



Acknowledging Acts of Kindness Club Newsletter

January 2022

First of all, a Happy New Year to everyone! We are entering our 3rd year as a club and plan on this being the best year yet! Our next meeting is on Thursday, January 13th at 12:30 at the Bacall Recreation Center. Our speaker will be LaRae Donnelon who will be telling us about some of the wonderful things that have been done for the SoZo Kids in the Ocala Forest.

We also have plenty of exciting news items to share and some time for a general discussion of possibilities for moving forward in the future. Start your year off right and join us. Your day will be better for it.

Our December Meeting

Our speakers in December were Dick Boyden and Joan Bender who formed a chapter of **Our Moment Café** in The Villages. This is a monthly café program which provides a safe and supportive place for caregivers and the ones they care for with early-stage memory loss, Alzheimer's Disease, and dementia to socialize and have fun. Their kind acts are helping so many Villagers deal with these difficult life situations.



Our December AAOK

Con Nguyen

In December we had the pleasure of honoring Con Nguyen who was the last pilot to escape after the fall of Viet Nam. He was a South Vietnamese helicopter pilot who was a part of the **King Bees** that were responsible for saving many stranded and wounded soldiers during the war. In his last flight out, he carried out the heroic act of saving his family and 80 women and children from a remote island and landing them on the USS Okinawa under extremely difficult conditions.

The venue for this event was Seabreeze Recreation Center at the monthly meeting of the Aviators Club. Our thanks to Tweet Coleman for helping to orchestrate the event. It was an honor to acknowledge Con for his kind, brave act as well as his wife, Linda. They currently reside in the Village of Marsh Bend.

Thanks to Jean Collier, Kim Young, Stan Misiasek, and Amy and Tony Donato for their help on this event.



We have two tentative acknowledgement events in the offing for this year but need your help to recommend new possibilities. We invite you to be a **Kindness Whistle Blower** if you have someone in mind who deserves one of our monthly acknowledgments. Attached is a form you can use to make a recommendation, or you can always download it from our website, aaokclub.org. They will also be available at our meeting.

Our monthly Acknowledgement Events are one of the most exciting things we do. We have a lot of fun doing these and we are always looking for people to be involved. **Any member can be a part of these events.** Our Candidate Selection and Event Coordination Focus Group reviews the recommendations and plans the

events. We pride ourselves on making these events very creative, fun, and full of surprise. They take little time and are very rewarding.

December Events

December was a busy month with some very exciting events. Our thanks to those who participated, and my hope is that more of you will volunteer for upcoming events. We are really on a role now!

➤ Christmas Parade

On Saturday, December 11th our club marched in the annual Villages Christmas Parade at the Polo Field. This is one of the year's best events and this is the second time we have participated (it was cancelled last year). We had 11 members with 4 carts and handed out an estimated 1500 cards and over 50 Kindness Rocks (compliments of Shirley Knight and Jan Masterson). We put some smiles on the faces of a lot of kids (young and old). This will definitely be an annual affair for us. All those who were a part of this event had a great time!





➤ **Wreaths Across America**

On Memorial Day we participated in the flag ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell and it was an incredibly moving experience. On December 18th we had a small group play a part in [Wreaths Across America](#) at this site. This was also a wonderful experience! In the future we will make both events a part of our club activities.



➤ **Project SOS (Support Our Soldiers)**

A few months ago, Gary Kadow spoke to our group about Project SOS and their wonderful work supporting soldiers and their families living in the Ocala Forest. We were honored to contribute to this effort and, in December, Jen and Terry Smith, Margaret and Bob Wolfe, and Jean and I

bought gifts for several children (Some of these children get no gifts at all for Christmas). We also attended the annual Christmas party in Ocala. I'm hoping that we can have this as another of our annual events with perhaps a stronger participation in coming years. The work that Gary does is truly amazing!



February Fundraiser

We are planning a fundraiser on February 18th, 2022 at 6 pm at the Rohan Recreation Center. It will be a "Not Your Grandma's Bingo" with Ric Mitchell and should be a real blast. Save the date and we will let you know more about this at the meeting. The funds we raise will all go towards more events as well as donations to other caring groups in The Villages.

