

# Making a Difference



The Rotary Club of Toronto | Marketing & Communications Special Edition

Volume 2 | Issue 2 | November 18, 2016

## ROTARY CLUB OF TORONTO CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

### Supporting our Foundation



The Rotary Club of Toronto Charitable Foundation funds programs and projects that have a lasting, positive impact on the lives of those in our community. Its primary mission is to fund programs, in the City of Toronto, which benefit children and youth in the areas of health, education, social development and life enrichment. It also funds community programs for seniors, the homeless, and the physically and mentally vulnerable.

The Foundation welcomes financial gifts at any time from Club members and from non-Rotarians. A substantial portion of our Foundation's assets come from bequests from Rotarians, spouses and families of Rotarians. You may make a bequest to The Rotary Club of Toronto Charitable Foundation in your Will. To receive further information and a suggested format, please call The Rotary office.

— by Valerie Clarke, Chair, Research & Appeals Committee

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## The Rotary Club of Toronto Provide Computer Tablets to Fred Victor Social Services: Grade 12 Students Teach Computer Skills! Seniors Learn! – by Leslie Morris, Health Promoter, Health Promotion Team



Fred Victor is a social service charitable organization that fosters long-lasting and positive change in the lives of homeless and low-income people in Toronto. As part of our community-based mental health programs, we are doing a pilot project training isolated, vulnerable seniors to access technology with tablets.



Students teach! Seniors Learn!

This unique program matches older adults (55+) living in St. James Town with grade six students from Rose Avenue Public School in order to teach seniors how to use technology and therefore close the digital divide that exists for many. With generous funding from The Rotary Club of Toronto, each participant is given their own tablet upon completion of the program. We are also partnering with Grade 12 students from Rosedale Heights School of the Arts to produce a film in order to capture the process as it unfolds for educational and communications purposes. Finally, we are working closely with a Media Consultant who has developed the curriculum, taught the students how to teach, and is running the program.

To date, tablets have been purchased, the curriculum has been developed, seniors have been recruited and grade six students trained. Our first meeting was held with each student separately to familiarize them with the devices. The official program started on Wednesday, September 28th at 3:30pm. Each senior was introduced to their student-coach and given several tasks to complete during the lesson. The film crew was on hand to capture this event. It was heartwarming to see the seniors and students working diligently together in a concentrated effort to learn (and teach) the material. At the end of the session it was evident that the students felt really proud and the seniors quite happy!

## The Rotary Club of Toronto Partners with Sistering to Improve the Lives of Isolated and Vulnerable Senior Women

— by Patricia O'Connell, editor, Executive Director



The number of homeless women in Toronto has doubled, and there has been a phenomenal increase in seniors living in poverty. Thanks to the generous support of our friends at The Rotary Club of Toronto, Sistering's Parkdale Drop In has had the opportunity to run workshops to support the special needs of senior women including mental health and emotional wellbeing, seniors' rights, landlord and tenant issues, elder abuse, and healthy eating on a budget. Sistering's seniors also enjoyed a number of day trips and special events as well as a Community Walk to explore the neighbourhood and all the resources available.



Thanks to generous support from The Rotary Club of Toronto, we offered programs supporting the special needs of senior women.

"We have supported the work of Sistering for a number of years," says Don Brooks, a member of The Rotary Club's Senior Citizens Committee. "When we award grants, we look at the impact a program has on the end user. And there is no question that Sistering positively impacts isolated and vulnerable women – and for this program, seniors."

**THE ROTARY CLUB OF TORONTO, PHILANTHROPIC COMMITTEE.**

**International Service Committee**



I have been a member of the International Services Committee since I joined The Rotary Club of Toronto in 2012. My role as Chair developed because of the Committee's well thought out succession plan. Heather Findlay was our most recent Chair and under her unwavering passion for development I learned the ropes.

We have an extremely active committee, with a lot of interest in high-impact grassroots development projects in the Third World. We're extremely fortunate to have a number of members who participate in Sweat Equity trips around the world as well as members who have an abundance of expertise in Third World development. While there is no particular geographic focus, the committee likes to focus on projects that have elements of Water & Sanitation, AIDS relief, Maternal Education, or Youth Development in the Third World. Over the years, Committee members have learned how to leverage funds through Rotary and how to work with many other Rotary Clubs worldwide to make bigger and better things happen.

