



Recap – April 16, 2019 Luncheon Mtg
Bethany Bratt & Rachel Olexa
Women at Risk- "WAR" Int'l

Meeting started at 12:17pm with the Pledge and Prayer

Broke for lunch

Reconvened at 12:51pm

Announcements:

1. White Cane Schedule still needs volunteers on May 3 & 4. He has a sign-up sheet and needs volunteers for 1 or 2 hour shifts. Walmart on Alpine Sat. 2:30-7:30 pm Sun 9am – 2 pm donaldjakel@aol.com
2. Brent Spoelstra told of the contest between 10 clubs down in the Galien area. They do amount/member and that club wins! So there are Two 8x10 foot trailers that picked up the glasses and transported them to the warehouse waiting to be processed. Approx 2800 pairs of glasses ☺ Remember we are still looking for a new place before the end of June.
3. Golf Committee is working hard on the drive for vision, get your 4-some!
4. Concert for the 100th Anniversary is looking at talent that won't be well known to keep the ticket cost down. We have \$25,000 seed money from the club as a down payment. Chairman Shawn would like to get more information from Live Nation (20 Monroe). All we know is that there will be a dinner for about 300 people on the floor with a DJ. A video playing about Lions Int'l. Then the doors upstairs will open to the public for the concert. The committee will make their recommendation to the board or you can contact Pat Mullen for more details. pmullen@mullencoins.com
5. Happy Bucks
6. Bowling Report – No report given

SPEAKER: Bethany Bratt & Rachel Olexa – Women at Risk (WAR)

The main purpose for "WAR" is to raise awareness of trafficking. Bethany works with the females that are used for sex or labor. 80% of the women taken are used for sex. There are 40 million women worldwide right now involved in sexual activities. There are 150 Billion women used in the factory industry-slave labor. Trafficking is the 3rd largest organized crime after guns and drugs and it is still growing. Girls as young as 11 but 12 year olds are what they look for to recruit. "WAR" helps give awareness and empower survivors and involves family and friends to help re-introduce them back into society. Right now there are 50 countries that are working with survivors. There is a second facet to "WAR", and that is their café on 2790 44th Street, Wyoming and a boutique, 25 S Squires St Sq #A, Rockford, 616-863-0100. This gives survivors a safe place to work. The "brick and mortar" building in Rockford is a boutique that sells products, i.e. candles, soaps etc. that are all

handmade by survivors. These products give 90% of the profits made from these items back to the West Michigan Program and again allows for survivors to have jobs. Rachel is a manager at 44th street. She is very compassionate for these ladies, since she is a survivor herself. Going through the trauma of being kidnapped, she wanted to work with these ladies. Many of the ladies rescued, cannot go through the typical entry level workforce, due to the trauma of what they went through, so this program is focused on them. It focuses on their well-being, both mentally & physically. The average age of women in the program are 27-35 years old. The program helps to heal their mind and body by allowing these ladies to create something beautiful with their own hands and seeing the final product. The work they create makes them feel valued, which is both mind and spirit healing. They get paid while working, this is their job. They also get paid for attending the educational program that teaches them computer skills or cooking skills in preparation for getting back into the real world.

The need for the program is for volunteers that can help with Math or Finance, which will help the ladies to pass the GED exam. Also, ESL & Citizenship classes. The hope of the program is to purchase a low-income housing building but with Grand Rapids housing market booming, it has been the struggle to find such a place. There is currently an 8-10 year-long housing shortage and every low-income housing space available has already been spoken for by other agencies.

FYI - The crisis at the southern border for the ladies when cleared will be transported to "welcoming" cities, of which Grand Rapids is one of these cities. The ladies have no idea what country they will get placed – the placement is a lotto, not a choice of where they want to go. Once sent to a city is will take 6 months to 24 months of support. (Some women have never had electricity or used a gas stove. They have no idea how to keep appointments or how to schedule by using a calendar. Sadly, language could be an issue when sent to a welcoming city.) "WAR" has a fundraising program that you can purchase their soap and have your label on the soaps. The soap does take a full 30 days to cure. These make great holiday gifts or giveaways. Did you know, Grand Rapids has a recycling program and the money received from recycling can be turned into bus passes. These ladies don't have a car and many depend on the bus system for transportation. There is also a program to make custom bridal jewelry or a single piece. Contact them if interested. 616-855-0796

Adjourned at 1:31
Lion Cheryl Anderson

