



Acknowledging Acts of Kindness Club Newsletter

June 2021

Our May meeting was a huge success! We were able to have our meeting in the Key Largo Room again which worked well for us. We had about 40 people to include some guests and 6 new members! We also had the pleasure of hearing from Gary Kadow about his work with **Save Our Soldiers (SOS)**. Gary shared some amazing stories and pictures of Veterans and their families living in the forest and all the wonderful things they are doing to help them including scholarships for their children. We ended up donating the results of our happy/sad opener to help in his cause.



Our next meeting is on June 10th in the Key Largo Room at the Bacall Recreation Center at 12:30. Masks are optional at this point since most of us have had our vaccines, so do what feels comfortable to you. We expect a pretty good crowd to include some new people and have a lot of interesting things to cover. **Bring some \$1 bills for our happy/sad opener.**

Our VP, John Maiorino, will be running the meeting since I will be speaking to a local ladies group on kindness. He will also be sharing some stories of kindness. Villages social groups are beginning to meet again and we hope to begin sharing our story with many of them.

Welcome New Members

A warm welcome to our new members:

Sandy Bartkowski (Tall Trees)

Lynn Godfray-Penman (Charlotte)

Marie Mellon (Collier)

Ella Moore (Mallory)

Deanne and Richard Mincer (Calumet Grove)

Shirley Weaver (Buttonwood)

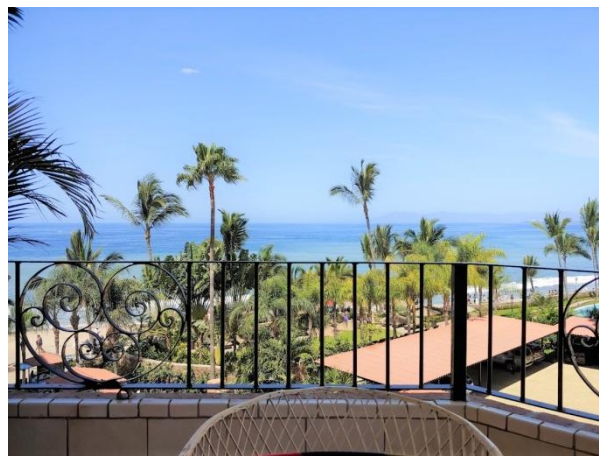
Carol Haimes (Pennecamp)

Patti Mannino (Hemingway)

Jane Clark

Puerto Valletta Condo Raffle

This is a call for help! Our member, Kathie Dieter, has donated a week at their condo in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and we are selling raffle tickets for \$20. We are limiting this to 100 tickets making the odds very good for those participating. How can you help? Of course one way is to purchase a ticket. **A flier is attached and we are asking you share this with as many friends and neighbors as you can.** This is available to anyone! Thanks for your help. Tickets will be available prior to the drawing at the meeting.



Flags for Veterans

On May 30th six of our members participated in the flag ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell. There are over 160,000 veterans at this absolutely beautiful site, and flags were placed at every site! It was wonderful being a part of this experience and our thanks to Jen Smith, Karen and Bob Geckler, Kathie Belisle, and Jean Collier for accompanying me. To be honest, I was very disappointed that more of you didn't volunteer. This will be an annual activity for our club and I hope to see a lot greater participation next year.



AOK Events

Prior to the pandemic we recognized 4 individuals and couples who deserved special recognition for their acts of kindness. We have some very creative and exciting ways of doing this but the pandemic put the brakes on this for over a year. Well, WE ARE BACK! In April and May we had two wonderful acknowledge events.

Monday, April 26, 2021

We acknowledged a resident of Bridgeport Lake Miona in The Villages, Gary Gariepy, for the kindness he has shown to his fellow neighbors at a neighborhood meeting with 200 or so attendees. Gary is a retired Air Force NCO who has been helping people in his community with housing maintenance issues free of charge. Among other things he has given roses to approximately 20 widows in his community. Last year, Gary lost his wife of many years. He is also actively involved in the veteran community. Thank you, Joe Santoro, for your help in arranging this.



Monday, May 3, 2021

We also had the pleasure of acknowledging a truly amazing lady, Marguerite Desbrow. Marguerite lives for veterans. She works tirelessly for Villages Honor Flight and handles all the food needs single handedly. She is also a main contributor for Villagers for Veterans and has been instrumental in the house project for veteran Pam. She has recently taken on projects to assist The Marion Military Academy in Ocala and is the coordinator of the Flags for Vets Ceremony at the Florida National Cemetery on Memorial Day. She also has recently become active with the Tri-County Lady Vets in their effort to arrange a woman- only honor flight to Washington, DC.

