

District 24L Zone I Winter Conference Report

Submitted by Zone Chair Dan Visone

Current Stats:

Current Total Members = 189, YTD Add = 9, YTD Drop = 17, YTD Net Growth = -8

General Comments:

I am extremely privileged and honored to be by the Zone Chair for these 4 OUTSTANDING Clubs! As you read through this report and have seen in the Paw Print, all four clubs have still continued to make a major impact on the Stafford Community.

Each has taken to heart their SWOT analysis and continue to work their action plans to move their club's forward in a time where LEADING a group of volunteers has been extremely challenging.

Some common themes – reaching out to ALL the membership for the Slate of Officers and to address succession planning, leveraging IT to innovatively meet and continue club communication, finding ways to continue to provide service (sometimes innovatively modifying projects/fundraisers), and working together to maximize impact to Stafford County.

My next Zone meeting, 2/17, will continue to focus on SWOT action plans, look for more opportunities to share lesson-learned, best practices, and collaboration, and look for my Successor.

It is an honor to submit this report and showcase the AMAZING efforts of Zone I!

1. SWOT analysis action plans update and current challenges

a. Aquia Evening Lions Club

- i. **Covid Restrictions:** Despite the restrictions, we have held all Board meetings since April by Zoom, and our membership met twice outdoors, once at Lions Park and secondly at the Clubhouse, following masking and social distancing protocols. We are planning to have a Zoom meeting with our membership in 2 weeks.
- ii. **Budget:** Our Board determined in July to cut most of our donations in half due to Covid restrictions and uncertainty about when the pandemic restrictions would be lifted. Not all were halved, and we did not eliminate any Lions-related donations. We are on track, and we have 2 fundraisers scheduled for May and June.
- iii. **Website:** Jane Stoll and I have updated our website with help from LCI. It has a refreshing new look and is a great addition to our community outreach! We added photos, recognition of support for outstanding

accomplishments, and a donate button for Paypal or other credit cards. It can be used to receive donations and for fundraisers. The Club recognition page has photos of Lions visiting others outside homes with crazy costumes, wrapping presents for Head Start and Special Needs, and thanking them for their awesome service

- iv. **Slate of Officers:** Our Board discussed the need, as suggested by Director Dodi Bunker, to involve the entire membership instead of asking a committee to put together a slate. We will send out a notice today to the membership asking for volunteers to serve in all positions, although some have agreed to remain in their positions if there are no volunteers for their position

b. **Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club**

- i. Went 100% virtual in October, Will move back to Hybrid meetings when we can meet outside or new guidelines come out that make it safer to meet indoors.
- ii. Like the other clubs, will be reaching out to ALL members on the officer's slate for the upcoming year, providing information on each position.
- iii. Started publishing membership info with all our fundraisers
- iv. Started having a virtual guest speaker at all our meetings – NAMI, Stafford Food Security, VLEIF, Gwyneth's Gift, 19 Hands to educate membership on local and District activities
- v. Using virtual payments to help with Fundraisers – Christmas Trees (pre order and on site) and for upcoming mulch sales – got many donations on top of the product they were buying
- vi. Might cancel Reverse Raffle which would be a \$7K decrement to our budget – looking at moving it to a virtual event
- vii. Moved our Childhood Cancer Benefit Dinner to 2022

c. **Greater Falls Run Lions Club:**

- i. GFRLC has been meeting via Zoom since March of 2020
- ii. Lion Mary Owens continues to provide cards (get well, birthday and encouragement) to members and thank-you letters to those who have provided donations
- iii. Lost income (approximately \$50,000 per year) from cancellation of weekly Bingo
- iv. Need to be more in contact (via phone or email) to members (especially those who live alone) during quarantine
- v. Need to concentrate on recruiting more members
- vi. Need to continue to advertise even during quarantine
- vii. Need to research more online fundraising opportunities
- viii. Not meeting in person has negative impact on recruiting; one of our club's greatest assets is our dedicated and friendly members and their commitment to community service

d. **Stafford Lions Club:**

- i. Our challenge has been to interest members in taking leadership positions. We took a different approach to nominations for next year's leadership positions. Our nomination committee formed, met and the first act was to

send out an email to all members regarding the election process with a description of duties for each position. Encouraged all that there are multiple learning resources and many experienced Lions willing to help guide them. We wanted to give all members a chance, if they were interested in taking on officer positions versus immediately going to incumbents. We realize repeats are not healthy for any club.

- ii. Put together an updated club brochure, Lion's history and club activities in a packet form to make it easier to provide information on Lions and our club. The same story goes out to those interested in learning about Lions and possibly becoming members.

