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Refugee Resettlement



Stacy Smith spoke about her volunteer efforts through her church to help with refugee relocation in the Omaha area. Her church was approached by the Refugee Empowerment Center to help. In past years, the need has been 80 refugees per year coming to the U.S. and last year that increased to 600. The Bishop

of Stacy's church was passionate about this need to help.

The refugees come from Afghanistan, Burma, and the Congo who have been displaced for a variety of reasons. Stacy stated that the refugees usually live first in refugee camps upon arrival and receive many screenings at a U.S. military base so that they will be healthy, good members of the community and are not here for other motives.

One refugee horror story Stacy shared was that the Taliban in one country had closed all women's restrooms so that there was just a public restroom. It was then closed and women had no way of cleaning their newborn babies, thus so many were dying.

Stacy stated that the father in one refugee family was an accountant in his home country, but because of his work with world-wide agencies, the Taliban targeted him immediately. This was also true for one husband who was a translator for the US Military, and one who was a construction engineer helping build up military bases. The accountant and his family were given two hours to get out of the country bringing only what they could carry.

Stacy stated she was very nervous about getting involved. Her first experience was arriving at the apartment the night before the family was to arrive and found it was dirty and trashy with broken glass laying around, etc. She was so discouraged. All she was to do was to deliver the items she had collected to be set up in the

apartment. There was not time for cleaning, but all items were put in and she was reassured that what she was doing would be such a blessing and help these families. It would be so much better than what they are used to. The refugees were just excited to have a bed.

Stacy was so touched by the experience that her family decided to do it once a year. Staci said this experience has taught her gratefulness and humility. Her family of four children, youngest being 20, have gotten involved and have been impacted. She stated her daughter in college, who "is in to herself", started scrounging on Facebook for free furniture and she and her boyfriend then volunteered to pick it up and deliver.

Stacy also decided to ask her neighbors to help, many of whom she didn't know, and 17 out of 20 neighbors were thrilled to be a part of this effort. She said this has created a sense of "community" that had not been present.

The apartments are located by the Refugee Empowerment Center. Restoring Dignity in Omaha collects donated furniture and household goods to help with this effort. The public is invited to take things they no longer need to this agency if they wish to help. Email: Nicole Jonson at nikki@refugeeempowerment.org.

The refugee families are helped for 90 days to find a job, set up a bank account, get cell service, learn basic laws, and get enrolled in school. She stated the families have such gratitude.

The accountant family had no papers confirming his ability so is working stocking shelves at Walmart while also going to Metro College, starting over to get his degree in the U.S. His wife works in day care and is taking basic general ed. classes and English. The family is on the correct pathway to citizenship.

One interesting final comment was that the families don't want their kids showered with toys – maybe just two, toys that can be enjoyed communally so that they won't become jealous of each other – legos, a set of dolls, books with pictures.

Next week's Speaker:

Shalimar Mazetis, Manager- Rural Development
Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation

Famous Quote

“Do and dare.”

Dale Carnegie

Meeting Minutes

Jordan Campbell called the meeting to order and led the pledge. Sixteen members were present. Three guests, Kirk Funkhouser from Austin, TX, Stacy Smith, and George Volz were present. Dale Willenborg offered the prayer. Keith Denton and Bill Vorthmann shared jokes.

50/50: Kevin Underwood won.

Attendance: Jerry Hempel won, but it went unclaimed.

Birthdays: We sang to Dick Fox (May 16) and Keith Denton (May 11) for their birthdays and enjoyed the breakfast pizza they brought for the group!

Jordan shared the following celebrity birthdays:

Morgan Wallen, 29, Stevie Wonder, 72

Dennis Rodman, 61, Steven Kobair, 58

Anniversaries: None

Bragging Rights: (Dollars are contributed to benefit local youth programs.)

- Keith Denton contributed \$4 because his granddaughter Lillie, a freshman at St. Albert, won first place in four races at district – medley relay, 4x100, 800 relay, and mile.
- Judy Guttau announced that this month 100 years ago was when TS Bank began as Treynor State Bank. The bank will celebrate at all its locations throughout the following months and the first celebration is at the Council Bluffs downtown branch on Tuesday, May 23 with a ribbon cutting and free ice cream from the Zalties Ice Cream Truck from 2-4 PM. All are invited.

- Dale Willenborg stated that Puff the Bearded Dragon, which had been living stranded at a rental house will be moving to a new location.

Business:

1. George Volz, District Lt. Governor, announced that all Optimists are invited to a free meal at 6:00 PM Tuesday, May 23 at Hoy Kilnowski. He suggested going to TS Bank from 2-4 for ice cream and then to Hoy Kilnowski at 6 PM!
2. George also presented an award to Judy Guttau – the Iowa District Optimist Club Bulletin Award.

Judy Guttau gave kudos to others who help with the newsletter: Dee Guttau – pictures, notes, Dale Willenborg – template and notes when she is gone, Kathy Luedke – notes when she is gone, John Klein – humor, Mick Guttau – humor and editing.



L-R: Kathy Luedke, Dale Willenborg, Judy Guttau, John Klein. Absent: Dee Guttau, Mick Guttau

3. Can kennel sorting helpers Wednesday were John Klein, Dale Willenborg, Gary and Chad Guttau, Bill Vorthmann, and Steve Chambers.
4. Praise was given by John Klein to Home Depot for donating the bags.
5. In two weeks on May 27 the Optimists will help put up flags with the help also of St. Paul Youth. It was also suggested that we look at providing payment by Venmo for the future.
6. The Treynor High School Awards Night is Wed., May 17 at 6 PM. Jordan Campbell will be presenting the 16 scholarships which total \$8000 between what our club gives and what JOI Club gives. Thanks to the community for participating in our flag project which provides the money for these scholarships.

Community:

1. Awards Night and Baccalaureate – May 17
2. Graduation – May 21

Auction:

Ken Graham donated a tomato plant and two sweet pepper plants which were purchased by Keith Denton for \$3.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

HUMOR

I asked a supermarket market worker where they kept the tinned peaches. He said, "I'll see," and walked away. I asked another and he also said, "I'll see," and walked away.

In the end I gave up and found them myself, in Aisle C.

Calendar**Events**

May 17	Treynor Awards Night, 6:00 p.m.
	Baccalaureate, 8:00 p.m.
May 21	Graduation 2 p.m.
May 27	Put up flags for Memorial Day, 9:30 a.m.
May 30	Take down flags, 4:00 p.m.

Birthdays

May 16	Dick Fox
May 21	Steve Irvin
May 22	Kirk Vorthmann

Anniversaries

May	None
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Programs:

May	Dale Willenborg
June	Steve Irvin (first 2)
	Jeff Jorgensen (last 2)
July	Chad Guttau

Speakers

May 20	Shalimar Mezetis – Manager, Rural Development, Advance Southwest Iowa Corporation
May 27	Brian Edick - Memorial Day discussion
June 3	Alex Harrington. He is a high school science teacher and one of his classes is robotics. (He is married to Danie Floerchinger.)
June 10	Steve Owens. Steve is a former teacher and coach at Treynor High School. He is currently on staff with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes for southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska.

Editor: Judy Guttau, judy.guttau@tsbg.com , 402-670-4330.

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