

Reporting ZOOM Meeting of 15 March 2021

Calendar of Events

Last Week: 3/8 Rob Raylman & Guillermo Trujillo, Gift of Life

This Week: 3/15 Best Buddies

Next Week: 3/22 Laura Max & Buddies – Capital Region Sponsor a Scholar

Coming Up: 3/29 Dr. Eric Yager, Virologist

Note: Regular ZOOM Meetings are held Mondays at 6:00 pm.

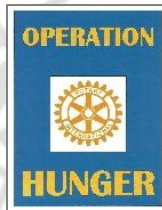
Check your e-mail inbox the day of the meeting for the computer ZOOM ID# and Password, as well as the phone number you can use to phone in if using your cell phone to participate.

*Please give suggestions for future programs to Darlene Bower and Dan Stec.
Find us at bhblrotary.org and on Facebook*

Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves

Announcements

- Gini announced the delivery of 150 Care Cards to the Kingsway Community. The theme for the cards was St. Patrick's Day with wishes for good luck. They were received with much gratitude. The next theme will be "Spring" with cards due for delivery mid-April.
- Linda reminded us of the on-line fund raiser for Keith Clement. Keith, local Veterinarian and former Rotarian, is recovering from COVID. Linda has sent an email asking us to consider supporting the drive. Questions about this project should be directed to Linda.
- Maryellen announced that Steve Geene will deliver the food donations this week for Operation Hunger. The collection bin is at Gil's Garage. The community has been invited to join this project which is supporting the Galway Food Bank. Donations are delivered mid-day Thursday of each week. A volunteer is needed for next week.
- Mary and Darlene gave an update on the planning for the April 21 Drive-Thru Community Dinner. The order form is near to completion and will be distributed soon. All orders will be pre-orders so promotion by members will be important. There is a planning meeting this Thursday. Mary is working on a sign-up plan for the way you can help with this fund raiser.
- **This meeting marks one year of virtual meetings!** Thank you to Silas for getting us started so well so soon at the beginning of the pandemic.
- In Mike's absence, Dan led Happy Dollars. Great to have John Fantauzzi with us.



Best Buddies

Darlene introduced the two dynamic presenters sharing her experience of participating in the annual Friendship Walk.

Best Buddies International is an organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living.

Nina Benvenuto is the program manager in Albany. She started the program with a quick but powerful video. The theme being "Everybody needs Somebody".

Sophie Dubuisson is the New York State Director. She explained how large this international organization is, working with 200 million people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). There are 130 school chapters in New York State. Locally there are 8 college chapters, 16 high school chapters, and 14 middle school chapters. The chapters are led by school personal who know the participants well enough to establish friendships. The friendships can last through the school years and into adulthood.

We learned that the BHBL School District has expressed interest in establishing a chapter. Gregg shared his daughters experience with Best Buddies in the Ballston Spa School system. Beyond school programs, there is also a program for Adults called the Citizen's program. A new program called "E Buddies" connects buddies electronically.

March is Best Buddies month. There will be a virtual dance party. This year 135 virtual events have been held. It has been a successful but challenging year. Some of the virtual events include "Crafternoon", Movie Monday, Fake Swimming Parties.

How could we get involved? Host an event like a craft-making session, join a program like E Buddies which brings people together anywhere in the word, be a public speaker and help a buddy create a self-speech. Spread the word and pledge to be more inclusive in all relationships, engage in the hiring chain for IDD people. The annual Friendship Walk is May 1st in Albany. It is either virtual or in-person. Let's organize ourselves to participate.

For all of this and much more information, go to the Best Buddies website, www.bestbuddies.org. Thank you to Nina and Sophie for a very inspiring presentation.

Serve with us – the world is waiting

Reported by Mary Anderson