Recently International Services, under the tutelage of Maureen Bird, spearheaded a subcommittee of Club Members to sponsor a Syrian refugee family in Canada. The result was raising more than \$55,000 and assembling a taskforce of passionate Rotarians to support the family's transition to Canada.

As we move towards the Rotary Convention in 2018, the International Services Committee is beginning to explore the idea of a major project. A lot of discussion from all members of the committee is taking place on what this project should look like as well as how it should be pursued. Stay tuned as we continue to work to this end, or better still, come join us!

– by **John Farrell**, Chair-International Service Committee

**Marketing & Communications Committee Chair:** Sylvia Geist  
**"Making A Difference" Issue Editor:** Sylvia Geist



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Covenant House staff announced its long-awaited transition for sex-trafficked victims has been opened. Special Thanks to Our Women's Initiative Committee for creating social media buzz. This post was liked 54 times and shared 17 times by our followers.

**Rotary Club of Toronto "Buzz Group"**

- Elizabeth Simmie
- John Fortney
- Marcy Berg
- Rudy Haddad

**The Rotary Club of Toronto Focuses on the Educational Needs of Children Living in Poverty in Tuksa, Peru – by Alan Harman, President, Alma Foundation**



The Tuksa project has been a great success for Alma and we are very grateful for The Rotary Club of Toronto's ISC support of \$5,000 towards this project.

Since the Rotary funding, we have seen a 90% attendance rate with over 65% of children achieving creative and analytical thinking.

Tuksa is a small community about four hours from Cusco. There are about 30 families in the area and 18 children attending our project. These families live in a state of extreme poverty (living off less than a dollar a day) and all educational metrics in this community are terrible. Three years ago we created one of our biblioteca style projects that reinforces education received in the school with creative teaching methodologies in an after-school program.

Parental involvement in this project has also been great. At this time of year, because of the weather power is quite often knocked out. One day recently, when the power was out at the school one of the parents connected the power from their home to the school so we could still run our after-school program. We are currently in the process of doing at home parent-teacher meetings so each parent can view the children's portfolio and providing the parents with suggestions on how they can help their children achieve their academic goals. This way, parents can become empowered and be actors in their child's education.

We have two teachers working in Tuksa and 18 children attending on a regular basis.

We use digital portfolios to measure the success and progress of the children. There are nine metrics displayed in these portfolios including:

- Presence of critical and creative thinking
- Adequacy of work level
- Understanding of course content
- Understanding and explanations of underlining concepts



*Eager Students in Classroom*

**The Rotary Club of Toronto Contributes Significantly to an Eye Clinic for Liberian Citizens – by Cathy Cameron, NSEC Board Co-Chairperson**



As a result of a Rotary International Global Grant (#GG25221) New Sight Eye Center (<https://goo.gl/zd05hn>) was founded in 2012 by Rotarian Robert Dolo, Sinkor Rotary Club, Liberia, West Africa. NSEC was established to respond to the burden of eye care needs in Liberia that persisted following 14 years of civil war.

In 2015/16, the International Service Committee, The Rotary Club of Toronto donated \$2,500 (along with donations from the Newtown, Trumbull and Westport Rotary Clubs, United States) towards a second Global Grant (#GG1420320) for \$41,000. This grant was used to purchase three important pieces of equipment (a YAG laser, visual field screener and scan biometry machine) that were needed to diagnose and treat patients. These pieces of equipment will reduce the occurrence of secondary cataracts, improve the ability to provide appropriate lenses for cataract patients and increase the accurate diagnosis of eye diseases.

With the first Global Grant, NSEC began as a small clinic in a two-room building in Monrovia with two staff, three volunteers and limited resources. Today, NSEC employs 24 staff in a 2-story clinic complete with an operating room, pharmacy, pediatric unit and optical shop (see video of the recent dedication ceremony <https://goo.gl/RgyXID>).

Through their contribution, The Rotary Club of Toronto has contributed significantly towards improving eye care for Liberians now and into the future.

NSEC is currently one of only three facilities providing much needed eye care for a population of 3.8 million. The overall mission of NSEC is to reduce preventable blindness and visual



*Dr. James Clarke and Visual Field Screener.*

impairment through the provision of comprehensive and affordable community-based eye health services, sight-restoring surgery and eye health education. To date, NSEC has treated over 50,000 patients, and provided sight restoring cataract surgery to more than 4,000 Liberians.



*Sinkor & Newtown Rotarians at Dedication*



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