

Spoke December 8, 2020

Presiding: Lisa Wisotsky

Recorder: Steve Wiessner

Guests:

Marie Magdeline Cazeau, guest of Berthe Luke

Superintendent Robert Kravitz, who was today's guest presenter

Lisa welcomed everyone and introduced Dean Brown who led the flag salute a little after noon, and Lisa then introduced Marie Magdeline Cazeau, one of the founders of Haitian Alliance Community Action who gave today's messages of inspiration which focused on happiness. Marie noted that we can still find happiness in the things we do, in helping others. Don't despair, when it rains, embrace the rain and look for the rainbow.

Program:

Today's program was split into two sections, first an update from Englewood Public School District's (EPSD) Superintendent Robert Kravitz regarding the status of technology and remote learning at EPSD, and second our regular monthly business meeting.

Superintendent Kravitz started the presentation noting that there are 3,200 learning devices in the district, including 2000 for students. 165 wifi hotspots have been put into place, & anyone who wants them, gets them.

EPSD technology staff are there to help students and parents. If problems with technology arise, students should contact their teacher/school then a ticket is created and a technician is assigned to help the student, working remotely to assist them to get things working.

If remote assistance doesn't work, students/parents should come to the school and meet socially distantly with the technical team. EPSD technicians are trained from Apple (bilingual) to fix the devices. Increased training for student and parents exists through Parents University, via remote training.

Kindergarten and Pre-K students use I-pads, and older students use Macbook Airs. A question from the club involved if the district needed scanners, and Superintendent Kravitz said no, everything is done digitally, not with paper, so scanners are not necessary.

He then noted that 25 students in the district have not returned to school, some have left the country. EPSD purchased enough laptops and I-pads for all

students three years ago. Leases for these expire in 2022-23, and they may be re-leased soon.

Mike Passow asked about students failing due to challenges with distance learning. Mr. Kravitz responded that only 23 students are failing at the high school, which is rather low all things considered. There are 15-20 students in the typical virtual class, consistent to the regular numbers in-school.

At this point, all teachers are teaching remotely due to the increase in COVID. Until a couple weeks ago, teachers had the option to teach in their classrooms, and about 1/3 (100 out of 300) were teaching onsite. At this point, all teachers are remote. 7 staff members are currently positive, 25 staff are quarantined, and 35-40 students are positive. Security, technology and administration staff are there to some degree, but teachers are all offsite for the time being. Teachers are working harder than ever, and Superintendent Kravitz thanked them for their service.

Federal CARES money was used for teacher training on new technology and outreach. More CARES funds will be used to help address the learning gap problems associated with the technology or learning divides.

A question arose about whether Rotarians can help with mentoring after the pandemic, and Mr. Kravitz said yes.

Business Meeting: The business meeting section of the program mainly involved updates from President-Elect Jacqueline Guttman with a Strategic Planning update, and an update from Scott Reddin regarding our Coat Drive and our Virtual Winter Party on the evening of December 29th.

Coat Drive:

Scott thanked Lisa and Charlotte for donating hundreds of pairs of gloves. The drive is going well with 25-30 coats, and a lot of hats, gloves and scarves being donated. Scott said the donated items will be sent to a local organization soon, and he is pleased with the drive and the publicity.

Strategic Plan:

Jackie followed up with her last update until probably June for the club's 2021-24 strategic planning process. She started the plan in late summer and had a meeting each month as well as emails soliciting the opinions and thoughts of our members. She looked at the plans from 2015 and the review from 2016 to get a sense of what we might want to carry forward. She noted that our vision statement was quite long, and hoped to make it more concise. Research and analysis was conducted including looking at our Club's strengths, weaknesses,

opportunities and threats, and focused specifically on where our opportunities and strengths are. Based on that, a direction for the future was determined.

Jackie noted that although we attract a lot of new members, we tend to not grow the club much because we do not do a great job of retaining our membership. Our active members though are very active, both in the club and the community. Diversity is a clear strength of the club.

Lisa has led the club into a more activist role, promoting People of Action. Over the next three years, we can build on what has been established by our leadership over the past two years – Lisa and JoEllen – in terms of building membership and taking action.