2. Successes since the Fall Conference Report

a. **Aquia Evening Lions Club**

- i. **District PawPrints Newsletter:** Carol Byers submitted 2 articles in the December *Paw Prints*; one on a Wrapup on the Fall Conference and the other on her presentation on “Serving Safely in a Covid Environment.”
- ii. **Food Collection and Gift Cards to SERVE:** We delivered 200 pounds of food to SERVE collected from our food bins at the Business Office and the Police Department. Meal math indicates that provides for 167 meals! In addition, we bought \$25 gift cards from Walmart and Target, \$250 from each store, or \$500 and gave them to SERVE for distribution as Christmas gifts.
- iii. **Poinsettia Sales:** We had a Poinsettia Sale online and members were vigilant in getting repeat orders from past year contacts as well. We made nearly \$3,500 in poinsettias sales. Chair Sheryl Sinche said she had many volunteers to help with picking up, sorting, and delivery.
- iv. **Santa Visits and Breakfasts with Santa at the Country Club and Head Start:** We were unable to have Santa visits, which was in the past a huge fundraiser or Breakfast with Santa at the Country Club with Santa’s Workshop for children to buy gifts for their family. However, but we were able to buy gifts for the Head Start children, although we could not have a Breakfast with Santa due to Covid restrictions and the kids receiving teaching at home by Zoom. Kathy Tate shopped for gifts for the Head Start children and hosted a wrapping party at the MBH office at which 8 Lions participated. The Club spent \$1,439.77 on gifts.
- v. **Special Needs Christmas:** Seven of our Lions were able to participate in shopping for the Special Needs group home adults, although we were not able to have a dinner for them, as is our custom, due to Covid. These Lions also wrapped gifts at the Harbour Inn. Aquia Harbour Host Lions always pay for the gifts. This is one of the several projects on which we collaborate. Curt and Alma Johnson along with Santa and other Host Lions dropped off the gifts at the group homes, and the residents were able to wave to Santa.
- vi. **Snowbags:** With Dottie Richardson recovering from a broken pelvis, Betsy Husser met with Dottie and then purchased food items for Snowbags for Head Start children, who are having food insecurity issues while they’re not in school. Many of these children do not have the

Internet at home either to receive their education by Zoom. Eight Lions joined Betsy at the Harbour Inn to assemble 25 large bags of non-perishable food items and took them to the Stafford Head Start coordinator for redistribution. The Club spent nearly \$600 on the Snowbags.

- vii. **Eyeglass Referrals:** Since the schools have been closed, there have only been 2 referrals for eyeglasses in December and 3 eyeglass referrals in January. With schools reopening, at least partially, we are prepared to handle more referrals. We also were able to assist a 20 year old man who needed eyeglasses, instead of referring him to the Host Lions.
- viii. **Commonwealth Nursing Home:** Lisa Semonick, Managing Director of Commonwealth, and a member of our Club, asked for help in bringing meals and beverages to employees for a week and a half due to the Covid pandemic. Several members participated.

b. **Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club**

- i. Held two very successful Fundraisers, both exceeding budget projections – White House Ornaments, Christmas Tree Sales
- ii. Successful and innovative approach to our Special Needs Holiday Party – some group homes picked up the gifts and Santa and his helper delivered to the rest of the group homes – great partnership with Aquia Evening Lions Club
- iii. Delivered Thanksgiving Food Baskets to 14 Families in Stafford
- iv. Held a COVID-19 friendly chili cook-off with membership with 5 members donating chili for the event
- v. Switched from hybrid meetings to all virtual second meeting of October
- vi. Donated \$1000 to Stafford Food Security
- vii. Donated \$300 to 19 Hands, a non-profit in Stafford supporting veterans, first responders, and active duty military.
- viii. Brought eye glasses to the eyeglass recycling center (over 100 pounds).
- ix. Continue to fund eye exams and eye glasses for the less fortunate in Stafford working with the schools and SERVE
- x. Donated to fundraiser for Special Olympics
- xi. Supported Aquia Police Department on their Blue Santa Run – collecting donations for Empowerhouse – we provided Santa, the Lion, and trucks/Lions to pick up donations
- xii. Donated Christmas Trees to Empowerhouse and Local Church to provide to less fortunate families.
- xiii. Had 6 members attend the Fall Conference and 5 already signed up for Winter Conference

c. **Greater Falls Run Lions Club**

- i. Disco, the CCI Puppy in Training who was started in his training program by Lions Jim and Michele Purton of the Greater Falls Run Lions Club and Linda Baran of the Dahlgren Lions Club will be returned to Canine Companions for Independence on February 16 to begin his professional advanced training at the Northeast Regional Headquarters on Long Island. Keep your fingers crossed for this big boy!

