

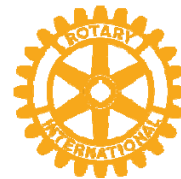


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District 2452 Rotary International

RCBC Marhaba

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Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan



RI President **Jennifer E. Jones**
Rotary Club of Windsor-Roseland,
Ontario, Canada

District Governor **George Azar**
Rotary Club Aley, Lebanon

Assistant Governor, **Aida Daou**
Rotary Club de Beyrouth, Lebanon

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President **Samir El Khoury**
IPP **Sona Kourtian Doniguian**
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The Launching of the Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan as an Inclusive Club for People with Disabilities (PwD)”



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, three powerful words that Rotary was built on and was adopted by RI President Jennifer Jones as her Presidential Initiative for RY 22-23. In her words “In Rotary, we celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion. It does not matter who you are, who you love, how you worship, whether you have a disability, or what culture or country you are from. What matters is that you want to strengthen communities and take action to create lasting change”.

Stemming from our inherent belief in these three words, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan, first in Lebanon and D2452, launched its initiative of being the first club to be inclusive of People with Disabilities (PwD). This important event took place on March 9, 2023 in the presence of DG George Azar(D2452), fellow Rotarians and guests. The national anthem was delivered by members from the Lebanese School for Blind and Deaf, a school that RC Beirut Cosmopolitan supported in the past few years, through various service projects.

This initiative was conceived, researched and brought to light by RC Beirut Cosmopolitan Incoming President Amal Talhouk. Her committee who participated in the execution of this initiative are: P Samir el Khoury, PP John Edde, RT. Abbas Sibai, PP Mona Jarudi and acting as a very proactive advisor is District 2452 DEI Chair, our own Rt. Rana Ghandour Salhab. We owe Amal and her committee a debt of gratitude in realizing this goal, in line with Rotary International President Jennifer Jones positioning DEI in the forefront of this rotary year.

RC Beirut Cosmopolitan President Samir el Khoury welcomed fellow Rotarians and friends to this important event. He stated that the enthusiasm by which this initiative was received by the club bears evidence of our embrace of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, a commitment that is now incorporated in our club bylaws. He went on to say that “This Initiative is a Pioneering and Transformative step which will impact the club’s culture and behavior, and engage us in a process of advocacy in collaboration with organizations and community members who support People with Disabilities in the local community and advance disability-related causes”.

The opening remarks delivered by DG Azar were a testament to his belief in the message of Rotary and his support for RC Beirut Cosmopolitan for their leadership in initiating this major step towards inclusivity. He quoted the founder Paul Harris who once said: “If Rotary is to realize its proper destiny, it must be evolutionary at all times, and revolutionary on occasions”. RC Beirut Cosmopolitan did both, it continued its evolutionary journey through its 26 years of existence, and revolutionized its path forward by adopting DEI and bringing into the conversation a group of people, accomplished in their own rights, who will add another layer to the conversation of diversity and inclusion.

DEI District Chair, Rt. Rana Salhab, delivered remarks about the club and the People with Disabilities (PwD) Initiative Pillars and Actions. She stated that the DEI journey of RC Beirut Cosmopolitan spans over 28 years. The club always embraced diversity, attracted women who became Presidents and board members, embraced the younger generation and empowered them. The club adopted the Rotary DEI Commitment Statement in its bylaws and included membership expectations around the Code of Conduct. By launching this initiative, RC Beirut Cosmopolitan aims to **attract** people with disabilities, **evolve** the club's culture to be inclusive by understanding the various ways people function and give them the same opportunities as other club members and **empower** to ensure that every member is treated with dignity and respect.

RC Beirut Cosmopolitan invited as a guest speaker, Mr. Ibrahim Abdallah, a visually impaired PhD candidate in International Law, to share his thoughts on inclusivity. He was most recently a consultant on disability in ESCWA. He served as Dean of Inclusive Education at al Kafaat University and was a member of the Lebanese delegation for negotiations on the CRPD at the United Nations from 2002-2006. Mr. Abdallah posed a very important question: How can society be more inclusive?? In his interesting and rich presentation, he stated that this is a long journey and as we begin to explore ways and means of having inclusive societies, we should acknowledge that not everyone is on the same page: for some, making societies more inclusive could be obvious and the right thing to do; for others, it may seem too overwhelming and unnecessary. Why do we need society to be more inclusive?

