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***Conferred on Janine Willis Maxwell & Ian Jaynes Maxwell on June 29, 2021***

These awards are being bestowed to recognize the outstanding contributions made by Janine & Ian Maxwell in their roles as the co-founders and senior managers of the charity *Heart for Africa.* The charity was founded in 2006. Its original mission was to improve the welfare of orphans and vulnerable children in sub-Saharan Africa. The HIV/AIDS pandemic in this large region was leaving tens of thousands of children without parents.

The initial program had two elements: First, was fundraising for children’s homes that take in street kids in large cities like Nairobi and Lusaka. Second, was leading small groups from Canada, the U.S. and Taiwan on 11-day mission trips to HIV/AIDS-devastated rural communities. Here, the visitors planted vegetable gardens to assist adult relatives, mostly grandmothers, diversify the diets of the orphans under their care. By 2009, Heart for Africa was active in Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, South Africa and Swaziland, and over 5,000 people had taken the mission trips. These trips increased awareness of the dire conditions the HIV was generating. They also created a network that proved useful later in scaling up fundraising and recruiting both short-term and long-time volunteers. However, working in five countries with an accelerating program created a management challenge of growing complexity.

In mid-2009, the decision was made to focus on only one country and to create the charity’s own operational programs. The country chosen was the Kingdom of Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland. King Mswati III, the country’s monarch, made the name change in April 2018. Eswatini has the highest HIV/AIDS rate in the world.

A forest-covered freehold property of 1,000 hectares (almost 2,500 acres) near the centre of Eswatini was purchased to serve as a base of operations. It is named Project Canaan. From this base, Heart for Africa is bringing HOPE to the rural poor of the country by addressing issues of Hunger, Orphans, Poverty and Education. Impressive results have been achieved to date.

* **A complex, large-scale farming program has been developed**. It is producing vegetables, dairy products, meat, eggs, fish, and fruits at a scale that surpasses Heart for Africa’s program needs for most of these goods. The sales of the farm surpluses, and those of the goods produced in its carpentry, jewellery & crafts shops are helping Project Canaan towards its goal of achieving operational sustainability.
* **A multifaceted children’s program is in place.** It has two components. The first is directed at orphaned or vulnerable children living on Eswatini’s rural homesteads. Through partnerships with 30 churches distributed throughout the country, Heart for Africa provides over 3,500 children with meals and other support (e.g., shoes and clothing). The second component was initiated in 2012. At the request of the Eswatini government, Heart for Africa agreed to accept, raise and educate abandoned infants until they are at least 18 years old. Currently, there are 284 children, eleven years of age or younger, living at Project Canaan. On average, a new infant arrives every 11 days.
* **Employment creation and vocational training is significant.** Nearly 300 local people are employed at Project Canaan. This is having a major impact in alleviating poverty in the local community. In addition, vocational training opportunities are offered in carpentry, mechanics, bead-craft, jewellery-making and ceramics.
* **Mutual respect amongst cultures is being generated.** Many highly skilled short- and long-time volunteers (teachers, dentists, nurses, social workers, farm experts, mechanics, etc.), who are mainly from the U.S. and Canada, serve at Project Canaan.The interaction of these individuals with Swazis has created increased understanding on both sides.

Indeed, Heart for Africa has brought HOPE to the Kingdom of Eswatini – and it shines like a bright star.

You are an inspiration to all who strive to place Service Above Self.

**In recognition of this, the Rotary Club of West Ottawa is honoured to bestow on each of you, Ian and Janine, a Paul Harris Fellow Award.**

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The Paul Harris Fellow Award

The Paul Harris Fellow Award is named after Paul Harris, a Chicago Attorney who in 1905 founded Rotary, a group of friends that became a service club. Rotary has since evolved to become Rotary International, a service organization of some 34,000 Rotary clubs. The Paul Harris Recognition Program was introduced by the Trustees of The Rotary Foundation in 1957 to encourage donations to the Foundation.

The Rotary Club of West Ottawa adopted the program to create the Paul Harris Fellow Award. The Award recognizes individuals who have given distinguished service that exemplifies the ideals and objectives of Rotary.

To bestow the Award, the Club makes a contribution of US $1000 to The Rotary Foundation in the name of the individual to be honoured; that individual is then named a Paul Harris Fellow by the Foundation.

For individuals who are not members of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa, a nominee must meet at least one (1) of the following criteria to become a recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow Award:

1. Has made an outstanding personal or business contribution that has significantly enhanced the welfare of the community at the local, national or international level; or
2. Has made an outstanding personal or business contribution that has significantly improved understanding and generated mutual respect between and among people of different races, cultures or countries; or
3. Has performed outstanding community service in support of youth, the elderly, the underprivileged, the disabled or the developmentally challenged; or
4. Exemplifies the qualities of the good citizen and provides a role model of the ideal community builder.

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