



Nuda Veritas

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District 11-C-1 --- Vol. 2015-16, No. 5, November 7, 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

**University Club
Downtown Grand Rapids
Meetings begin at 12:15 p.m.
unless otherwise noted.**

----- We Serve -----

Monday, November 9, Lions Club
Bowling League, Northfield
Lanes, 4:45 pm

**Tuesday, November 10, The
JEM Program, Brandon
Eisentrager**

***Saturday, November 14, Happy
Anniversary on the Founding
of the Grand Rapids Lions
Club!***

Monday, November 16, Lions
Club Bowling League, Northfield
Lanes, 4:45 pm

**Tuesday, November 17, Down
Syndrome Association of West
Michigan, April Sawhill**

Monday, November 23, Lions
Club Bowling League, Northfield
Lanes, 4:45 pm

**Tuesday, November 24, 6:00
pm, Jamark Labs, Eyeglass
Recycling Work Session & Dinner**

Thursday, November 26, Thanks-
giving Day!

Tuesday, November 10

The JEM Program, Brandon Eisentrager

“Lonely at the top” is often a frustration expressed by business decision makers wrestling with strategic and day-to-day operations. The JEM program reflects West Michigan’s culture of collaboration to strengthen and enhance West Michigan’s business leaders through quality mentoring, thereby helping to build more successful businesses. Through careful and deliberate selection, the JEM program matches a mentee with a mentor.

The JEM uses one-to-one confidential monthly meetings for mentees to gain the from the mentor’s experience, insight and empowerment. Similarly, mentors gain the enjoyment of relating with a business leader and assisting in the tough decisions that come along with growing a business.

Mentees are business decision makers (CEO, President, etc.) in a proven business who has the ability and desire to grow his or her company, but recognizes the need for a mentor to help them grow. A mentor is a former or still active CEO and/or President of an organization who has a proven track record of running a successful business and is willing to share their experiences.

In addition, monthly group events are also arranged to discuss pertinent topics and help mentees gain insight from presenters and other JEM participants. It also builds relationships and offers networking opportunities with other business leaders.

Mike Jandernoa is the founder of the Jandernoa Entrepreneurial and was CEO of Perrigo Company from 1988 to 2000 and still serves on the Board of Directors.

Brandon Eisentrager will talk with us at today’s meeting. He has been Executive Director of JEM for 6 years and previously worked for Universal Forest Products.

Tuesday, November 17
Down Syndrome Association of Western Michigan, April Sawhill

Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring genetic condition chromosomal abnormality. It affects one out of approximately 700 births among people of all races and economic levels. Down syndrome occurs when an individual has three, rather than two, copies of the 21st chromosome. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome.

Individuals with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, which is usually mild to moderate. It is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses. People with Down syndrome are active participants in educational, vocational, social and recreational activities. They are included in general education classrooms, attend college, hold jobs, have friends and marry.

People with Down syndrome are valued by their families and communities, and contribute to society in a variety of ways. *They are more like everyone else than different.* Quality education programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care, and positive support from family, friends and the community help people with Down syndrome to develop their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.

The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan was formed in 1985 by six couples who had children with Down syndrome to provide support and share knowledge with other families. Over time, the Association broadened to encompass advocacy, public awareness and distribution of information relevant to Down syndrome. It serves twelve counties in West Michigan: Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa and Van Buren.

Its membership is comprised of more than 427 individuals with Down syndrome, their families and their friends. It services more than 400 community partners, such as medical professionals, educational professionals, therapists and disability organizations. April Sawhill, Executive Director of the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan, will talk with us at today's meeting.

This Tuesday! Lions "After Hours"

Lion Kim Gary stated that "One of the goals of the social committee is to have some sort of social event once per month. The intent is they should be fun, casual and quick, as we all have busy lives." Our first one is this Tuesday!

- Tuesday, November 10, 2015 – Rare Beer Tasting
- 4:30 – 6:00pm
- Alliance Beverage, 4490 60th Street (next to Steelcase Pyramid)

Come sample and learn about some of the rare beer of some of our local craft breweries, like Founders KBS, Bell's Planet Series, a Smoked Porter . . . My son, Brendan, is a certified Cicerone who will lead the discussion. No need to RSVP - just show up!

Also, we are only about 2 miles from the Eye Glass Recycling Center. So, you may want to join them for a work session afterward if you wish (If you haven't sampled too much . . .)

If you have some ideas for fun, casual events for the future, please let me know. Our next event after this will be the Holiday Social in December. Lion Kim Gary: (616-291-5438, kimlgary55@gmail.com)

Meijer Kids Holiday Shopping Event

Note: This announcement is more detailed this year so that all members understand or are reminded of what is involved in preparing and running this event each year. This is what the Lions mean by our motto – “WE SERVE”.

Each year on the first Saturday of December, the Grand Rapids’ Lions Club hosts a shopping excursion for children who qualify based upon financial need. While it varies each year, about 35% of these children are visually impaired and are referred by their special education teachers/consultants. The remaining 65% are children are urban-city children in Grand Rapids and are referred through Saboath Ministries as being underprivileged.

In 2014, we had 43 children, a record number. Each year, the need has outstripped the capacity and finances to handle more children. “This year,” Anne Baird said, “we could reach 50 children if we have enough funding and volunteers.” The number of volunteers needed is a one-to-one ratio for each child, and possibly more for visually impaired children. Grand Rapids Lions Club and Grand Valley State University Campus Lions Club members sign-up for this event as volunteers.

Volunteer drivers meet at a central location to take the Saboath Ministries children to the Cascade Meijer store and return them home after the shopping excursion is finished. Parents whose children are visually impaired are required to bring their children to Meijer in the morning, but our volunteers drive them home after the event.

