



ROTARY  
SERVING  
HUMANITY

# The Bulletin

Rotary  
Etobicoke



## Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: **Jim Louttit**

RI President: John F. Germ

Week – September 7, 2016

**Board 2015-2016**

**President: Gregg Dobson, Past President: Jack Fleming, President Elect: Donna Cansfield,**

**Secretary: Ron Miller, Treasurer: Don Edwards.**

**Directors: Barry Friesen, Gord Duncan, Diane Irvine, Michael Lu, Gerald Lue, Liz Read, Kester Trim**

**Wednesday, September 14, 2016 – MEETING CANCELLED**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 21, 2016 – Big Ideas Forum (BIF) – “All About Literacy”  
– Delmanor Seniors Residence, 4180 Dundas Street West (at Prince Edward) – 6:30 PM**

Reporter and Editor: Ron Miller

### *Lee MacIssac – “MicroSkills Experience and Connecting With Kids in General”*

Lee was a high school teacher of Math and Economics for 32 years (8 years at Vaughan Road C.I.; 3 years at Runnymede C.I.; 5 years at Michael Power; and 16 years at Father John Redmond). He has been retired now for 10 years. He still does some part-time teaching, as well as being a “private tutor”. He has known Jack Fleming for 40 years through hockey. When Jack called him to tell about the MicroSkills Youth Skills Program, he was interested and volunteered to help out. MicroSkills has a “Homework Program” daily from 3:30 to 6:30 PM. Lee volunteers 2 to 3 times a week to help tutor kids who need help. He said it is a busy place, but Michelle Tinker, the Program Director, keeps things organized with her “fair but firm no nonsense approach”. He thinks that she would have been a “great teacher”. The kids arrive for the Homework Club and sit around a table. When he first went to see if any of the kids need help there was “some reluctance” since he was a “new face”. Soon, however, the kids were coming to him for help. He has been doing this for a year now, and says the kids are “grateful” for his help. Lee noted that his “private tutoring” is with students in the Kingsway, Baby Point, and other relatively “affluent neighbourhoods” where people have the “ability to give their kids every opportunity for success”. If a kid is having trouble in math, they hire a math tutor; trouble in science, hire a science tutor; etc. Lee thought, “what about families that don’t have the

resources to do this”. That is where Rotary has helped out with funding programs such as the Youth Skills Program. This is a “high needs” neighbourhood, and this program has given the kids the opportunity to “get the help they need”. Rotary is helping to fund this program and the kids “really appreciate it”. Lee added that in April many of the Syrian refugees came into this neighbourhood. Many of the kids attended the Homework Club and he said that it was “just amazing to see how much they appreciated the help”. The looks on their faces told a great story. He said that it made him “very proud to be a Canadian”. He wanted to thank Rotary for all of the things we do with the money that we fundraise at events like Ribfest. He added that Jack got him to help out with parking at Ribfest, so he knows how hard we work at fundraising. In turn he has talked Jack into “reviving his hockey career along with Gord Duncan, himself and 40 others” this year. This is just shinny. They play at Central Arena on Mondays and Thursdays at 2:30. He added that Jack was the primary founding father of a league, 28 years ago, the Humber Valley Oldtimers, Murray Dryden Division. Most of the originals have since retired, including Gord.

Lee concluded by saying that he is a “strong believer in education” and that Rotary should be proud of our efforts in this program.

**Zahra Komeylian & Julian Tersigni –  
MicroSkills Literacy Program and  
Achievements**

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Gregg now asked Zahra Komeylian and Julian Tersigni from MicroSkills to talk about their Literacy Programs and their achievements.

How do we define literacy? The following 4 steps are “always” included in each lesson;

- Good verbal skills
- Good phonetic skills
- Good Comprehension skills
- Good writing skills

All of these skills reinforce each other.

How Has MicroSkills shaped literacy in North Etobicoke?

