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## Refugee Sponsorship Program Michelle Eng, Pastor, First Alliance Church

Our guest speaker was Michelle Eng, Pastor, First Alliance Church, speaking about their Refugee Sponsorship Program. Michelle began her presentation by relating that she is really pleased to be here today, as she has a special relationship with Rotary. While she is not a Rotarian at this time, she did have the opportunity of being a Rotary exchange student in 2011 through which she spent a year living in Turkey. It was during this year that she worked with a number of refugees in that country, which effectively changed her life. It was an amazing experience which combined her two life passions ... her passion for faith, and her passion for helping others.

As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder with the Government of Canada, the First Alliance Church (FAC) focuses on assisting individuals in the local Calgary area with submitting refugee applications. Every year, the Canadian government grants FAC a certain number of sponsorship spaces for refugees. The spaces are limited, and the need is great.

As a church, FAC helps refugees already sponsored by FAC when they arrive in Canada. There are many ways they can help — from the official details and financial support, to helping with English skills and simply building new friendships. They help make sponsored refugees feel welcome and a little less overwhelmed. Reach out to Michelle to ask how you can help welcome FAC-sponsored refugees to Calgary, explore a list of items which you can donate, or mark "refugee sponsorship" on your donation envelope to support a refugee family financially.

Michelle explained that it takes from one to four years to apply for an individual to be approved by our government as a refugee to Canada. It is more difficult to go through this process if one is initiating their application from a country in which Canada does not have an embassy. It is quite common for individuals who are already permanent residents of Canada, to wish to have other family members approved so they can relocate to Canada and join their family. A few of the obstacles which must be overcome are housing, access to furniture and other supplies, and dealing with language barriers, and often, mental health challenges.

FAC is an approved depot for the Calgary Foodbank and as such, has access to food resources to assist refugee families as necessary. They also provide a resource designed to assist refugees in learning to speak English, and Michelle reports that there are currently 65 refugees enrolled in such a class. She notes that 80% of new refugees have never been invited into a Canadian home.

You can contact FAC by checking out their website [www.faccalgary.com](http://www.faccalgary.com) or calling directly: — 403-252-7572

Rob thanked Michelle for her presentation and advised her that we would be making a donation to Rotary's "Polio Plus" in appreciation for her joining us today.



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Rotary  
Club of Calgary Chinook



120  
YEARS OF ROTARY



President Rob called our meeting to order at 12:15, welcoming all in attendance.

## Indigenous Fact

*What is the largest First Nation in Alberta?*

The largest First Nations cultural group by population in Alberta is the Cree, if the Woodlands Cree and Plains Cree are counted together. Thirty-two First Nations bands in Alberta are affiliated with Cree culture, and are related to other Cree peoples across Canada as far east as Labrador.

## The History of April Fools' Day

The origins of April Fools' Day are somewhat unclear, but historians believe the tradition dates back centuries, possibly to the 16th century or even earlier. Here are some key theories about its history:

### 1. Calendar Change Theory (1582, France)

One of the most widely accepted theories suggests that April Fools' Day originated in France in 1582, when the country switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar under Pope Gregory XIII. Under the Julian calendar, the new year was celebrated around April 1st. With the new Gregorian calendar, the new year was moved to January 1st. Some people, either unaware of the change or refusing to accept it, continued celebrating New Year's on April 1st. These people were ridiculed and called "April fools", and others played pranks on them.

### 2. Ancient Roman Festivals (Hilaria)

Some historians trace April Fools' traditions to the ancient Roman festival of Hilaria (Latin for "joyful"), which was celebrated at the end of March. During Hilaria, people wore disguises and mocked others, including public officials. This festival had elements of humor and deception similar to modern April Fools' Day.

### 3. Medieval England and "Fools' Errands"

In medieval Europe, especially in England and Scotland, there were traditions of sending people on "fools' errands" — wild goose chases to find things that didn't exist. This could have influenced the modern idea of playing practical jokes on April 1st.

## Club Business

We had 24 participants at our meeting today which included our guest speaker, Michelle Eng, Pastor, First Alliance Church, Refugee

Sponsorship Program. She was introduced by Rob and welcomed with our 'Welcome to Rotary' song.

Rob thanked Paul G. for being our scribe today. He also thanked Michael and Bart for being our Greeters, and making everyone feel welcome. He thanked Stephen and Anne for all they do for our Club, and thanked Paul H for arranging our meeting set up. Rob then called up Jinan (Carriage Hotel server) and thanked her for the tremendous job she does each week. In addition we also wish to thank both Hank and Neil for operating our payment system.

Rob highlighted several issues for our consideration:

- We had a good crowd for last Thursday's Membership Mingler including 20 members and 25 guests. We outlined various highlights on the activities of Rotary generally, and Chinook specifically. Several of our Directors outlined our service activities, and Dan and Marlene Doherty explained Polio Plus and other areas of international service.
- Rob spoke of our upcoming International Convention and recommended that each of us consider registering for the Convention and volunteering also. We need lots of volunteers so simply google "Calgary Rotary Convention" and click on the link "I want to serve".



