

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, combined Real-Virtual Meeting

President:	Chili Yalamanchili	Phone: 604-463-4851	E-mail the President
Secretary:	Lynda Lawrence	Phone: 604-868-4674	E-mail the Secretary
Editor:	Peter Boekhorst	Phone: 604-462-0377	E-mail the Editor



MARCH IS WATER AND SANITATION MONTH

[Happy Birthday](#)

[Happy Anniversary](#)

UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

Mar 22: Mike Jennings The Men's Shed Association of BC	Mar 29: Trevor Crean Heritage Gardens Sustainable Cemetery	Apr 05: Chad Cowles - Maple Ridge's Community Social Safety Initiative
---	---	---

OUR CLUB LAST WEEK'S MEETING

Mike Davies presided.

Guests (apart from our speaker):



AG Allan Stjernegaard, Port Moody Club



Denise Trottier,
Project Manager of the Ballantyne Project

Program: The Ballantyne Project

Speaker: Dwight Ballantyne – founder



Some "Quotable Quotes":

"I have lived in Canada my whole life, but have had my feet in two worlds that could not be further apart. Growing up in Montreal Lake Cree Nation I always felt like I was looking through a one-way glass," Ballantyne says. "I could see everything the rest of the world was doing but no one could see me... To the rest of the world who lived beyond the borders of my remote community, I did not exist."

"Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, while highly rated in Canadian history, introduced a policy of starvation for Indigenous people, launched Indian Residential Schools (where children were assaulted, abused, and tortured), considered Indigenous people "savages", criminalized powwows, and brought in other programs aimed at assimilation, leading to devastating effects and intergenerational trauma. Since I started doing research on Canadian history as part of the Ballantyne Project, I realized that the history that I had been taught was not a real reflection of what actually happened," Ballantyne says. "It also made me understand so much more about why my life was the way it was growing up in a remote reserve. All this made me create a presentation for students and anyone else who wants to learn more about Indigenous history in Canada and what it was like to grow up in my community to try to bridge the gap between remote First Nations and the rest of Canada."

Our Rotary Club asked Dwight and Denise to come to our club to give us more information about the Ballantyne Project and their request for funds to assist in defraying expenses, while in BC, of nine indigenous youth that they are bringing from a remote Alberta community to the lower mainland area. What follows is, firstly, information about Dwight and the Ballantyne Project generally and, secondly, information about the specific program for which they have requested funding from our club:

The Ballantyne Project is an Indigenous youth-led organization that works towards bringing awareness to Canadians about the unique challenges faced by individuals living in remote Indigenous

communities, with a specific focus on youth and young adults. Dwight uses his personal life experiences during presentations to urban students, youth organizations and businesses. It is connecting and working with educators, administrators and folks across the country to bring more awareness of what youth are facing in remote Indigenous communities. "Indigenous youth living in remote communities relate to Dwight because of his story and similar challenges. They appreciate the opportunity to receive mentorship from an Indigenous leader outside of their community who offers them a chance to envision life outside their immediate circumstances."

The following two articles about and by Dwight Ballantyne (which are found on the Internet) tell us about Dwight and the Ballantyne Project:

First Article:

I am from Montreal Lake Cree Nation, but I call Maple Ridge, BC home now. I lived my first 21 years in Montreal Lake Cree Nation, a remote northern Saskatchewan First Nation, and moved to BC 5½ years ago. Growing up in a remote northern First Nation, I experienced a unique set of challenges and barriers that are never experienced or understood by the majority of Canadians. Since moving to an urban setting in 2016, I now am one of the few people who can explain the vast difference between these two worlds. I am passionate about public speaking which is very ironic because I never imagined I would be doing this but I have discovered over the past two years that I want to use my voice to raise awareness about life on remote reserves. I am also passionate about going to the gym and playing hockey.

I started The Ballantyne Project because after moving to Maple Ridge, BC, I realized that some people I met did not even know what a reserve was and if they did know, they definitely had no idea what it was like to live in a remote northern reserve. I had an opportunity to represent Team Canada at an International hockey tournament in 2019 and it was on the plane home that I made the decision to use my life experience to raise awareness. At first, I had no idea how I was going to bring my idea to life but in January 2020 I was asked to do a presentation at a high school in BC about my life. Word spread very quickly through the education system and before I knew it, I was doing presentations to gymnasiums of students several times a week. The biggest challenge I have faced was when COVID 19 brought everything to a halt in April 2020 but I have used the past 15 months doing virtual presentations which has allowed me to expand my reach across Canada. I have been surprised by the response I get when I share my life experiences. Educators and urban youth are very interested and engaged. Complete strangers from all across the country want to help with the needs of remote reserves once they understand the challenges that many of these communities face. The impact has been much bigger than I could have imagined. I often say that I had no idea how just telling my story could make such a difference. My story seemed insignificant to me but once I started to share it, I realized that I can use my voice to start to build a bridge between youth and young adults living in remote reserves and youth and young adults in more urban settings. The Ballantyne Project has impacted every part of my life. I had no idea that I would enjoy public speaking. It has also allowed me to meet so many new people, have new experiences and grow as a person. I am much more confident now in who I am and that what I have to share is valuable.

Second Article:

I grew up in a remote northern Saskatchewan First Nation called Montreal Lake Cree Nation. They are approximately 1200 people who live there. The only buildings in our community are Band Office, K-12 School, Health Centre, Convenience store/Gas Station and an Arena. Opportunities are hard to find. The unemployment rate in my community is much higher than the rest of the country. The majority of our community members are forced to live on welfare. The nearest city is approximately an hour drive but not many people have their driver's license and there is no public transportation. Getting here can be a problem. This, and so many other things, made my life choices extremely limited.

