



The Medina Kiwanis Brick

“serving the children of the world”

Publication of the Kiwanis Club of Medina
www.kiwanis.org



February 7, 2026

Volume 107 Number 4

Welcome, Erin Grohe!

Please help us welcome Erin Grohe, our newest Kiwanis member! Erin is the Director of Medina County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), a new program of The Children’s Center of Medina County. She brings a strong child advocacy background, including time as a supervisor and training director with CASA of Portage County and four years in New York City as a Child Protective Specialist.

Erin grew up in Aurora (and was a Key Club member!) and studied Human Development at Cornell University, later earning dual master’s degrees in Social Work and Nonprofit Organizations from Case Western Reserve. Outside of work, she loves marathon running, salsa dancing, travel, and exploring Northeast Ohio. Erin will be getting married on July 11, 2026, and we’re thrilled she’s joined our Kiwanis family!



Pictured: Aaron Harrison, Hank Waite, Erin Grohe



Medina County Career Center - The Center Café



Keeping with our annual tradition, our club enjoyed lunch at the Medina County Career Center’s restaurant, The Center Café. Chef Tony shared an overview of the students’ culinary curriculum and the hands-on experience they gain by serving the public.

He also noted that many graduates — approximately 65–70% — stay in the restaurant business, and some remain local and go on to own their own restaurants, including Ryan from Corkscrew Saloon.

The Center Café can also host banquets for 50+ guests. And yes, their popular Fish Fry returns during Lent — reservations are recommended.

To sign up for menu updates and other information, visit: https://mcjvs.edu/?page_id=252

Schedule

February 12 
Service Project -
Valentine’s for County
Home

February 18
Board Meeting

February 19
Akron Children’s
Hospital - Katy Fuerst

February 25
Project MUNCH

February 26
Kiwanis Child Safety

March 5
Service Project -
Children’s Center
Pinwheels

February 9
Board Meeting

March 12
US Sixth Circuit Court
of Appeals - Judge
Alice Batchelder

March 19
Macy Hallock Essay
Contest

March 25
Project MUNCH

Honoring Nancy McNeal: A Kiwanis Heart in Motion ♥ . ♥ . ♥ . ♥ . ♥ . ♥

If you've spent any time in our club over the years, you've felt Nancy McNeal's quiet superpower: she shows up, she serves, and she makes people feel seen.

Nancy joined the Kiwanis Club of Medina on May 20, 2004, and she wasted no time jumping in. She served on our Board of Directors, and later led our club as President for the 2007–08 year. Beyond our own meetings and projects, Nancy expanded her impact across Northeast Ohio through Kiwanis leadership, including serving as Division 16 Lieutenant Governor. In that role, she visited clubs throughout the division, attended events and installations, and helped strengthen the health, education, and membership growth of Kiwanis across the region.

But Nancy's leadership has always been rooted in people, especially kids. She championed Kiwanis-sponsored youth programs like Key Club, Builders Club, and K-Kids — even helping develop a new K-Kids club right here in Medina. Her dedication to youth leadership and service earned her the Ohio District's David B. Gillespie Award in 2012.

Nancy's service doesn't stop with Kiwanis. She has volunteered with the Medina Community Service Center, supported Project MUNCH, and given time through her church community — always with the same steady generosity. And, as a lifelong music educator and performer, Nancy has shared her gifts through choir, community singing groups, and musical outreach.

In recent months, Nancy has moved to be closer to her family and is receiving extra support and care. The board approved transitioning Nancy to Honorary Life Member status so she can remain part of our Kiwanis family and not have to pay KI dues. Please keep Nancy and her loved ones in your thoughts.

Nancy has given our club so much. This is a moment for us to return that kindness with prayers, encouragement, and a whole lot of love — the Kiwanis way.



Meet Medina County CASA

Erin Grohe introduced us to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Medina County, a nonprofit program that recruits and trains community volunteers to advocate for children involved in family court due to abuse or neglect. CASA volunteers are appointed by a judge, spend time getting to know the child and the adults in their life, and provide objective information to help the court make informed decisions in the child's best interest.

