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Barb Yllescas Vorthmann Speaks Today

Barb Yllescas Vorthmann spoke to the Treynor Optimists about Gold Star Mothers on Saturday, January 18 at the Treynor Community Building. Barb became a Gold Star Mom when her oldest son, Robert Yllescas, died from injuries suffered in Afghanistan in 2008.



Barb expressed that being involved with Gold Star Moms became a way for her to go on living and honoring her son by helping veterans and veterans' families.

The Gold Star Mothers group began after the mother of George Seibold, lost her son in WWI. While he served in combat she visited returning servicemen in the hospitals and continued to do so after his death was

confirmed. Realizing that self-contained grief is self-destructive, she devoted her time to not only working in the hospital but extending her hand of friendship to other mothers whose sons had lost their lives in military service. She organized a group which became Gold Star Mothers. The organization was named after the Gold Star that families hung in their windows in honor of the deceased veteran.

The SW Iowa/Nebraska group that Barb is involved in has 20 some members and work on approximately two projects per month for veterans and their families. In 2019 they joined the Quilts of Valor group and made 19 quilts to present to veterans. She called her home, "Barb's Sweatshop". They also prepare several meals a year for veterans (approximately 130) who live in Victory Apartments in Omaha and Victory Gardens in Lincoln. The Moms and veterans find it therapeutic to visit. They've helped with providing 98 shower curtains, hooks, bedding, etc. at these locations. They also prepare bags of toiletries, lap robes, socks for veterans at the VA Hospital and other locations.

One project dear to her heart is the Fisher House, which is being built on the VA campus in Omaha. When Barb was notified of her sons' death, she stayed at one in Germany. Food was provided and shared all at no expense to her. She said the Fisher Houses are a wealthy donor's answer to a Ronald McDonald-type House for the military. Her Gold Star Mothers group is hoping to prepare 100 gift baskets to be used in the rooms. The House should open in April or May and will have 26 private rooms plus common areas. Volunteers are welcome to provide food.

This group of mom's do these projects at their own expense or if given gift of donations. Barb does a number of speaking engagements and doesn't ask for donations, but does receive donations sometimes. She praised her husband, Warren, and other husbands for being generous in helping finance these expenses.

The list goes on and we greatly praise Barb and the other Gold Star Mothers. She touched our hearts and a motion was made by Kirk Vorthmann, seconded by Chad Gutttau for the Optimists to donate \$200 to Gold Star Mothers. All voted aye.

Barb shared that there is a book, "The Outpost", by Jake Tapper which tells about the battle her son was killed in. A movie is being produced and will be out this spring.

Next week's speaker will be Dennis Hopp, Physical Therapist. Join us from 8-9 AM on Saturday at the Treynor Community Building.

Meeting Minutes

Bill Vorthmann, President, called the meeting to order at the Treynor Community Building. Thirteen members were present and three guests, Barb Vorthmann, Doug Dillivan and Georgia Denton. We're looking forward to Doug becoming a new member.

Jokes/stories were shared by Gary Funkhouser, Chad Gutttau, Keith Denton, and Bill Vorthmann, The group said the Pledge of Allegiance. Bill Vorthmann gave the opening prayer.

The 50/50 Drawing was won by Dale Willenborg and the Attendance Drawing was won by John Klein.

Birthdays/Anniversaries: None

Bragging Rights

1) Chad Gutttau to share that he led the Pledge of Allegiance at the opening of the state legislature this week. He also had a meeting with the head of the Iowa School for the Deaf, proposed a pop bottle bill to be raised to 10 cents with funds going to education and veterans and met with lobbyists. 2) Dale Willenborg stated they lost power at 3:30 am and came early to Optimists to book his flight to Spokane to visit grandkids. 3) Gary Gutttau donated in honor of the celebration of life of Wayne Casson. He also attended the dinner at the McClelland Hall and remembered roller skating there when young. 4) Judy Gutttau donated to share that granddaughter Joslyn Gutttau has learned some sign language for her role in the Speech Contest Speakers Theater in sharing the story behind the song, "It is Well with my Soul".

Community News:

John Klein shared that Sunday at 4 PM in the Middle School Commons is the home performance of the Treynor Speech Group in preparation for the District Large Group competition in one week. Open to the public.

John Klein shared a proposed map of a 5K (3.1 miles) walking trail for Treynor in the effort of keeping pedestrians safe and keeping kids from running on streets. He stated this is an idea only. He and Gary Funkhouser serve on the Keep Kids Alive Committee. There was a brief discussion on the possibility of pedestrian stoplights with a button to push when crossing the street.

Kirk Vorthmann said the public is invited to the Wedded Band Spaghetti Dinner Sunday (tomorrow) at St. Paul Lutheran Church from 11:30 – 1 PM.

The Wedded Band group at St. Paul Lutheran Church will celebrate their 70th anniversary on Sunday, January 26 at 3 PM with a concert performed by The Witness.

Light poles on the Vision Treynor property were the old football stadium lights.

Judy Gutttau announced the Friday Feb. 28 SW Iowa Community and Economic Development Forum at East of Omaha in Griswold from 9AM – 2 PM.

Wednesday is WIC Jazz Band Competition at IKM (Manning).

Old Business:

Bill Vorthmann thanked Dale Willenborg and John Klein for leading meetings the past two weeks.

Gary Gutttau shared that a can kennel check and one scholarship check remain to be picked up.

New Business:

The Music Boosters will sort cans at the can kennel this week on Tuesday at 4 PM, not Wednesday as previously stated.



Thanks to Dale Willenborg for ordering the new Optimist mugs which will be given to speakers starting today.

Bill Vorthmann stated that there is a District Optimist meeting on Feb. 15 in Greenfield.

Gary Funkhouser shared after the meeting: Beginning at 1 p.m. Sunday, Jan 26, the JOI members will be picking up food/paper donations for the Treynor Food Bank as part of the annual "Souper" Bowl drive. Patrons are to leave items outside the front entrance to homes. Those in the country outside of Treynor are encouraged to take items to their church on Sunday, the 26th. Any items not needed locally will be given to MOMS in Council Bluffs.

Gary Funkhouser wants you to know: Wendell Hotze donated back to the JOI-Keep Kids Alive committee the **full \$600** the JOI-KKA club paid for having him install the banners on Treynor's Highway 92 recently. Thank Wendell when you see him!

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned and concluded with the saying of the Optimist pledge.

WINTER REALITY NOW



Calendar

- Jan 21 Can Kennel – Music Boosters, 4:00 pm
- Jan. 26 “Souper Bowl Drive” Sunday – JOI
- Feb. 15 Regional Optimist Conference - Greenfield
10 am – 3 pm, Hotel Greenfield

Birthdays

- Jan 19 Dennis White

Anniversaries

Programs

- Jan. Keith Denton
- Feb. Gary Funkhouser
- Mar. Gary Guttau

Speakers

- Jan. 26 Dennis Hopp, Physical Therapist
- Feb. 8 Speaker from Children’s Square
- Feb. 15 To be announced
- Feb. 22 Scott Wallace, new baseball coach
- Feb. 29 To be announced

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Dues/Donations/Flag Money: Mail to Optimist Club of Treynor, PO Box 354, Treynor, IA 51575