



THE BULLETIN



Rotary Club of Etobicoke

District Governor: **Valarie Wafer**

RI President: **Ron D. Burton**

Week March 12, 2014

Board 2013-2014

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

April 02, 2014 –Speaker: Albane Gaudisaart – Director TATU Project, Tanzania.

Reporting: Ron Miller

Pictures: Ron Miller & Peter Dusek

Today's Speaker – Banesha Shah – Families For Children



Jack Fleming introduced Banesha. Jack said it was a “real pleasure” to introduce her as she has been a “friend and colleague” for almost 25 years. Jack said that first met her when they worked together at Confederation Life where she was responsible for all aspects of product development. She is an Actuary who specializes in “all sorts of insurance”. Through their friendship between their families, Jack convinced her she should start “her own practice”. For the past 15 years she has been an “independent consultant helping clients on both product development and strategic initiatives” (Banasha Shah Consulting Services, Inc.). She has collaborated with Jack on many

projects. Jack said she is a “fabulous advisor” to deal with.

In her spare time, she has a husband, a son and two daughters. She is here today to talk about the “support work she is doing in India” with Families for Children

Banasha wanted to begin by saying she first visited the “Families for Children” orphanage in India 1 year ago. “Families for Children” is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian agency operating homes that care for hundreds of destitute children and women in India and Bangladesh. FFC was founded in 1971 by Sandra Simpson from Montreal. FFC India is located in the city of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu State in southern India. They have 450 children residing at their Homes in Coimbatore. Over 1/3 of the children are “special needs” who are physically or mentally handicapped. All of the children are educated, served nutritious meals and have healthcare provided. The children are raised by a “caring staff of care givers” in a “loving family environment” Excellent locally hired Special Education teachers are also employed to care for these children.

Banesha said that she found out about FFC about 20 years ago and “knew immediately that she would become involved”. She and her husband sponsored a child there. Her daughter Sophie began to make jewellery that she could sell with the money going to FFC. In December 2014, she and Sophie went to India to visit FFC India and both were “truly amazed by the experience”. The facility is comprised of 6

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houses including the Special Care centre, a toddler's house, and Harry's House which is a home for young boys. They also have the FFC Primary School. Every child gets an education. The curriculum has been set by volunteer teachers from Canada.

There are also some adults living at FFC. Many of these adults came here as children and grew up here. In most cases these people are giving back by working at FFC in various capacities or participating in FFC's various projects or handcraft production. This helps to make FFC "self sustaining" and helps promote "independence by providing meaningful work for the residents. It also provides a source of income.

Some examples are FFC's mushroom farm. They hang bags made of hay in a "dark, damp" spot, water it daily and grow "oyster" mushrooms. These are very popular in India and are easily sold. They have an Organic garden that covers about every square metre of useable land to grow food for the children. They also compost all scraps from the kitchen which is added to the soil to make it rich. There is a ladies sewing co-op. A volunteer taught the sewing technique to the ladies. They use donated scraps from local tailors to make various things that they can sell. They also had a pile of old pants and jeans that were destined for the garbage, so they made a "challenge" to see if there was a more environmentally favourable alternative. They came up with the idea of sewing the jean fabric into back packs for school children. This not only saved the old material from being wasted, but also cut down on the number of backpacks that would have to be purchased. As it turned out, the kids loved the custom-made backpacks, as each child had his own unique material and design. There were many other creative designs such as yoga bags and duffle bags. They also do "silk weaving"

which uses discarded silk ends from the mills. It is processed and spun into yarn which the weavers at FFC use to produce small area rugs and mats. They also use "recycled paper to make greeting cards which are hand painted by some of the residents. Another project is bee keeping which produces honey that they can sell.

Another of the projects is the "House of Hope" where they are teaching "skills" to young adults such as cooking and bakery skills.

Baneshia now wanted to talk about volunteering in India. Her daughter Sophie was 14 when they visited FFC. They didn't know what they were going to do there for a week. They were told to just "spend the time being part of what is going on". They spent time with the children, some of which a "severe disabilities". The care givers "do everything that is necessary for the children (feed, change, etc). The volunteers allow the care givers the time to do other things. While there they helped make different things with beads (bracelets, necklaces, etc) that could also be sold.

The monthly cost of running FFC is approximately \$30,000 (\$CAN) and \$30,000 for their other facility in Bangladesh. FFC does not pay for office rental as FFC volunteers work out of their homes. FFC raises its money through private donations, special projects, handcraft sales, fashion show, private garage sales, dances and other individual or group-sponsored events.

Baneshia says FFC "changes lives". The child that she and her husband sponsored 20 years ago was a "bright student" who eventually went to college.

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Frederik Martin thanked Banesha for her informative and inspiring presentation.