But I always held on to the hope that something would come my way. In February 2016, I caught my first flight to B.C. to be a part of a one-year college preparation program designed specifically for Indigenous youth from remote communities. I had to leave everyone and everything I ever knew behind. It was one of the hardest things I have done. I actually wasn't very interested in school but it was my only way out of my reserve. I really hoped to find work and play hockey. The next year would prove to be one of the most emotionally challenging years of my life as I adjusted to my new reality. By January 2017 I had established important new relationships that allowed me to stay in B.C and focus on work, going to the gym and playing hockey. I was getting to know local hockey teams and also playing in larger native tournaments. The biggest native hockey tournament I played was in the Yukon. I got my passport and traveled outside of Canada for the first time. In January 2018, I came up with an idea for a hockey skills and leadership program specifically for young men from remote Indigenous communities across Canada. I worked with a non-profit and we started flying hockey players out to B.C. for life experience and to become coaches in their home communities. This program received media attention because it was so unique. The hockey players were out in B.C. for 5 months. In November 2018, I was nominated and received a Premier's Award For Indigenous Youth Excellence In Sports for creating and directing the hockey skills and leadership program. This was one of the biggest accomplishments of my life and I didn't realize how big it actually was until I got to the ceremony to accept my award. In March 2019, something even bigger happened for me. I was asked to represent Team Canada at an international hockey tournament in Europe. The tournament was held in Zoetermeer in the Netherlands. For the first time in 20 years Canada won gold. I will never forget this once in a lifetime experience. In April, 2019, after the hockey tournament in Europe, on the flight back to Canada, I was reflecting how much my life had changed in only 4 years. I knew I needed to do something so that other youth and young adults living in remote Indigenous communities could also have choices about what they wanted their lives to look like. When I got home, I founded The Ballantyne Project in September 2019. The Ballantyne Project team began traveling to remote Indigenous communities in Canada where I would share my journey since leaving my community in 2016 with the youth and young adults. They appreciated hearing from someone outside of their community who they could relate to and who shared their unique life experiences.

Request for Funding

I am writing to you on behalf of The Ballantyne Project. We are a Maple Ridge based organization raising awareness about life in remote Indigenous communities, Canada's history and the on-going challenges faced by Indigenous People in our country.... Our goal is to let youth and young adults living in remote Indigenous communities know they are no longer an invisible segment of our society. That, we see them.

In May, The Ballantyne Project is organizing a five day trip for 9 youth (ages 16-22) and 3 chaperones from Fort Chipewyan, Alberta to come to Vancouver. This will be their first trip ever away from the reserve. Our goal is to give the youth an idea of the possibilities outside of the tiny walls of their fly-in community. We want to plant a seed of hope, introduce them to Indigenous run businesses and show them Indigenous people that are thriving!

It was suggested to us by Heather Treleven that we reach out to your organization to ask for support for this first of its kind trip. Airfare and accommodations for the group have been generously donated. We are now seeking additional donations to cover the cost of local attractions and some basic necessities. We know the youth will arrive with their clothing in garbage bags. We would like to give them each a backpack with toiletries and perhaps a shirt, socks, as well as a welcome basket and a few gifts to leave in their room every day. We have a budget of \$250 per youth for these special extras to show there are people who care. If it would be possible for the Rotary Club to support our Maple Ridge based organization and this project with a donation of \$2,000 to help these youth see a brighter future, we would be so grateful. The Maple Ridge Rotary Club would be recognized through our social media channels and acknowledged in our newsletter.

Note: The Community Services Committee has met and has approved this request for funding. Individual members of the Committee will also personally donate \$900, so that each participant will have \$100 of spending money while they are here.

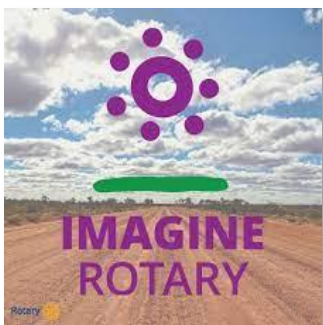
Fine Master:

Who is the new president of Rotary International for the 2022 – 2023 year?

Answer: **Jennifer E. Jones**, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland, Ontario, Canada, a ground-breaking selection that will make her the first woman to hold that office in the organization's 115-year history.



What will be Rotary's theme for her year?



Announcement: by AG Al Sternegaard:

District Grants Management Seminar - Zoom - March 26, 2022 9 AM – 1:30 PM

Rotary District 5050 requires that a minimum of two club members must attend a Grants Management Seminar each year, and that one of those two members must be the President-Elect (incoming president). Upon successful completion of the qualification requirements, the club will be qualified for one Rotary year. Club members are qualified for three Rotary years.

District Assembly will be held on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at the Kwantlen Polytechnic University, 12666 72nd Ave., Surrey. Registration, coffee and light breakfast will be at 8 AM with the event starting at 8:30 AM. Lunch is included, and it ends at 3 PM. The District Assembly is designed to give incoming club officers, and all other Rotarians information to enhance their Rotary experience. Classes will be offered on a broad range of Rotary topics including Engaging Members, Youth Programs, DEI, Rotary Information for New Rotarians, Effective Communications Personal and Virtual, Membership Issues, Club Administration, Public Image, The Rotary Foundation, International Service, Fundraising and much more! This event is a great opportunity for Rotarians to discover their Rotary passion.

Quote for the Day



If the grass looks greener on the other side,
start watering the grass you're standing on.

Submitted by Laurie Anderson