

COG

The Rotary Club of Calgary



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The Rotary Club of Calgary is an organization of professional and community leaders who come together through commitment and fellowship to create opportunities and a better future for generations to follow.

Anil Karim & Farrah Khoje, **MISSION POSSIBLE**

Madeleine King introduced our speakers Farrah Khoja and Anil Karim. As we know, Southern Alberta was hit this past June by what has been called the flood of the century. Well over 100,000 people were evacuated, and many homes and businesses were destroyed. While there are numerous stories of neighbours helping neighbours, the example of Anil and Farrah is exceptional.

Anil returned to Calgary in 2011 after spending twenty years in Los Angeles and Houston, and earning a doctorate in early child education. He is the President and CEO of Kids U, a preschool and child care centre for children from 19 months to 9 years that offers a unique curriculum of loving child care while delivering an outstanding education program. Farrah is a residential and commercial realtor with Century21. They are the founders and directors of the Mission Possible Recovery Foundation.

Anil and Farrah were flooded out of their shared condominium in Sunnyside on that fateful Thursday morning in June. They obtained a pump to remove the water from their basement, and then had the idea of offering it to their neighbours. Needless to say they didn't stop there. They found additional pumps and recruited volunteers using social media. After securing a truck and generator, they enlisted Alderman John Mar whose involvement and support raised the profile of the Mission Possible Recovery Foundation to a new level.

Once Sunnyside recovery efforts were well underway they took their experience and connections to (where else?) the Mission district for Phase 2, recruiting 800 volunteers on Day 1 to deal with the huge piles of trash and flooded basements. They went house-to-house to identify the places of greatest need, and sourced truckloads of supplies from supporters such as Tim Horton's.

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Speaker Anil Karim

The operation grew to 1000 volunteers on Day 2, and to 2200 by Day 4. In five days they cleared 900 houses in 14 neighbourhoods. After pausing for a brief celebration (the Mission Possible block party), they headed to High River where they convinced the provincial government that their successes in Calgary uniquely qualified them to make a difference in High River as well. Over the course of one week they recruited a total of 21,000 volunteers and cleared 3,100 houses in 3 neighbourhoods.

The Mission Possible Recovery Foundation's current goal is to help with rebuilding. It still needs volunteers as well as individual and corporate donations. To support these leaders in our community go to <http://www.missionpossiblefoundation.ca>.

Laura Krantz gave the club's official thank-you to Anil and Farrah for their efforts and their excellent presentation. Laura was one of the many who volunteered through the Mission Possible Recovery Foundation, but didn't realize at the time just who was the driving force behind it. We truly appreciate their amazing achievements, and we are sure to hear of more great things from these two community leaders in the future.

The Meeting

This week was bathed in late fall sunshine with the mercury rising to 16C and lifting the spirits of Rotarians attending the club meeting at the Palliser. David Bromwich led a stomping a cappella rendition of *O Canada* and treated us to a descant rendering of the final line. We mortals usually take refuge in the baritone while singing this line.

Rick Erven offered a powerful invocation, and President Eva delivered accolades to the tireless Gord Cumming, Tony Howard and Bruce Millar, with special recognition to Sergeant-at-Arms Carl St. Laurent and Greeter Keith Visser. We then sang Happy Birthday in honour of several Librans including Martha Cohen, the second female member of the Club.



Speaker Farrah Khoje

Terry McMahon urged us to mark the club's 100th anniversary by contributing \$100 to the Rotary Foundation, Terry McMahon Foundation, or both. Please consider making your donations by June 3, 2014 to have them recognized in our centennial year.

We then had a visit from "The Old Sandbagger". Some of you may have mistaken the masked apparition for the Grim Reaper if you didn't notice that he was brandishing a golf club instead of a scythe. When he spoke he was revealed as Gord Walker, who invited us to join in the 31st Year of Winter Golf at the Riverside Golf Academy. If you decide to join in, you do not have to play every Saturday; however, the group needs to know in advance when you are playing to confirm its reservation. For more details please call Gord Walker at (403) 252-7777, or email partgolfinfo@shaw.ca.

Ralph Lundberg reminded us that our Remembrance Day luncheon takes place on November 7th. (November Rotary Remembers with an after work event.) Join fellow Rotarians for a fun-filled evening of fellowship/fund-raising at the Big International Event on October 29th at Donegal Irish Pub. Your \$40.00 admission buys you dinner and two drinks.

The club is sending a card to Gerry Watkins to wish him a speedy recovery.

Thank-you Paul Paynter for preparing this week's meeting report—Editor.



This guy wants us to play golf?
Look what it did to him!!



Laura Krantz thanks our speakers

*Thanks to Catherine Brownlee
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