

Rotary Program Notes: January 2017
Speaker Coordinator: Becca Booth

Steve Kelly, Vice President of Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, EDC
January 9, 2017

Steve Kelly is the new Economic Development director for the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce. He worked for 26 years at the Kansas Department of Commerce, so he comes to the job with considerable expertise. Mr. Kelly has an MBA from KU and has lived in Lawrence for over 30 years.

In his remarks, Mr. Kelly noted that there are dynamic opportunities in Lawrence that other communities would kill for. As millennials become a larger component of our workforce, place is becoming increasingly as important as getting a job. Younger workers want lifestyle and location. Lawrence has excellent opportunities on those fronts.

Mr. Kelly also considers the completion of the South Lawrence Trafficway helpful and an asset for the city. KU has been and continues to be an asset with its educational programs and the strong brand of its basketball program. He stressed that economic development takes partnership, teamwork, and a willingness to work together. He sees the city's economic future as a blend of existing companies and new ones and that entrepreneurs are crucial for growth.

Mr. Kelly recommended that our city identify its weaknesses as well. Lawrence--whether deserved or not--has a reputation as hard to work with and there needs to be an effort to change that perception by promoting stories of success in Lawrence. He encouraged pondering what kinds of businesses are the right fit for the community.

Mr. Kelly concluded his remarks by noting that everyone in Lawrence is interested in the same thing, a vibrant community where people want to be. He told the audience that we need to sell KU and the positives of Lawrence. We have a great location, are poised for growth, and have an infrastructure with KU that is difficult for other communities to emulate. He encouraged everyone to work hard, work together, and respect one another.

Jennifer Nigro, Coordinator of Volunteers, Audio-Reader
January 23, 2017

Ms. Nigro has been with Audio-Reader since 2004 and oversees the work of over 400 volunteers. Audio-Reader is the second oldest reading service in the United States and provides audio versions of books, magazines, and newspapers to people with low vision.

Since many people know about Audio-Reader and the job they do providing audio content of written material, Ms. Nigro spent her time with our Rotary group sharing information about a lesser known service performed by Audio-Reader, audio description. Audio-Reader provides audio description at Theater Lawrence, Lied Center, Starlight Theater, and other locations in the

area. Audio description is narrative used to enhance visual elements of a performance. Audio describers use vivid, succinct language, saying what they see. It's important that their descriptions are judgment free and just describe visuals as they see them.

Audio description was initially developed in the 1960s and further revised in the early 1980s. People use headphones to hear the audio description. In addition to providing audio description for live theatrical events, audio description is also available at national parks and art museums. Additionally, through improvements of ADA laws, audio description must be provided in digital movie theaters of a certain size. Also, many television channels must provide 50 hours of audio described programming each quarter.

Many people can benefit from audio description in addition to people with low vision who rely on it. Children, English Language Learners, and people with autism are just a few examples of populations who could benefit from audio description. If you or someone you know needs audio description provided to you at an event, contact Audio-Reader. They also provide this service at Crafton-Preyer Theater, Dole Institute of Politics, and soon at the Spencer Museum of Art.

If you are interested in trying out audio description, there is a list of audio described events on the Audio-Reader website at reader.ku.edu.

**Andy Brown, Executive Director, Headquarters Counseling Center
January 30, 2017**

Andy Brown is the Executive Director of Headquarters Counseling Center. Headquarters provides life-saving counseling for people in crisis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Its 50 trained volunteers answer calls for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline in Kansas.

Headquarters made headlines in late 2015 when it found itself in a financial crisis. Due to issues with a Federal grant, the organization was running a deficit of \$90,000. The community stepped up to help and the money was raised in three weeks. Donations continue to roll in and will allow Headquarters to develop a more comprehensive fundraising plan.

Brown provided some statistics about Headquarters as well as the incidence of suicide in the United States. Headquarters answers more than 20,000 calls each year, and approximately 60-100 calls per day. The busiest time for the Lifeline is from 8 pm to 2 am. Headquarters is one of 140 crisis centers in the United States. The closest centers are in Wichita and St. Louis. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for all ages and the second leading cause of death for youth. Children as young as eight years old have committed suicide.

In addition to providing the Lifeline services, Headquarters also provides training on suicide prevention throughout Kansas. It currently uses a network of 50 volunteers for its Lifeline services. Brown said that Headquarters could use 30 more volunteers to meet the volume of calls.

During the question and answer portion of the presentation, Brown shared a number of interesting facts.

- **Gender differences.** Men are more likely to die by suicide, while women attempt it more often. He attributed this to access to firearms. Suicide by firearms is 80% successful.
- **Follow up.** When a person has called the Lifeline, one of the volunteer's goals is to create a plan with the caller which includes scheduling a number of follow up calls with them over the course of the following weeks.
- **Training.** Volunteers are required to attend a weekend-long training session. In addition, volunteers attend 100 hours of training, observing and role playing before they answer Lifeline calls.
- **Child Suicide.** Alcohol and drugs are the leading cause of child suicide. Most children do not know to call the Lifeline. Headquarters is working on its outreach efforts to make the service more widely known to children.
- **Rural vs Urban.** Rural areas have a higher rate of suicide, while urban areas have a higher number. Access to firearms is the reason for the difference. Brown expressed concern that the new concealed carry law will result in more suicides, particularly on college campuses.