

By Tiffany Woods
 Rotary International News - 17 December 2007

Ryan Hreljac is a typical 16-year-old. He plays sports, spends time on the computer, loves to sleep, and is up to his neck in schoolwork. But there's one thing that makes him stand out, besides his lanky 6-foot-6-inch frame.

He's the founder of Ryan's Well Foundation, a non-profit organization in Kemptville, Ont., Canada. It has raised more than US\$3 million to fund nearly 320 water projects serving almost 500,000 people in 14 countries since it was created in 2001, according to his mother, Susan, who is its executive director. She participated in a Rotary Foundation Group Study Exchange (GSE) to France in 1992-93. Her husband, Mark, traveled on a GSE to Mexico in 1991-92.

Ryan's interest in clean water started when he was just six years old. His first-grade teacher, during a school charity drive for developing countries, rattled off a list of items that their donations could buy. She said \$70 could fund a well. As Ryan recalls, she told the class that people were dying because they didn't have access to clean water and that some had to walk several kilometres to get a drink.

"I thought that was unfair, so I decided to do something about it," says Ryan, who was named a Paul Harris Fellow in 2004. "I went home and said, 'Can I have \$70 to build a well in Africa?'"

"Being good parents, we ignored him," his mother says. "One night at dinner he was still pestering us. He said, 'You don't get it. Someone just died because they didn't have clean water.' I thought, 'Whoa.'"

They decided to let him do extra chores to earn the money. Ryan collected pinecones for his grandmother's craft projects, vacuumed, and washed windows. "If he didn't do a good job, I'd make him redo it," Susan says. Ryan saved the money he earned in a cookie tin. Four months later, he reached his goal and presented his tin to an official at WaterCan, a charity dedicated to clean water.

He was told, however, that a well would actually cost about \$2,000. "I said I'd do more chores," Ryan recalls. He kept doing them, but in the meantime his story picked up momentum in the media, and donations started coming in. In 2000, he traveled to Uganda to visit the well that he helped finance.

Ryan has since become the face of his foundation, which has worked on water projects with Rotary clubs and has a Rotarian board member. He's also given numerous speeches to various groups, including Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Interactors.

For other young people – or anyone – looking to make a difference, Ryan offers this advice: "Find something that you're passionate about. The world is a huge puzzle. You have to figure out where your piece fits. My piece was clean water. You don't have to devote your life to something. Have fun – but at the end of the day, it's important to lend a hand and give back."



Ryan Hreljac (left), founder of Ryan's Well Foundation, saved his money as a kid to finance a well in Uganda.



The Four Way Flasher

Rotary Club of
 MeadowRidge Newsletter

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Web-site: www3.telus.net/MeadowRidge_Rotary

Meetings: Tuesday 12pm, Gourmet Hideaway Restaurant

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December is Family Month

INVOCATION

Dec. 18	Lynda Lawrence	Jan. 8	Ron LePore
Jan. 15	Wendy Lindvik	Jan. 22	Debbie MacRae

BINGO SCHEDULE

	6:15 - 8:15	8:00 - 10:00
Dec. 27	Marco Terwiel	Dave Rempel
Jan. 24	Wendy Lindvik	Wende Dawes

Call Peter at 604-465-3392 for assistance or email peter.boekhorst@telus.net

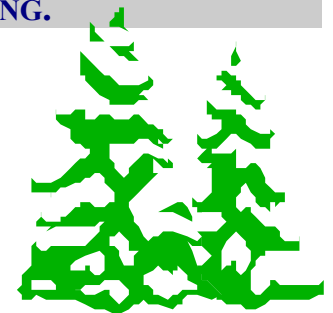


DEC. 25 AND JAN. 1 NO REGULAR MEETING.

TODAY'S PROGRAM: **Merry Christmas to All**

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM: **Next meeting is Jan. 8, 2008**

Fausta Magee, Nutrition Expert



CALENDAR OF CLUB AND DISTRICT 5050 EVENTS:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
Dec. 18	7:45pm	Christmas Train	The Wharf

50 / 50 draw - Jackpot at \$532.50 + 1/2 of today's sales, 32 cards left, Jackpot on "Queen of Hearts" only!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Dec. 21: Sharon Bekar Dec. 31: Valerie Spurrell

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dec. 19: Vladimir & Zdenka Cukor Jan. 4: Ronald & Sharon Kyle

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

Our guests today were Rob Watkins and Christine from Rotary Club in Port Moody, and Ivan Vazquez from the Mission Club.

Announcements:

Ineke announced that the B.I.A. will be organizing a fundraiser on December 21 and 22 titled "Turning Wheels for Holiday Meals" This is a 30 hour event and funds will be raised for the Friends in Need and the Salvation Army. A sign up sheet was distributed to the Members.

December 22 – Volunteers are required for Calendar Sales at two malls.

Shelter Box. Patrick O'Brien announced that he has been working with Marco on a project to raise funds to purchase more Shelter Boxes. The project would entail members actually staying outside overnight perhaps in a Shelter Box Tent and have the community involved. We could possibly approach Haney Club to see if they would be interested in joining us.

Our AGM took place and Committee Reports were submitted as well as elections. The following members have been nominated for 2008/09:

- 1) Anil Bharwani - President
- 2) Marco Terziel - President Elect
- 3) Bob Shantz - Past President
- 4) Maureen Goodrick - Secretary
- 5) Walter Volpatti - Treasurer

Avenues of Service:

- 6) Kevin Nosworthy - Club Service
- 7) Matt DeBruyn - Vocational Service
- 8) David Rempel - International Service
- 9) Mike Davies - Community Services

Robert Campbell was elected Vice President

Submitted by Maureen Goodrick



HOSPICE CALENDAR SALES

Last Saturday several of our members went to local shopping malls to sell our yearly Hospice Price Calendars. Despite the cold and wet weather, the spirits were high, as this picture shows. These are only 3 of about a dozen members, who volunteered.

