



THE BULLETIN



Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: **Brian Thompson**

RI President Gary C.K. Huang

Week Jun 10, 2015

Board 2014-2015

President: Mark Winson, Past President Michael Bell, President Elect: Jack Fleming, Secretary: Ron Miller,

Treasurer: Don Edwards

Directors: Donna Cansfield, Gregory Dobson, Gillian Dugas, Ingrid McGaughey, Frederik Martin, Kester Trim,

June 17, 2015 – Big Ideas Forum (BIF) Local City Councillors 7.00 PM Crooked Cue

Reporting: Ron Miller

Pictures: Ron Miller & Peter Dusek

Today's Speaker: Dan Kershaw Furniture Bank

In the absence of President Mark, President Elect Jack Fleming chaired today's meeting.



Gill Dugas was asked to introduce Dan and noted that she has met Dan on several occasions.

After completing a B.A. in Environmental Studies, he went on to complete his M.A. in Environmental Economics and a Marketing Technology M.B.A. It was these intensive years that motivated him to build things, analyze everything, and push the limits of conventional thinking. He has over 17 years of digital experience in which he led the operations and growth of a variety of industries, business challenges, and product innovations from Internet Gaming, Telecommunications, Payment Processing, Web Hosting, Mobile Dating, Mobile Advertising, Mobile Content Solutions, and a variety of eCommerce projects. He is fortunate enough to have

learned from the best of the best in this industry and has pushed himself to keep learning as he goes. He is "a fleet footed problem solver in a variety of operating scenarios". He has worked at the "C" level and at several executive management capacities in operations, marketing and product as well as founding and running his own business.

Why the change? Like others moving into Social Enterprises – applying many of the same principles he has mastered over the last 17 years for social good is a long time personal goal of his.

Dan began by saying that after a "not typical" career of working for 18 "growth companies" he was "tired of dealing with shareholders". He was hired by the Furniture Bank to "scale" their operation.

Since 1998tThe Furniture Bank has been here in Etobicoke. It was founded by Sister Anne Schenck, who one evening was invited to the apartment of a family of five for dinner. When she arrived, she found a 'home' furnished with a milk crate used as a table, and a pot which the dinner was cooked and served in. She learnt that her hosts ate and slept on the floor. On her way back home that evening, she came upon a gently used sofa that had been left out on the curb for disposal. Sister Anne credits that experience for spawning the idea that gave rise to Furniture Bank – an organization that facilitated the transfer of furniture from individuals disposing of gently used items, to homes in need of them. In her social work in the years that followed, she encountered a dire lack of furnishing options for financially vulnerable individuals, and a growing collection of supporters of her idea. With the help of numerous volunteers, countless hours of pro-bono work and financial donations, small and large, Sister Anne formally incorporated Furniture Bank as a charity in 1998.

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Dan noted that over 20,000 people in the GTA “sleep on the floor”. After a house and a car, furniture is the most expensive purchase for most people. Over 62,000 people have been supported by the Furniture bank including individuals transitioning out of homelessness, women and children escaping abusive situations, refugees and newcomers to Canada, etc. They offer a “furniture removal service” for good quality “gently used” furniture”. They have 9 trucks (5 trucks pick up the furniture from the homes of donors and 4 trucks to deliver furniture to the clients). They have a 40 person staff and a 30,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Etobicoke. In the warehouse is a 16,000 sq. ft. showroom where the furniture is displayed for the clients to choose from. They have over 1000 volunteers (both individual and corporate). Clients make an appointment to visit the showroom and the volunteers work with “each and every” client to help them shop for what they need. Dan said that “all” of the donated furniture they receive is turned over every 72 hours. He said it is a “very active in and out” process.

