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Geneva Rotary Club

GENEVA -- A "Dolly and Me Tea Party," a fundraiser for the Geneva Rotary Club, will be held Sunday, March 18 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Geneva Public Library. Registration forms can be picked up, and the \$10 registration fee paid, at the library, Sargent Drilling, Jill's Sweet Shop, Cumberlands, or Farm Bureau Insurance in Geneva.



ESU4 services discussed at NC's Rotary

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Gregg Robke, administrator for ESU4 at Auburn, provided the program for the Nebraska City Rotary over the noon hour on Wednesday, Feb. 21, at the Eagles Club.

Robke said he saw the Rotary program as an opportunity to explain the services provided by ESU4 across a nine-district service area that includes the counties of Otoe, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee and Richardson.

Schools in the service area are Auburn, Falls City, Falls City Sacred Heart, Humboldt-TRS, Johnson Brock, Johnson County Central, Lewiston, Nebraska City Lourdes, Nebraska City, Palmyra-Bennet, Pawnee City, Sterling and Syracuse-Dunbar-Avoca. ESU4 is also the operating organization behind the Nebraska Center for the Education of Children Who are Blind or Visually Impaired (NCECBVI) in Nebraska City.

It all boils down to services for ESU4.

"What I am here for is just to talk about our services," Robke said. "What we do is we help schools.

"We are not in competition with any school district. We don't try to over take the school district.

"We try to work with the school district to improve education for all students," said Robke. "Every student matters to us."

And so does every district. Robke noted that whether the school is small or large, patrons can expect to get the same level of support from ESU4.

Services provided by ESU4 include the areas of health, technology, special education and professional development.

Stacie Higgins, a member of the Nebraska City Public School Board of Education, was present at the meeting and voiced her support for the work done by ESU4. Higgins specifically noted that the professional development provided at ESU4 is top notch and a huge value to her district's patrons.

"We have a lot of experts at the ESU

who are within 50 miles of us," she said. "When you drive by the little building in Auburn and wonder what happens there—it's huge for what it does for a public school."

Beginning with the area of health, Robke talked about what ESU4 does for students in its service area.

Catrina Zentner and a staff of three travel to schools in the service area to provide basic health checks for the kids.

"If kids aren't healthy, they can't learn," said Robke.

The ESU4 team does more than just identify problems though. Staff members work to rectify situations. If a child needs glasses but the family can't afford them, the ESU4 has partnerships with optometrists and can meet that need.

If a student has a hearing problem, that can be addressed too.

Joel Halpine, ESU4's audiologist, travels the area and does hearing assessments. If there is problem, a piece of technology might be employed.

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ESU4

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Robke said he visited a school where a student with a hearing problem had an earpiece that allowed him to hear the teacher's voice at an amplified level.

Turning to special education, ESU4 works to identify kids as early as possible, even before the age of three, and then sets up a plan to meet their needs. And the ESU4 will follow that student all the way to age 21 if necessary.

Ellen Stokebrand, ESU4's expert in special education, works with students in the areas of psychology and speech pathology. She also works to secure funding for special education needs.

While students in the

service area are getting support, so are the teachers. Robke said the professional development team of Jennifer Madison, Suzanne Whisler and Ben Hanika work with teachers to strengthen their classroom techniques.

"They do an outstanding job of going to schools and helping teachers improve their instruction," said Robke.

Through what ESU4 calls a High Impact Instruction Partnership, teachers work with the ESU4 team to develop goals for instruction and work toward the goals through what Robke described as "deliberate discussions."

A lot of the professional development activities happen right in the building of a particular school.

But those aren't the only education opportunities for teachers.

Just recently, the ESU4 hosted an Engaging Educators Conference which featured expert presenters and staff from the Nebraska Department of Education.

Outside of teachers, school counselors, principals and superintendents can all have cooperative meetings and talk about the challenges and opportunities with which they are faced.

An example discussion might be one involving school safety. Robke said experts for ESU4 can instruct staff members of a school on techniques to keep students safe.

"What do you do when there is a threat?" Robke said. "And how do you deal with that?"

Answering questions and providing support would not be possible without the right technological and networking support.

The ESU4 provides technology trainings, technology support and network support.

Technology support for each school goes all the way down to incorporating technology to enhance an individual student's experience.

Nebraska City's 1-to-1 Chromebook program is a great example. Nebraska City's middle school began a program back in 2015 that provides each student with a Chromebook for class work. But that opportunity doesn't come without possible complications.

Hanika, a tech expert

and member of the professional development team, will go out and work with schools to incorporate technology, like the Chromebook, into their every day curriculum.