While CASA programs exist across the country, the Medina County program is still growing locally. Right now, there are 100–120 foster children in our county, and the goal is to build a team of 100 CASA volunteers. Fifteen volunteers are currently in training. Training consists of five consecutive meetings (three hours each), designed to prepare volunteers for this meaningful role.

To learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer, visit medinacountycasa.org.

In recognition of Erin Grohe's work, the book *Work: Interviews with People Doing Jobs They Love* by Shaina Feinberg and Julia Rothman was dedicated in her honor to the Medina County District Library.

Project MUNCH

Many thanks to our volunteers helping with Project MUNCH! Also, thank you to Krista and Tim for the pictures! If you would like to serve, [please sign up by clicking here](#).



Pictured: Erin Grohe and Aaron Harrison



Pictured: Russ Fanello, Kimberly Gaska, Krista Wasowski, Hank Waite, Marty Gaska, Ron Luxon, and Nanette Waite

Fifth Thursday Social

The Kiwanis Club of Medina, Morning Kiwanis Club, Medina Kiwanis Satellite Club, and Spark Medina gathered for a Fifth Thursday Social and service project. Members used their many talents to solder and adapt toys for RePlay for Kids. Thank you to Amy, Joe and Michael for keeping everyone safe and on track.



Club Updates

Valentine's Dance

Medina High School Key Club has decided to host a Family Carnival this spring instead of having a Valentine's Dance. Kiwanians running the coat check for the dance has been a long-standing tradition, but the students cannot afford to run an event at a loss. As leaders that we have encouraged them to be, they are embracing a new idea and are asking for our support. More details to come.

Home & Garden Show

We are taking a year off from having a booth. The committees are looking at different ways to recruit members and promote our fundraisers.

Heartfelt Thanks

This year, we're bringing our appreciation to the honorees by coordinating a time to visit them, rather than asking them to fit our meeting into their schedules. Please email names to Krista - commish35.52@gmail.com

Oasis of Hope

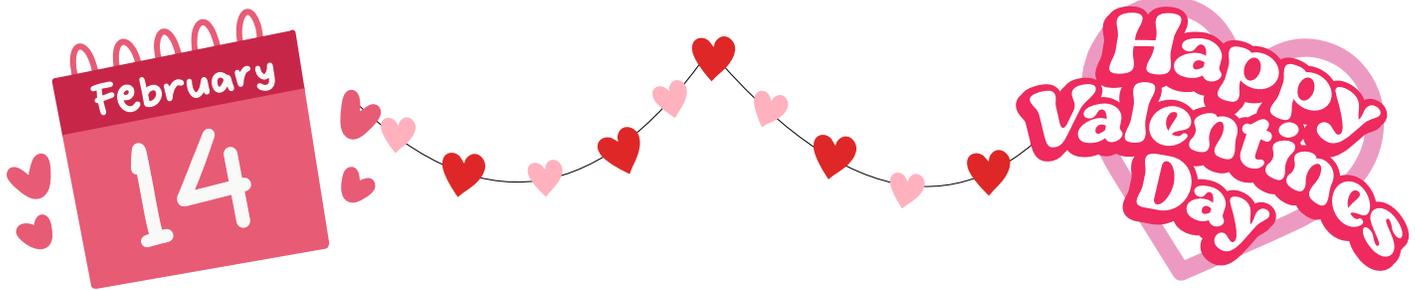


Pictured: Brian Harr, Shelby Rudnitskas, Laurie Cullen, Krista Wasowski, and Dan Camm.

Oasis is powered by generous community support, with nine paid staff and about 30 volunteers. Our club was proud to support their mission with a \$500 donation. To learn more, visit www.oasisofmedina.com. In recognition of their work, the book *Funny Little Pregnant Things* by Emily Doherty was dedicated in their honor to the Medina County District Library.



