

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon

President: Alex Pope	Phone: 604-465-1535	E-mail the President
Secretary: Debbie MacRae	Phone: 604-649-8962	E-mail the Secretary
Editor: Peter Boekhorst	Phone: 604-476-0010	E-mail the Editor



APRIL IS ENVIRONMENTAL MONTH

Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

Upcoming Speakers:

Apr. 21	Kirsten Munk Beavers in BC	Apr. 28	Claire Viktora and team Trip to Ecuador	May 5	Kim Boekhorst Friends in Need Food Bank
---------	-------------------------------	---------	--	-------	--

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

President **Alex Pope** presided.

Guests

- Jennifer Schroeder** of Cythera House
- Terry Peacock**, President of the Haney Rotary Club
- Kim Telep**, International Services Director of the Haney Rotary Club

Cheque presentation

Mike Davies, our community Services Chairman, presented a cheque in the amount of \$500 to **Jennifer Schroeder** representing Cythera House, in support of programs assisting women and children in transition.

Jen Schroeder expressed sincere appreciation and outlined how the funds will be used:

- Supporting recreational and community-based activities for residents
- Providing opportunities such as movies, mini-golf, and family outings
- Helping families temporarily shift focus away from challenging circumstances and enjoy meaningful time together



Program (via Zoom)

Dr. Anshu Chandra - Haiti Global Eye Project

About our speaker

Anshu holds a Doctor of Optometry degree.



She was raised in India and the USA where her mother worked as a social worker with under-served communities and created programs to strengthen various skills to make members more independent. These influences have given Anshu an understanding of the needs of disadvantaged populations as well as practical, simple solutions to address those needs. She has worked in Haiti for the last 15 years building and advancing eye care for the poor. She is working to end disparities in eye care globally by bringing this service to remote areas and giving them health equity. She's leading the efforts in Haiti and has built a permanent eye clinic there which provides client care and training for local residents, and helping to further develop the Haitian ophthalmology residency program in Port-au-Prince. [Ophthalmology is the branch of medicine concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the eye.] This would provide advanced training and access to equipment and supplies so all Haitians can have high quality eye care. Anshu has also provided eye care to communities in Nepal, Haiti, Peru, Lebanon, Tanzania, Honduras, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Indonesia, and India.



“Today, I want to talk about something very simple: How we can help provide eye care to over 15,000 people every year—people who would otherwise never have access to it.

Let me start with a story. You're looking at a photo of a two-month-old baby. This child was brought to us by his mother, who carried him on the back of a motorcycle—over unpaved roads, through mountains, across rural Haiti. No protection. No resources. Just hope. She came because her baby was born with **white eyes**—and she knew something was terribly wrong. She couldn't afford care in the city. So she came to us. While we diagnosed and treated her child, she slept outside our clinic... on a piece of cardboard. She cooked her meals on a small stove she carried in her bag. And when she needed to bathe, she handed her baby to strangers. Not because she didn't care, but because she was **desperate**. She understood something very clearly: If her child couldn't see... his future would be one of dependency, isolation, and lost opportunity.

That reality is what drives my work. My journey started when I finished my residency. I took some time to reflect on what mattered most to me - and I remembered a promise I had made before leaving India: If I ever had the opportunity to build something meaningful, I would not forget where I came from. So I volunteered. That first trip took me to the Himalayas, working in a mobile eye clinic. It changed my life. We saw people who had walked six hours or more just to reach us. Here were incredible moments: A child seeing clearly for the first time; An elderly patient regaining independence.

But there were also difficult moments. I remember a 40-year-old monk who sat in my chair. He had walked for days because his world had gone completely dark. When I examined him, my heart sank. He was completely blind from glaucoma. There was nothing I—or anyone—could do. And he wasn't alone. There were countless people losing their sight... from conditions that were completely treatable—if only care had been available. That's when I asked myself a difficult question: There are thousands of doctors who could replace me in a clinic. But who would come here? That question changed everything. I chose to dedicate my career to bringing eye care to people who have none.