With all of this action, the ESU4 needs a great structure. And it definitely has one with a 75-member staff and a nine-member board that functions the same way as any school board with representation from schools across the service area. Robke said the ESU4 board meets once per month.

The ESU4 staff doesn't just sit in the office. Robke said about 10 of the 75 are office regulars, meaning that the overwhelming number of staff members are out in the schools of the service area.

"These people are out and about every single day doing stuff for districts and for students and, I truly believe, making an impact.

What sets ESU4 apart from other educational service units across the state of Nebraska?

Without question, that difference is NCECBVI. Sally Schreiner of the NCECBVI, who introduced Robke's program, works with students, not just in Nebraska City, but statewide. Schreiner helps to provide educational opportunities for some 800 students across the state and ESU4 has personnel that travel the state to make assessments of stu-

dents. That's also while running a residential program in Nebraska City.

"I think that's very powerful," Robke said. "I think that's very unique to what ESU4 does."

From all of its support programs to NCECBVI, the ESU4 does a lot. And it wants to do more.

Robke said the biggest emerging problem for schools these days revolves around mental health. The staff at ESU4 is hopeful that LB998 will be passed by the Nebraska Legislature. If the measure does pass, a mental health care provider would be placed in every ESU in Nebraska.

"Is that enough? (It's) probably not, but at least it's a start," Robke said. "There are so many kids who need that resource."

Behavioral and mental health is currently being addressed and supported in the service area thanks to programs like Nebraska City's impact classrooms, which provide educational support for students with behavioral issues.

Robke said the ESU4 sees the need for impact classrooms and noted that Humboldt-TRS also has some space dedicated to that effort with two impact classrooms.

"We do collaborate," said

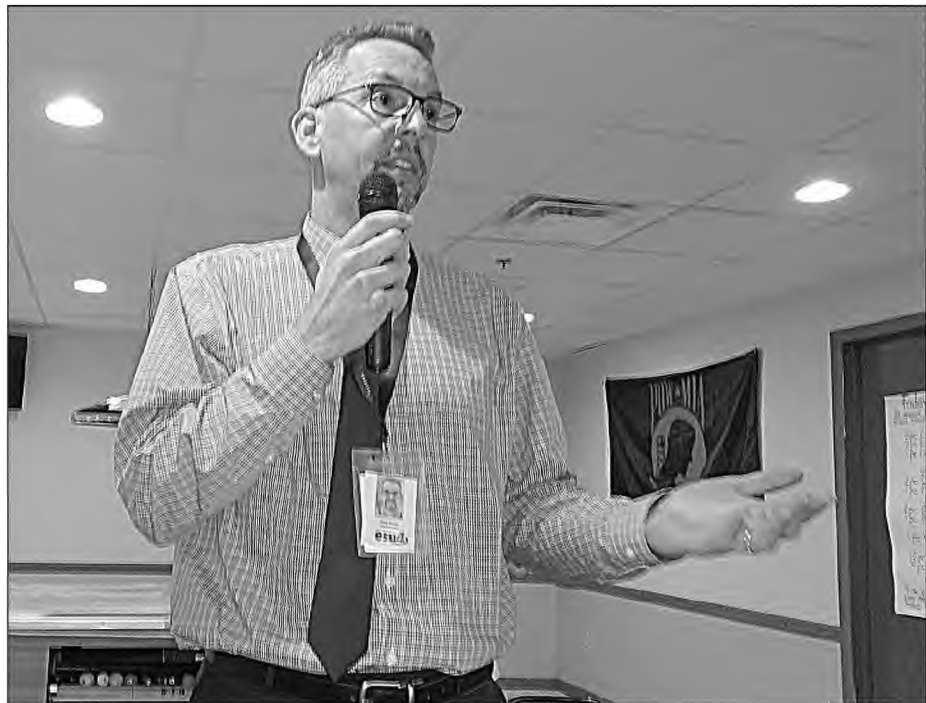
Robke. "We do send kids who are in the area to (Nebraska City Superintendent) Dr. (Jeff) Edwards' program.

"Kids closer to Humboldt, we send there.

"And we are full. We have to deny kids," he said.

Robke said resources don't exist to provide for the needs of every student with a behavioral problem, but attempts must be made, Robke said. If not, Robke said he fears that there might be more incidents like the shooting in Florida.

To learn more about ESU4's programs, visit <http://www.esu4.org>



Gregg Robke of the Nebraska ESU4 describes the services provided by his organization during a meeting of Rotary at the Eagles Club.

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CALENDAR
TODAY

Fremont Rotary Club, noon, Fremont
Golf Club, N. Somers Ave.



Community Calendar

28 February

6:30 a.m., Red Oak Optimists meeting, Red Coach Inn and Restaurant.