- As Chair of the Calgary Rotary Clubs Foundation, Rob thanked Michael Spears as a recent donor from Chinook, and highlighted the funds (\$13,000) which we receive each year from this Foundation. It is easy to donate through "Canada Helps".
- Rob is the Learning and Development Chair for our Rotary District, and asked us all to take the time to go on to [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) (Rotary's website), establish a "My Rotary" account and then proceed to review all the courses available by clicking on the "Knowledge and Resources" button. Give it a look see.

## Get to Know our Members

Rob invited our President Elect, Wayne Wiebe, to come up and tell us something that we don't already know about him. Wayne chose to tell us about his family and

*cont'd on page 3 ...*





their various activities. He told us about Muriel's directing of a mens choir, their son Steven's running 4 Iron Man races, and his daughter Lara's success at pickleball. He also told us about his grandchildren's careers and his own 31 year career with NCR. b Wayne did a great job at the podium and it was great to get to know his family also.

## Good News/Bad News

- Sharon donated \$5 to report that her son, Bar Sazar Sandrusi, who has been a Sheriff in Alberta for some time, has successfully joined the Alberta Sheriff Interdiction Patrol Team which will be patrolling the Alberta/Montana border.
- Hank donated \$10 to announce that he and Janet, with a guest, attended last week's evening membership mix and mingler and really enjoyed it. Rob and Sharon did a wonderful job.
- Bev donated \$10 for Anthony to report that their son Spencer is the recipient of the exclusive RE/MAX Diamond Club Award and RE/MAX Lifetime Achievement Award, putting him in the top 0.1% of realtors in Canada.

## Chase the Ace

Garth Plunkett's ticket was drawn resulting in his winning \$63 (with \$84 to our Club), but he missed picking the Ace of Spades, so we will be continuing our 2 remaining draws for the month. We have only 19 cards left in our deck so the odds are getting better!



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

Bev announced our **Birthdays** for April. We have two member birthdays during the month, Ian Burgess and Dale Perret, both on April 1st. Our single **Spousal Birthday** for April (25th) is Connie Hussey.

We have five **Anniversaries** during the month of April: Neil and Lois Beatty celebrating their 59th anniversary on April 2nd, Keith and Glenda Wellon have their 50th on the 26th, George and Carol Van Schaick their 34th on the 27th, Albert and Laurinda Amaniampong their 33rd on April 3rd, and Bill and Maria Stemp their 23rd on April 5th. Congratulations and best wishes to all!

**April Anniversaries of joining Rotary** are Fred Jessee — 40 years, and Ron May — 28 years.

## Sunshine Report

Rob updated the health of George Van Schaick who has just undergone surgery to repair his rotator cuff and remove a bone chip. We wish him a rapid recovery. Anthony visited John McBean recently, and advises that visitors should visit in the morning as John normally is resting in the pm.

## Dates to Remember

We will be meeting at the Legion for lunch and fellowship on Tuesday, April 8th. Our next regular meeting will be on Tuesday, April 15th at noon at the Carriage House. We are planning a visit to Village Brewery for our evening meeting (5:30 to 7pm) on April 24th, as a joint event with Calgary East.

Rob thanked everyone for attending today and asked all to stand and help close our meeting with a reading of Rotary's 4 Way Test.

Remember, "The Magic of Rotary". Have a great Rotary week! Meeting adjourned at 1:30pm.

*Photos courtesy Sharon Fraiman*

**Rotary**   
Club of Calgary Chinook

**120**  
YEARS OF ROTARY

# Polio Plus



**WORLD  
IMMUNIZATION  
WEEK** 24-30 APRIL

Rotary  

World Immunization Week is fast approaching on 24-30 April. **This is a critical time to raise awareness about the importance of immunization and the safety and effectiveness of vaccines.** Why do we believe so strongly in this? Rotary made a promise to the children of the world with the launch of the PolioPlus program in 1985 that we would eradicate polio from the world. Thanks to vaccines and the incredible support of Rotary members like you, **polio cases have been reduced by 99.9%.** But we aren't done yet.

As we continue our work to eradicate polio worldwide, we need to remain vigilant so that we don't lose the progress we've made. **No child should suffer from diseases like polio that a vaccine can prevent.** Polio eradication is Rotary's top humanitarian project, and we need your help to educate your communities about the benefits of vaccination and tell the story of Rotary's efforts.



## Environmental Month

April 15th  
April 24th

Nelda Schulte, Maturepreneurs  
Evening Meeting with Calgary East Club  
@ the Village Brewery Taproom, 2nd floor, 5:30 - 7pm

## Youth Service Month

May 6th  
May 20th

Jay McNeil, President, Calgary Stampeders  
Ray McPhee, Human Trafficking

## Rotary Fellowships Month

June 3rd

Leny Smith — Pediatric Dentistry



# Membership Mingler March 27th

