The Coupeville Lions Step Up to Help Kids: The Coupeville Boys & Girls Club and the Peace Poster Contest

A number of years ago, a few people with vision realized the need for a Boys & Girls Club within Coupeville. Spurred to action by Margie Parker and Sue Roundy, who realized that the Central Whidbey Youth Coalition’s Saturday night get together in the gym proved the need, others including Coupeville Lions, John Kohlmann, Jackie Feusier and Bob Clay soon got involved as members of the Advisory Group. “Even in a small town, kids need something to do and it needs to be more encompassing than one night a week” states Kohlmann.

When the old fire house became available, the Coupeville Lions voted to fund the annual rent as they have now for a number of years. Since its inception in Coupeville, the Boys & Girls Club has grown and is now a focal point of the local youth. As Feusier states, “The Boys & Girls Club makes living in a small community a pleasure for all of its citizens. As a Lion, I am now seeing former members as high schoolers earning scholarships from the Coupeville Lions Club.” So integral to Coupeville area youth, the Boys & Girls Club has outgrown their present facility and is in need of a larger facility. The Coupeville Lions is committed to helping make a new larger Boys & Girls Club a reality for the future of kids in our community.

In addition, in 2009 the Coupeville Lions resurrected its annual Peace Poster Contest that a decade ago had briefly been coordinated with the Middle School Art Class. Each year, Lions Clubs around the world proudly sponsor the Lions International Peace Poster Contest in local schools and youth groups. This art contest for kids encourages young people worldwide to express their visions of peace. For more than 25 years, millions of children from nearly 100 countries have participated in the contest.

Since 2009, Lion Sandy and I have had the pleasure of coordinating the Peace Poster Contest. Though our Club President does the honors of awarding cash prizes to the top artists during the Boys & Girls Club’s December Art Show, the judging by the entire Coupeville Lions Club is done ‘in the blind’ – very important in a small community where everyone seems to know everyone. The top award of $50 cash is just the beginning as the chosen artwork is submitted upward where the top international award is a $5000 scholarship.

Though the International Lions Club rules limit art to those between the ages of 11 and 13, the Coupeville Lions Club has for many years judged and awarded art from younger artists too. The possibility of receiving coveted gift certificates to Coupeville’s Honey Bear encourages the younger kiddos to work on their artistic skills for competition in
later years. Of all of the projects that the Coupeville Lions Club has on its plate, the Peace Poster has to be ranked as one of the most endearing.

Lion Gary Leake, Peace Poster Contest Co-Chair (with Lion Sandy Leake)