



THE BULLETIN



Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: **Valarie Wafer**

RI President: **Ron D. Burton**

Week April 23, 2014

Board 2013-2014

President: Michael Bell, Secretary: Ron Miller, Treasurer: Don Edwards

April 30, 2014 –Speaker: Lyn Manwar – Classification Talk

Reporting: Ron Miller

Pictures: Ron Miller & Peter Dusek

Today's Speakers – Susanna Kislenko and Nevine Sedki – Toronto Furniture Bank



Yvan said it was “an honour” to introduce Susanna and Nevine. Yvan noted that most people know that he will be running in the next Provincial election in Donna Cansfield’s riding (Donna is retiring). Donna told him that he should get to know “people in his community that make a difference” and told him that “he must visit” Susanna at the Furniture Bank. He found that they are making a “great impact on the community” and are “passionate about what they do. He convinced them to speak to our Club.

Susanna Kislenko is the Executive Director of Development at the Furniture Bank. With over twelve years of experience in the non-profit

sector, Susanna’s work is centered on strategic brand and program development, marketing and partnership building. Previously holding roles at World Education Services, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation and Roots of Empathy, Susanna’s efforts have been focused on leveraging the potential for systemic change that exists in uniting the voluntary, private and public spheres. Susanna holds a Masters of International Relations from McGill University and an International Bachelor of Business Administration from the Schulich School of Business. In 2013, Susanna also completed the “Strategic Perspectives in Non-Profit Management” executive training program at Harvard Business School.

Nevine Sedki is the Fundraising Officer. Nevine brings to Furniture Bank over 11 years of Fundraising experience and over 13 years in the charitable sector working with both small, medium and large organizations across Canada including Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, The Shaw Festival, Canadian Diabetes Association, The Royal Conservatory of Music and SkyWorks Charitable Foundation. As a graduate of the Income Managers Program, a Fundraising and Marketing Certification Program through the University of Waterloo and with a Bachelors of Arts degree in Communications from the University of Ottawa, her fundraising experience has spanned across various forms of philanthropy including events, corporate giving, sponsorship, annual giving, major gifts, and grants. Nevine is deeply passionate about social enterprise, the arts as a tool for social justice,

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sustainable solutions to poverty alleviation and food security. She has served on the Board of Directors for FACRA (First Alberta Campus Radio Association) and volunteers her time with community radio stations.

Susanna began by giving some “background” about the Furniture Bank. Furniture Bank has been around for 16 years. It was started by a nun, Sister Anne Scheck, who had been collecting furniture for a centre she operated for refugees. She had her first inspiration when she visited a refugee family with children living in an empty apartment and a single mother with no furniture. She recognized that there were still people who needed help in re-establishing a home. With the help of a “few key champions” including then City Councillor Jack Layton, Sister Anne opened the doors to the first Furniture Bank in 1998 on Madison Avenue. They moved 1 ½ years ago to a permanent home at 25 Connell Court where they operate a 30,000 sq. ft. facility to service their clients and donors. The facility is a fully equipped furniture showroom for clients to browse and select furniture items; a warehouse to receive and organize furniture donations; and a waiting room for client appointments.

Furniture Bank is a registered charity has helped over 60,000 people in the GTA since 1998 to establish their homes by transferring gently used furniture and household goods donated to them by individuals and corporations. Furniture bank works with 73 shelters and partner agencies to provide furniture at no cost for; people transitioning out of homelessness; women and children escaping abusive situations; refugees; and newcomers to Canada.

Furniture Bank is also a full-service Furniture removal Charity. They offer furniture removal services for your home or business including

offices, retail locations, construction sites, and more. They are the furniture removal company that “handles the tough stuff” and they ensure that the furniture gets recycled, donated, or disposed of responsibly. They take old furniture, minor appliances, electronics, housewares, beds, mattresses, tables, chairs or other furniture. Furniture Bank can take away almost any furniture they can fit in their trucks. They will remove furniture from wherever it’s located, and ensure the donor gets a taxable donation receipt for the gift to their charity.

