Canandaigua Hops on Board to Keep Community Children Safe

The Kiwanis Club of CANANDAIGUA, Finger Lakes Division – in mid-February, the Young Children Priority One (YCPO) committee of the Canandaigua, New York Kiwanis Club met to brainstorm ideas for a child safety project. A few great ideas surfaced and a second meeting was planned to discuss which one the club would like to pursue first. In the two short weeks between meetings, word came to us of a new New York State law requiring booster seats for all children between the ages of 4 and 7. The problem seemed to be that very few people in the community were even aware of the new law. True to our mission of serving the children in our community, the YCPO committee jumped into action…or should we say “hopped” into action.

YCPO decided to give away 100 booster seats free to the community. The next issue was how to reach those that would need the seats, especially since most people weren’t aware of the law. In addition, 100 booster seats could get very expensive so sources needed to be identified. The solution of venue seemed obvious; in only 4 weeks, the club would hold its annual Easter Egg Hunt at the local elementary school which typically attracted a large number of area children. With many details to iron out and a limited budget, YCPO went to work.

Assistance was obtained from various sources: the New York State Police agreed to provide 24 seats obtained from grant monies and staff the hunt to provide information on car/booster seats and the new law; WalMart agreed to purchase the additional 76 seats and sell them to the club for a discounted price that fit the budget; and a newly-formed chapter of National Safe Kids helped coordinate with all of the involved parties and staff the event with a table full of safety information for parents.

After only a few short weeks and a great deal of legwork, the Easter Egg Hunt and Booster Seat Giveaway was successfully held on Saturday, March 19, 2005 and attracted over 400 children, along with their parents. Over 7,000 eggs were collected to the delight of the children and all 100 seats were given to parents of children between the ages of 4 and 7. Many parents commented to Kiwanis members about “what a great event this was for the community” and “this is a very special thing that you do.”

The event was a true testament to the good that a Kiwanis club can do in its community, even with limited time and money.

The Kiwanis Club of TROY, NEW YORK, Van Rensselaer Division – roasted chestnuts at the Annual Troy Victorian Stroll. Pictured from left to right are: Bill Aram, a participant in the Victorian Stroll dressed in Victorian garb, Barbara Wyman and Scott Morley.

The money raised form this event will be used by the Club for donations back to the community.

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