Dan now wanted to mention an event that took place back in February and how Rotary “was a key component to get them back on their feet”. On the night of February 27-28 (overnight Friday/Saturday) a “strange white truck” appeared and 2 men in hoods got out and promptly “immobilized” their trucks. They stole the catalytic convertors from 5 of the trucks overnight and now they can’t be driven. The convertors are worth up to \$20,000 each brand new. They are stolen for the metal inside; Rhodium (\$9200/oz.); Platinum (\$2000/oz.); Palladium (\$500/oz.). They immediately had to go into “crisis management” and to assess the impact. They contacted the police and their insurance company (who Dan added were less than happy). They had to quickly find a solution for client deliveries and for furniture pickups. On Sunday Dan told the world through all of the media outlets. On Monday morning Dan received the bad news that it would take 8 weeks to repair the trucks (wait until May 1st) as there was a shortage of convertors. They had over a 1000 clients waiting for their furniture; 500 tons of furniture needed; and 750+ donors waiting to have their furniture pickup. As well the insurance

company was “very concerned and was questioning cancelling their insurance”. Dan said “we were in big trouble”.

But then came “Keep on Trucking”. On Monday Dan’s phone began “ringing off the hook”. Leon’s donated trucks and staff for 3 weeks straight. HINO, the makers of the catalytic convertors heard about what had happened and “prioritized” the shipment of 200 convertors to Toronto with their trucks to be “first in line”. The wait had dropped from 8 weeks to 2. They were back in business and no clients were affected. Other individuals and organizations helped as well with cash and “in kind” donations. Rotary Etobicoke’s made a donation which allowed the Furniture Bank to install cages under the trucks that protect the catalytic convertors from being easily stolen again (It would probably take too much time to be worthwhile to a thief and would increase chances of them being caught). The insurance company was now happy and only raised their premiums by 2%. Dan wanted to thank our Club for our help. As a finish to this story, Dan wanted to mention something that coincidentally happened yesterday. The two individuals who stole the convertors were arrested yesterday and face 231 charges. While it won’t bring the convertors back, it is “comforting to know they were caught”.

The Furniture Bank hold an annual “Chair Affair” gala and fundraiser. It will take place this year on October 30th. Some “old” donated furniture may not be in good enough shape to be given to the Furniture Bank clients but is still “furniture with dignity”. Furniture designers in the community take this still “gently used” furniture that “needs life” and redesign it. Then at the “Chair Affair” gala these “works of art” are auctioned off for the charity.

A section of the Furniture bank has been section off for a workshop with the objective of becoming a training centre for youth.

Dan wanted to thank Rotary for all our support.

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International Rotarians

**Alida Delgado – Rotary Club of Chacao -
Caracas, Venezuela (D4370)**



Alida asked if she could say a few words to our Club which would be translated from Spanish by her son Kenny Lopez. She is here from Venezuela visiting her son Kenny (who is a potential new member for our Club). She is a widow but both she and her late husband have been very active in Rotary. Her husband joined Rotary 35 years ago and served in "many roles" during that time including being a two time President of his Club. She has also been a Rotarian for many years. She is "proud to be part of the Rotary family and proud to work with Rotary". She says that she practices the motto of "Heart and Hands for Rotary". While she is here both Kenny and her are planning to help out at our Ribfest.

Vocational Service

**SHEA (Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial
Academy)**

Gord Duncan was asked to welcome the 8 students from the top 3 groups from SHEA's Grade 11 Entrepreneurship class that were mentored by



members of our Club (Theresa Sherwood, Keith Theodore, Michael Lu, Kaiwan (Kevin) Irani, Gord Duncan) They were accompanying by SHEA Principal Rilwana Jafi and Shelley Mancuso, a teacher from the Entrepreneurship class. Gord said that it was an enjoyable mentoring session and it was great attending their "Venture Day" last week to see what the students "could produce from what they learned". Most of the ventures "sold out and made money". It was "very satisfying" for the mentors to see the results. Gord wanted to thank his fellow mentors and the teachers at SHEA for their "support and assistance". He then asked Shelley Mancuso to introduce the top performers who were all presented with certificates to recognize their achievements:

