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By **Mary Sue Wickham**

For **The Nonpareil** | **1 comment**

For Grand Knight Steve Chamley of the Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Council 11296, "One of the greatest reasons why someone should join the Knights of Columbus is to build community – to be able to help folks not only within your parish or church community, but also within the greater community as a whole."

Chamley and Knights member John Lookabill say the St. Patrick's Knights of Columbus do many types of service projects.

"This is genuinely for what Fr. McGivney's structure is set up to be – to help people that need help," said Chamley, now in his second term as grand knight. "To explain the Knights of Columbus service programs, everything we do is service-focused. It is about doing good for the betterment of the entire community."

Service programs include Church, Community, Council, Family, Culture of Life and Youth. The Knights participate in yearly service projects, such as a pancake breakfast held on the first Sunday of the month at St. Patrick's Parish. The annual spaghetti dinner is held in the fall. A fall and spring rummage sale is held, with proceeds going to the building of the new St. Patrick's Church.

Two awards are given at the annual Knights of Columbus Appreciation Dinner. St. Patrick's Parishioner Dan Koch was named as the 2014 Knight Of The Year, and the Augie and Michelle Valdivia family was named as the 2014 Family Of The Year.

Every year, the Knights hold their Tootsie Roll Drive for the developmentally disabled along with the Iowa Special Olympics. The annual Mother's Day Brunch is held in the month of May. The annual Christmas cookie bake sale and Christmas poinsettia sale are held in month of December. The Coats For Kids project has Knights members take coats to kids at local high schools and give coats to those who don't have them.

The Knights hold their annual boys and girls basketball free throw contest open to all grade school boys and girls. Students who participate come from Treynor, Avoca, Walnut and Neola – and not just from Catholic schools. Mike Godfrey and his wife are in charge of the freethrow contest. The Knights of Columbus members from St. Patrick's help out with the scoring and organizing of the event.

When RAGBRAI comes to town, Knights members set up a booth and sold breakfast to the bike riders, with the proceeds going back to the Knights of Columbus Council.

"The Knights of Columbus also fund projects like scholarships for kids going to college and for people in need of financial assistance," Chamley said. "The Knights of Columbus donate to local charities and organizations such as St. Albert High School, Gabriel's Corner, Catholic Charities, MOHM's Kitchen and The MICA House. The Knights also donate to people who solicit as we feel there is a need to help them."

Lookabill, a 20-year member, said the Knights also do things in support of their church. Recently, an American flagpole and diocesan flag were placed in front of St. Patrick's Church. Donations were made by Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Company of Omaha.

Lookabill said that some of the proceeds made from the church rummage sales go to MOHM's Place for use in fixing up their store. Another service project Lookabill mentioned was "Pennies From Heaven." Each year, at an annual Knights meeting, each Council of Knights contribute money to a statewide fund to help the seminarians.

Financial Secretary Roger Graeve says that for service projects, the Knights also participate by marching and riding floats in the Veteran's Day Parade and in the Pride Day Parade. Whenever the Bishop comes to town to celebrate mass, the Knights of Columbus serve as an Honor Guard.

The Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Council meet on the first Thursday of each month. The 2014-2015 officers include: Grand Knight Steve Chamley, Chancellor Duane Chevalier, Recorder Brian Hunter, Treasurer Steve Neff, Financial Secretary Roger Graeve, Advocate Tony Tauke, Warden Larry Andress, Inside Guard Larry Ravlin, Outside Guard Louie Schultz, and Board Trustees Steve Kidder and Mike Godfrey. Kidder, a retired Council Bluffs Police officer, serves as district deputy for the Knights of Columbus Councils in Council Bluffs. Fourth-degree Knight Dennis Shea is the culture of life director and serves on

the board of directors for Gabriel's Corner.

Lookabill said the Council Bluffs Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Council 11296 first became an organization when the first official Council of Knights was founded on March 13, 1994.

Lookabill was one of the founders and was First Grand Knight for the Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Council 11296. At that time, Roger Graeve was first deputy grand knight and the Rev. Monsignor Edward Pfeiffer was chaplain.

Lookabill said the Knights of Columbus organization is one of the oldest organizations that supports the Catholic Church. The first chapter of the Knights of Columbus St. Patrick's Council 11296 had 36 members, a membership that has grown to 116 today.

Chamley said there is a process youth and men age 18 or older must go through to become a member of the Knights. First, he must show interest.

Next, there is an exemplification or degree process the candidate must go through to learn the history of the Knights. Three stages must be completed – First Degree, Second Degree and Third Degree. The Fourth Degree exemplifies patriotism. The candidate then must complete a membership document.

The Knights of Columbus Organization, the world's largest lay-catholic organization, was founded 130 years ago in 1882 by Venerable Father Michael J. McGivney at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Conn. International headquarters are located in New Haven, Connecticut, and led by Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson. The first council of the Knights of Columbus organization instituted in Iowa was Council 510 in Dubuque, established on April 29, 1900. Davenport Council 532 started on September 30, 1900.

Membership into Knights of Columbus is available to all practicing Catholic men age 18 or older with a yearly fee of \$25. For information about the Council Bluffs Knights of Columbus Councils, go tocbknight.org. The website for the Iowa Knights of Columbus is iowakofc.org. The website for Supreme Council National Order Of Knights is kofc.org.