



Waunakee Rotary Club

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Waunakee resident Paul Gilbertson is seeing his project idea take off as if it had wings, or as he would put it, "It's just been taking off like a bottle rocket."

Paul spoke to the Rotary club at the April 17 meeting about With Wings and a Halo, his new full-time job. Paul's idea seeks to put books in the hands of children dealing with crisis situations in their lives.

It was on a trip to Ground Zero in New York City last Memorial Day when the idea really came into formation, Paul said. He saw the incredible devastation and thought of all the children affected by that dark day.

He wanted to find a way to "put a smile on the face of a child in a time of need." He thought of all the books that are returned or not sold and how great it would be to get them into the hands of a child.

This winter, Paul got the program off the ground by getting books into all the squad cars in Dane County. Now he said there are books in squads in over 50 counties throughout the state and in two counties in Illinois, and he hopes over the next year or two the program can spread nationwide.

Lori Goetsch, the program's first volunteer, said she remembers police officers saying how great the program seems but then asking what it would cost them.

When Paul told them it would cost them only the price of stamp to send requests for more books, they said, "Where do we sign up?"

Goetsch said a trip to a daycare center after the meeting with officers showed the potential impact of the books. It wasn't even a crisis situation, she said, but once the children got their books, they were quiet and distracted.

Paul said currently there are 900 B.A.C.K. (Become A Cheerful Kid)

Packets out there in the field, but he also just received an order of 5000 backpacks and will need 12 books per bag.

He said With Wings and a Halo is getting a lot of help from different bookstores and companies, and the governor is planning on proclaiming the Saturday of Father's Day weekend With Wings and a Halo awareness day.

But Paul said the group still needs a lot of help. He said he wanted to approach the Rotary as a group because they are in so many different communities across the state and the country. Paul said the group could use a contact point in every community, and he was wondering if Rotary might be interested in being that group.

Paul said if anyone is interested in helping out by stamping or applying stickers to books to get them ready, they should give him a call. And if you can't volunteer time, you can always make a donation, he said.

"I could just use all the support you can give us at this time," Paul said.

Other items:

- The Sun Prairie Rotary Club is holding their golf outing on June 19.
- President Lynne Spielman reminded people that the district conference is coming up next weekend.

Guests: Dennis Leonard, guest of Jim Leonard; Brent Neevel, guest of Roberta Baumann.

Visiting Rotarians: Sarah DeKraay.

Birthdays: April 24, Leonard Allen; April 27, Bob Nicholson; April 30, Harriet Statz.

Anniversaries: April 28, Scott and Melanie Cochems.

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Calendar of Events:

•District Conference, April 25-26

Prayers: April 24, Susan Vergeront; May 1, Leonard Allen; May 8, Kim Wilde; May 15, Pat Durden.

Programs: April 24, Pamela McGee, Gilda's Club; May 1, James Chancellor's and Shelley Moffatt's classification talks and club assembly.

Greeters: April 24, Luke Tierney and Jon Townley; May 1, Bob Tucker and Jim Tubbs; May 8, Susan Vergeront and Mary Weber.

I was in New York's Grand Central Terminal on my way to visit friends in Connecticut. I had never taken the trip before and was wondering if I needed to switch trains in Stamford.

Walking to the train, I saw the conductor and asked, "Do I need to change?"

"No," he replied immediately. "You're fine the way you are. Your bag matches your shoes and your earrings are the same color as your outfit. Very coordinated."

See you next week!

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.