

Volunteers travel to Southwest Virginia

Written by Bill Jones

Wednesday, 23 November 2011 11:05 -

*“Not what we give but what we share
For the gift without the giver is bare”
– James Russell Lowell*

Drs. Douglas and Victoria Weiss, local optometrists, who do volunteer work in remote areas such as the Appalachian mountains came on Nov. 9 to talk to the Friends of the Library about their work in the disadvantaged areas of Virginia. They are part of the organization, Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity, (VOSH) who serve people with limited access to eye care.

They began their work in 1987 when they were students in medical school. At that time they did much of their volunteer work in Central America. Since the birth of their children they have confined their work to Virginia. They have worked with Remote Area Medical (RAM) an organization founded by Stan Brock of 'Wild Kingdom'.

Every summer they go to Wise and Grundy in Southwest Virginia to participate in a free clinic. This clinic comes under the umbrella of RAM and includes VOSH/Virginia as well as other participating organizations such as the Lions Club.

They showed us slides taken at the clinic. Thousands of people come seeking dental, eye and other medical attention. These people are either poor or working poor and only about 25% of them have any medical insurance. The Lions Club comes with their van and does preliminary testing for eye diseases. The slides showed the many volunteers who form an assembly line for conducting eye tests as well as making glasses. The people who come for treatment stand in the heat for hours awaiting their turn with the doctors. Fortunately food and water has been donated for their use.

In this age of self indulgence it is refreshing to see people like the Weiss' who donate their time and talent to help the less fortunate. They should be an inspiration to us all as this holiday season approaches. We thank them for their informative lecture and wish them well in their endeavors.

In other business it was announced that the Friends now have 305 members. It was also announced that the free movies are doing well. There were 45 attendees at the last showing.

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The Friends regretfully announce that our current president Linda Waller does not wish to pursue another term. If anyone has any interest in this position or knows of anyone that might be interested, please contact Linda at lindapresfol@gmail.com or Janet at drcandjlc@gmail.com

The next meeting will be at 10 a.m. on Dec. 7 and will be our annual Christmas party. See you at the library.