- ii. Lion Bill York successfully sold 30 LOVF Raffle Coupons for a profit of \$600 to the club
- iii. Invited a guest speaker from Hope House family shelter to provide a presentation on her organization; arranging for a speaker from Stafford County
- iv. Fire and Rescue Station 12 to provide a presentation on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors (Lion Jim Purton)
- v. Ran a successful food drive (January 18, 2021), donating to S.E.R.V.E.
- vi. Provided pictures and article for the February Paw Prints Newsletter on the food drive (Lion Beth Kelley)
- vii. Continued to change smoke detector batteries, ceiling lights and install garage door openers for Falls Run residents (Lions Bill York, Jim Purton, Garry Haun, Dave Cogley and Beth Kelley)

d. Stafford Lions Club

- i. We continue to have hybrid meetings
- ii. Members are serving in the following ways:
 - 1. Mobile Food Pantry sites
 - 2. Food distribution at the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank
 - 3. Sewing lap blankets
 - 4. Collecting empty pill bottles for redistribution
 - 5. Vision and hearing screenings
 - 6. Recycling e-waste
 - 7. Collecting slightly used summer/winter clothing and luggage for donations to Medical Missionaries (for families in Grundy)
 - 8. Delivered 100+ eyeglasses to Lake of the Woods Eyeglass Recycling Center
 - 9. Visitations (ZOOM) to the following clubs, Alexandria Lincolnia, Alexandria Host, Zone J meeting (Dalhgren, Westmoreland, Chancellor, Spotsylvania, Spotsylvania Courthouse 100, and Fredericksburg)

3. Membership and creative ways to grow membership

a. Aquia Evening Lions Club

- i. We now have 52 members; a year ago, we were at 55. In the past quarter, we have lost 5 members, two have moved, one to Italy and one to NC , and another has her house on the market, the other 2 had family issues and left in good standing, but we're are hopeful they will rejoin us soon.

b. Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club

- i. Waived membership dues for first 5 members to join this year
- ii. Added Membership flyer with our fundraiser flyers in the Harbour View
- iii. Membership Flyer on Facebook Page
- iv. Proactively publish club successes on Facebook to many Aquia Harbour Groups
- v. First Virtual Member Induction in January
- vi. Handed out flyers and proactively asked Christmas Tree patrons about joining – one joined so far and 4 are in the cue.

- vii. Lost two members this Lion Year - one to transfer, one to passing away
- c. **Greater Falls Run Lions Club**
 - i. Continued the Initial Fee Waiver to attract new members (Lion Christine Frescas)
 - ii. Lion Jim Purton recruited two (2) new members (Dave Cogley and Mary Henderson)
 - iii. Lost one (1) member who transferred to a club closer to her home (Pam Lightfoot)
- d. **Stafford Lions Club**
 - i. Inducted 5 members via ZOOM (member induction was seriously delayed)

4. Upcoming Events

- a. **Aquia Evening Lions Club**
 - i. **Dinner in the Dark:** Brandi Bowles, our 1st VP, is working on details for dinner outside consisting of small groups, possibly 35 on 3 nights in May or June.
 - ii. Susan Schindler shared information regarding a project called “Canation” sponsored by the Frederickburg’s Food Bank in which we could participate as a possible service project collecting cans. It’s a competition which ends in March. Carol Byers suggested having the Board undertake a service project of keeping in touch with 5 members each. Donalda Lovelace, NAMI Champion, also suggested besides calling members that members could send flowers, Valentine’s cards, or commercially-baked cookies and deliver them to members’ homes.
 - iii. **Suggested Fundraiser for 2022:** Valentine’s giftbags with 2 wine glasses, 1-2 bottles of red-white wine(s), chocolates and/or cookies, a romance novel, pre-order through EventBrite, partner with Total Wine with 30% discount; cost per bag: \$30 for 1 bottle, \$50 for 2 bottles. Set up table at Total Wine with Club banner, have extra bags for patrons to purchase onsite with credit card or cash.
 - iv. **Scholarships:** I’m chair of scholarships,, and we’re ready to notify Stafford County High Schools. Zone Chair Dan Visone, who just attend our February Board meeting, suggested we wait until the Zone meeting, so we could coordinate with Zone Clubs. We did 4 last year, but may only to 2 at \$1,000 each this year.
 - v. **Upcoming Fundraisers:** White Cane Fundraiser at the Aquia Harbour Gate will be held on May 1. Hopefully, we will be able to have our Yard Sale Fundraiser at Briarpatch Park on June 5. Also, we probably will not be able to have Monte Carlo, which is usually in March and our largest fundraiser, because of Covid! In the past, we’ve had a golf fundraiser in June, but that won’t be possible because we need to have sponsors and most are small businesses, so we’ll have to readdress this next year when Covid, hopefully, is behind us
- b. **Aquia Harbour Host Lions Club**
 - i. Mulch sales

- ii. White Cane – joint with Aquia Evening Lions
- iii. Reverse Raffle – maybe virtual
- iv. Easter Food basket for 14 families
- v. Scholarships
- vi. Childhood Cancer Benefit Dinner – pushed to 2022
- vii. Finish Visitation – will have ALL visits done late-Feb ☺
- viii. Grow Membership – 4 in the cure from Christmas Tree Lot Sales
- ix. Business Appreciation/Recognition

c. **Stafford Lions Club**

- i. Have in process or completed several fundraisers (broom sales, candy sales, Boon supply)

5. How the District Leadership Can help

- a. Continue to recommend ways to lead in a virtual world
- b. Continue to recommend innovative ways for virtual service and fundraisers
- c. Continue to educate on succession planning
- d. Provide venue to share links for virtual visitations
- e. Provide a knowledge management website/link to share best practices/lessons-learned