Hands On Etobicoke - Painting at Youth Without Shelter



On Tuesday, March 25 Rotary Etobicoke and Rotaract Club of York University teamed up to paint 4 bedrooms in Youth Without Shelter. With the wonderful support of Judy Leroux, Mike Burnett and the always generous and encouraging staff at YWS, we spent a really fun day working on refreshing the rooms and coming up with the best designs. The competition between the 4 teams resulted in excellent designs which can be seen on our club's Facebook. First place ribbon went to Amir along with a super hero cup full of chocolates.

Thank you to everyone for giving your time, energy and passion to make a big difference to 8 of the homeless youth staying in YWS. Keith and Drew are not in the photo, however, they contributed a big part to the project.

Cheque Presentation Haven on Queensway & Trillium Foundation



On Monday, March 17, Rotary Etobicoke Andre & Gillian Dugas presented Bev Hynek, Director of Haven on the Queensway, with a \$1,000 cheque for the immediate purchase of much needed winter items to be distributed from their Hope with Wheels bus each week in the Etobicoke area. The urgently required items included cold weather sleeping bags, blankets, underwear and socks. Bev also thanked Rotary Etobicoke for their earlier Hands-on Etobicoke donations...."your donation of new socks, underwear, gloves and warm hoodies has been given to the homeless by our Hope with Wheels bus, the food was used in our food bank and the toiletry packs will be distributed to our rehab program"



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Secretary's Announcements



International Services Committee Meeting. March 31, 2014. 7.00 PM.
Andree & Gill Residence, 7 Crestridge Heights Road, Etobicoke.

Vocational Services Committee Meeting.
April 03, 2014. 7.15 PM at Dr. Jay Carey's Office.

Saturday April 19, 2014. Rotary Leadership Institute (RLI) – Levels 1, 2, & 3
– Seneca College, 1750 Finch Ave E, Toronto. Contact Ron for details and Registration.

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

Visitors & Guests



Visiting Rotarians

- **Ron Manfield** – Rotary Club of Toronto West

Visitors and Guests:

- **Banasha Shah** – speaker
- **John, Deb and Carrie Robertson** – Albion Amusements
- **Rhena Fleming** – Guest of Jack Fleming

Attendance:

Members – 19
Visitors & Guests – 06
Total – 25



HAPPY BUCKS

Jack Fleming – Jack was happy to see today's speaker Banasha Shah here today. Jack says that they have been friends for a long time. Jack also was happy to thank all the members who attended the "MicroSkills" Meet & Greet last Friday evening. There was a "great turnout and it was a lot of fun". From the feedback received from the MicroSkills staff and others, the kids had a "great time" and it was "valuable" for them to be there. He added that MicroSkills will be holding an "open house" on Monday, April 7th and all our members are invited. And finally Jack was "extremely" happy to announce that his first grandchild, Ada Julia Fleming was born on March 14th.



50/50 Draw

Earlene Brown – 4 of Hearts. So the pot grows...

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Michael Lu – Michael was happy to say that Hugh Williams and he were at Etobicoke General Hospital this morning for a “special announcement” by Health Minister Deb Mathews. The Ontario Government is investing \$55 million in a 3 phase project at EGH which includes new equipment as well as building a new 4-story building that will be attached to the old building that was built back in 1972. This will house a new ER facility, etc. This was a big announcement and showed their “commitment to the community”

Michael Bell – Michael was happy to say that he was helping out at PETS2 over the weekend where Mark Winson training. Mark also left on Monday with the other President Elects to fly to Chicago to visit Rotary International Headquarters in Evanston. They returned on Monday. He was also happy to see two of our honorary members, Bob Maxwell and Doug Hartry in attendance today. In addition Michael was happy to welcome John, Deb and Carrie Robertson from Albion Amusements to be here today. Albion Amusements run the midway at Ribfest. John and Deb had just returned from Texas with a new ride called “Monster Trucks” which will appear at Ribfest.

Invitation to attend MicroSkills Open House:

The following invitation has been received from MicroSkills;
“Community MicroSkills Development Centre is very pleased to invite you to join us in celebrating 30 years of serving our community! We will be commemorating this significant milestone with an official Open House to be held:

Monday, April 7, 2014 at 12:30PM
Youth Welcoming Centre
235 Dixon Road, Unit 12
Toronto, ON

Over three decades MicroSkills has helped thousands of individuals – including women, newcomers, youth and the unemployed – build better futures, and we look forward to your sharing this momentous occasion with us and bringing greetings on behalf of the community.

Our celebratory Open House will feature a formal presentation that highlights the important role of corporate and community partnerships during these 30 years, in strengthening our clients’ participation in, and contribution to, our communities and our economy.

Please let us know if you will participate in our 30th anniversary event, or if you require further information.”

RSVP to Eunice at: ekimani@microskills.ca

President Elect Mark Winson at RI Headquarters after PETS

