



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

Marcia Armstrong, President

January 30, 2024 Reporter: Don Butler

Program: Wendy Pyper – Cuba Canada Care Connection -4C

This meeting was by Zoom only

Meeting Video: <https://youtu.be/jzH1y6Bp0sA>

President Marcia Armstrong welcomed us to the 29th meeting of the Rotary Year. She acknowledged that we meet on the traditional unceded lands of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation and reminded us to always be mindful of their story in the history of Canada. Let's learn about it, and then act to bring about change and honour their elders for their knowledge of living in harmony with the land.

Guests: President Marcia welcomed online guest Wendy Pyper, our speaker.

O Canada video: rendition with a female voice, instrumental backing and Canadian scenes

Presentation

In his introduction of Wendy Pyper, **Phil Powel Smith**, told us he had known Wendy for a long time, having tutored her son and now tutoring her grandson. He recalled that he in his Classification Talk he had spoken highly of Wendy and of her support work for Cuba, much of it from her kitchen table, and thought that a connection with Rotary might interest our Club and could help further Wendy's work.

Wendy took the mic and, lo, was now in her basement and we could see shelves full of supplies ready to be shipped to Cuba. Her work in Cuba started in 1997 when she, her husband and her son had taken a holiday to a resort in Santiago de Cuba. They had filled their suitcases with children's clothes and other supplies. They took these to the school nearby and presented them to a teacher. They found they liked not just the sun and sea, but also the people, and returned to Cuba many times, often to that same resort.

Cuba is under an American embargo and other economic problems which means it is in short supply of many things. Wendy noted that urinary catheters are hard to get in Cuba and patients risk infection and other problems without new clean ones. Even gauze for wound treatment is often unavailable.

That is why the Cuba Canada Care Connection, 4C, brings medications and medical supplies to Cuba. Much of these supplies are “expired” in Canada and might well end up in landfill here. 4C supplies support therapeutic, diagnostic, and preventative care for all ages in rural areas and large cities. 4C is built on the model of Not Just Tourists <https://njt.net/> which uses tourists to carry needed supplies to countries all over the world. 4C can draw medical supplies from NJT and its own supporters and buys items like acetaminophen on sale and packs them in boxes to be shipped by air cargo to Cuba. 4C supporters vacationing in Cuba also carry suitcases with supplies. What is crucial is that all supplies in Cuba be received by known and trusted contacts. 4C gets feedback from receiving hospitals and clinics, including pictures of supplies being delivered and of the patients being treated.

Since March 17, 2021, 4C has raised almost \$19,000 for air cargo, purchases and other expenses and has sent just under 1500 kg of supplies -2/3 by air cargo, and the rest in suitcases.

4C is convinced its model works and would like to grow. However, fundraising is hard and unpredictable. These are some of the ways that RCWO could help: provide financial grants; act as intermediary to receive contributions destined for 4C and issue CRA receipts to donors; association of 4C with Rotary would increase 4C credibility; and, finally, increase 4C exposure to donors and travelers and to healthcare professionals, who are sources of excess supplies and medications.

Q&A

Robert Eagle for our International Service Committee proposed that he and Wendy meet and discuss ways that our Club could help 4C in the short term and on a continuing basis. Wendy agreed.

Brett Brooking asked if 4C had issues with Cuban customs. Wendy said no. Initially each recipient could receive 10Kg with no duties and that limit had now been raised to 15Kg.

Tom Belton thought 4C was doing valuable work and wondered if they could not save money by shipping by sea. Wendy said that it is cost efficient to ship by sea but the paper work requirements for large shipments are very onerous and sharing out the contents of the container to the small communities 4C serves is complicated.

Gord Leverton asked about Wendy's mention of mobility devices. Wendy had meant canes which are needed there and fit into boxes and suitcases.

Answering **Andrew Young** on finding trustworthy contacts to receive shipments Wendy said her first had been recommended by NJT and another was a long-term contact of her 4C associate.

Nigel Lever offered to connect 4C with Canadian Blood Services which must regularly get rid of supplies rated as "expired" in Canada but still usable. Wendy welcomed that and cited an Ottawa plastic surgeon's offer to put her in touch with smaller regional hospitals and paramedic services also for supplies. She said that links like that were much better than cold calls.

Answering **Ken Murray, Linda Flynn** said that tax deductible donations for 4C could be given to our Club service fund westottawarotaryclub@gmail.com with instructions that they be passed to 4C

Phil thanked Wendy for her presentation and looked forward to working with 4C to support its work in Cuba.

Awards Nominations

Bob Harrison told us it is again time for us to select Club members and/or nonmembers to nominate for awards. He reviewed the different awards and the criteria and said Awards Committee members would be reminding us again to get those nominations in. Due by March 30.

Here is a history of the Awards Program, detailed criteria for the Awards and Awards nomination forms

<https://rcwo.org/Stories/want-to-nominate-someone-for-an-award>

Soc and Rec

Ron Doll told us that we could again Mush with Morton – hiking/snowshoeing with **Dave Morton** Feb 18 and then a meal at the Royal Oak.

On March 16 we will celebrate St Patrick's day at Connor's Irish Pub.

April 8 – a possible eclipse watching party

Stay tuned for details for all of these.

President Marcia urged us to mark these events in our calendars. They give us the in-person fellowship we don't have right now at our meetings.

Coldest Night fundraiser for Cornerstone

Emilie Gendron and **Ana Ideias** seek members to join the Movers and Shakers team which will walk Feb 24. Donations are also welcome. Let them know by Feb 15.

Birthdays

Fred Christie, on behalf of our Club Foundation, extended February greetings to **Denzil Feinberg, President Marcia, Wilmer Pulido, Frank Cranton, Jen Ahde, Rocco Disipio, Bruce Fry and Phil Powel Smith**. Fred added the classifications and Club responsibilities of each to further identify them.

We Close

President Marcia told us that at next meeting **John Matthews** would give his Classification Talk and then adjourned this meeting.

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

Next Meeting
Zoom ONLY
Tuesday, February 6, 2024

“Doors open” 12:00. Meeting proper starts @ 12:30
John. Matthews – Classification Talk
Intro & Thanks: **Marcia Armstrong**

Spinoff: **Ginette Thomas**

Duties
TBA

In person meetings start again April 2

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