

TAKING AIM AT GUINEA WORM IN GHANA

Rotarians in four countries are helping to eradicate Guinea worm in Ghana through a collaborative effort with the Carter Center and the Ghana Health Service.

Clubs in 13 districts in Canada, Ghana, Switzerland, and the United States have sponsored six projects funded by Rotary Foundation Matching Grants since 2005 to provide safe and clean drinking water to remote communities in northern Ghana. The Rotarians have worked with the Guinea Worm Eradication Programme, a partnership of the Carter Center and the Ghanaian government, to identify the best locations for wells or water systems.

"They knew exactly where the cases were, so they could tell us, 'These are the towns that need wells,'" says Walter Hughes, president of the Rotary Club of Rocky Mount, Virginia, USA, which has been involved in the effort since 2006. "It's really a future vision before they had defined Future Vision. It's partnering with multiple clubs in multiple districts in multiple countries, and partnering with nongovernmental agencies."

The number of Guinea worm cases in Ghana has dropped from 4,136 in 2006 to 242 in 2009. Hughes says only four cases have been reported through February of this year, marking six months with three or fewer cases each.

"We are expecting by December to be able to claim victory in Ghana," he says. "It will take 12 months after that to certify they are gone."

Guinea worm is contracted when a person drinks standing water containing a tiny water flea that carries the larvae of the worm. The larvae take a year to mature within the human body, growing as long as 3 feet, and then emerge through a painful blister in the skin, causing long-term suffering and sometimes crippling effects.

The Matching Grants have funded projects to dig wells, drill bore holes, or provide mechanized water systems in areas hardest hit by the parasite. One effort funded a solar-powered mechanized water system in the remote area of Singa. Other projects led to two wind-powered systems that pump water from far away into villages. Providing safe drinking water is part of the Guinea worm eradication effort, in combination with treatment and education.

Hughes says the Rotarians also help repair wells. They work with local villages to create a water and sanitation committee that will charge for water, save the money, and use the savings to maintain or fix the well or water system.

"One of the things Rotary encourages is that it is sustainable," he says. "We encourage people to help us dig the well. Usually the town comes out and does what it can, clears land, brings food for the workers, whatever. When it is done, it is something they built and not just something that Rotary built."

The Rotary Club of Tamale, Northern Region, Ghana, with fewer than 25 members, has been the host partner for all but two of the Matching Grant projects. The two-year-old Rotary Club of Sunyani Central was the host club for the other two.

"The Rotarians in Tamale are really to be commended. They have traveled within three different states to eradicate this disease," Hughes says. "For a club that size to have accomplished this much is pretty amazing."

"It shows a small club can make a difference," he says.



A girl in Ghana holds up a bottle containing Guinea worm.

Photo courtesy Walter Hughes



The Four Way Flasher

Rotary Club of MeadowRidge Newsletter

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March is Literacy Month



INVOCATION

Mar. 23	Gord Robson	Mar. 30	Mary Robson
April 6	James Rogers	April 13	Michael Serry

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

March 26: Alphonse Seward

TODAY'S PROGRAM: Robert Campbell & Alphonse Seward - Navigating Rotary Web Sites

NEXT WEEK'S PROGRAM: ADG Darrell Burnham - Homelessness

CALENDAR OF CLUB AND DISTRICT 5050 EVENTS:

Date	Time	Event	Venue
April 10	7:00 pm	Wine Festival	Rotunda – Thomas Haney S.S.
April 20		New Members Meeting	
May 14-16		District 5050 Conference	Tulalip Resort Casino, USA
June 20-23		Rotary International Convention	Montreal

50 / 50 draw - Jackpot at \$737.00 + 1/2 of today's sales, 26 cards left, Jackpot on "Queen of Hearts" only!

LAST WEEK'S MEETING

Jim had no guests to introduce. Marco welcomed Kelly Fry back.

Auction of 2 tickets to the Men's Bronze Medal Sledge Hockey Game at UBC's Thunderbird Arena – Jim Coulter was the successful bidder.

Laurie Anderson – Rotary Moment: The Rotary Wheel.