- Rotary MicroSkills Youth Services provides literacy support through their 6 homework club programs in their Dixon location, as well as through “after-school” programs at 4 local schools
- At Dixon, they support an average of 20 youth each day, with the highest numbers of youth at the start and mid-point of the year. (Over 100 youth served in their programs)

Their programs support youth with;

- Systemic access barriers to extra educational support
  - Newcomer youth learning English
  - Youth with learning disabilities
  - Youth Grades 9-12 and all of their clients who are preparing for the Gr. 10 Literacy test (OSSLT)
- They provide group-based and one-on-one support to their youth through their various programs and they work with different populations who have unique challenges.

Some of the unique challenges/barriers facing some newcomers/refugees;

- Weak fundamental study skills resulting from gap in education
- Entering the education system at high school, and having to learn all subjects in English
- Lack of adequate resources in the school board
- ESL has become something of a chronic condition for many of their students who started ESL in kindergarten and are still in it several years later.
- However, with additional programming, they have seen thousands of our new Canadian students move on to become professionals, community developers and nation builders.

Challenges unique to their youth;

- Reading/writing at below grade level
- Inconsistent attendance
- Lack of motivation in completing homework
- Shame and stigma of having low or failing grades
- Parental disengagement – many parents expect their youth to come home with high grades because they are enrolled in HW club

Literacy Funding:

Literacy is a strong focus of the youth centre, however they still face challenges in securing funding to support us in implementing effective literacy programming. There is a lack of funding specifically delegated for our Homework clubs and literacy programming. This is why we rely on our peer volunteers and “Mr. Lee” to support our youth. Some funding is provided by;

- United Way
- IRCC – Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada
- Grants Ontario Immigration Programs – Newcomer Settlement Program Literacy Component
- They recently received some funding in conjunction with the York University Rotaract Club.

Who they look for;

- They recruit local youth with strengths in English, Math and Science to mentor and tutor clients
- They have support from “Mr. Lee” and 2-3 tutors
- Additionally, their Newcomer Settlement Program Literacy stream offers specialized programs for 6 local schools in the Dixon catchment area, 3 days a week

Newcomer Settlement Program;

- They have partnered with Excellence in Literacy foundation to provide clients with a youth-centered literacy curriculum. This curriculum has proven beneficial for strengthening confidence, and preparing youth for success on the OSSLT.
- One of our challenges is to find committed bilingual tutors who speak the languages of the clients.

They recognize the gaps that exist in providing literacy and providing support to a marginalized community. They have been creative in delivering programming. This summer they held a summer camp using art as a way of improving youth confidence and conversation skills. Mena is an Iraqi newcomer youth who when asked what was her

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favourite day said that she genuinely could not pick. She expressed joy in making friends and said that the camp's comfortable environment enabled her to grow out of her shyness and speak aloud.

Gregg thanked Zahra, Julian and Lee for being here today. Gregg wanted to remind everyone about our Club's involvement With MicroSkills. In partnership with the Rotary Club of Toronto West, the 2 clubs committed \$150,000 each to move MicroSkills out of a cramped 1000 sq. ft. location to a 2000 sq. ft. facility along with refurbishing their facilities and their computers.



## Happy Bucks

Ralph Chiodo – Ralph first wanted to mention the recent earthquake in Italy. On Friday, he is leaving to go to Italy where he plans to “walk through the area where the quake hit”. Ralph and his family will be donating \$20,000 to the earthquake relief effort. Ralph was happy to say that October 15<sup>th</sup> is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of when he went into business. To celebrate, Ralph and his family are planning a fun-filled “FamilyFesta’ event in support of the new “Kids Zone” at Trillium Health Centre. The event will take place on October 14<sup>th</sup> at Le Treport Wedding and Convention Centre in Mississauga. Ralph and his family will be donating \$1/2 million, and hope to raise another \$1/2 million at this fundraising event.

