

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN - NARRATIVE 2025 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 fourth 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. This fall in Lacey, a remarkable collaboration unfolded between the dedicated members of the Woman's Club of Lacey and the enthusiastic participants from Lacey Elks Lodge 2518. Together, they collected of an astounding 1,538 of used children's book for the Bridge of Books Foundation. After all the books are collected, the group at the chairperson's house meets to sort and organize the books by age or grade. The books were then delivered to Bridge of Books headquarters in Tinton Falls to be distributed to teachers and librarians at underserved schools.

Pinwheel Garden

In April in honor of Child Abuse Awareness Month, the Club funded 50 brand new pinwheels and 2 new signs directly from Prevent Child Abuse- New Jersey. Our members planted the pinwheel garden in front of the Lacey Township Municipal Building for all to see. This is a highly visible sight on Lacey Road in Forked River. In addition, we received a Proclamation in April declaring April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. The proclamation was read at the Township meeting and a dozen members were present at this ceremony and for pictures with the township mayor. At our April general meeting members wore blue in support of this event.

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 we were able to visit the new Sensory Decompression Room at the Mill Pond School. Mill Pond Elementary is for Pre-School and Kindergarten school age children. The room is near completion and being used for our autistic children at Mill Pond. We presented them with a check for \$1,500.00 to complete this room and for further upcoming projects.

High School Drama Club

Each year in March, the Woman's Club of Lacey invites the Lacey Township High School Drama Club to preview the school play at the Club's Birthday Party celebration. This year the show was "The Addam's Family." Twenty high school performers sang and danced, much to the club members' delight. It is a wonderful opportunity for the students to practice and for members to interact with young people. The Woman's Club makes an annual donation of \$100 to the school to defray some of their expenses.

Hobby Fair benefiting Special State Project

At the Woman's Club November general meeting, representatives from the NJ Children's Alliance were invited to speak to the membership about work their organization does. Our members were supportive of this effort and one member in particular, Cathy Katsianis, especially

so. She proposed an idea of hosting a hobby fair to raise funds to donate to this worthy cause. Cathy organized a committee and quickly sprang into action. In a short time, she solicited 33 vendors and hobbyists to participate in the hobby fair on March 30, 2025, at the Charles A. Smith Community Center in Forked River. Each vendor or hobbyist was asked to provide a basket or item for raffle. She was able to solicit donations for the ticket and signage printing. In kind donations amounted to \$750. An area hobby shop donated \$900 in cash. Members supplied baked goods for sale to guests. Due to her efforts the Club was able to make a \$2,000 donation to the NJ Children's Alliance. Since many hobbyists and vendors expressed a desire to participate again, this event may be hosted again in the future.