Noon: Lions Club meeting, Pizza Ranch.

2 p.m., Bingo, Arlington Place.

3-5:30 p.m., Christ's Cupboard, Food Pantry and Clothing Cupboard, 604 4th St.

5-6 p.m., Overeaters Anonymous, United Methodist Church, 200 Church St., Shenandoah. Contact Sara W. at 712-215-1500.

5-7:30 p.m., Chicken and biscuit dinner, Guss Maple Grove United Methodist Church. Free will donation.

1 March

8 a.m.-noon, Leadership Red Oak.

8 a.m.-2 p.m., Bloodmobile, Viking Center, 501 Elliott St., Stanton

1 p.m., Bridge Club, Arlington Place, 800 E. Ratliff Rd.

4 p.m., Community Prayer Time, Fountain Square Park. Call Bonnie at 623-4759.

4-5:30 p.m., "Business Ownership Routes to Entry & Ethics," Omaha Public Library, 5111 N. 90th St.

4:30-7 p.m., Montgomery County Court of Honor soup and pie supper, St. Mary's Catholic Church lunchroom, 1510 Highland Ave. Serving chili and potato soup, pies and cakes. Adults \$8, children 4-12, \$5, under 4 free.

5:30-7 p.m., Community Soup Kitchen, Red Oak Presbyterian Church, 511 Cool-

baugh St.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

7:30 p.m., Gaelic Storm, IWCC Arts Center. Call the box office at (712) 388-7140 or 1-800-432-5852 ext. 7140 for ticket information.

2 March

9:30 a.m., Family Success Network, ROCSD Admin Office boardroom.

9:30-11 a.m., Friendship Friday, Stanton Care Center.

10 a.m., Community Coffee, Arlington Place.

10:15 a.m., Library story time, "Dr. Seuss," Red Oak Public Library, 400 N. 2nd St.

5-7 p.m., Lenten Fish Fry, St. Mary's Catholic Church Hall, 1510 Highland Ave.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

6:30 p.m., Narcotics Anonymous, First Baptist Church, 403 N. 3rd St.

7 p.m., "Ferdinand," Red Oak Grand Theatre.

3 March

8 a.m., Legislative Briefing, Montgomery County History Center.

8 a.m.-noon, Wash Assist, Red Oak Washboard Laundromat, 400 E. Washington Ave.

11 a.m.-3 p.m., Giant book sale, First Christian Church, Tabor.

Noon-3 p.m., Union Coun-

ty Genealogical Society First Saturday genealogy workshop, "DNA Basics," Gibson Memorial Library, 200 W. Howard St., Creston.

7 p.m., "Ferdinand," Red Oak Grand Theatre.

4 March

2 p.m. and 7 p.m., "Ferdinand," Red Oak Grand Theatre.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

5 March

11 a.m.-1 p.m., Pregnancy Center of Southwest Iowa, open, 101 E. Reed St.

Noon, Kiwanis meeting, Pizza Ranch.

2 p.m., Monday Club meeting, First Christian Church, 1909 E. Summit St. Call Jackie at 712-621-4663 if you need a ride.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

6 March

Walk-in Clinic. Free testing for STDs. Mills County Public Health, 212 Independence St., Glenwood and Montgomery County Public Health, 1109 Highland Ave., Red Oak. Call 712-328-4666 for more information.

8:30 a.m., Montgomery County Supervisors, Courthouse.

Noon, Rotary Club meet-

ing, Red Coach Inn and Restaurant.

Noon, Lenten Lunch, Crossroads Community Church. Free will offering accepted.

Noon-5 p.m., Food Pantry, First Baptist Church, 406 N. 3rd St., 712-621-1644.

5:30-8 p.m., Southwest Iowa Free Medical Clinic, 406 N. 3rd St.

5:30-8 p.m., Pregnancy Center of Southwest Iowa, open, 101 E. Reed St.

5:30 p.m., Overeaters Anonymous, Faith Community Church, 2701 N. 8th St.

6-7 p.m., Moms Off Meth support group, Faith Community Church, 2701 N. 8th St.

6:30 p.m., Early-Bird Bingo, 7 p.m., Regular Bingo, Red Oak Eagles, 200 E. Washington.

6:30 p.m., Celebrate Recovery, Advent Christian Church, 300 S. 2nd Ave., Villisca.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

7 p.m., Practical Farmers webinar, "Planter Technology for Cash Crops in Cover Crops." Go to practicalfarmers.org/farminars, click the "Join In" button and sign in as "Guest."

7 p.m., Financial Peace University, Faith Community Church, 2701 N. 8th St. Go to flu.com/1053031 for information or to register.