at the general meetings. A table is set up and raffle tickets are sold. This year, Joe Bond, Supervisor of Special Services in Lacey Twp. School District accepted a check for \$1,200 from the Woman's Club of Lacey to create a sensory decompression room for students within the autistic spectrum at the Mill Pond Elementary School. This is the second Lacey Township school the Woman's Club of Lacey has supported with a room for autistic children.

Guest Speakers

Speakers from The Arc of Ocean County, the New Jersey Angels, and the New Jersey Children's Alliance were invited to speak to the members of the Woman's Club of Lacey during 2024. Each speaker was well received by the members.