

# KANDU Connection



April 1, 2021



*A Message from  
Joel Chappelle,  
Board of Directors President*

It has now been a year since the pandemic upended our lives. With the passage of that grim milestone, I thought it would be worthwhile to reflect on your remarkable ability to adapt, overcome, and achieve. You all did something truly extraordinary.

As humans, our well-being is dependent on maintaining close social bonds with one another. An especially cruel irony of viruses like COVID-19, is that they harm us by exploiting our social desire. That is, to “survive,” a virus must continually propagate to new hosts, which is only possible if the hosts “us” facilitate transmission through close physical proximity. In turn, to stop the spread of a virus, we must deliberately deprive ourselves of what we cherish most: each other. Now, after a year of hardship, the pandemic is winding down. In considering our shared sacrifice, I am reminded that we are so much more than the sum of our parts, and how, when we put the well-being of others before our own, we all do better.

So it is for KANDU. While the last year will be remembered for the pandemic, that is only part of what KANDU has overcome. There was also significant organizational upheaval. Jake Reed was promoted to head of production. An exceedingly complex and challenging job under normal circumstances, it is unimaginably more so while navigating a pandemic, leadership changes, and a global supply meltdown. You welcomed Interim Executive Director, Barb Kelley, and then our exceptional new Executive Director, Kathy Hansen. There were, less importantly, many board-level changes as well. Amidst all these challenges, of course, the worst pandemic in a century put Best Events (but not its people) out of commission temporarily. It should have been a terrible year for KANDU.

But this team never got the memo. Instead, they got to work. Rod and Julie gathered their

teams from Best Events and Client Services and went over to production. Jake's team welcomed everyone, and they went to work as one team, putting mission first and doing whatever needed to be done. Given the challenges of operating safely during COVID-19, a significant slowdown in production would have been understandable, but Jake never got that memo either. Instead, he got his family. Enlisting this additional help was necessary to keep up with the flood of work Jake and his team brought in.

In true KANDU spirit, everybody worked together. It was mission first, all the way and as a result, KANDU had an exceptional year. Production revenue didn't just meet its (pre-pandemic) expectations, it obliterated them. It wasn't just a good year; it was the best year. Ever. By an astounding 25%. That is a stunning achievement, and it belongs to every one of you. I hope you are so incredibly proud of what you accomplished, and that you will carry it with you always. You worked together while we were forced to be apart, and together you did the (seemingly) impossible. **Very well done!**



## Rod Oksuita, Chief Development Officer



### Congratulations, Rod!

We are excited to announce that Rod Oksuita has been promoted to Chief Development Officer for the organization.

Rod has been with KANDU and Best Events for 36 years as "Director of Best Events". His dedication to the community and to the mission of KANDU has been an extreme asset. Those who know Rod, whether a client, team member or community leader, know his exemplary work ethic and loyalty to people with disabilities or disadvantages.

Rod will have responsibility for Best Events, fund development, marketing, donor retention and expansion programs, community relations, along with assisting the Executive Director, Kathy Hansen with the strategic planning goals and objectives. He will also work closely with the Director of Marketing & Development, Liz Menz and oversee the Fund Development & Marketing plan implementation.

Executive Director, Kathy Hansen commented, "This simply makes sense as we are evolving as an organization and developing short and long term plans for the future of KANDU. I want to make use of Rod's many years of experience and knowledge for greater success in achieving our goals. He is held in great regard in the Janesville and Beloit business and service communities and well connected to many who support our important mission. His involvement in all facets of KANDU's services and departments make him an ideal person to assist with implementation of our goals as we build for future generations."



2021  
**Golf Tour**

Sponsored by **AAE**  
AMERICAN ALUMINUM EXTRUSION  
CORPORATION

## Introducing KANDU's Golf Tour

Golf season is just around the corner and this year, KANDU is offering a different type of community outing. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, golfers can participate in KANDU's Golf Tour and receive discounted rounds of golf at various local courses. Participants who complete all featured rounds at our partnering courses by September 6th will be entered to win exciting prizes. Partnering courses include Beloit Club, Blackhawk Golf Course, Glen Erin Golf Club, Riverside Golf Course, Edgerton Towne Country Club, Cecelia's Golf Course and more to come! Visit [kanduindustries.com/golf](http://kanduindustries.com/golf) for more information and to become a sponsor. Registration coming soon!



## An Irish Celebration

This St. Patrick's Day, we were lucky enough to find our very own dancing leprechaun, who was even willing to share his pot of gold! He and a most generous Irish lass offered chances to win fortune ranging from chocolate and personal jigs to money and paid time off. Staff and clients at both locations were also treated to a magical Irish feast, complete with corned beef and cabbage, chocolate mint brownies and lucky charm lemonade, courtesy of Best Events. This was the first of many monthly themed Fun Days, so stay tuned to see what we have in store for April. Hint: it's going to be totally tubular! [Click here for more photos.](#)

# DRAGONS ON THE ROCK

SPONSORED BY



DRAGON BOAT RACES AND  
FESTIVAL BENEFITING



**SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 18  
TRAXLER PARK**

WITH STREET CHEF COMPETITION SPONSORED BY



## Dragons on the Rock Boat Team Registration Now Available

Dragon boat racing is back! Early bird registration for the annual dragon boat race and community festival is now available through July 5th. Discounted boat team registration is \$1,000 with payment plans available. After July 5th, team registration is \$1,200 and includes only 1 practice. Registration for nonprofits, students, club teams and municipalities is \$900 and individuals without a team is \$65.

Dragons on the Rock is Saturday, September 18th from 9am-6pm at Traxler Park. The dragon boat race features 16-20 paddlers and 1 drummer in each boat, competing in heats throughout the day to determine the top 3 champions. All equipment and training are provided, as well as experienced staff to steer each boat, so no experience is necessary! All teams will participate in one mandatory hour-long practice session the week leading up to the event. Participants must be 12 or older and 3-4 extra team members are recommended as alternates. The top 3 placing race winners will receive medals and recognition during an award ceremony. Teams are encouraged to be creative with their attire! Especially the drummer! Drummers will have the opportunity to compete for prizes by showing off their costumes and talents during a drum competition.

Boat teams are encouraged to fund raise a minimum of \$1,000 to receive extra perks including:

### The VIP Experience

- Access to the VIP Pavilion with snacks, refreshments, plush furniture and recognition on pavilion entrance signage
- Team name on T-shirts

**As well as a partial sponsorship (1 of 2) of a KANDU client or youth boat.**

The top 3 fundraising teams will receive special recognition.

Visit [kanduindustries.com/dragons](http://kanduindustries.com/dragons) for more information and to register for the race!

KANDU Industries, Inc.

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