- I. Lina Rahguzar and Mariama Ali – Scoop it Up (ice cream in a cup)
- II. Gary Stanford, Miguel Cortico and Joshua Robichaud – GMJ Milkshakes (oreo cookie milkshakes)
- III. Abdulkarim Salad, Mustafa Salad, Yusef Abdi – Popsicles Wallahi (variety of popsicles)

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Community Services

Welcoming Gifts for New Residents of Women's Habitat Shelter



Gill Dugas reported that Women's Habitat opened their new shelter on Monday, June 8th after a year of renovation. The new facility will provide accommodation for 10 families (25 beds) and residents may stay for several weeks or up to one year. On Tuesday, Gill said that "they were proud" to deliver gifts for women and children to be part of their welcome to the shelter. Women's Habitat also provides outreach programs for 400 women and their families each year. Gifts included, bears, puppies, stationery, interactive books, trinket boxes and vases/flowers.

Club Administration

Wednesday, June 17th – Etobicoke Big Ideas Forum (BIF) with Local City Councillors – 7:00 pm – Crooked Cue (3056 Bloor St. W.) – President Mark reports that 3 to 4 of the City Councillors from Etobicoke will be there to give their "Big Ideas" for Etobicoke.

June 24th – Luncheon Meeting Cancelled due Ribfest set-up

July 1st – Meeting Cancelled – Canada Day/Ribfest

Wednesday, July 8th – Presidential Handover

Our next regularly scheduled luncheon meeting will be on July 8th. This will be Jack Fleming's first meeting as President and then Past President Mark Winson will be there to "hand over the reins". As well our current District 7070 Governor Brian Thompson (who will be the PDG at that time) will present our new District Governor Michael Bell with the "Governor's Home Club" banner which we will display throughout Michael's year as DG.

50/50 Draw



Jack Fleming picked the Joker. Jack wins the pot of approximately \$866.00. Jack mentioned that at our recent Board meeting it was decided that the Club would not increase the membership dues this year even though there has been an increase in some of the expenses the Club incurs. The suggestion has been made that the Club might look at holding a few events that would act as "internal fundraisers" for the Club where the proceeds could be used to offset our increase in expenses. In that light Jack said that he will donate his Happy Bucks winnings to this end.

Visitors & Guests

Visiting Rotarians

- John Joy – Selby, England (D1040)
- Bob Boyded – Canmore, Alberta (D5360)
- Alida Delgado – Chacao (Caracas), Venezuela (D4370)
- Althea Raun – Toronto Sunrise (D7070)

Visitors & Guests

- ✚ Dan Kershaw – The Furniture Bank – Speaker
- ✚ Kenny Lopez – Potential New Member

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✚ 8 Students & 2 Teachers from SHEA
(Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial
Academy)

that he was sick for 4 days. He said however that this won't be his last convention. He will "figure out another excuse to go

Attendance:

Members 14
Visitors & Guests - 16
Total - 30

This Weeks Calendar

HAPPY BUCKS



Lynda Ryder – Lynda said she was happy to welcome Alicia Delgado from Venezuela to our luncheon today and added that she was "thrilled" to learn a great new phrase of "Heart and Hands for Rotary". Lynda was also happy to hear from Gill Dugas about all the "Canadian stuff" that they had gathered that is to handed out to the "new citizens" at the July 1st Citizenship Ceremony at Ribfest.

Theresa Sherwood – Theresa was happy to see the kids from SHEA here today. She was happy to be a part of the "great mentoring program" that was held this spring. She also had a "great time" at their "Venture Day" but she "ate too much". She thought the kids this year were "well prepared" and she was "proud to see the progress that had been made since we started the program".

Liz Read – Liz was also happy to see the students from SHEA and said this was a good way to spread her message that "volunteering is good". She explained to the students that "Ribfest is where we raise all of our money that we use to benefit programs that directly affect them and others in the community". She added that we need "all the help we can at Ribfest" and she is encouraging everyone "to volunteer".

Jack Fleming – Jack said he was "happy to be standing". He unfortunately had to cancel his trip to the RI Convention in San Paulo. He got to the airport to fly out but got sick and decided at the last minute to go back home instead. Jack added

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