



ROTARY CLUB OF WEST OTTAWA

MarciaArmstrong,President

December 3 2024 Editor: Don Butler

This meeting was hybrid

(In person at **New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant**
Carlingwood Shopping Centre)

Chaired by **Ginette Thomas** standing in for **President Marcia Armstrong**

Program: Program: Dr Nancy Gilbert, -Rotary project Malawi

In-person: 36 members, 1 guest

Online: 20 members, no visitors

Opening:

Ginette Thomas, acting for absent **President Marcia**, welcomed everyone to the 23rd meeting of the 120th Rotary Year. She highlighted that December 3 marks the **International**

Day of Persons with Disabilities, a UN-designated day to promote awareness and inclusion. **Ginnette** acknowledged the Algonquin Anishinaabe people and their traditional territory. **Nancy Gilbert**, the keynote speaker, was introduced

O **Canada**: video sung by Steve Jarnick with guitar and showing Canadian scenes.

Presentation

Robert Eagle, International Service Chair, introduced Dr. Nancy Gilbert, a Rotarian for over 30 years. After practicing law and running an advertising agency with her husband, Nancy joined the Water and Sanitation Rotary Action Group WASRAG in the early 2000s and worked on WAS projects in Nigeria. She is currently a member of the water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) Rotary e-Club. Nancy is the executive director of Transform International which provides training, tools and resources to help families climb out of poverty.

Nancy began her presentation by discussing her organization's work in northern Malawi's **Rumphi** District, an area with critical needs in healthcare infrastructure. She shared the story of the maternity wing renovation project, a collaboration involving our Club and Rotary clubs from Nova Scotia, Washington State, and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Nancy described how a condemned maternity building, infested with termites, was rebuilt with durable materials and equipped with solar-heated water, ensuring comfort for new mothers and infants. This project, completed within a year, highlighted the power of Rotary partnerships.

Nancy emphasized the importance of WASH noting alarming statistics: 50% of health care facilities in low-income countries lack basic hygiene services, and 9.5 million people die annually from healthcare-acquired infections. She explained the Transform International **Streams Program**, which trains local health workers to maintain WASH standards and infrastructure, resulting in a 50% reduction in infection rates.

Controlling these infection rates is relevant to us in Canada too. The newly developed superbugs don't stay in Africa.

Nancy also discussed the **Community Health Clubs**, an initiative of Africa Ahead <https://africaahead.org/>, which empower villagers to adopt better hygiene practices. She shared the story of Precious, a young woman whose participation led to significant improvements in her family's health and home. Graduates of these clubs often transition to **Street Business School** <https://www.streetbusinessschool.org/>, learning

basic entrepreneurship skills. Nancy highlighted how this program increases incomes by 300-500%, enabling families to send children to school and access healthcare.

Nancy concluded with opportunities for future collaboration, including expanding WASH programs to new districts in Malawi and Kenya. She invited the club to consider funding or volunteering for these impactful projects.

Q&A Highlights:

- Asked about the prohibition against buildings being funded by Rotary global grants. Nancy answered that this does not seem to apply to toilets. The funding for the actual maternity building was done by District rather than Global Grants.
- **Jim Maxwell** said Global Grants could be easily used for trades training as had been done for a project in Eswatini. Nancy agreed this was a good development tool. Successful trainees often wanted to give back
- **Ron Baker** agreed that working with Global Grants was very frustrating. Nancy said that project initiators could work with her organization .
- **Sustainability:** Nancy explained that investments in infrastructure paired with behavior-change programs ensure long-term success.
- **Government Cooperation:** Answering **Bob Harrison** on apparent government barriers to projects Nancy said that challenges remain but Malawi's leadership values education and progress, making partnerships feasible.

See Nancy's slides <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13yN8BHLpj3WML9PZaIDC-TobL-9fwha1/view?usp=sharing>

Robert Eagle thanked Nancy for her presentation, saying he thought our Club and she could work together in the future. He gave her the usual memento and told her about our donation to End Polio.

Club Business and Announcements:

1. **Past Presidents' Draw:** Nancy drew the winning ticket, with **Susan Diening** claiming the prize.

2. **Birthdays Recognition: Jean Bégin** announced December birthdays, celebrating **Dave Morton, Rod Holmes, Ed Balys and Yves LaFontaine**. She asked that the birthday people give to the Club foundation
3. **Holiday Party:** Tickets for the December 17th **Holiday Lunch** at St. Elias are available for \$45. Contact **Jean Holbert Leighton**
4. **Larry Chop** talked about Advent getting such as the fun of opening slots in Advent calendars and getting chocolates or other goodies and called for Advent giving of food baskets (or bags) to the Westboro Food Bank.
5. International Day of Giving: **Nigel Lever** asked us give to RC Kyiv Balzac which wants to give orphaned kids in several regions of Ukraine something to celebrate at Christmas. The RC contacted us through former member Joe Redhead and **Robert Eagle**. Donations via **Dave Morton** will get a tax receipt. Specify that the donation is for this project.
See <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1411XXJNdeYojUi2MWU7NOyf2E72WY7gF/view?usp=sharing>.

NB **Ivan Tobilevych**, used to be with the Ukraine RC

6. **Graeme Fraser** announced a Lionhearts (<https://www.facebook.com/Lionhearts.yow/> pumpkin pie making project, encouraging members to volunteer for baking shifts Dec 18-20. See **Graeme's** email Dec 3.

Happy Dollars:

- **Jake Maarse** proudly showcased his polished Rotary bell,
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Closing:

Ginette reminded members of the Dec 10 program featuring **Beryl Puddifer's** Classification Talk. Adjournment

Program Change for Dec 10

President Marcia Armstrong advises that **Beryl** will not give her talk Dec 10. Meeting will be on Club business

Calendar winners

<https://rcwo.org/>

Next Meeting - Hybrid

Tuesday, Dec 19 2024

New Desi Zaiqa Restaurant

Carlingwood Shopping Centre

Luncheon at noon. Meeting at 12:30

Program: Club Business

Intro: **President Marcia Armstrong**

Spinoff: **Don Butler**