

Kolping Banner

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Lenten Project Summary

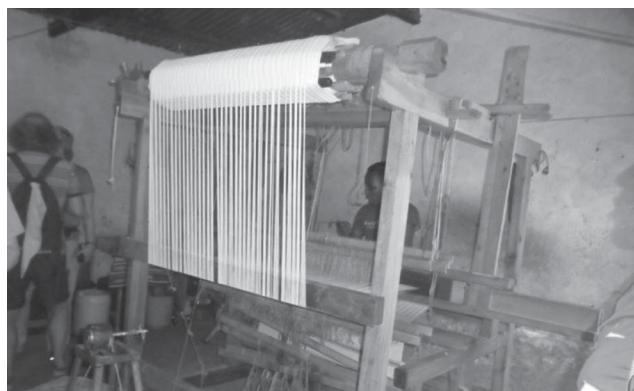
Thank you so much for your generosity!

In total, we collected \$25,500 in donations for the Kolping Families in Kenya!

Please note that the following donations are in addition to the donations listed in the April-May-June Banner.

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Kolping Banner

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Catholic Kolping Society of America

Mission Statement:

We, the members of the Catholic Kolping Society of America, extend the vision of our founder, Blessed Adolph Kolping, by promoting the development of the individual and family; we foster a sense of belonging and friendship through our program of spiritual, educational, charitable and social activities.

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For more information about the Catholic Kolping Society of America, becoming a member, or establishing a Kolping family in your parish or community, please contact the Catholic Kolping Society of America PO Box 76008, Highland Heights, KY 41076 e-mail: anna@kolping.org

Please visit the Catholic Kolping Society of America internet website at:
<http://www.kolping.org>.



From the President's Desk ...

One of this year's scholarship essay questions was to reflect on: *What is more important – pursuing an education or building skills?*

We thought that this question resonates in today's climate, where rising education costs and renewed interest in trade schools are leading many young people to reconsider traditional academic paths.

Interestingly, most of our applicants acknowledged the foundational importance of education, but emphasized that, over time, building skills—whether technical, interpersonal, or personal—becomes even more critical to building successful and fulfilling careers and life skills.

The original Kolping Houses were home to tradespeople—cabinet makers, bakers, tailors, electricians—who combined years of study with hands-on training. And while they may have been “Meisters” (master craftsman) within their individual trade, the real growth often happened in community: by living together, they learned from one another, gained exposure to other trades, and built relationships that helped them thrive both personally and professionally.

Today, the rise of artificial intelligence presents a new twist to the conversation. If information and tools can be accessed instantly through the right prompts, what role remains for human skill—and for education itself?

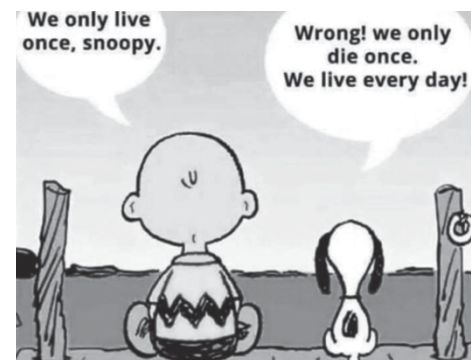
These are exactly the kinds of questions our organization was founded to engage. At the heart of the Kolping mission is the belief that education and skill-building go hand in hand—and that both are most meaningful when rooted in community. By equipping individuals with both knowledge and practical ability, and by surrounding them with a supportive environment, we empower people not only to better their own lives but to uplift others as well. Working within a community toward common goals and grounded in shared values naturally teaches essential life skills – like cooperation, compromise and collaboration.

Whether through scholarships, housing, social activities, or community programs, we strive to create spaces where people can learn, grow, and develop/expand the skills they need to contribute meaningfully to the world around them, and have some fun along the way.

