Kiwanis Club of Bald Eagle and Nittany Valleys News Release

July 19, 2021

BENV Kiwanis Holds Mediathon Fundraiser for CMN

MILL HALL – When the Kiwanis Club of Bald Eagle & Nittany Valleys learned that the annual telethon fundraising event for Children's Miracle Network and The Geisinger Janet Weis Children's Hospital in Danville would not be held this year, members were disappointed. Since the Club’s charter nine years ago, it has partnered with CMN in various fundraisers and helped to answer phones during the telethon. Club treasurer Sally Young had an idea. Why not conduct a month-long fundraiser for CMN culminating with a “Mediathon” using live streaming on the club’s Facebook page? Under Sally’s leadership, the club devised a theme using its 3-2-1 meeting structure (three hours service, two hours of social, one hour of meetings per month). Donors who made a gift or pledge of just $6.00 per month for six months ($36.00) were matched by BENV Kiwanis donating a new book to the Janet Weis Children's Hospital “Reach Out and Read” program in their name. The campaign ran during the month of June and ended on July 4. During June, the club published promotional posts on its social media pages. It featured #Miracle Mondays that showcased a local CMN Miracle Child's story. Sally reached out to CMN and was put in contact with Sam Kennelly, a CMN Development Specialist at Geisinger. She and her supervisor, Jackie Seidel, were instrumental in helping to achieve a successful Mediathon by setting up donation links and video links for easy promotion and publication. They constantly offered quick answers to questions and provided encouragement on a daily basis. They also arranged for two Geisinger neonatology doctors (Dr Dana Smith and Dr Lauren Johnson) to record special interviews explaining the amazing care that CMN and the Janet Weis Children’s Hospital provides to local children. Those videos were featured on the club’s social media pages as well as during the live Mediathon sessions.

The main event of the fundraiser was the Mediathon on Sunday, June 27. It was held at Miller Brothers Auto Sales in Mill Hall, a corporate member of BENV. Miller Brothers generously loaned office space, telephones, and computers to make the event possible. Club members Matt Wise and Ricky Reinberg provided the media expertise needed for the Facebook live interviews. Club president Penny Meyers joined Sally in a kickoff interview to begin the event and Sally announced that the goal was to raise $3,600 for CMN. Sam said “CMN raises money one dollar at a time and donors’ contributions would buy things that help kids be kids when they are in the hospital.” Special guests included Jim Hepner and his wife Connie who brought their dog, Drake, a therapy dog who visits the Children’s Hospital once per month to spread cheer among the youngsters who are hospitalized for care. Macy Plowman and her mom, Jaime McCann, visited to relate Macy’s Miracle Child story. Macy was diagnosed at Janet Weis at age four with a serious heart condition but after many treatments, medication, and close monitoring, Macy is now happy and active. Macy is the granddaughter of BENV corporate member Denny Mann of Mann’s Garage. The club also welcomed Teresa Everett and her son, Ryan. Ryan was born prematurely at 26 weeks at Geisinger in Danville. Theresa remarked that Ryan spent 135 days in intensive care at Geisinger and would probably not be with us today were it not for the care he received there. Sam later commented that CMN uses funds raised through contributions to help purchase the most advanced equipment to equip its Neo-natal Intensive Care Units.

The club succeeded in raising $1,761.00 in donations and will donate 51 new books to the Reach Out and Read program. CMN expressed its thanks and was impressed with how the club organized and carried out the event. Matt Wise, who is also the Kiwanis Pennsylvania District Region 4 Trustee, said that the BENV event will likely be used as a model for other clubs in the district and possibly at the national level of Kiwanis as well. Kiwanis of BENV is looking forward to conducting another event Mediathon next year. Until then, CMN is always in need of donations to support its mission of serving young people in need. Those who would like to donate may do so on-line at [Children's Miracle Network (geisinger.org)](https://www.geisinger.org/sites/cmn).

Photo Captions:

1. Youngster Presents Check for CMN – CMN “Miracle Child” Ryan Everett presents a donation check to Sally Young, Kiwanis of BENV CMN Mediathon Chairperson.
2. Answering the Phones – BENV President Penny takes a call from a donor during Mediathon.
3. Macy Plowman – CMN “Miracle Child” Macy Plowman with her mom, Jaime McCann.

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