Here is what we accomplished: a vision, a mission and three overarching goals. The “how” of meeting our goals will be added early next summer.

VISION

The Rotary Club of Englewood is an organization whose members work together to meet needs in our community and beyond. Leveraging our camaraderie, creativity, resources and diversity, we are always striving to serve as an exemplary organization in our community.

MISSION

To provide service to others and promote integrity, understanding, good will and peace in our Club, our community, nationally and abroad.

GOALS

Membership - To attract and engage new members while maintaining an equal focus on meeting the needs of current members, both recent and long term.

Community/Service – To devote ourselves to active, hands-on service in our community and beyond.

Youth - To place particular emphasis on reaching out to the young people of Englewood, playing a role in developing future leaders.

Jackie thanked everyone who participated in our discussions and responded to email questionnaires and surveys.

Virtual Winter Party:

Lisa thanked Charlotte Bennett Schoen, Jackie and Amy Gazley for their work on the Virtual Winter Party scheduled for December 29th at 6:00 pm. The free

event will be DJed by our own Scott Reddin, and feature comedian Chip Ambrogio and an appearance by the Starling Ensemble.

Pre-registration for the event is required, please click the link below for full details and to register.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYodOCgrzkuHNV2s4MqCGI9HY-GnVDxclrd>

Anti-Hunger:

Lisa noted that the club will continue to work on food insecurity in 2021, with a recent grant being awarded to the Center for Food Action for the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. day of service to prepare snack packs for needy individuals. This issue will be brought up again at the next board meeting.

Announcements:

Lisa welcomed Mayor Wildes. Mayor Wildes noted that all things considered, students at the schools are doing OK with distant learning, considering this difficult situation. He is proud of Superintendent Kravitz' accomplishments and the District as a whole in this challenging time.

The City averages 10+ cases daily, but only 2 deaths have occurred in recent weeks though. The Actor's Fund will begin vaccinations soon.

Shelly Wimpfheimer then announced that next week the Community Chest is launching a collaboration of agencies to address some of the void when World Central Kitchen completed their anti-hunger program. The Chest is raising funds to purchase meals for 300 families per week. They will pay 4 local restaurants to prepare meals, and food will be distributed through local agencies. Scott Reddin provided \$100 Happy Dollars to this program. This effort will take place through at least March, and to donate or get more information you can visit: <http://www.communitychestofenglewood.org/>

Lisa then introduced Kathy Silberstein who led Happy Dollars. Many Happy Dollars were from members happy to see Norman Davis, Florence and Eddie Hadden on the Zoom today. Janet gave \$50 Happy Dollars for her 50th Anniversary with Sansar, and there were many Happy Dollars from members for the Sharma's. Florence noted that she and Bob are heading for their 63rd Anniversary. Happy Hanukkah to all who celebrate!

Send Happy Dollar contributions/checks to:

Kathy Silberstein
20 Hidden Ledge Road
Englewood, NJ 07631

or to the PO Box:

Rotary Club of Englewood
PO Box 412
Englewood, NJ 07631

Kathy prefers that people make their donations via check as opposed to online, but you can also pay online through the website.

Checks to be made out to: Rotary Club of Englewood

Upcoming meetings:

Tuesday December 15 at noon- Gary Hollander, Director of the Dwight Morrow H.S. Marching band with a special music performance

Tuesday December 22- No Meeting

Tuesday December 29 at 6 P.M.- Virtual Winter Party Celebration

Tuesday January 5 at noon- Dr. Angelica 'Angel' Pilato, from The Rotary Club of Portland, the first woman Air Force Officer assigned to manage an officer's club and the first to run one on a fighter pilot base in Southeast Asia, "How Being Part of History Turned into a Memoir".

Tuesday January 12 at noon- Bergen County Commissioner Tracy Zur will discuss Food Insecurity during the Pandemic in Bergen County and in Englewood

Tuesday January 19 at noon- Englewood Rotary member Dr. Mike Passow, "Englewood Environmental Trail"

About 23 members and 2 guests were on the Zoom meeting
Respectfully submitted, Steve Wiessner