

Chair: Fred Honerkamp

Invocation: Jim Young

Editor: Martha Briggs

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Martha Briggs: Aktion Club meets tomorrow night—5:30, MPS Administration Building, rooms A&B. Please join us!

Brian Goodwill: Please sign up to provide the Invocation at one or more of our fall meetings.

Jim Heffel: Your dues are due: this is the last FRIENDLY reminder!

Ray Senesac/Cal Hoerneman: Pick up your T&A materials! Turn in \$\$ to Mike Feider; see Ray or Cal with questions.

Jim Young: If you enjoy messing with Excel, Jim has a data analysis project for you!

Fred Honerkamp: There will be a brief Board of Directors meeting following the regular meeting.

GUESTS : Alma Kiwanis Club members Tim Kellner and Duane Stacey joined us today, along with Kathy Young and Laura Miller, Bill Marklewitz's daughters, who will attend the ribbon cutting/dedication of the Longview Pavilion after today's meeting.

MEMBER NEWS: Bob Nankee is back in Midland after being hospitalized in Grand Rapids after a car accident two weeks ago. He is at Medilodge, 4700 Hedgewood Drive, and would appreciate visitors.

PROGRAM: Nikki Atkinson, Chazaq Movement

Junior Youth co-chair Rudy Phillips introduced Nikki, who is the Executive Director of Chazaq Movement in Midland. Chazaq Movement is a private non-profit that focuses on victims and survivors of sex trafficking. Nikki explained that “chazaq” is a Hebrew word meaning courage and strength. The Movement's mission is to provide hope and healing to victims of sexual exploitation.

Sex trafficking is defined as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain a commercial sex act, e.g., pornography, stripping, or prostitution. “Survival sex” is the exchange of sex for a need, e.g., shelter or food. Both involve a perpetrator and a victim. The perpetrator is usually a skilled manipulator who can play on a victim's need for protection, acceptance, affection, or love. Contrary to the myth of the “creepy abductor,” a trafficker is more likely an ordinary person who builds a connection to a potential victim over time, learning about the person's vulnerabilities in order to take advantage of them. Traffickers use social media to create an identity that will appeal to the victim. Both traffickers and victims can be any age, male or female. Because victims rarely come forward to seek help, sex trafficking is a hidden crime.

Sex trafficking occurs throughout the nation. Michigan is especially appealing to traffickers because they can be out of the state in two hours. In 2016, 843 statewide calls to 911 resulted in 246 human trafficking cases. Midland is not immune to this scurrilous activity: our fair city is seen as a desirable source of victims because of its large international corporations and its proximity to both an international airport and a national border: traffickers can be out of the COUNTRY in two hours.

Nikki explained that Midland's Chazaq Movement is partnering with area agencies to coordinate services and increase public awareness of sex trafficking. Many folks don't know that anyone can call 911 to report a concern about an individual they believe may be involved in sex trafficking. The organization is also working to open a shelter for females ages 12 to 17 to provide the care and support victims need to change their lives.

Chazaq's website (chazaqmovement.com) has a helpful list of red flags that can indicate if someone is in danger, along with links to other organizations that focus on sex trafficking: NHTRC.com (National Human Trafficking Resource Center); Polarisproject.org; and SharedHope.org. Also, check out a recent article in the Midland Daily News: <http://www.ourmidland.com/news/article/New-organization-targets-human-trafficking-11257842.php>.

Kim Clark, Director of Early Childhood and Family Services and Building Administrator at Longview Early Childhood Center, reviewed the history of the Longview Pavilion project and invited members to attend the dedication and ribbon cutting of this wonderful addition to the spray park next to the school. The structure is named for long-time Kiwanian Bill Marklewitz.

REMINDERS

Next week's program: Senior Youth—Eagle Village.