Dave Rempel discussed a possible Rotary Exchange during the next winter Olympics' 2014 to Sochi, Russia – he will keep us posted.

Announcements – Marco willing to share a room at District Conference – Lindsey Hendy will attend with Marco. Marco is also attending Montreal for International Conference and will also share a room there. Mary has 3 attendees for RYLA. In order to receive the Presidential Citation, we require a new member before the end of March – put on your thinking caps everyone!

Our Guest Speaker was Rhian Pipprell – director of the Coquitlam District Library. She has been a librarian for 35 years in the UK, the Middle East and Canada. A Rotarian for 16 years, she is the past president of the Mission Sunrise Club and the incoming President of the Coquitlam Sunrise Club. She is currently Literacy chair for the District.

Rhian spoke to us about how valuable our support to the Guatemala Library has been. Their mission is to increase the literacy rate in the area. The main language is Spanish; however there are 22 Mayan languages spoken and it's this group they are most trying to connect with.



It's because of the low literacy rate that they chose Guatemala – most children leave school after the 3rd grade. Rhian spoke to us of her trip to Guatemala and her experiences while there. Small things like handing out pencils mean gold to the children. In 2006 they inaugurated the bus during a visit there. It was a large celebration in which the bus was blessed by the Catholic Church. They have everything from picture books, to fiction books, to culturally applicable books. Rhian showed us many pictures of the bus in action and of the children in the bus. Each year \$10,000 US is sent down to Guatemala for the upkeep and operation of the bus. Many clubs within the district participate in this. Larry Jube delivered the cheque last year.

The bus attends up to 5 schools per day and is run on a bi-weekly schedule touching approximately 5000 students a month. The importance of bus is demonstrated by the founding of static libraries within communities and schools. You Tube Video – Guatemala Library and you can see the bus in action.

All the books are in Spanish language as it's the language of business. None in the Mayan languages.

The Imagination Library – a project which is endorsed by Rotary International.

Established by Dolly Parton in Tennessee, her father was illiterate and understands how important books are in a child's life. She has set up a program that each child will receive a book a month until they reach the age of 5. Local organizations can sign on to the program. It costs \$65 Cdn per year per child. The books are selected by librarians and teachers – The Little Engine That Could is one that is chosen. Quite a few of the clubs in District 5050 are interested and the process of setting this program up. Dolly Parton will be at International Convention and will be speaking on this. Coquitlam Sunrise targets an area where there are lots of refugees and food bank areas.

Rhian will forward an Excel sheet for us to look at to determine this is something we want to consider. It's a 5 year commitment.

Marco thanked Rhian for coming and speaking and donated a book in her name to the Guatemala Mobile Library.

Rhian encouraged us to consider attending the Literacy Seminar in Bellingham coming up soon. Ineke spoke about how she was so moved about this project and something she would like us to pursue.

Marco announced an Executive meeting at his place at 7:30 Wednesday morning – March 17th. These meetings are open to the general membership, but Marco requires a head count in advance to ensure coffee and bagels for everyone.

Alphonse spoke that the lunch today was very good and the staff of the restaurant were pleased to receive the feedback.

Submitted by Terry Becker

WINE FESTIVAL APRIL 10, 2010

The Wine Festival is only 2½ weeks away and we have only sold roughly 30 tickets. Please consider to attend this splendid evening-out with your spouse, partner or friend.



And where can you go for \$40 and have food, wine and/or beer and entertainment? If we can count on all our members, that will be 80 more tickets. You don't want to go alone? Invite the neighbours (left side, right side and across the street); that's easily another 100 tickets. Now we are going somewhere!

If you already got tickets, then we thank you for your patronage. However, if you didn't pay for them yet, could you please do so as soon as possible, possibly the coming week.

We are asking every member to donate a "good" BOTTLE OF WINE (Absolutely NO home-made wines!). If you are unable to do so, we would ask you to just donate \$30.00 or whatever you can spend, and a Committee member will buy the bottle for you (discount available to our Club!).

We will then put together an exquisite "wine cellar" to be auctioned off at the event! As you can see, we really need **every** member to participate in this, otherwise we will not have enough bottles to make this exciting "wine cellar-auction" successful.