## 50/50 Draw



**Anthony Kasenda - 9 of Clubs. As a consolation prize, Anthony will win a “free lunch” if he attends our next luncheon meeting on Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>.**

## Birthdays



**Paul Roeser – September 9<sup>th</sup>  
Jay Douglas – September 10<sup>th</sup>  
Fern Duarte – September 15<sup>th</sup>**

## Visitors & Guests

**WELCOME**  
*Enter as guests, leave as friends.*

### Visiting Rotarians:

- ✦ Rose Dlamini – Greenwich, England (D1130)

### Visitors & Guests:

- ✦ Lee MacIssac - Speaker
- ✦ Zahra Komeylian – MicroSkills - Speaker
- ✦ Julian Tersigni – MicroSkills - Speaker
- ✦ Anna Kuzmenko – Potential New Member
- ✦ Michael Wood - Potential New Member
- ✦ Dan Stevens – Guest of Liz Read - Potential New Member

### Attendance:

Members - 13  
Visitors & Guests – 7  
Total – 20

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## Club Calendar



**Monday, September 12<sup>th</sup> – Board of Directors meeting- 6:30 PM – Rotary Clubhouse.**

**Wednesday, September 21<sup>st</sup> – Big Ideas Forum (BIF) – “All Things Literacy” – Delmanor Seniors Residence – 4180 Dundas St. W. – 6:30 PM**

**Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> – District Governor Jim Louttit’s Club Visit – Old Mill Restaurant – 12:15 PM. (NOTE: DG Jim will meet with the Board of Directors after the luncheon meeting).**

**Club Social “Beer & Wings” at the Bier Markt – Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> – 6:30 PM**

**You are all invited to the Club Social “Beer & Wings” at the Bier Markt (199 North Queen St. (Across from Sherway Gardens) - Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup> (6:30 to 8:30 PM)**

**An evening at the Bier Markt to unwind with fellow Rotarians while enjoying great wings (1<sup>st</sup> 66 on Gregg) and beer (cash bar).**

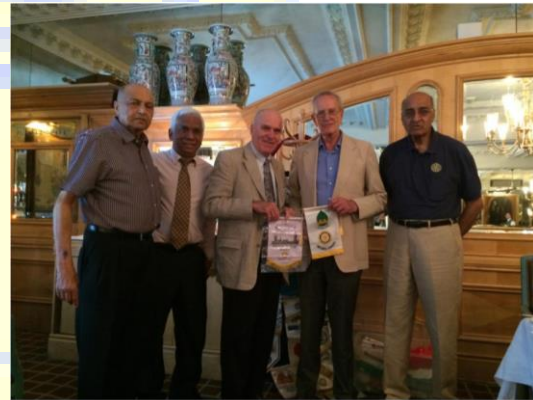
**All welcome, bring family and friends.  
Perfect time to get to know new friends.**

**NOTE: If you have a marketing background, Toronto Ribfest needs your help, so please plan to attend at 5:30 for a brief brainstorming session. Beer is on Gregg.**

## Rotary Club Visits by Our Vacationing Past President

**Jack Fleming is vacationing in Europe and has been visiting some local Rotary Clubs during his travels.**

**He attended at luncheon meeting of the Rotary Club of Westminster West in London, England.**



**He and Rhena also attended an evening meeting of the Rotary Club of Vieux Lyon in France.**



**Sounds like he is having fun!!**

## Burlington Ribfest

**President Gregg volunteered at the Burlington Ribfest.**



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**Mark Winson (serving beer) and Liz Read (VIP Tent) also volunteered**

## Women's Habitat Open House

President Gregg and Liz Read attended the Women's Habitat Open House on August 31<sup>st</sup>.



## Silvercreek Park Playground

During Rotary Etobicoke's last fiscal year, The Club provided funding to assist in the renovation of a playground in Silvercreek Park. This project updated and rejuvenated the existing children's playground area in Silvercreek Park and its playground structure which had fallen into disrepair and neglect. We helped to create an area that is safe for children between ages of 18 months and 12 years and one that stimulates creative and active play. Gill Dugas visited the area on Sunday, August 28 to do a follow up and take photos for the Community Service Committee.



**NOTE: There will be no bulletin published next week.**