Education Focus Group

We have an Educational Focus Group to collaborate with local schools to encourage students and staff to use our process of acknowledging acts of kindness. This group, under the leadership of Margaret Wolfe, has been doing an outstanding job during a relatively difficult period. **Just think of the possible impact on our future in helping kids learn how to live lives of kindness!**

They have distributed 3500 cards to schools in Lake Panasoffkee, Webster, South Sumter, Fruitland Park, and Lady Lake. They are also working on Villages Charter, Bushnell, and Wildwood schools. Margaret will update us on this effort at our upcoming meeting.

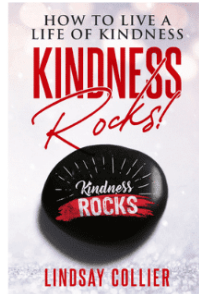
The Lady Lake Elementary School has a particularly innovative use of our Kindness Cards which Margaret will review at our meeting. It's a chance for some of you to get involved in a very exciting monthly activity at the school. I had the pleasure of attending on of these and it was a wonderful experience!

Kindness Rocks! book

Several people have asked me if I can make my book, **Kindness Rocks! How To Live a Life of Kindness**, available for sale at the meeting. To be honest, I am somewhat sensitive about this because it's a bit of a conflict, being President. That said, I will have some available for just \$10 (about ½ of what Amazon would charge) at our next meeting. **For those who buy the book and leave a review on Amazon I will give back \$5 to our club.**

Kindness Is the New Cool!

This new book will give you all you need to live a life of kindness!



It's been said that 'Kind' is the new cool. The main thrust of this book is to help you to raise your own level of kindness and promote a culture of kindness wherever you go. This book takes a unique look at the nature, characteristics, and benefits of kindness. Most importantly, it details dozens of ways that you can use to lead a life of kindness. These techniques will help you lead a more fulfilling, happier life, and also to become a prophet of kindness with all those you impact. You will also have fun along the way and experience some wonderful stories of kindness.

Club Shirts, Hats, Nametags, and More

Custom Apparel in the Publix Plaza on 466 has a catalog of products with our club logo. This includes men's and women's Tee and polo shirts, full zipper fleeces, nametags, masks, totes, and hats. And the prices are very reasonable. Their catalogue can be seen at [aokclub merchandise](#) and you can order on line if desired. Visit them today and checkout their great selections so you can show our AOK Club colors.

Updating Membership

If you are getting this newsletter you are on our membership list. There are a good number of folks on this list that we have not heard from at all. **If you no longer want to be listed as a member please let us know.** We understand how busy so many of you are – retirement can be a lot of work.

Social Events

From time to time we like to have some social events for the purpose of getting to know one another and just having fun. In the past we have had Himalayan golf, gatherings at restaurants, etc. If you have any ideas for future social events, please let us know.

Kindness Certificates

Our Certificates of Kindness are another very easy way we use to acknowledge acts of kindness. If you have someone you know who has shown exceptional kindness you can use this to acknowledge them. We will provide you with a copy complete with the recipient's name. If you would like to do this let me know (lindsaycollier@comcast.net) and I will work with you to make it happen.



Website and Facebook Sites

We have a terrific website (AAOKClub.org) and we now have a new Website Advisor, Jan Masterson. Who will be helping to keep it updated. Visit this often to see the latest events and news. Our blog is a way of sharing interesting articles on kindness, and **we invite you all to contribute to this**. The latest blogs include articles from two of our members and a story of kindness that will bring tears to your eyes. If you have something you would like to share sent it to aaokclub@gmail.com and we will make sure it is added (with your name of course). While you are on the site check out the latest blogs and enjoy.

We also have a Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/AcknowledgingActsOfKindness>

and a Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2392926004127163>

Check them out, give a big like, post some good stuff, and share it with as many as you can! You will find a lot of interesting examples of kindness on these sites.

See you on January 13h!

Stay Healthy, Happy and Kind!

Lindsay Collier, President, Lindsaycollier@comcast.net

