

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, Virtual Meeting

President: Patrick Dobbyn
Secretary: Lynda Lawrence
Editor: Peter Boekhorst

Phone: 604-356-0923
Phone: 604-868-4674
Phone: 604-462-0377

[E-mail the President](#)
[E-mail the Secretary](#)
[E-mail the Editor](#)



FEBRUARY IS PEACE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION/RESOLUTION MONTH

Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

Feb 22: Alicia Erenli Foundry Ridge Meadows	Mar 01:	Mar 08:
--	---------	---------

OUR CLUB LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Patrick Dobbyn** presided.

Speaker: **Naa Sheka Riby-Williams** – Book Project in Ghana



“Naasheka” was raised in Canada, with her mother, and her father lives in Ghana.



While growing up, she got involved in sports, especially basketball. When visiting her father’s homeland, she studied for a semester while visiting in Ghana. The following article about our speaker, how she got started in her business, and her “Books for Schools” project, was published by Global News on July 29, 2021:

Almost 15 years after she travelled to Ghana, Naa Sheka Riby-Williams still keeps the garment that inspired her business and, later, her charity efforts, safe. The White Rock, B.C., fashion designer bought the purple, sleeveless shirt with distinctive white patterns on a student exchange trip to the West African country. When she came home, it proved to be a hit. “When I came back to Canada for Christmas break a lot of women were giving me compliments,” recalled Riby-Williams. “That’s what gave me the idea.” It set the stage for the 2007 founding of her business Naa Sheka Fashion, a business that now employs several tailors in Ghana at a shop near the capital city off Accra. Experiencing life in Ghana, the country where her father Charlie was born and raised, has changed Riby-Williams’ life. He died of cancer in 2009 but her connection to his home country keeps growing.

Seeing the education system first-hand when she lived there has had a huge impact on her. “Some of the schools don’t have a single book, which just amazed me. How are kids learning without books?” Riby-Williams said. With help from the Surrey School District, Riby-Williams launched Books to Ghana, an initiative to support a school outside Accra. The team assembled boxes full of books and shipped them off to build the school’s first library, and Riby-Williams hopes to send two more pallets to Ghana by the end of the year.



The teacher told me they have a superstar student and I got to meet her," Riby-Williams said, remembering a visit to the school after the books arrived. "Apparently she reads a book every single day which is so cool to hear." Fashion and philanthropy aren't Riby-Williams' only talents. She was a star basketball player at Douglas College, earning the nickname 'Nash,' after Steve Nash. She also played for Ghana's national team during qualifications for the 2012 London Olympics.



So how did they do that year? "Not good, we'll just leave it at that," she quipped. "The team did not do well at all." Which is just fine, because her other contributions to the community in Accra have meant so much more. And she knows here dad Charlie would be very proud. "I feel like this definitely keeps me connected to my dad. The culture, the heritage, the people. When I'm walking

around the streets of Ghana I just see my dad everywhere around which is really cool."

When she first approached a school in Tema, she found that the school did not have any books. She donated them pencils and notebooks, but after returning to BC she approached the librarian at the high school she attended in Surrey, who was very receptive of the idea of sending used books to Ghana. That librarian contacted other librarians in the area and approximately 2000 books were accumulated. Naa Sheka paid for this first shipment out of her own funds.

Goals

- Build library for each of the elementary and high schools in the community
- Build the library shelves to accompany
- Donate Computers, Tablets, Printers
- Build a Community Library
- Support a on going legacy of literacy and achievement in Ghanaian schools
- Granting students access to new possibilities

Most recently, she approached a school in Tema having approximately 600 students and plans to help them with a library of their own. Her longer-term goal is to build a community library. The schools that Naasheka are helping are in the city of Tema, which is located approximately 16 miles from Accra, the capital of Ghana. *(Tema developed from a small village to become Ghana's leading seaport and industrial centre. Its port opened in 1961, and is the busiest in Ghana.)*

It was suggested to Naasheka by our club members that she should inquire about a Rotary Club in Tema that could connect with a Rotary club or clubs (such as our club) here in BC to assist her with the fundraising for this program. (A check online confirms that there is, in fact, a Rotary club or clubs in that city).

Happy and Sad dollars were collected from the following:

Libby (for talking politics)

Ineke (who visited Marjolein in Kelowna for a Club snowshoeing and skiing activity)

Lynda (found some time to clean her patio)

Sharon (whose tulips are popping out of the ground) and

Debbie (who went with her 90+ year old mother on a visit to "Winterpeg").

Quote for the week:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson