

Burlington Rotary Club 100th Anniversary Comments

By Dan Feeney

Thank you Lise for your leadership and spearheading the Burlington Rotary Club's 100 year anniversary celebration.

Rotary consists of an amazing group of people – it inspires many of us by asking “how can I do more to help the Club and by doing more for my community.”

As program director and a past president, I have seen firsthand some of the hard work and effort that goes into helping the Club succeed in many ways.

Our club was founded in 1922.

Our Club's first President, Warren Austin went on to represent Vermont as a US Senator before accepting President Truman's appointment as the United States first Ambassador to the United Nations.

And speaking of presidents, our little club here in Burlington hosted two sitting presidents –

Macedonian President Ivanov in the fall of 2009 and

President Wade from Senegal in the fall of 2010.

As president of the Rotary Club at that time, I learned the in's and out's of getting dignitaries into the hotel by the secret service. It has helped immensely over the years when running late to a Club meeting.

As the club's program coordinator, my role is to provide interesting programs that leave an imprint on the club membership and educates the members about the comings and goings in the area and across the globe.

We try to rotate through non profits, interesting businesses, political personalities and the community in general.

Some of the more interesting programs that left an imprint on the membership in no certain order have been:

Wood4Good – helping provide much needed wood for those in need

The crew from the USS Vermont crew this past spring

Vice Admiral Thomas Rowden – who managed the US 7th fleet of the US Navy

Multiple local, state and federal politicians seeking office and in office

We hosted, Reverend Peter Maclean who served in US Naval Reserve during the Viet Nam War – mesmerizing program about serving as a chaplain in Viet Nam

Spectrum's Sleep Out summary by Mark Redmond

Pure Water for the World

Flyin Ryan Foundation - Rotary club member – Peter Hawks turned his son Ryan's tragic accident into a world class organization which inspires others to live a more meaningful life and draw from their own self-composed core values. The program was supported instantly by Peter's fellow rotarians after hearing what he wanted to do.

Beta Technology – as a start up we learned what this company was doing well before it hit the front pages and wall street

Dealer Policy and how they disrupted the car insurance industry

There are many members to recognize for the success of the Club over the past 100 years but the core member has always been those who believed that Service Above Self plays a role in their daily lives.

Some examples of projects led by the Burlington Rotary Club include:

Delivering over 52,000 masks to organizations during Covid,

Planting flowers in City Hall Park every spring,

Cooking or bringing dinners for residents at Dismas House on a monthly basis,

Ushering at UVM hockey games

Ringing the bell for Salvation Army on bitterly cold Saturday's in December on Church Street

assembling teddy bears every winter at Vermont Teddy Bear and donating their labor to support the Burlington Rotary Club.

Some might think that these activities aren't fun, but there is always levity and humor when completing a Rotary Community Project.

Let me tell you about a few of the Club's programs that are unique to Rotary

The **Burlington Rotary Foundation** with Ed Murphy (Rotary Secretary/Treasurer);

Giving back to the community can only be done if there is currency to give back. Currency is usually in the form of US \$ but currency could be blood, sweat and tears. The Club has been very fortunate that over the past decades, the Burlington Rotary Foundation has been led by Ed Murphy and assisted by Rit Devenere.

The **Friendship Exchange** with Joe Gaida; Rotary Friendship Exchange Unites members from across the globe. With over 46,000 clubs across the globe, a Rotarian can usually find a friendly Rotarian to welcome them to a meeting and learn what that club is doing but also share what goes in the Burlington club. Joe Gaida has lead the friendship exchange for the Burlington Rotary Club for many years and the Club is a better club because of his efforts.

The **Burlington Youth Exchange** with Jesse Beck. The Rotary Youth Exchange builds peace one young person at a time.

Exchange students unlock their true potential to:

- Develop lifelong leadership skills
- Learn a new language and culture
- Build lasting friendships with young people from around the world
- Become a global citizen

Jesse Beck and his wife Kevin have opened their home to many an exchange student and facilitate life long memories for those who have visited Burlington.

All of these programs offer Rotarians an opportunity to support local and global initiatives.

Rotary is all about Service Above Self to benefit the greater community whether it be in Chittenden County or across the globe. There are many choices for someone's time and energy out there and becoming a Rotary Club Member should be right at the top of your list.

Organizations, come and go but when an organization such as Rotary International, started by Paul Harris who at the age of 3 moved to Wallingford, VT, attended University of Vermont and started Rotary in Chicago back in 1905.