

CHAIR: Renee Castellon
PIG: Jim Rajewski

INVOCATION: Mike Briggs
MAILER: John McClellan

MUSIC: D. Winegardner/W. Meyer
EDITOR: John Mier

CALENDAR

January 15 Blood drive hosted by Kiwassee, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at MCFTA.
January 19 Travel and Adventure program "Irish Stories and Glories", 7:30 p.m. at MCFTA.
January 21 Board of Directors meeting, noon at Memorial Presbyterian Church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

***Dick Jellum reminded members that Kiwassee is hosting a blood drive on Friday, January 15 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the MCFTA's Garden Room. Call Dick if you would like an appointment.
***Stan Englund thanked members for their continuing magazine donations to Pinecrest, and for their gifts of Candy and Nuts during the holidays. Also, the new \$6 million structure is progressing well.
***Jim Struthers thanked members who volunteered to usher at the Travel and Adventure program on January 19.
***Diane Stevens needs one more volunteer for the Kiwanis Reading program for preschoolers. Please call her if you would like to help.
***Vicki Briggs presented the Kiwassee Scrapbook to Ray Senesac in recognition for his outstanding leadership as club president last year. (BIG applause from members for Ray).
***Penny Ecarus introduced Lee Stocker (Bill's wife) and Leslie Lawrence from the Auburn Baptist Church's Quilting Group. The group produces about 100 quilts each year which they donate to many different agencies. Today, they presented 40 quilts (with Beanie Babies) to Safe and Sound. Karen Adams accepted the gifts and explained they will be given to children who are interviewed when abuse or neglect is suspected. The quilts will provide comfort to the children during a difficult time. The quilting group accepts donations of new fabric, Beanie Babies, or money. Donations can be given to Bill Stocker or to Penny.
***Dick Skochdopole announced that the annual "Taste of Diversity" fund raiser will be held at the MCFTA from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Jan. 18, featuring food from local restaurants. Tickets are \$35 and proceeds go the Midland Area Partnership for Drug Free Youth (formally Circle of Health).
***Alex Rapanos said the Detroit Kiwanis Club will celebrate its 95th Anniversary on January 23.
***President Renee said her new e-mail address is "reneecastellon" at yahoo.com.

ALAN OMAN: "GREAT START COLLABORATIVE" AND "IMAGINATION LIBRARY"
Jim Schroeder, Co-Chair of Young Children Priority One, introduced Alan Oman who is well known to Kiwassee members. Alan is a former Director of the North Midland Family Center and currently heads the Success by 6 and the Great Start Collaborative organizations for Midland County. Alan brought us up to date with current activities. The Michigan Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) was started in 2005 and is the focal point in state government for developing Michigan's Great Start System. The ECIC awarded a Great Start Collaborative planning grant to the Midland County ESA in April, 2008. The Midland County Great Start Collaborative (GSC) was then formed with a vision that "All children will enter kindergarten safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and in life". Their mission, then, was to assure that all community resources in Midland County were coordinated and available to families with children from birth to age five. The needs are greater than most of us realize. Infant mortality in Midland County is trending higher than the state level and the number of children in foster care has increased 19% since 2003. Confirmed child abuse cases in M.C. has increased 42% since 2000. The GSC conducts needs assessment and coordinates existing early childhood programs. Strategies have been developed to support various priority areas such as physical health, parental leadership, family support, and early education. The "Early On" system was developed to coordinate early intervention for families with children ages 0-3 with physical or mental developmental problems. The system helps families to navigate the complex systems of available services. Finally, Alan reported on the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which was started by the Dollywood Foundation in 1996 and made available to all Midland County children from birth to age 5 in 2006 by Midland County ESA and Success by 6. The service provides a book each month for parents to read to their children. Penny Ecarus adds that Current research indicates 85% of brain development occurs by age 5. Exposure to reading and vocabulary is essential to that. The Imagination Library is supported by the United Way and by donations from churches, service clubs, and individuals. About 51% of Midland County children in this age range participate in the program. Alan quoted the wisdom of ancient Rome's Cicero (106 B.C.-43 B.C.): "A room without books is like a body without a soul".