Over the next few years, I worked wherever I could— from inner-city programs in the U.S. to outreach trips in India and Africa. And eventually, that work brought me to Haiti. My first trip to Haiti was in 2010. Within hours of landing, I saw a completely different world. We traveled over eight hours to reach a rural region—no paved roads, no running water, limited infrastructure. And when we arrived...people were already waiting. They had lined up overnight. They stood all day—without food or water—just for a chance to be seen. If we couldn't reach them, they would sleep on the ground...wake up...and get back in line the next day. We worked from early morning until midnight. And still—it wasn't enough. That was the turning point. Short-term missions were helping—but they weren't solving the problem. People needed consistent, permanent care. So we made a decision: We would build a full-time eye clinic. In 2015, I returned to Haiti—alone. No clinic. No infrastructure. Just equipment in my bags and a plan. The first thing I did was train local staff. Because if this was going

to last, it had to be locally led. We taught in hallways, courtyards—any space we could find. We practiced on volunteers walking by. And slowly... something incredible happened. Patients started coming. Then more patients. And soon—we had lines.

We built a small clinic. Then expanded it. Then expanded it again. Today:

- We've provided over 132,000 eye exams
- Performed thousands of advanced procedures
- And we now see over 100 patients per day

Even more importantly: The clinic is run by a highly trained local team. They are diagnosing and treating complex eye diseases— independently and confidently. We're not just treating blindness anymore. We're preventing it. We launched Haiti's first retinopathy of prematurity screening program, saving the vision of premature babies. We run pediatric vision programs. We focus heavily on education, because early detection changes everything. But now—we're at a critical moment. The hospital that houses our clinic needs its space back. We've been asked to relocate by the end of 2027. Which means: We either build a new facility... or we shut down putting the only source of eye care for over 500,000 people at risk of shutting down. The good news is:

- We've secured land
- We have equipment
- We have a trained team
- We have architectural plans already in development

What we need now... is support to build. The new facility will include:

- A larger outpatient clinic
- A surgical center
- An optical lab
- And infrastructure designed for long-term sustainability

Our goal is to raise \$750,000 USD. We've already raised over \$200,000. And here's something important: Our organization is 100% volunteer-run. Every dollar goes directly to patient care and building this clinic. So how can you help?

- Help us spread the word
- Connect us with individuals or organizations
- Support a day, month, or year of care
- Contribute to our pediatric or school screening programs

The impact is real. I'll leave you with one final story. A woman came to us years ago with severe diabetic eye disease. She had already lost her leg. And she was about to lose her sight. We treated her. Saved her vision. Years later, I visited her. She was sitting outside her home, selling handmade purses. Independent. Working. Living with dignity. That's what this work does. It doesn't just restore sight. **It restores lives.** Thank you for your time... And I truly hope you'll join us in bringing sight to those who have nowhere else to turn.

Club (and Community) Business

April 17 – 10:30 am - wine fest meeting – via Zoom

April 21 – Rotary Executive meeting

April 23 – 4:00 pm – Duck Race Meeting – via Zoom

April 24 – Rotary Planning meeting for next Rotary Year - at Eric's house

April 25 – MR Community Foundation - citizen of the Year Dinner

May 1-3 – District 5050 Conference at Harrison

May 27 – Haney Rotary Club - Ladies Night ("the Gatsby Affair")

President's Closing Quote

This past weekend, I was introduced to a policewoman who does the chalk outlines at crime scenes. Her name is Tracy.



What would you have said?

Driving in the country, a man collided with a truck carrying a horse. A few months later, the man sought damages for pain and suffering. "How can you now claim to have all these injuries?" asked the insurance company's lawyer. "According to the police report, at the time you said you were not hurt."

"Look," the man replied, "I was lying on the road in a lot of pain, and I heard someone say the horse had a broken leg. The next thing I know, this policeman pulls out his gun and shoots the horse. Then he turns to me and asks, Are you OK?"

- Norman Augustine

Submitted by Laurie Anderson