

## HOMETOWN CIVITAN CLUB

The Villages, Florida

### Meeting Minutes of April 4, 2023

**OPENING:** A regular meeting at Evans Prairie CC Restaurant was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by President Laura McLaughlin who welcomed everyone, led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and then the Civitan Creed. Mary Anderson introduced her guest, Carol Rosen, a resident of The Villages but who was an unknown neighbor in Maryland. The Happy Box was passed with \$23 collected.

**PROGRAM: New Horizons Service Dogs.** Cheryl Williams is a puppy trainer of service dogs that are placed at no cost with individuals who have mobility disabilities, are in wheelchairs, veterans with PTSD, and children with autism. It costs \$25,000 to train and place a service dog and provide lifetime follow-up. A dog can be sponsored for \$2,500. Puppy Raisers (volunteers) have the dogs for about six months, then they go to the Prison Pup Program for training and more socialization. The dogs transition to professional trainers to achieve the high levels of commands needed by their recipients. When dog and recipient are paired, they train together and graduate together. There are 100 dogs, mostly golden retrievers, in rotation all the time in this two-year training program. More than thirty dogs graduate every year and provide service to the mobility disabled, who are chosen from a year-long wait list. The dogs retire at age ten and often continue as therapy dogs.

Cheryl brought her puppy-in-training, Hockey, and they demonstrated some of the many commands he has already mastered at only one year old. We were all delighted, inspired, and loved the presentation.

**Moment of Inspiration:** April is Civitan Awareness Month. The club held a Supplies Drive and Laura acknowledged all of the needed goods that were brought in to be donated to the women of Ruth House. Kris Tygrett loaded them all in her SUV after the meeting, took them to Lana Rosenberg who will see that our donations are delivered.

Deb McCoy told us that the Sunrise ARC club in Leesburg, which had shut down during the pandemic, is now back and holding meetings.

Deb also told us of a fundraiser walk in Orlando to support Best Buddies. She will get that info to Judi for distribution to all members.

**Charity Involvement:** Arlene Kaplan spoke of her passion for helping those in need, for finding a school room that could use workers to organize and clean, to help read to children, to assist with bringing a party to a group of students or IDD residents. She is going to contact our 2022 charities to find out their needs and how we can provide assistance individually, separate from and in addition to the club's annual grant funding.

### **BUSINESS MEETING:**

**President's Remarks:** Thanks to Diane for the April club newsletter. On the last page was a question - Which member is pictured from 50 years ago? Judi Higbee had the correct answer - Betty Rohan.

**Member Recognition:** Laura presented Sharlene Floam with a gold Civitan pin in appreciation for her Membership Committee work and getting the cupcakes for our 8th anniversary last month.

**Secretary & Website Report:** Current membership is 35. The roster was emailed to everyone and paper copies were provided on request at the meeting. [www.HometownCivitanClub.org](http://www.HometownCivitanClub.org) has been added at the top of the roster. New members are encouraged to go and explore. Updated club brochures were provided and everyone was encouraged to take one to carry in her purse.

**Next Charity Event:** Karen Goodman has arranged with Sherry Robinson, the teacher of an ESE class (Exceptional Students Education) at Wildwood Elementary, for a few of us to visit with her eight nonverbal autistic students on April 11. Four or five members have volunteered, have been registered, and are ready for this special engagement.

**Next Social Event:** Tour of Beacon College on April 18. Meet promptly at 10 a.m. Tour includes a light lunch of sandwiches, salads, beverages. We will be walking around the downtown campus. Golf carts are available. Should finish by 1:00 p.m.

Location: 105 E Main St., Leesburg. Park across the street at the public library.

**RSVP to Lana - [lanasr11@gmail.com](mailto:lanasr11@gmail.com) or 703-472-5121 by April 11.**

Lana will then send the list of attendees so they can arrange their own car pool.

**New Business:** Adopt-A-Precinct 2024 - A few months ago our Board of Directors, after much discussion weighing the benefits and problems, came to the conclusion that the extensive schedule for working the early voting polls was just way too much for us anymore. Laura and Betty met with the Deputy Clerk and others in the Sumter County Supervisor of Elections office. They have offered us the Everglades precinct for all 3 election days which requires 13 volunteers as well as 10 for the Phone Bank. The seven board members present at the March board meeting voted unanimously to accept their offer and continue with our major fundraiser. It will certainly be less money but only requires a commitment for three long days rather than 28 days of early voting.

Election Day Dates: March 19 (Presidential Preference), August 20 (Primary), November 5 (General).

**Next Club Meeting:** May 2, 2023 - same time, same place.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. followed by socializing over lunch.

**Attendees:** Mary Anderson, Karen Chlebek, Anne Clark, Kay Dando, Sharlene Floam, Judi Higbee, Chickie Holtzman, Ilene Hyams, Arlene Kaplan, Deb McCoy, Laura McLaughlin, Betty Rohan, Karen Schwering, Diane Seymour, Kris Tygrett and Angela Vickers (16), Mary's friend Carol Rosen and the speaker Cheryl Williams.

Respectfully submitted by Judi Higbee, Secretary