Many of her friends were there to add their comments to include Gary Kadow, Chairman of Save Our Soldiers (SOS). Marguerite may be one of the most truly deserving candidates we have ever honored! Thanks so much, Kathy Belisle for all your help in the arrangements.





Our thanks to Jean Collier, Jen Smith, Judy Samuelson, Kathy Belisle, and Joe Santoro for their help. These events are the backbone of our activities and they are also a lot of fun and not very time consuming. **Our hope is that more of you will volunteer.**

We have events planned in June and July and will be get information and a call for volunteers out soon. Also, if you know of someone or group that deserves to be acknowledged, please let us know.

Abundance of Love Fundraiser

As many of you know, our Treasurer and charter member, Jen Smith, has devoted herself to spreading kindness in our community. Her latest effort is leading a group called ***Abundance of Love***. They are planning a fund raiser on July 10th at 5:30 at La Hacienda Recreation Center. Tickets are just \$10. The event is called “Not Your Grandma’s Bingo” with Rick Mitchell, Professional DJ. If you have never

experienced Rick Mitchell, you are in for a great experience! Please copy and share the following with friends and neighbors if you can.

ABUNDANCE OF LOVE Presents "NOT YOUR GRANDMA'S BINGO"

Join us for a fun, music-filled evening! Hosted by Ric Mitchell, Professional DJ Saturday, July 10, 2021. Doors open 5:30, open seating at La Hacienda Recreation Center. BYOB & Snacks - residents only. \$10/ticket (non-refundable). Get tickets at an Abundance of Love gathering: La Hacienda Rec Ctr 6/4, 6/18 8:30-11 a.m. Big Cypress Rec Ctr 5/28, 6/11, 6/25 9-11:30 a.m. Everglades Rec Ctr 6/7, 6/21 10:30-12:30 p.m. (or contact Nancy Still, 301-538-3103).

A Nice Story of kindness

The Villages is full of so many examples of acts of kindness. The long standing Couples Saturday Golf League with over 30 couples headed by Doug Fitzsimmons of Tall Trees has traditionally met for breakfast after golf at Johnny Rockets in Sumter Landing. After learning that their favorite waitress was dealing with a medical issue which requires extensive testing and treatment, the group took up a collection, and within 2 weeks stepped up with a \$1000 contribution. A number of the members of this golf league were at our fundraiser. Thank you for your kindness! We have sent a Certificate of Kindness to Doug to share with the group.

Do you have a particular story of kindness we can share in our newsletter? Let us know.

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,

gathering at restaurants, etc. If you have any ideas for future social events, please let us know.

Cards and Kindness Certificates

One of the easiest ways to promote kindness is to acknowledge kind acts as you see them with our Kindness Cards. Between our club and our Dayton, Ohio affiliate we have handed out more than 40,000 of these. Joe Santoro supplies these for us and has just received an order of 10,000! You can always pick up as many cards as you need at our meetings. If you can't make the meeting the cards are always available for pickup at my open front porch at 383 Awendaw Loop in the Village of Tall Trees. Just drop by and pick up as many as you need.

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. 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 (AAOKCub.org) and our Website Advisor, Tweet Coleman, is doing a wonderful job keeping this up to date. 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.

Club Merchandise

Custom Apparel in the Publix Plaza on 466 now 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. Our catalogue can be seen at [aaokclub merchandise](#) and you can order on line if desired.

It's Memorial Day and I would like to share a story of kindness that will pull on your heart strings. Warning - Get the tissues out!

The Nurse and the Serviceman

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened.

Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young uniformed Marine standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement.

The nurse brought a chair so that the Marine could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest awhile. He refused.

Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans of the other patients. Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night.

Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Marine released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited.

Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her, "Who was that man?" he asked.

The nurse was startled, "He was your father," she answered.

"No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

"I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed. I came here tonight to find a Mr. William Grey. His Son was killed in Iraq today, and I was sent to inform him. What was this Gentleman's Name?"

The nurse with tears in her eyes answered, "Mr. William Grey....."

The next time someone needs you ... just be there. Stay.

See you on June 10th!

Stay Healthy, Happy and Kind!

Lindsay Collier, President, Lindsaycollier@comcast.net

**The world is changed by your example,
not by your opinion.**