In an era shaped by rapid technological change, Father Kolping's teaching becomes even more relevant, for while tools of the trade may change, the need for character, craftsmanship, individuality, and connection does not.

Enjoy the summer.

Lisa Brinkmann



Help Kolping Plan for the Future



In college I studied social statistics. The professor taught one basic rule: Garbage in yields garbage out. As we studied various methods of calculating data, the professor always reminded us to apply that basic rule to every study we did.

If we did not, we would be wasting our time. Percentages, medians, graphs and so forth are only meaningful when one works with reliable, clean data.

Please help Kolping National plan for the future by giving your honest answer to the questions that follow. We need all the participants that we can so our survey of members will give us clean, reliable data.

With this issue of Kolping Banner

we hope to get answers to three questions that we pose to all our Kolping readers.

The three questions are:

1. Why is being a member of Kolping important to you?
2. In three sentences or less, how would you describe Kolping to a friend?
3. What would you like to see for the Kolping Society of America in the future? (5 years, 10 years, 50 years)

These three questions attempt to obtain your opinion about the Kolping Society of America. The future of Kolping depends upon your clear, honest answers so that our national

leaders can plan effectively.

Please make your opinion count, regardless of how you see things.

Remember that your input and creative ideas are the building blocks of our future.

Don't let our future fall apart because too many members failed to take a few minutes to contribute to our collective future development.

Thank you for your consideration.
Fr. Dan Kroger

2025 National Scholarship Recipients:

University Awardees- \$3,000:

Alexandra Carr	Granddaughter of Hans and Doris Lechner	Kolping New York
Stephen Connair	Grandson of Geraldine (Gerry) Kreutzjans	Kolping Cincinnati
Elena Gerbus	Daughter of Kevin and Valerie Gerbus and Granddaughter of Ann Gerbus	Kolping Cincinnati
Emily Hein	Granddaughter of Christine and Gustav Gunther Schmidt	Kolping Chicago
Andrew Linden	Son of Steven and Lori Linden	Kolping Detroit
Isabella Miccio	Granddaughter of Trudy Reinhard	Kolping San Francisco
Kiely Morley	Daughter of Rick and Melissa Morley	Kolping New York

High School Awardees- \$1,000:

Violet Groll	Daughter of Jonathan and Heather Groll	Kolping Chicago
Leland Stromberg	Grandson of David and Margaret Dougall and Great-grandson of Joseph Friedrich	Kolping New York

Congratulations to all of our scholarship recipients and thank you to all of our participants. The next generation has, once again, impressed us with their thoughts, engagement, and enthusiasm for Blessed Fr. Kolping and his mission.

Greetings from Brooklyn

Greetings from the Brooklyn Kolping Family! Yikes...it looks like we have not reported to the Banner since last spring! Let's start by extending congratulations to the **Philadelphia** and **San Francisco** Kolping Families as they celebrate their **100th Anniversaries!** Reaching the century mark means there's quite a bit of history and tradition to celebrate. Good luck as you begin your second hundred years.

Since we last checked in we sadly lost three members. In June 2024 our longtime member Alfred Wittreich passed at age 96. Freddy was born in Handlern, Gottschee and came to the United States when he was 23. Settling in Ridgewood NY, he was a loyal parishioner at Miraculous Medal Church, was active at the Gottscheer Clubhouse, and sang with their Men's Choir. He was a loyal Kolping member for over 60 years. A friendly and cheerful guy, it was always great to see him at the Kolping Center.

In January we said goodbye to another active member, Anne Novotny, age 93. Anne was born in Speyer, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany in 1931. Her family's life was disrupted by World War II, and Anne left Germany as a young adult. Her first move was to Switzerland, then she came to New York in 1957. She found work caring for the children of TV personality Hugh Downs. She later married and raised two children. She was a dedicated parishioner at Holy Child Jesus in Richmond Hill and volunteered for various activities. She was particularly proud of her work with the local Girl Scouts and spoke of it often. After joining our Kolping Family in the early 90's she immediately joined the Board, served as Treasurer, became our main cook, made sure the Kolping Center was cleaned to her high standards, and was a delegate at several Kolping conventions. She also introduced us to our current Praeses, Father Christopher Heanue. Father Chris celebrated a Memorial Mass for her in early April with several Kolping Members in attendance.

