



## Rotary Club of West Ottawa *The Lloyd Loynes Award For Volunteer Service<sup>1</sup>*

**Conferred on Navin M. Parekh, June 28, 2016**

*(The following text was read at the awards presentation ceremony)*

The Club bestows the Lloyd Loynes Award to recognize outstanding volunteer service in our Club, or in the community, by a Club member. This Lloyd Loynes recipient is an exceptional entrepreneurial volunteer who focuses on the global community.

In the east African nation of Uganda, 16 per cent of the population, or close to 6 million people, live with disabilities. Hostilities, disease, malnutrition and the legacy from Idi Amin's Reign of Terror in the 1970s are leading causes of these disabilities.

Kasese, an agricultural district with some of the country's most challenging terrain, is one of Uganda's poorest. Bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kasese is no stranger to armed conflicts, insurgencies, ethnic conflicts and cultural issues. Living with physical disabilities in such a region means experiencing extreme poverty and being marginalized.

In 2010, our Award recipient was volunteering in Kasese with *CUSO International*, a Canadian-based development organization. He saw, first-hand, the plight of many individuals, both children and adults, who were living with physical disabilities. Being a man of action, he resolved to improve the situation of these suffering people. That same year, he founded ***CanUgan Disability Support***, an Ottawa-based charity dedicated to improving the lives of Ugandans with physical disabilities. *CanUgan's* object is to enable the physically disabled to gain independence by meeting their mobility and communication needs.

To achieve this end, a two-faceted operational strategy was adopted. Early on, our recipient recognized that to be effective, *CanUgan* needed a locally based and like-minded partner -- a partner that had the capacity to assess an individual's needs in precise terms, and to work alongside that person in meeting the needs. Such a partner was found in the *Kasese District Union of Persons with Disabilities (Kadupedi)*. The second element of the strategy was fundraising. Under the leadership of our Award recipient serving as its president, *CanUgan* launched an ambitious fundraising program to finance the charity's partnership with *Kadupedi*.

The results have been impressive. To date, some 800 individuals have benefited. Amputees and the lame receive braces, supports, crutches, prosthetic limbs and hand-operated tricycles. The deaf receive auditory tests and hearing aids; the blind, white canes. Beneficiaries become more mobile and communicative. They attend school. They find work. They acquire independence, self-sufficiency and greater self-esteem. At *Kadupedi* and *CanUgan*, the dictum is "*Disability is not Inability*".

And there is another benefit. Arrangements are in place to manufacture many of the needed assistive devices locally in Kasese. This has brought needed employment and training to the district.

Lives have been changed forever, thanks to our fellow member, Navin Parekh, founder and President of *CanUgan*. Navin, please come forward to receive your *Lloyd Loynes Award for Volunteer Service*.

---

<sup>1</sup>This award is named after the late Lloyd Loynes who was a member of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa. Lloyd promoted many ways of increasing "volunteerism" in the club and the community. The following criteria are considered when reviewing nominations for the award: The nominee must be a member in good standing of the Rotary Club of West Ottawa AND (1) have provided outstanding "hands-on" volunteer service (time and talent) in support of the club's projects, AND/OR (2) have provided outstanding volunteer service to the community, external to Rotary.