

# ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Rotary goes local, internationally

[L lakeplacidnews.com/opinion/columns/2023/07/27/rotary-club-news-rotary-goes-local-internationally](https://lakeplacidnews.com/opinion/columns/2023/07/27/rotary-club-news-rotary-goes-local-internationally)

Columns

Jul 27, 2023

## MARTHA PRITCHARD SPEAR, PETER LABELLE and ROTARIANS IN GHANA AND UGANDA

Lake Placid Rotary Club



Future students wave at the Abonsrakom Vocational Trade School. (Provided photo)

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid is financially supporting several international humanitarian projects, and we thought you would like to know about two of them.

### Vocational trade school in Ghana

We are partnering with the Rotary Club of Cornwall Ontario Sunrise Foundation Inc. to fund a Rotary Global Grant for a project in a community in Ghana. A formerly vacant building is being retrofitted as a vocational and trade school. The needs assessment has been completed, and the ministry of education has committed to providing the teachers. The project leader, Rotarian Peter Labelle, was in the Bono region of Ghana working on another Rotary Global Grant on Neglected Tropical Skin Diseases. He was approached by the chief and community members of the village of Abonsrakom about the possibility of converting the

village's old school building into a vocational trade school, like our BOCES here. The community formally requested Rotary's help to get this project up and running. The project was strongly supported by the local Rotary Club of Sunyani Central, which has been collaborating with the Abonsrakom community for almost ten years.



The men in this photo include Peter Labelle, far left, and the chief of Abonsrakom in Bono Region, Ghana, in the middle. (Provided photo)

The total cost for this project is about \$50,000 USD that consists of:

- Revitalization of the school building.
- Equipment and tools for the trades.
- Compostable toilets.
- Consumable supplies for the trades for the first class that will generate sales of finished products. The resulting revenue will be used to fund the purchase of additional supplies and equipment as required.

The school is projected to train 120 skilled tradespeople annually in specialties such as masonry, carpentry, fashion design and hair styling. Trades are strongly gendered in rural Ghana so the project describes the classes as “for women” and “for men.” Each class has a

capacity of 30 students in a three-year program.

### Clean water and hygiene supplies in Uganda

A second Global Grant that our local Rotary Club is helping to fund is in Uganda's Kyoga village North East of Kampala. In many rural villages around the world, lack of fresh water, menstrual hygiene knowledge and sanitary supplies keeps girls at home a quarter of their school days, and their education suffers accordingly. According to the World Bank, "In low-income countries, secondary school completion rates for girls ... lag, with only 36% of girls completing lower secondary school compared to 44% of boys." A lot of that discrepancy is due to girls' missing school an average of a week every month due to their periods. This is such a simple fix. UNICEF says, "Educated girls are less likely to face discrimination. They are safer and better protected from exploitation and abuse. They invest more in their communities. And they contribute more to the economy and to society."

This project benefits girls and women by upgrading the sanitation in the schools, providing hygiene, sanitation and menstrual hygiene management training to both the girls and the boys in the schools, providing pads to the girls and women in the community, and most importantly, by ensuring a clean water supply.

We chose to focus particularly on the girls. Funding for sanitary pads was greatly appreciated. The pads are washable and reusable and are expected to protect girls for three to four years. The cost of one pad is \$1.25. They come in cotton bags that have six pads per bag and we gave two bags per girl. The cost of 12 pads is \$15, and \$1,000 helps 66 girls.

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid meets weekly at 7:20 a.m. for breakfast at the Hampton Inn. All are welcome and all meetings are hybrid. Learn more at [rotarylakeplacid.org](http://rotarylakeplacid.org).

(Martha Pritchard Spear is a member of the Rotary Club of Lake Placid.)