The purpose of the event is to provide these children an opportunity to purchase gifts for their families. Due to economic reasons, expecting these parents and families to provide this for these children is unrealistic. Thus our club provides this opportunity. Prior to the shopping excursion, participants are asked to obtain a weekly Meijer’s newspaper ad to assist in selecting their gifts for family members. They are asked to come prepared with a list of family member’s names, ages, and sizes to assist in choosing the items to be purchased.

Each child is given a Meijer’s gift card for their shopping. Each is given a budget of how much they can spend and are paired with an adult volunteer who helps them select gifts for their family while staying within the parameters of their budget. The volunteers who assist the visually impaired children must also act as sighted guides and provide visual descriptions of items that will help these children identify the gifts they wish to purchase.

The children will also have an opportunity to gift wrap their purchases and put individual name tags of family members on each gift. Each child is given a large bag to put their gifts in and take them home. The additional funds needed to pay for gift wrapping supplies and the continental breakfast have been donated by individual Lion members in the past years.

In addition to the use of its conference room, Meijer generously donates a \$15 gift card per child within a total limit of \$1,000 for the event. The Grand Rapids Lions Club donates \$60 per child (up to \$3,000 for 50 children) to set a budget of \$75 per gift card for children to spend on their family members. “Pass the Hat” donations through collections at Lions luncheons assist in supplementing the cost of having additional children participate. (For each \$75 collected, an additional child is able to attend). Donations can also be mailed into Jeff Kraai for those who are unable to attend the meetings. (2276 Old Dominion Ct. SE, Kentwood, MI 49508)

This event rewards all who participate. For the children, it allows them to show love for their family members and affords them the opportunity to make these choices (giving them a sense of empowerment). For all the adult and student volunteers, it provides a means to serve individual less

fortunate, either due to the children's family financial situation or due to visual impairment. This is also true for the Cascade Meijer store and its employees who decide what charitable causes to support.

This year's event will be held on Saturday, December 5th from 7:30-11:00 am at the Meijer at Cascade on 28th Street. If you have questions or wish to volunteer, please contact Anne Baird (baird@surf.free.com) 616-446-9496 or Mike Thibodeau (muthibodeau@gmail.com)

What Did We Learn? Violent Crime & Public Safety

Chris Becker, Chief Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Kent County, presented "The Truth about Violent Crime and Public Safety in Michigan." Using a PowerPoint presentation, he talked about the trends and offered his perspective about current reality. Discussions about reducing the cost of prisons are not new, referencing a 1983 quote by Governor Milliken, "Time to reverse Michigan's failed, costly imprisonment policies." Here are some examples of what he mentioned:

- About the size and cost of the Michigan prison population skyrocketing due to so-called "tough" policies: Reality – Michigan's prison population has declined from a peak of 51,454 inmates in 2006 to 43,704 in 2013.
- MI Department of Corrections (MDOC) full-time employees have decreased since 2006 by 20% and 11 prisons have been closed: Reality – Employees decreased, but MDOC's budget remained the same. Why?
- Costs per inmate per day have gone up approximately 34% since 2003 (by \$96/day): Reality – By comparison, Michigan cost per inmate is \$7,784, compared to Illinois (\$3,501), Indiana (\$3,858) or Ohio (\$5,755). Why can't our MDOC learn from other states' practices to reduce our MDOC costs?
- All persons convicted of felonies are in prison: Reality – Michigan *initially sentences* only 10% of all convicted felons to prison. The other 90% are placed in diversion programs (probation, community service, drug rehabilitation or less than a year where they are incarcerated in county jails, etc). By comparison, Michigan sends 21.6% to prisons, compared to a National average of over 40%. Prosecutors appear to be doing a good job to keep us safe by using prisons and alternative programs.
- Michigan has the highest violent crime rate in the Midwest: Reality – The proportion of violent criminals in Michigan prisons is 70.1% compared to all State prisons (53.8%) and Federal prisons (7%); The State are doing a good job convicting violent criminals.
- What types of felons are sent to prison, and can we safely release state prisoners to cut costs? Reality: - Most prisoners in Michigan prisons are violent and career criminals (drug crimes, assaultive crimes and non-assaultive crimes), but a higher proportion of assaultive crime (murder, rape or sex with a child, assaults, armed robbery, car jacking, etc.) are in prison. In Michigan prisons, 17,368 prisoners (of 43,703) were convicted of assaultive crimes.
- Can we safely release drug offenders to reduce the MDOC costs? Reality – Michigan prisons are NOT filled with drug offenders – less than 8% of the prison population; In 2013, only 1,420 of 13,268 felons convicted of a drug offence were sentenced to prison. The rest were sentenced to other alternative programs (jail, treatment, community service, etc.). Much of the discussion refers to Federal prisons.

- How do marijuana arrests contribute to overall drug arrests? Reality – In part due to the City of Grand Rapids decriminalizing marijuana, the number of marijuana arrests in Kent County has been declining since 2009.
- Repeat offenders increase the costs to society and the courts: Reality – It is less expensive and probably more effective to use alternatives to prisons for most convicted felons, other than for violent crimes.

Other Lions News:

New Member:

Meijer Kids Holiday Shopping: Reminder to save the date – Saturday morning, December 5, 2015 to volunteer to help! See article elsewhere in this newsletter.

Reminder - Extended Hours at the Eyeglass Recycling Center: Announced in the last Nuda Veritas, the Eyeglass Recycling Center is now open every Tuesday from 3:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Basically, this is to two shifts. This will accommodate volunteers who want to do work earlier as well as those who are able to work in the evenings. This will not change the meeting, dinner and work session on the last Tuesdays of each month.