



Spinoff

ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

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.
Marcia Armstrong, President
September 10 2024 Editor: Don Butler

This meeting was hybrid
(In person at Nepean Sailing Club)

Program: Heather Norris Ottawa Network for Education

In-person: 26 members 5 guests
Online: 16 members 1 guest

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

Standing in for **President Marcia Armstrong**, Past President **Jean Begin** welcomed us to the 11 meeting of this 120th Rotary Year at the Nepean Sailing Club. She acknowledged that we met on the traditional lands of the Algonquin Anishinaabe. She recognized guests Shanta Raj Sharma Neupane, RC Burtibang, Nepal, Area Governor Joan Hunter with Dawn Stroka RC Ottawa, Jocelyn Burns, guest of **Mike Traub**, our speaker Heather Norris and on-line guest Deborah Scarpelli.

O Canada video sung by the Sunday Choir of Ajax, Ontario showed Canadian scenes

Bob Harrison introduced Heather Norris, President and CEO of the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) as an experienced leader in the Ottawa healthcare sector. She has Masters in Philanthropy from Carleton University and believes the non-profit sector makes a vital contribution to the economy of the community. She has successfully led ONFE's initiatives to support

students across Ottawa, particularly focusing on student well-being, literacy, and nutrition.

Heather started by recognizing that some cCub members were already supporting ONFE initiatives. One is the reading program., She continued that ONFE's mission is to inspire and support every child's learning journey and reaching their full potential. ONFE likes to say it fuels kids (with food programs) and “ignites learning every school day with the programs that we offer,”

- ONFE collaborates with Ottawa's school boards, public and Catholic, English and French, post secondary education, business firms, community organizations and government to offer programs that range from literacy support to career readiness. The flagship programs include:
 - **Volunteers in Education:** Provides one-on-one tutoring and classroom support. Last year, the program reached 8,000 students across 105 schools.
 - **Ottawa Reads:** Matches volunteers with kindergarten to grade three students to help develop early literacy skills.
 - **Food Programs:** The Breakfast Program ensures that 22,000 students receive a nutritious meal daily. Snacks and lunches are also supported as required. Government funding is received for some of this but Heather highlighted the growing need for this program, particularly with rising food costs and an increasing number of immigrant and refugee families.
- **Financial Literacy (JA Ottawa):** ONFE teaches financial literacy and entrepreneurship to 13,000 students annually through programs like the JA Company Program, which gives students hands-on experience in running a business.
- **Classroom Gardens:** A fun and educational program where students grow and eat their own produce, with 100 schools participating in Ottawa.

ONFE is a charity and does fundraising events and solicit grants from business and other organizations. It tries to raise \$1 million per year.

ONFE programs need volunteers support and they do active recruiting. Heather thought that anyone who has a passion to support work with children and youth would probably find a good fit with ONFE

Heather also spoke about ONFE's role in advocating for a national school food program, which Canada is the only G7 country to currently lack. Recent efforts have led to promising steps by the federal government toward establishing such a program.

Q&A

- **Means Testing for School Food Programs:** Heather explained that ONFE's programs are universal, as students may need food for various reasons on any given day, and applying a means test would create unnecessary barriers. However parents who can provide meals are asked to do so as government funding must be supplemented by fundraising to provide all the food support needed
- **Challenges from COVID:** Volunteers could not be in schools to prepare, package and serve food so providing single-serve food items skyrocketed food costs during COVID-19, ONFE is working on transitioning back to more cost-effective models.

ONFE slide presentation- sent with this Spionff

Bob Harrison thanked Heather saying that he had not realized how much was involved in ONFE food and education programs. He gave her a memento and told her we would donate to End Polio to mark her visit. He then called on members who read for the literacy program to stand and be recognized and invited anyone interested to call him.

Club Business:

- **Past Presidents' Draw:** Heather Norris drew the winning ticket number but Spinoff missed who won.
- **Soc and Rec: Ron Doll** reminded us of the visit to Rideau Hall and lunc afterward at the Tavern on the Falls the following Friday
- **Mums for Thanksgiving: Rocco DeSipio** called for more members to volunteer to deliver Oct 3,4 and 5. Only a few had volunteered so far and each plant a member delivers is \$4.75 to the Club. A delivery route is around 32 plants so call Rocco and say how many routes you will do.
- **Graeme Fraser** endorsed **Rocco's** call for drivers and then told us about the inter- District competition to raise funds for the Rotary Foundation at the Action Zone training event on Sept 17-22 in Toronto <https://actionzone2023.sched.com/> . We would be asked by email to contribute. Graeme also called for support to the Lionhearts <https://www.lionhearts.ca/> which collects healthy food which cannot be sold for aesthetic or other reasons and gets it to people who need it. We have all received an email about this.
- **Happy Dollars:**
 - **Denzil Feinbeg** was pleased at the growth of his RESP and recommended the program to prepare for children's education.
 - **Rocco Disipio** told of trip to Michigan with family members to see a football game. Some had gone to school there.

Special presentation

Guest Shanta Raj Sharma told of his area of Nepal, which has a hunting reserve and how he had gone home there after post-doctoral research in Halifax to establish a Rotary club there. He spoke about his club's interest in partnering with the Rotary Club of West Ottawa. He highlighted the unique needs of his rural community, such as building toilets, kitchens, and science labs for schools. He emphasized the impact of small projects and expressed hope for collaboration between the two clubs on initiatives to improve local education and sanitation in Nepal. He would send us detailed proposals

Closing:

Acting President Jean Bégin reminded members of the upcoming September 17 meeting at the New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant at the Carlingwood Shopping Center, 2121 Carling Avenue She told us about the next meeting presentation and adjourned

Calendar winners

<https://rcwo.org/>

NB

**Next Meeting - Hybrid
Tuesday, September 17 2024**

**New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant
Carlingwood Shopping Centre**

**NB Lunch preceded by Rotary Foundation Walk at 10:30 from back door
of restaurant. Dave Morton will lead.**

Luncheon at noon. Meeting at 12:30
Program: Kim Hiscott, Exec. Dir. Andrew Fleck Ottawa Forest and Nature
School

Intro and Thanks: **Chris Braeuel**
Spinoff: **Don Butler**

For log on info for Zoom see invitation

