



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

Marcia Armstrong, President

September 5, 2023 Reporter: Gavin Schnobb

Program: Igor Zosymenko and Maureen Adamache

Bikes for Ukrainians

This meeting was hybrid

Meeting Video: <https://youtu.be/chL7leOTL34?si=bu8DiB4ENUb-Rdes>

Meeting enablers

Communication links: **Brett Brooking**

Payments: **Dave Morton;**

Past President's Draw: run by **Graeme Fraser**, and won by Denzil Feinberg.

Attendance: **Mary Wattie** and **Theresa Jamone** 24 people were in attendance and 6 guests

Room arrangements: people who helped were thanked.

Meeting opens:

From noon to 12:30, a film of Bea Osome's most recent Kigama well project in Kenya was shown. Video of Bea's project with much laughter and smiles. A place for kids to wash their hands.

Bea said a few words. During Covid-19 we were discouraged but they were able to get donations from her church and others. They created a well and toilets were put in during 2022 thanks to Rotary. The care of the well is put in many people's charge; the villagers have to sign papers stating to take care of the well because they are for the children as well the community.

We gathered again at St Anthony's Banquet Hall on Preston St. which is situated on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.

Prior to the recording, Marcia thanked Gavin, Jen and Graeme for doing a fine job filling in for Brett when he was on vacation in Japan with his family. Marcia also thanked Ginette for filling in for her last week. Graeme reminded Marcia that she appears to be taking 1 meeting a month off. Marcia quipped that we'll see if that trend continues.

At 12:32 O Canada video

Several Guests today including; Surinder and Bonnie Khanna, Kay Hogan, Gerhardt Peters and Roger Barlison. And our speakers today Igor and Maureen

At 12:35 Past President Graeme inducted Ivan Tobilyvich into the Club. He has been a Rotary member since 2008 and he's been a President of his club in Kiev. Business is import/export and business. Welcome Ivan and thank you for choosing us.

Larry Chop introduced speakers. **Igor Zosymenko and Maureen Adamache**
Maureen Bio - She is a former project manager, policy, working in business, non-profit, retired justice lawyer and e-biker. Igor is a Ukrainian immigrant.

Maureen got interested in this project from a Facebook page. The Ukrainian Settlement Helpers page. She saw an ad for bikes on the page. She had 4 bikes available in her shed and grown-up kids so she went and gave them to the bike organization and asked how she could help.

Then Maureen set up a bike depot in her own garage. It went on from there. Started asking for bikes, posting ads. Then bike mechanics offered to help. The mechanics were a huge help because they fixed all these old bikes.

She found some (Sherpa) ladies that help people pick out bikes, based on size and preference. They started on Easter Sunday and gave out 10 bikes. Maureen was emotionally moved when recalling the day.

An example of a nice bike story: A tall 17 year old boy came looking for a bike. They built him a prototype. He got a bike for a tall person and he got on the bike and didn't get off for hours.

She shared a couple other stories of how the bikes proved very valuable to the immigrants.

To date: The program has donated over 700 bikes to Ukrainians over the past 2 years. And she was very proud of it.

Maureen said this project forced her to learn many new skills and different hats including inventory watcher, trouble shooter, bookkeeper, organizer, social media poster.

Safe Roads Ottawa provides bells for the bikes and the helmets were provided by the Brain Injury Prevention group at the City of Ottawa.

It is a great project. Builds a small community. Kept the bikes from landfills. We are hoping we won't be needed next year.

Igor addressed the audience and thanked us for the opportunity to talk. People need bikes. Finding a bike brings independence for immigrant families. He went to Bikes for Ukrainians to search for a bike for his 4 year old son and 16 year old sister. He was eager to help out as well. Getting a bike was necessary for transportation.

The bike and program have helped immensely.

It is important to have Ukrainian volunteers. Igor helped with communication between the new immigrants and Canadians trying to help. It opened friendships. People had to leave their houses and it was hard. This provided a place to chat and make connections. Even the process of selecting a bike was fun. Ukrainian people experienced the best moments in several months. A reminder of the simpler times.

Igor talked about the relationships that the program created and as a new immigrant, the program provided a chance to meet new people in a new country and network and feel a bit normal again.

Most Ukrainians are hardworking, they just need help. Igor gave a plea to help Ukrainians. Igor saw how bikes changed the lives of people. Remembering their faces, they were happy for the first time in months. The kids found hope with their bicycles. They are very happy to be here and thanks for the help.

Questions

What does someone do who wants to help right now?

Maureen recommends donating bicycles to [House to Home Furniture Donation Centre \(h2hottawa.com\)](http://House to Home Furniture Donation Centre (h2hottawa.com)).

Larry thanked Maureen and Igor for their presentation.

A donation to Polio plus will be given to acknowledge their presentation to the Club.

Amazing project. People rally when it's necessary.

Announcements:

Marcia plugged club T-shirts and was wearing one, they are available for \$28.75 from John Matthews and Karen Logan. Let Karen know your size. A wish for embroidered logos rather than silk screen logos on the shirts was expressed. Karen will check on additional costs for that.

Soc & Rec update: At Agriculture Museum September 16th at 10:30 am followed by lunch at Dows Lake Umbrella Bar.

Other club events, Orleans – Wine and Cheese on Sunday 17th September 2pm-5pm

Kanata Rotary hosting a Taste of Wine and Chocolate at Phiney's point on September 23rd 3:30pm to 5:30pm.

Info on club Facebook page.

Rocco issued a plea for volunteers to help deliver mums, including new members.

Past President Prize organized by Graeme Fraser. Denzal Feinberg won.

We adjourn

President Marcia told us about next week's presentation, wished us well and adjourned the meeting.

Cash Calendar winners

<https://www.ottawarotarycalendar.com/2023-winners.html>

Next Meeting

Hybrid

Tuesday, September 12th, 2023

“Doors open” 12:00. Meeting proper starts @ 12:30

Speaker: Dr. Allen Middlebro on Modern Terrorism Past and Future

Introduced by Bob Harrison

Greeters: Ron Doll and Girija Dube

Banner Setup: Gavin Schnobb and Dave Morton

Past President's Draw: Alan Bowles (Jean Begin)

In person: St Anthony Banquet Hall

Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81365346181> Meeting ID: 813 6534 6181

