

**Regular Minutes of the Houston Cy-Fair Lions Club
Tuesday Aug. 23 , 2016 at 7PM at the Lions Den**

Members: 8

Guests: 3

President Paul opened the meeting promptly. Lion Keith led the pledges to the flags. Lion Paul gave prayer. There was no song. Guests were introduced: Justin Masters, Roger Cross, and Brandon Williams, all from Camp Hope.

After the meal, Justin Masters spoke about his life and how he came to find Camp Hope. He grew up in a very dysfunctional family, with his father a large drug dealer in the Houston area, and his mother a drug addict. He cared for his younger siblings until he was 5 years old, when he was sent to live with his grandparents. They got him involved in Church, and became the best parents they ever had. However Justin still had anger issues, and at the end of High School, his grandfather gave him two choices: either go to college or enlist in the military. So he joined the Marines, and ended up in Afghanistan, where he worked many serious battles. He came home, but reenlisted and this time was sent to Iraq. He has been blown up 7 times in the 9 months he was there. He said he was “mentally fried” after this. He came back home, met a wonderful woman, and was married. Two years later he started having problems with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and was still having anger issues. He self sabotaged himself with things like not showing up for work, pushed his wife, and tried suicide. Finally, he found Camp Hope. Camp Hope has peer to peer counseling, and Warriors Groups from the Viet Nam war through current wars. He improved, then had a set back and didn’t feel like he deserved all the great things in his life. He went to the VA, was put on 15 different medications which made him feel like a zombie. He tried suicide on a motorcycle at 70 mph. He went back to Camp Hope, has gone through the program again, and is currently working there as a peer counselor. His grandfather asked him when he was the happiest in his life, and he answered, “ Now, working at Camp Hope.” There are 45 military personnel and their families currently at Camp Hope. He discussed The Refuge, a place in Conroe for military veterans to go for professional counseling and further help for other problems. Camp Hope is a faith based program and an exercise program to produce healthy mind and body. He works as events coordinator. Each person there has to do 250 service hours yearly. Camp Hope is a 501c3 organization, located off the Beltway at Windfern, close to the horse track. The residents live in beautiful well maintained homes, and attend Cross Bridge Church nearby.

Brandon Williams explained that he was on a roller coaster from early in life, with a father who was never home. He became the Class Clown, and did other attention seeking mechanisms since childhood. He chose to go to the Army after High School. He spent 6 years in active duty, and was involved with the extraction of Saddam Hussein. He reported that he married early, had kids early, then began drinking and partying. His symptoms of PTSD included emotional detachment, unable to hold a job, and not tolerating authority. He stated that Camp Hope found him, he did not find it. He now feels like he belongs. He states he is the happiest he has ever been, his faith is the strongest it has ever been, and he feels whole again.

Roger Cross is from a small town in North Carolina. He was a high school athlete, and his father was his coach. During high school, his girlfriend became pregnant, and had a son. The baby died just a few months of age during his sleep. He joined the military to try to get his life back on track. He met another God fearing woman, got married, and was to be sent to Iraq, but was told that his son’s death was still too fresh in his memory. He ended up in Iraq in 2009, after having two more children. He said he was afraid to become too emotionally attached to his kids because he couldn’t bear the pain of losing them as his first son. He lost his 2 best friends in Iraq. He started drinking to cover up the pain of these

deaths. His youngest son became seriously ill, and he was trying to cope through drugs and alcohol. His wife told him he needed help or she was going to leave him. She found Camp Hope for him, which he credits to saving his life.

All three stressed that the guys at Camp Hope help each other, by talking about their problems. Since they have similar problems, they can very easily relate. There is no hierarchy there, they are a very close knit group and feel they can open up and get stuff off their minds, providing experiences, friendships, and camaraderie to others with similar backgrounds. Camp Hope does accept monetary donations, and the guys give back to the community through service hours within the community. It was started in 2012. Visit their website at www.stsdusa.org.

President Paul dispensed with the Secretary's minutes and Treasurer's report.

Saturday Aug. 27 there will be A Community Conversation event sponsored by the local library held in our facility.

Lion Bud discussed a man who has lost vision in his right eye due to Type 1 Diabetes. He is now 33 years old. He attended Texas Lions Camp as a child. He needs further surgery to help preserve the vision in his left eye, and due to his condition, he has used up all his sick leave at work. Lion Bud motioned that we try to procure a Humanitarian Relief Fund grant with our Club putting up \$1250 and the HRF matching that amount, to help with his medical bills and vision care. Lion Sandy seconded. Motion passed with none opposed. Lion Bud will get the necessary forms/paperwork to the President, Secretary, and Treasurer, then on to the HRF committee.

Lion Bud has tickets for the Children's Magic Festival on Sept. 12. Lion Sandy reported that Lion Chuck was to receive more ticket sales money later this week.

Lion Robert Berry did a free magic show here last Friday night. It was an audition type show, and although the crowd was sparse, everyone had a fun time.

The Bike Ride will be Sun. Oct. 2. We need ALL Lions to participate in some fashion. There will be sit down jobs, as well as driving and working jobs. Contact Lion Chuck at 281-685-6322.

Baseball will begin Sunday Sept. 11 with the Sunday night double header league. Please be available to help at the concession stand.

A member of our Club would like to post on her Facebook page that our Club accepts used eyeglasses. No one had any objection.

A Banner Patch for 100% Camp contribution was received and will be placed on the banner.

We received a thank you note from Leader Dogs for our donation.

With no further business, meeting was adjourned after Lion Mazher led us in a hearty Lions Roar.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandy Martin, Secretary