Susanna believes that the Furniture Bank has “grown up” over the past few years. They have become one of the largest social enterprises in Canada. They are currently in the middle of their 5 year strategic plan. Furniture Bank services approximately 5000 donors and an equivalent number of clients a year. Furniture bank has had over 200 companies donate furniture since 1998. They have 5 trucks on the road every day (3 to pick up furniture and 2 to deliver). She added that “demand is increasing” due to “external and internal displacement”. Plans are to eventually go national with their programs.

Susanna says she knows “first hand” the impact of the services they provide. When she and her parents emigrated from the Ukraine 25 years ago there was a government program that supplied furniture, food, etc to new families. They thought this was wonderful and have always been grateful for this. However, the Federal government has stopped providing this service. This is where the Furniture Bank fits in. She mentioned just the simple impact a couch has. It is a place to; rest after a long day; for families to come together; to relax with loved ones; etc.

Nevine wanted to discuss “Why do they do what they do?” Through the transfer of the

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gently used furniture and household goods they help people to turn an empty space into a true home. It helps empower the people involved and help to regain their dignity.

There are over 391,260 metric tonnes of waste being thrown out in the GTA every year according to the City of Toronto Solid Waste department. At Furniture Bank, by transferring items from donors to clients they help divert materials from going to landfills. They divert approximately 1,500 tonnes of this waste per year. Since 1998, they have helped divert over 9,400 metric tonnes of waste which is the weight of approximately 1,887 elephants! In 2013 if you stacked up the waste they diverted it would be the equivalent of 63 CN Towers.

Unfortunately, Furniture Bank is unable to use some of that furniture and disposes up to 52 truck-loads (312 clients) or 41,600 lbs of furniture a year as pure waste going to landfill. This waste could be further reduced by repair. They initially believe that 10 times that amount could be diverted if they were able to provide a way of giving away furniture that was in need of repair instead of disposal. The solution is their program called "RepairUp". RepairUp would eventually provide furniture and upholstery services to both individuals and business across the GTA, providing an easy and socially conscious solution, helping the City of Toronto reach its goal of "zero waste". While a number of furniture disposal and repair options exist, their program would be unique given its skills development and training focus. They would do this by expanding their current skills development program "LegUp" by adding a furniture repair capability. Of the 35 member staff at Furniture Bank, 20 have been former clients or participants in the program that have been trained. They look to help the "under-employed".

Social Impact - Nevine says the Furniture Bank mission is to serve even more individuals and families. The Skills Development program, through LegUp, has been able to train over 120 'youth at risk', newcomers to Canada, and people with "other employment barriers" to date. With "RepairUp" they would be able to train at least 20 new participants a year and provide a new skilled trade layer that they had been unable to provide to date. The long-term measurable social outcomes for participants are; increased self-esteem and confidence; a suitable livelihood; long term employment accessibility beyond Furniture bank employment experience; and improved job experience. They also have an increased waste diversion goal of at least 42,860 lbs a year of furniture saved from landfills (reduce the number of unused furniture items by 20% in 2013 and by 60% in 2014).

Nevine noted that for further information their website is www.furniturebank.org.

Keith Theodore thanked the speakers. He says the "scale of what they are doing is amazing". He was impressed with the "growth of what they are doing and where they are going" and their "plans to get there". He says they are really "thinking big". Keith said that with his Real Estate background he can relate to having people having to get rid of furniture and that Furniture Bank may be a viable option for many.

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Secretary's Announcements



Saturday May 03, 2014 – BMO Institute for Learning, 3550 Pharmacy Ave, Toronto. 7.30 AM – 2.00 PM. Contact Ron for details and Registration.

Superior Court Justice Cory Gilmore - Scarborough Rotary Club - Tuesday, May 13, 2014.

