

This is Carole Crossley with your Community Comment. I am still surprised when I talk about something my Kiwanis Club is doing and the response is “What is Kiwanis?” I’ll say “It’s my Service Club.” “What is a Service Club?” This has happened repeatedly over the past 4 years, so I guess it isn’t something everyone grows up knowing about.

A service club is a voluntary organization where members meet regularly to perform charitable works either by direct hands on efforts or by raising funds for an organization. A service club may do other things for it’s members, but it is defined first by it’s service mission.

Locally, we have many options from which to choose. Quota, Kiwanis, Rotary, Soroptimists, and Lions are just a few. Most of these organizations also have components for youth and the adults from the Service Club provide guidance. We have Circle K and Rotaract for College level, Key Clubs and Interact for high schoolers, Builders Clubs at the middle school level, Kiwanis Kids for primary, and the Kiwanis Aktion Club for adults living with disabilities.

Do you think Service Clubs are an outdated concept? You're very busy with your family, your work, and your kids activities to have any extra time? I can promise you that it isn't an outdated idea. Several years ago, my husband's Rotary Club helped with a restoration project at the Boys and Girls Club and he took our teen son along to help with the painting. This April, on Kiwanis One Day my Kiwanis Club did a work day at the Sequoia Park Zoo and our Girl Scout troop was there to work alongside us. Those two projects were meaningful to our kids because our son had attended the Boys and Girls Club and this was an opportunity for him to see what goes into maintaining that organization for him. Our daughters felt some pride the next time that we went to the zoo because they saw the areas where they had pulled weeds. It was an opportunity for them help care for organizations that have cared for them. That was just one way that we help our kids to see that Humboldt County belongs to us and that we are entrusted with it's health.

I don't really care which Service Club each of our children choose to join as adults. Well, I might lean a little more one direction, but as long as they are involved with the care of their community and it's residents, I'll be happy.

2015 is a big year for my Service Club, Kiwanis International. We celebrated 100 years of Service to the children of the world. Kiwanis Clubs are building and improving playgrounds to celebrate our 100 years and we're helping Redwood Fields. I can't think of a better way to celebrate 100 years of service. Lest you think all Service Clubs do is paint, pull weeds, and other physical work, I can tell you our club has fun! Our last event was the Sip and Spell, an adult spelling bee which raised funds for the Humboldt Library Foundation. We've hosted bunco tournaments and Karaoke nights. If this sounds like fun, look into which Service Club might be right for you.

This has been Carole Crossley for Community Comment.