Our Kolping members were shocked to learn that our dear friend, Albert Tscherne, passed away on Sunday April 13, just four days after his 93rd birthday. Everyone who knew Albert knew what a great person he was. He joined our Kolping Family in the early 1950's. He served for many years as our Corresponding Secretary and after his retirement he re-joined our Board of Directors. He rarely missed a meeting and was there up to our March meeting. We benefited from his wisdom and the knowledge he brought us as a former small business owner in NYC. Albert was also a proud member of the Gottscheer community and was known by many at the Gottscheer Clubhouse. He

brought his great kindness to everything he did, and we will miss him very much.

We welcomed 33 people to the Kolping Center on Saturday, October 19 for our Fall Mass and Communion Supper. We once again welcomed Father Johny Thomas as celebrant. We were happy that his schedule allowed him to remain and enjoy supper with us. He thanked us for Kolping's support of his parish's food pantry and described that ambitious volunteer program to us. This was truly a joint effort with many members cooperating to make sure we were set up for Mass, and that dinner was served and the Center cleaned up. Thanks to everyone who helped, especially Chris Gerage who did the cooking and served the food, and Jessica, Gary & Val Meyer and Pat Gerage for making this event happen. And of course, thanks to everyone who supported us by attending.

A few years ago, we put a table outside the Kolping Center on Halloween afternoon to distribute candy to the many trick-or-treaters who pass by our doors. We thought it was another good way to bring Kolping into the community. At this point it's become a Kolping tradition! Thanks to Jessica Meyer, Gary Meyer and Sonia Kulesza for making this happen once again.



*Waiting for the trick-or-treaters outside the Kolping Center on Halloween afternoon.
Sonia Kulesza, Jessica Meyer and Gary Meyer.*

Back on Saturday December 14 we welcomed 26 adults and 3 children to our Kolping Family Christmas Party. For some valid reasons attendance was lower than usual, but we took advantage of the smaller than usual turnout to create an intimate, candlelit Christmas Dinner Party! Jessica, Gary & Valerie Meyer provided elegant winter décor, and we



enjoyed a delicious pot roast beef dinner (with Chris Gerage supervising all the food aspects). Once the dinner dishes were cleared away, we had our Christmas program and our



All set up for our Christmas Party



Anakin Josten entertaining us on the piano.

traditional sing-along. Our guest of honor - Santa Claus- made an appearance and brought a small gift for the kids and for some of the adults as well. After Santa left for the long trip back to the North Pole, we put out our desserts -stollen, cookies and gluh wine, along with coffee and tea. It would not be Kolping without a raffle, and we appreciate that our guests were generous. Everyone lingered,



Santa Claus was happy to join us!



Kolping Family Christmas group photo.

enjoying the wonderful atmosphere and wishing each other a Merry Christmas. Thanks to everyone for coming to the Center to make this party a social success!

At the same hour we were having our Christmas Party on December 14, one of our members, **Frank Heller III** joined his bride Tina in matrimony! The happy couple enjoyed a lengthy honeymoon in Europe, checking out many Christmas Markets along the way. **Best wishes for a lifetime of happiness!**

We were very happy to learn that one of our members, Nancy P. Schmidt, won the first prize (\$1,500) in the Kolping National Raffle! No one was more surprised to learn she won than Nancy herself. What a nice early Christmas present!

Because of the threat of snow, we plan very few events in January and February. We picked things back up this year with our Annual General Meeting on Sunday, March 4. We were happy to welcome 22 members to the meeting, about 43% of our membership. Our afternoon began with a luncheon buffet, then we eased into our meeting. We reported our finances and 2024 activities to the members who were there. Thanks to everyone who helped along and cleaned up, with special thanks to Chris Gerage for the homemade cream of tomato soup.