The Scarborough Rotary Club has invited our members to attend their meeting on Tuesday May 13th at the Scarborough Golf Club (12:30 PM) when the speaker will be Superior Court Justice Cory Gilmore. She is the daughter of Judge Stan Long, a long-time member of the Rotary Club of Etobicoke. She is one of our Bilingual Judges who practiced law in Alliston specializing in Criminal and Family law. They are hoping to have as many members as possible from our Club attend.



50/50 Draw

Barry Friesen– 10 of Hearts. So the pot grows...

Visitors & Guests



Visiting Rotarians

- **Anna Panno** – Rotary Club Toronto Earlscourt
- **Anthony Calamia** – Rotary Club of Toronto Earlscourt

Visitors and Guests:

- **Susanna Kislenko** – Executive Director – Furniture Bank – Speaker
- **Nevine Sedki** – Fundraising Officer – Furniture Bank – Speaker
- **Diana Gaspar** – Potential new member

Attendance:

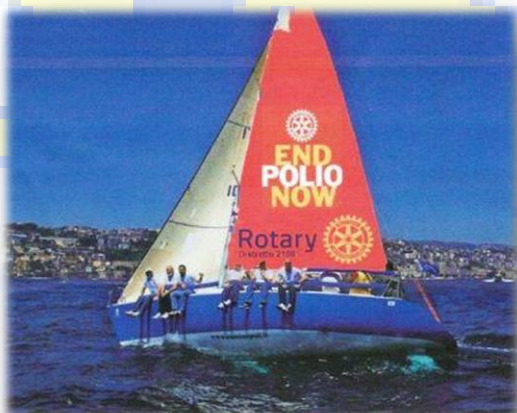
Members 16
Visitors & Guests - 05
Total - 21

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HAPPY BUCKS



Ralph Chiodo – Ralph was “happy” to say that our twin Club in Amantea, Italy and PDG (D2100) Francesco Socievole “hooked” him into supporting the purchase of a an “End Polio Now” sail for a sailboat that that will be in a regatta on the Bay of Naples. Ralph and his family are paying for the sail that will appear throughout Europe this summer. Ralph said he has just written a cheque for 2465,00€ (Euros) or the equivalent of \$4701.24 (\$CAN).



Ron Miller – Ron was happy to say that he attended a very successful Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) training session last Saturday. Michael Bell, Paul Roeser and Jack Fleming completed their Part 3 training and Linda Ryder and Ron were some of the facilitators. Ron says he is hoping that we can get more of our newer members to attend the next session in the fall as this is a great way to learn about Rotary. Ron was also happy to say that he was “honoured” to attend the Toronto Police Services Volunteer Recognition

ceremony on April 14th where he received his 5 year recognition for his volunteer work with the 11 Division Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC). He received a service pin from Police Chief Bill Blair and Police Board Chair Alok Mukherjee.

Michael Lu – Michael was happy to say that he had some gift baskets left over from his very successful “Lights On for Seniors” program at Christmas that brought some cheer to isolated seniors in our community. They “mixed and matched” the contents of the baskets and added a few things to make them “Easter” gift baskets which they delivered to 10 seniors last Monday.

Nigel Brown (via Ron Miller) – Nigel sent the following email from Cape Town, South Africa that Ron wanted to share with the Club:
“I went to the South Africa National Rowing Champs over the weekend (April 5th & 6th) and had 3 races in the Masters 3rd Division (an eight, a double & an un-coxed quad scull) - after handicaps were applied to my boats, came in 4th, 2nd, and 1st respectively - my quad team are now SA Champions!! My first medal, and why not start with gold!? It is such a good feeling - only 1000m races - we came from behind after a slow start and took the lead with about 400m to go and held on - the results say it was about half a boat length, 4 seconds). Luckily the second boat crew were also Masters “D” (an average age rating) and the older crews were far enough back not to spoil our moment this time (unlike in the double, where we also took line honours). Nigel”.