



CENTENNIAL BEAT

January 2013

Service Above Self

The Rotary Club of Toronto, \$100,000 Centennial Award

Much More Than A Room With A View

— by Marcie Ponte, Executive Director Working Women Community Centre



The Rotary Club of Toronto is all about making a difference within local communities in the city's core. As an agency, which strongly promotes community engagement, Working Women Community Centre is not only honoured, but immensely excited to have been chosen as a beneficiary of the Centennial Project. The Club's \$100,000 grant was used to create a space whose primary focus is to provide community members with the opportunity to participate in projects that benefit the community at large. The majority of our community members are the often over-looked but highly resourceful demographic—immigrant women.

Once a derelict office unit, The Woman's Meeting Place is essentially a large open concept space with adjacent child-minding room and washroom. The open space includes a fully functional and well-stocked kitchen, with new appliances and a comfortable area that can be custom-configured with tables and chairs.

With a fully accessible washroom and front entrance, new plumbing, flooring, air

conditioning and heating, The Woman's Meeting Place provides an inviting and versatile facility all year round. The space also includes much needed storage for the variety of groups that meet there. The large windows at the front of the building provide plenty of natural light and are very effective at promoting the beautiful interior and the diverse groups that use it.

The greatest asset of the renovated space is that it will allow immigrant women to actively take part in their community by providing a place to plan community engagement projects such as the beautification of local surroundings or to organize social enterprise business activities. In addition, the space will allow immigrant women to improve their lives and the lives of their families by allowing them to participate in a variety of initiatives ranging from health and wellness classes, to financial literacy counseling, to parenting classes. Without the renovation of the space, these and similar programs and services would clearly not be possible. In fact it is because of The Women's Meeting Place that staff and community members alike are able to finally act upon program and service ideas they have been developing.

To fully appreciate the impact The Women's Meeting Place will have, it is important to underscore the value that "coming together" has for low-income immigrants. Too often newcomers don't participate in their community, not for lack of initiative or skills but, because even renting a church basement or a room in the public library is cost-prohibitive. A space such as The Women's Meeting Place allows immigrant women to break isolation, make friends and feel valued through active participation in their community.

On behalf of all the immigrant women and their families who will use The Women's Meeting Place, I thank the Rotary Club of Toronto for understanding a room often consists of more than just four walls.



The Selection Process : A Perfect Opportunity for a Successful Partnership

– by Sylvie Leger, Woman's Initiatives
Committee, Project Liasion

In 2010, the Women's Initiatives Committee (WIC) invited 25 agencies to a forum to consider the Centennial Fund and received many interesting proposals. Three finalists were selected and asked to present a detailed proposal. The Women's Meeting Place project, presented by Working Women Community Centre (WWCC), was selected as the winner.

WWCC had some old office space being used for a variety of purposes ranging from breastfeeding sessions for newcomer moms, to art projects for at risk youth, to fitness classes for seniors. The space provided an opportunity for immigrant women and their families to build skills, make new friends and help one another.

The shabby interior and unhealthy environment was in desperate need of repair but the organization lacked the funding for the necessary renovations. After viewing the existing interior and considering the recommended improvements, the Committee realised the difference a refurbished space would make to the lives of the women and children.

The project presented by WWCC was in line with the WIC's mandate to work on issues related to women's services and education. The renovation project creates a welcoming hub where women can connect and secure important resources and support which can make all the difference to their successful participation and integration in the society. This support will enable newcomers to become fully engaged in the community, productive and ultimately of service to others.



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

“ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK”

– by Bill Morari, Chair of Membership Committee



There seems to be a real buzz happening within the Rotary Club of Toronto, as we reach the halfway point celebrating our 100th Anniversary! And what a great way to start the New Year!

The quality of speakers that have kicked things off for 2013 has been outstanding. Our Program Committee continues to do a terrific job, securing inspirational, informative and engaging guest speakers, each and every week. We are privileged to belong to such a great club, so why not share this experience with others?

I'm delighted to report that our “All you have to do is ask” membership campaign is going great. With three new members introduced by President Neil last week, the Membership Program is alive and well. However, let's not rest on our laurels; we need to keep the momentum going, and encourage all members of our club to have membership growth as a priority, and top of mind.

Your Board of Directors has recently approved an additional “Show of Appreciation” for members who introduce a new member to RCT. The sponsor will receive a complimentary ticket, value \$225, to our Centennial Gala Dinner Event, on Thursday, May 23, 2013. This will be the crowning event of our Centennial Year.

In addition, you will have your name entered in a draw, to take place in May, for a chance to win a case of wine. Also, courtesy of member Geoffrey Johnson and En Ville Event Design and Catering, a dinner of lobster and steak with all the trimmings for four, to go, will be drawn. Last but not least, the member sponsoring the most new members, and a guest, will receive a gourmet dinner for two, complete with wine pairings for each course, courtesy of The National Club.

There has never been a better time to introduce someone to the RCT than right now, during this milestone year celebrating a century of great work in our community, and around the world.

So, let's all get going, and remember, “All you have to do is ask”. Becoming a RCT member can be a life-changing experience; you may be helping someone make one of the best decisions of their lives!

Don't Miss President Sakuji Tanaka's Official Visit Friday, March 1, 2013

– by Robert O'Brien



On Friday, March 1, 2013 (12 noon – 2 pm) The Rotary Club of Toronto will have the honour of hosting the President of Rotary International, Mr. Sakuji Tanaka and his wife Mrs. Kyoko Tanaka at The Fairmont Royal York Hotel, Concert Hall for a very special luncheon meeting and official visit to Toronto, which has been a year in the planning.

This year, The Rotary Club of Toronto is celebrating its 100th Anniversary. That is 100 years of service to humanity, both locally in the City of Toronto, and globally. Our Club is marking this momentous occasion with many special events, and an outstanding line-up of speakers at our weekly luncheon meetings.

More importantly, we are making grants totalling of \$1 million to local charities, Rotary International and global projects.

The Tanakas will be in Toronto to help The Rotary Club of Toronto mark this very special anniversary. Our Club will be presenting the President of Rotary International with a cheque for \$100,000 for Rotary's End Polio Now Campaign. This gift will be matched with funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as well as the Canadian Government, turning this donation into \$300,000!

Please join our celebration and have an opportunity to hear Rotary International President Tanaka's important keynote address on polio. The cost will be \$80 which includes lunch, surprise entertainment and a full program which will run from 12 noon to 2 pm. Tickets may be purchased through the website at www.rotarytoronto.com or by clicking here or you may contact the Rotary office at: 416-363-0604 or email at office@rotarytoronto.on.ca



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