We posed together at our Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 4

Last but certainly not least, we welcome a new member, Rosemarie Gnam! Rosemarie might officially be our newest member, but she grew up in our Kolping Family and has been supporting us from the sidelines for quite some time. Many will remember her parents, Martha & Gus Gnam, who were longtime Brooklyn members. Anyone who ever attended a picnic at Camp Kolping knows that for a few decades Gus was one of two men cooking dinner on the outdoor fireplace (the other guy was Winfried Blatz!). Rosemarie lives in Virginia, so she will be a long-distance member. We are very happy to add her to our roster!

Best wishes to everyone for a wonderful summer!

Kolping USA Executive Director



There was a point in my life when my world had completely crumbled and I was struggling to find solid ground upon which to stand. I found myself living in a new town, with an income that was barely over the poverty level, and raising a beautiful little girl on my own. It was absolutely essential for me to focus on only what mattered, every waking moment of every day. I was forced to distill everything - my thoughts, my resources, and how I spent my time down to the most important things - my faith, my family, and pursuing a hopeful future for my daughter and me.

That is when I came to realize that over the years of youth ministry, Bible studies, women's retreats, etc. - many of the "good things" that I had been doing, while contributing to the Kingdom of Heaven and my own edification, were just activities that were distracting me from the most important things.

A Bible story that I have heard since I was a child in Sunday School became the benchmark in my mind for how I would choose to spend my time and resources. Three of the four Gospels recount the happenings one night on a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples see a ghost walking on the water and are frightened. Jesus calls out to them to reassure them. Jesus tells St. Peter to come to him on the water; St. Peter gets out of the boat and walks on the water. As long as St. Peter kept his focus on Jesus, and did not look away to the storm and wind, he was able to miraculously defy the laws of Physics. The image in my mind of St. Peter walking on the water only because he was focused on Jesus, helped me to discern between an unfocused activity and activities that would lead to accomplishment. At first, it was difficult to let things go. Once a month I taught the 5-year-olds' Sunday school class; I let that go. I played in the Bell Choir; I let that go. I was driving 45 minutes each way to my old church; eventually, I let that go too, and joined a church nearby. Over time I realized to what extent I had built my life around activities and not purpose.

Within a year, even with a full-time job and raising my daughter, I was able to start graduate school at Indiana Wesleyan University. The course work was the usual Business Administration courses, but one of the primary reference texts throughout the curriculum was the Maxwell Leadership Bible. Not long into my studies, there it was in John Maxwell's 21 Laws of Leadership, Number 17 - The Law of Priorities: *Activity is not necessarily accomplishment*. Maxwell comments that, while activity is based on tasks and processes, accomplishment is based on purposefully

focusing activities on desired results and outcomes. Obviously, this is in the context of business and leadership, but I had seen it work in my life.

It has been many years since I received that diploma, but the words of wisdom of John Maxwell, inspired by the Holy Scriptures, still ring in my brain to this day. *Unfortunately, not loud enough!* As we humans often do, I have gotten distracted and have been filling my time with activities driven by a reactionary state, instead of focusing on desired results. Most days I feel as if I am juggling flaming batons and I feel that if one drops, the whole house will burn down. I am certain that I am not the only one challenged by being busy all the time, yet not really accomplishing anything. It's time for me to re-evaluate and establish my new focus. It's time to stop looking around at the storm and wind and focus on what is important, again.

I don't think that organizations are any different from humans; after all, they are run by humans (at least until AI takes over). What was once a highly focused, results-driven organization, may not be relevant now. As projects and goals are accomplished, new ones need to be identified and prioritized so that activities can be planned and organized to produce the new desired outcomes. If an organization does not define its desired results, the activity still continues without really accomplishing anything, which eventually results in functioning in a reactionary state, and very likely - eventually, the flaming baton juggling act.

