



Spino-ff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

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Marcia Armstrong, President
September 17 2024 Editor: Don Butler

This meeting was hybrid
(In person at **New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant**
Carlingwood Shopping Centre)

Program: : Kim Hiscott, Exec. Dir. Ottawa Forest and Nature School

In-person: 28 members 3 guests
Online: 16 members 2 guests

Meeting Video: https://youtu.be/ch_AZoJFTQg

President Marcia Armstrong welcomed us to the 12th meeting of this 120th Rotary Year. She acknowledged meeting in our new venue in the Carlingwood Shopping centre was also on the traditional lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe. Among the guests was Tina Chapman, Assistant Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator for Zone 28.

O Canada video sung as a female solo with instrument backing and Canadian scenes

Introduction by Chris Braeuel: Kim Hiscott, a passionate advocate for children's outdoor learning, heads Andrew Fleck Children's Services, which offers licensed and unlicensed childcare programs, including the Ottawa Forest and Nature School. Kim has years of experience in youth education,

starting with early childhood and working through teen parents joining the Andrew Fleck group in 2008.

Presentation Summary:

Kim told us the Ottawa Forest and Nature School (OFNS), located on 140 acres at Wesley Clover Parks, the school provides children with the chance to learn outdoors all year round. Kim emphasized the importance of risky play, where children engage in activities like climbing trees and building forts, helping them develop confidence, problem-solving skills, and a deeper connection to nature.

The school focuses on allowing children to experience outdoor environments regularly, encouraging them to become stewards of the land. Kim highlighted how this type of play encourages children to explore, take risks, and engage their imaginations in ways traditional classrooms often don't.

While the program is unlicensed and not eligible for government subsidies, Kim spoke about the Opportunity Fund that helps families who may not otherwise afford the program. She shared a story of a family with two children with special needs who received financial assistance, allowing them to continue attending the school. Their experience had a lasting, positive impact on both the children and their family.

Kim also touched on the benefits of outdoor play for educators, noting that staff working in these environments take fewer sick days and are generally healthier than those working in indoor programs. Finally, Kim discussed the need for more equitable access to the program and future plans, such as securing transportation options to allow more children to attend.

Her presentation emphasized the value of giving children space to explore, learn, and grow through outdoor play. She showed us a video of the school' <https://youtu.be/PY9bZGa6p-A> and some slides which are sent with this report

Q&A highlights

-there are limits on the number of days/week a child may come to OFNS.

-children come to OFNS primarily as a result of its links with Ottawa school boards and parental research.

-Equity and Accessibility: Kim addressed concerns about program accessibility, explaining that while there is a lottery system for enrollment, the program's popularity and the location's lack of public transit present challenges. A possible solution could involve acquiring a bus to facilitate transportation.

-Risky Play: Kim emphasized that risky play helps children develop essential life skills. While society often views these activities with caution, research shows that children engaged in controlled risk-taking are less likely to suffer serious injuries.

-Most Andrew Fleck services are funded by government, but the OFNS is unlicensed and cannot be. To be licensed, and thus funded, the OFNS would have to build an expensive building, which is at odds with the outdoor focus of the school. Fees are approximately \$900 per child per season.

-Nordic countries and Scotland are ahead of us in outdoor education.

-**Caroline Dewitt** mentioned the Rotary club of Peter Burrow support of camp Kawartha and cooperation with the Ontario College of education on outdoor teaching. Algonquin College has its Plato program.

Chris Braeuel thanked Kim for her presentation adding that we had noted the coordinates of the OFNS Opportunity Fund for those wishing to make a donation. He gave her a memento and told her of our donation to End Polio to mark her presentation

Past Presidents' Draw: Kim drew the winning ticket, and **David MacGregor** was the lucky recipient.

Announcements

Fred Christie invited members to look into selling Cash Calendars at retirement homes. It seems **Mike Traub** arranged for us to do it at Riverstone properties

-Mums Update: Larry Chop read a report from **Rocco Disipio**, urging more members to sign up for delivering. Dates: Oct 3,4 and 5. Of the 134 delivery routes, 40 were still in need of volunteers. Of 96 members 25 have volunteered. The Club does better if members deliver rather than our partners. Email Rocco or Mums 2024 RCWO

Happy Dollars:

-Gord Leverton expressed his gratitude for the success of the Club's Foundation Walk, which raised \$17,120. **Doug Rowlands** being absent, **Ron Baker** was the biggest contributor present and won the free lunch and the socks. Other sock winners were **Lynne Fraser** and **Susan Diening** and

-Larry Chop shared his excitement about starting his volunteer work at Regina St. Public School, assisting with outdoor education by leading students on walks at Mud Lake

-Alan Bowles had visited former member Navin Pareckh in Toronto. Navin had won PHF and other recognition for Rotary service projects in Uganda. **Alan** said Navin looks well.

-Yves Lafontaine told us he had annoyed his friends but got three more cars to deliver Mums. He invited us to do likewise

-Yves continued that he had asked the International Service Committee to put \$5000 towards building a soup kitchen in a small village in Peru. He added that the micro finance company KIVA was supporting a research project by two students on fundraising. **Yves** concluded that “this club is a nice boat where everybody is paddling”

John Kersley was happy to be living at the Stirling Park retirement home while his flat is being repaired.

Visiting Rotarian Vincent Opoku from RC Accra East in Ghana told us he was studying engineering at U Ottawa. He liked what he saw at our Club meeting.

Close

President Marcia got a show of hands in support for meeting again at this restaurant. She told us that at our meeting on September 24, Michaela Ferguson will speak about the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation – Orange Shirt Day. Members are encouraged to wear orange shirts. Adjourn

Calendar winners

<https://rcwo.org/>

**Next Meeting - Hybrid
Tuesday, September 24, 2024**

**New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant
Carlingwood Shopping Centre**

Luncheon at noon. Meeting at 12:30

Program: Michela Ferguson—National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

Intro and Thanks: **Gaye Moffett**

Spinoff: **Don Butler**

For log on info for Zoom see invitation

