

Avon Optimist Club & Central Indiana Woodworkers Partnership

In July the Avon Optimist Club had a speaker from the Central Indiana Woodworkers (CIWW). The speaker told us about CIWW with members who are amateur and professional men and women having a common interest in fabricating from wood.

Central Indiana Woodworkers is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization first organized in 1948 under the name Home Craftsmen Forum. Their MISSION is the education of members and non-members in wood craftsmanship, and contribution to the community. Members gather throughout the year in several shops to fabricate toys for distribution at end of year holidays. In 2013, twenty-six service agencies received the toys and then distributed the over 8000 durable wooden toys made by CIWW members. Some members make toys at home. Others join fellow members for socialization and toy manufacture in one of five shops located around the compass points from Indianapolis. The substantial majority of the toys are made by members retired from full time employment. The making of toys is not a condition of membership. More information can be found on their website (www.ciww.org).

At the Optimist meeting the speaker brought a variety of the toys that are made and distributed. He offered them to anyone who wanted to make a donation. Immediately, four of the toys were snapped up. The club then passed a hat for volunteer contributions. Over \$150.00 was collected. Later at our monthly Board meeting another \$350.00 was allocated.

The speaker asked for names of organizations in our community which could benefit from toys for kids. The first organization we gave him was Sheltering Wings. Sheltering Wings is a home in our county for battered and/or abused women and their kids. Sheltering Wings is an emergency housing shelter for women and children suffering from any form of domestic violence. This Hendricks County shelter is a Christian organization that offers crisis/emergency intervention, case management, children's services, and education. Sheltering Wings was started by a group of volunteers from area churches, and has always been a faith-based non-profit organization. More than 2,800 women and children have lived in the shelter since it first opened. www.shelteringwings.org.

CIWW contacted Sheltering Wings to see what items they could use. Then on August 28, Avon Optimist members, Nic Quintana and Paul Grant met with Mick Keller from CIWW and made a presentation of 50 kits & cutouts to Volunteer and Grants Coordinator, Donita Roberts from Sheltering Wings. The kits look like houses but are really tissue dispensers and the cutouts are animal shapes. Kits are meant to be assembled by an adult and a child. The animal cutouts may be decorated with crayons or finger paints.



Presentation on August 28th
Mick Keller, CIWW
Paul Grant, Avon Optimist
Donita Roberts, Sheltering Wings
Nic Quintana, Avon Optimist

The second organization we named was Project Angel (<http://www.hcprojectangel.org>). Project Angel is a Hendricks County based not-for-profit (501(C)(3)) organization. The purpose of Project Angel is to improve the quality of life in Hendricks County. Project Angel is staffed with volunteers and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Their mission is to provide social services to needy Hendricks County families and seeks to involve the entire Hendricks County Community in improving their economic position with their focus on serving low income residents. They strive to offer assistance to the “working poor” and those individuals which do not qualify for normal tax supported social services type programs. They collect food and toys and deliver these things in December of each year. Project Angel immediately asked CIWW for 400 toys for distribution this year.

The third organization we gave Mr. Keller was Handicapable Camp (<http://handicapablecamp.com>). Handicapable Camp provides outdoor recreation and overnight camping in scenic Southern Indiana for approximately 100 physically, mentally, and emotionally handicapped people each year. It gives many of these people an opportunity to enjoy camping for the first time. Campers get a chance to enjoy outdoor activities they’ve never been able to try. Most importantly, campers become a part of these activities, thus boosting their morale and confidence. Even severely handicapped campers, confined to wheelchairs, are able to participate and enjoy nature’s best. This is a camp for those kids who are “handicapable”. This weekend is held each fall and gives caregivers a respite from full time care.

All three organizations are ones that the Avon Optimist Club already supports. CIWW will be making donations in the name of the Avon Optimist Club.

The Avon Optimist Club clearly sees this as an excellent joint partnership. Both organizations are helping kids. This is our mission “Bringing Out the Best in Kids”.

Paul R Grant
Avon Optimist Club (05-010)