

Parkland-Spanaway Kiwanis Club
By Brooke Mattox

Serving the needs of children and the community since 1915, Kiwanis International, members share a long-term goal of shaping the lives of future leaders.

Across the world, members of Kiwanis volunteer more than 21 million hours and invest more than \$113 million in their communities. Each year, clubs raise more than \$107 million and participate in 150,000 service projects.

Kiwanis means, “we trade” or “we share our talents.” It was coined from an American Indian expression, “Nunc Kee-wan-is.”

The Parkland-Spanaway Kiwanis Club actively participate in many programs including Terrific Kids, Key Clubs, Circle K, Builders Clubs and Aktion Clubs, commonly found on elementary, middle, high school and college campuses. Each program offers a unique flare.

The Terrific Kids program is often associated with the Terrific Kid bumper stickers. This program focuses on relationship and skill building between a student and his or her teacher.

Key Clubs and Circle K clubs prepare high school students for a lifelong commitment to community service.

The Builders Club organizes activities for middle school students interested in community service.

The Aktion Club is a service group for adult citizens with a disability.

The Parkland-Spanaway Kiwanis Club grants \$1,000 scholarships to select students in the Franklin Pierce and Bethel School Districts. Interested students must complete 100 hours of community service to be eligible for a scholarship.

Kiwanis members bring these programs to life each day. With the help of more than 8,000 clubs in 96 countries and 260,000 members, youth are encouraged to lead efforts in the community.

Alan Perkins, a Parkland Light & Water Company (PL&W Co) member, joined Kiwanis in 1979 when he was an insurance agent in Parkland and Spanaway. Looking for a way to become involved in the community, Alan sought out the local Kiwanis group. He became a charter member of the Spanaway club and continued his membership when the Parkland and Spanaway clubs merged in 1993. His wife, Judy, is also a member.

Alan was a Key Club member in high school. Chaperoned by the school principal, he participated in field trips geared toward community activities.

“I remember being taken to the Kiwanis meetings by the school principal, who was a member,” says Alan. “It was good to get out of a couple of classes to go to the Kiwanis meeting and to hob knob with the principal.”

Years later, Alan isn't trying to “get out of classes” – but, he does “hob knob” with the 47 fellow members of the Parkland-Spanaway club. He has served as club secretary, vice-president and twice as president. His favorite activity is the annual club-sponsored, spring auction where they hope to raise \$100,000 for the scholarship fund next April.

“My work in Kiwanis is rewarding,” he says. “I get a great feeling of satisfaction knowing that I am helping my community by doing what takes only a little time and yet can mean so much to others.”

Fred Linton, a Kiwanis member for more than 50 years says he has almost always been a member of the Parkland club, which was founded in 1949 as an evening gentlemen's club.

He joined because he was friends with many people in the club. It was the same people he attended church with and joined at Lions Club meetings that encouraged him to join Kiwanis. Fred, a lifetime member, says he enjoys “the fellowship.” His wife, Dorothy, an honorary member, ensures he makes it to each meeting.

A 30-year Kiwanis member, Dave Huff, became a member shortly after the club offered assistance to his daughter when she was pursuing a leadership role at her school.

“Our club is very involved with children,” he says. “And, it keeps me young and busy.”

Ron Berwick, a PL&W Co member, retired from the Tacoma Police Department at the age of 46. He wanted to fill his calendar with activities to keep him busy during retirement. He jumped at the opportunity when his friend invited him to join.

“I attended a meeting and fell in love with Kiwanis,” he says.

Ron discontinued membership with the social clubs he was involved in so he could dedicate his free time to Kiwanis activities. Soon after, he was elected as president. He also served as treasurer and says he's held the role of secretary for nearly 20 years.

“We are a true service club,” says Ron. “We're always looking for new programs and people in the community interested in helping kids.”

Ron's wife, Joan, joined Kiwanis in 1987 when women first gained access to membership. She says women fought to obtain membership for nearly 30 years. Since that time, she has served as an active member and as past president.

Current treasurer, Gini Dryer-Dow became a member because her dad, Travers, was a member for 50 years. She especially enjoys getting out and meeting the public at the Parkland and Spanaway festivals where Kiwanis often hosts a table.

“I’m involved because I appreciate the theme of Kiwanis – changing your community and the world one child at a time,” she says.

The Parkland-Spanaway Kiwanis Club meets each Thursday at noon at the Paradise Village Bowl, 12505 Pacific Avenue South. Residents interested in community service are encouraged to attend. Contact Ron for details at 253-531-1069 or jonandron@comcast.net. You may also visit the Kiwanis Web site at www.kiwanis.org.