

“Where everyone is kin; with a sense of worth, over all the Earth”

~ adapted from Robert Burns/Gordon McInally, RI President 2023-24

WEEKLY MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday February 7, 2024

Hybrid Meeting

Frank Adamson, Dave Schulz, Hugh Graham, Bob Eamer, Annie Holtby, Michael Jacques, Carolyn Mullin, Sharon Pfeifer, Collins Acheampong, Beverley North, Jess Stephenson (Speaker from Niagara Nutrition Partners), June Mergl (Niagara Falls Noon), Sylvia Mergl, Jeremy Mathai (Kenya)

1. **Welcome Jess Stephenson from Niagara Nutrition Partners, June Mergl of Niagara Falls Noon club and her guest and mother in law, Sylvia Mergl and visiting Rotarian from Kenya, Jeremy Mathai**
2. **Land Acknowledgement. Sharon**
We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people.
3. **Toast & National Anthem. Sharon/Carolyn**
 - a) To the King and Canada, To the Office of the President of the United States, To the President of Rotary International and To the Office of the Prime Minister of Japan.
 - b) National Anthem
4. **4-WAY TEST. Hugh**

Of the things we think, say, or do
Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build good will and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
5. **Invocation. Hugh** **Respect Others Then Act Responsibly Yourself**

6. **President's Report. Correspondence and Announcements. Carolyn.**

February 19. We are sponsoring a Free Skate hour, 11-. At MCC and collecting Food4Kids

February 21. Strategic Planning with Leadership Niagara at our 730 am meeting.

March 2. A Saturday workshop, 9-12 in our meeting room, (Kinsman Room), for our Strategic Planning.

April 5 & 6. Home Show. Hugh. We have a booth reserved by the entrance/exit so we're last to set up after 7 and first to take down on Sunday.

April 20. Tree Planting. 400 trees at cost. Same day as Clean Up. Pelham Cares – 100 trees for Pelham Cares Forest

April 26 & 27. Rotary District Conference.

May. Paul Harris Evening

7. **Introduction of today's Speaker. Annie** introduced **Jess Stephenson, Niagara Nutrition**

Partners. Presentation NNP coordinates 201 student nutrition programs across our 12 municipalities. These programs consist of a healthy breakfast, lunch and/or snack – based on each school's capacity and need and tailored specific to them. – 24,000+. 1,000 volunteers (hunger heroes) work the front lines. Many of our programs are student run. Often built into everyday curriculum, students learn to do the program budgeting, food ordering, and many high school culinary teams cook and serve each meal.

A Healthy Breakfast can have a BIG impact including things like an inclusive school community, improved learning capacities, reduced occurrence of behavioral incidents and of course alleviating hunger related stress by providing access to healthy food.

Implementing the concept of universality has been transformative in removing the stigma often associated with school 'breakfast' clubs. Come to school hungry? No questions asked. Unfortunately, Student Nutrition Programs **across Ontario are experiencing financial obstacles** that have had a large impact on how we run non-stigmatizing programs. Our expenses for food, equipment and delivery are increasing at alarming rates and **each program is becoming more expensive to maintain as a result.** Our rightful mandate is to provide fresh, preferably local, high quality foods at all times – a fruit/veg, grain and dairy project. This is what the kids deserve but at significant cost.

Families building from pandemic losses have become more reliant on NPP's programs than in previous years PLUS a continuing increase in student population also requires more resources. And this is experienced across the board of those providing nutrition services. And with fewer resources we moved from a hot meal at breakfast to a granola bar. It's very hard on everyone.

The provincial government came through with a 1 time investment of \$1.1 million across Ontario last June in which Niagara received \$34,652. Along with local donations from philanthropists, **clubs (including Rotary)** and groups, communities and schools, these efforts saved our programs in the short term but left us longing for some sort of sustainability moving forward.

In September the Government of Ontario committed an additional \$5 million towards the Ontario Student Nutrition Program and First Nations student Nutrition Program for their school year. Niagara's portion was \$103,080. **It was an important acknowledgement that school meal programs are an essential pillar in food security.** That funding only equals 4 extra cents per child for this one time only commitment.

Thank you, Fonthill Rotary friends for your support. You've made feeding school-aged children in our community a priority and because of you **and your generous donation of \$4338 today from your Purse Bingo!** Niagara Nutrition Partners will have the ability to continue providing a nutritious meal to students in 5 breakfast lunch and snack programs daily right here in Pelham.

Carolyn. Thank you, Jess, for sharing the present story of Niagara Nutrition Partners .Also, in honour of you speaking today Jess, we will be making a donation in your name to Pelham Cares for their New Comer Program.

8. Induction of Sharon Pfeifer as our newest member in Rotary by Frank, our Membership Chair.

Sharon was proposed by Carolyn and is sponsored by Dave.

Sharon shared a bit of her long journey that has come full circle with Rotary today. She grew up in Manitoba and her first experience with Rotary was in Kenora where she had a summer job with the radio station. She became a Rotaractor and jumped at a two week exchange with a Japanese club, then back to Lake of the Woods and Tourism. She moved to Nanaimo and worked with her dad, then back to radio and her interest in the Environment grew. From the Chamber of Commerce and Business Development to the Radio Family in Winnipeg where Sharon did freelancing with Global News which gave her lots of time with the kids. There she volunteered with the school and a youth group. 5 years in Pelham including the Covid years have passed. She joined the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Foundation, the culmination of other career choices she'd made in the past. This is reflected in her home property that's been 'naturalised' in Fenwick. Sharon says it's also so nice to be back with Rotary!

9. Visiting Rotarian from Kenya, Jeremiah Mathai is Charter President of his club and also Current President! Jeremy spoke briefly about his club's project to provide a pair of shoes to each primary student in his area's 4 primary schools. Thus far, 2000 pairs have been presented. They have a partner that manufactures the shoes so they get a cost effective rate.. There are 146 clubs in Kenya and all are being invited to support this project for all primary students.

Dates till end of month!

February 14th Performing Arts Centre Presentation by Colleen Smith, Diana McAdorey

February 21st Strategic Planning Session with Leadership Niagara. We need you there!

February 28th Board Meeting, MCC Concession area. Everyone is welcome.