We recently welcomed Laurie Cullen from Oasis of Hope Pregnancy & Parenting, a local nonprofit offering free, confidential support through pregnancy and beyond. Oasis provides parenting classes, one-on-one mentoring, and referrals to other Medina County resources, including the Health Department. One standout program is Earn While You Learn: clients attend training and classes, then earn vouchers to shop for needed items in their in-house store. Their parenting support is designed to be long-term, and they also offer a program specifically for



The ‘No Prize’ Prize

Dave Gedrock is back at it—serving up brain teasers, trivia, and laughs with his famous “no prize” prize. No trophy, no ribbon, just bragging rights.

1. Which Caribbean island is shared by two countries?

Passport Stamp Champ: Keith.

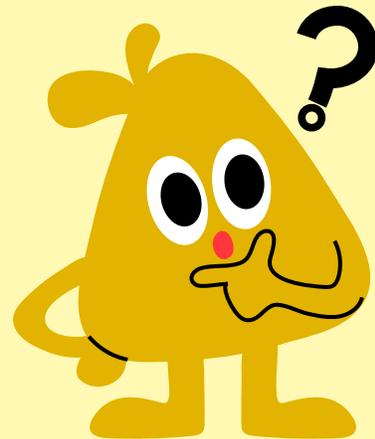
2. What are two crows called?

Feathered Wordplay Wizard: Barry

3. What is the collective of Raven?

Master of Trick Questions: Sue

Answers are on the last page.





Kiwaniis
CLUB OF MEDINA

More details on our annual Easter Ham Sale will be shared at our Thursday, Feb. 12 meeting – hams are \$65 and will be delivered on Good Friday.

**Cheers to our
February Birthdays!**

- Matt Bazemore
- Jim Haymond
- Barry Jones
- Tim Nelson
- Joan Samkow
- Nanette Waite



**Happy
Kiwaniiversary!**

February

- Jeffrey Eble - 46 Years
- Joan Rundle - 36 Years
- Linda Hoffmann - 30 Years
- Daniel Groh - 29 Years
- David Sterrett - 26 Years
- Aaron Harrison - 4 Years
- Tim Nelson - 4 Years

Happy Dollars



- **Tim Nelson** gave \$20 Happy Dollars, “Some great news after a heart catheterization.”
- **Hank Waite** gave \$20 Happy Dollars, “For Erin joining today and a great trip to Mexico last week.”
- **Kerry Kelley** gave \$10 Happy Dollars, “1 - Rick and I spent last Saturday and Sunday as extras in a movie! Aaron was there too, but he didn’t quite have the patience to stick around the whole time. 2 - Mike Short, Jim Shields, and I appeared in last week’s Medina Weekly photo supporting Friends of the Cemetery’s America’s 250th Committee, along with many others in our community. 3 - My friend Maureen “Mo” Dabbieri is with us today. Mo will be opening her new location on the square, with a ribbon cutting scheduled for January 30th.”
- **Sue Milligan Russell** gave \$10 Happy Dollars, “Joining the Project Learn of Medina Board of Trustees.”



No Prize answer key:

1. Hispaniola (Dominican Republic & Haiti) or Saint Martin / Sint Maarten (French & Dutch).
2. A murder (commonly said as a “murder of crows”)
3. No official “group name”... ravens don’t exactly do committees. They tend to be solitary.

Board of Directors

2025 - 2027

Joan Samkow
Tracy Knappins
Russ Fanello

2026 - 2028

Kimberly Gaska
Chery Short
Ed Zackery

Mailing Address:

The Kiwanis Club of Medina
P.O. Box 903
Medina, OH 44258

Club Officers

President	Aaron Harrison
President Elect	Krista Wasowski
Vice President	Kerry Kelley
Immediate Past President	Marty Gaska
Secretary	Nanette Waite
Treasurer	Brian Harr

Kiwanis Defining Statement

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to improving the world one child, and one community at a time.