Many of our Kolping Families have celebrated their 100th anniversaries. Our National Organization will within a few years. It is time for us, the members of Kolping USA, to take some time to define our primary focus and start to evaluate and re-align our activities to serve that purpose. It is so easy for us to be distracted by the storm and wind, both as an organization and in our personal lives. How blessed are we to belong to an organization that was founded by Blessed Fr. Kolping to be a shelter from the storm and wind and allow us to focus on Jesus!

Please take some time over the next month to fill out the "Member Input" on our website homepage. The national leadership team is looking forward to hearing from you!

Anna P. Stukenborg

International Kolping



UKRAINE: HELP FOR FORMERLY OCCUPIED VILLAGES

On 22 May, Vasyl Savka, Director of Kolping Ukraine, travelled to the south-east of Ukraine, to the Kherson region, with an relief transport. He delivered relief supplies to villages that had been under Russian occupation for many months. He was accompanied by the local police. Here is his travel report:

“Last week, I travelled approximately 2,000 kilometres in the south-east of Ukraine, in the Kherson region. On 22 May, at 00:30 am we set off for Kherson together with representatives of the Chernivtsi police. After a journey of almost twelve hours and over 750 kilometres, we were met at a petrol station near Mykolaiv by colleagues from the Kherson police. From there, we drove straight on to the villages in the Kherson region that had been liberated from the occupation.

Food for the hospital and a diesel generator

After another 2 hour's drive – about 150 kilometres, half of which was over rough terrain and fields – we reached a small village where around 40 villagers were already waiting for us. Representatives from the Central District Hospital in Beryslav also joined us. We handed over a 12 kW diesel generator and around 150 kilograms of food for the hospital staff and patients.

In the village of Stepowe, we delivered around 800 kilograms of humanitarian supplies: food parcels (rice, wheat and corn flour, pasta, oil, canned food, drinking water), a small generator and sweets for the few children who have remained in the village.

Villages were under Russian occupation for eight months

After another 25 kilometres on dirt roads, we reached the neighbouring village of Sahajdatschne. Here, too, people had gathered in the hope of receiving relief supplies. The situation in Sahajdatschne is just as difficult as in the previous village – like in many settlements in the area that

were under Russian occupation for over eight months. Almost all residents have lost their jobs and are forced to survive through small-scale farming and humanitarian aid.

Food prices have doubled

“In the frontline areas, especially in the Kherson region, the majority of the population lacks food. In the Zaporizhzhya and Donetsk regions, every second resident is affected. Food prices have risen by 25%, with some vegetables even doubling in price. This trip was extremely valuable and educational. No report or narrative from other volunteers can convey the impressions you get when you see everything with your own eyes.

The people are exhausted – the resistance is unbroken

We talked to people who survived the occupation and saw fear and exhaustion – but also incredible resilience in their eyes. Every “thank you” was genuine and deeply moving. These encounters remind us how important it is to be there for one another, to support each other and not to leave those affected alone with their suffering. Experiences like these change your perspective, give you new motivation to continue – and teach you to appreciate the simple things in life even more: peace, warmth, food and human kindness.

Thank you for your solidarity

Our heartfelt thanks go to KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, the Diocesan Associations of Hildesheim, Augsburg, Erfurt and Limburg, the Johanniter and Renovabis for their generous help and trust. Without the police escort in Cherson, this aid would hardly be possible. Thanks to your support, we were able to bring hope, food, medical equipment and human contact to particularly hard-hit regions. Your solidarity makes a real difference – and gives the people of Ukraine strength and confidence. Thank you for being with us!!!



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2026 National Convention

Hosted by Kolping Society of New York

Explore the Big Apple with your Kolping family and friends (old and new)!

Save the dates - **September 11-13, 2026.**