- To ensure that persons with disabilities are valued, their dignity and rights are respected and that, in society, they find an enabling environment in which they can fully and effectively participate on an equal basis with others.
- To mainstream a human rights-based approach to disability in society, in combination with targeted inclusive measures that will make the concerns and experiences of people with disabilities an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that persons with disabilities benefit equally.

Mr. Abdallah thanked RC Beirut Cosmopolitan for bringing to the forefront the voices of the disabled, a gesture that embodies the slogan "Nothing About Us Without Us", a slogan that has been and continues to guide the disability rights movement around the world.

DG George Azar, in his remarks, congratulated RC Beirut Cosmopolitan for being the pioneers in this initiative. **"Today you are writing the history of creating an inclusive club culture in our country and district, that will help in cultivating an environment that is welcoming to all".**

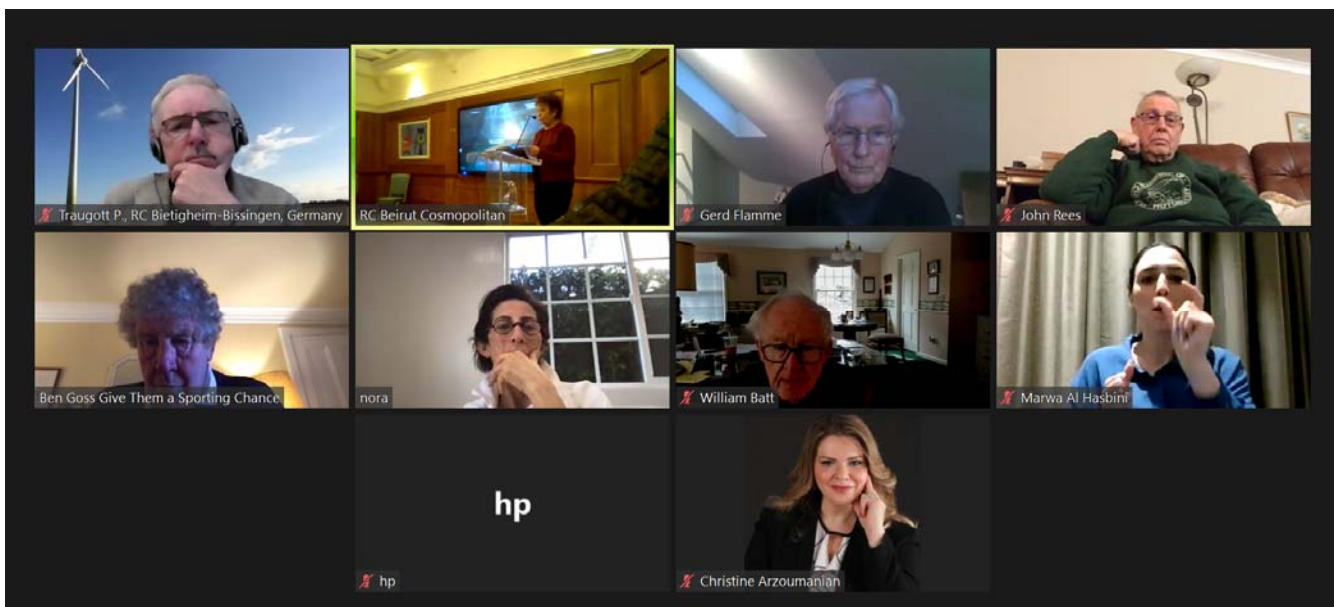
Every journey towards the summit begins with a step and a mile...the journey of RC Beirut Cosmopolitan just commenced and we hope that along the way we will unite as individuals and Rotarians to make our world more inclusive and welcoming.

Past President

Mona Jarudi







Dinner Meeting

February 28, 2023
The Phoenicia Hotel

RC Beirut Cosmopolitan, over the years, has supported the Lebanese Red Cross in various projects by donating an ambulance and equipment. With this close alliance, the club held a dinner at Phoenicia Hotel on February 28 to host Ms. Simone Casabianca Aeschlimann, Head of the Delegation of the International Red Cross in Beirut, guest of PP Mounir Jabre.

Simone gave a very detailed overview about ICRC and their work in Lebanon. In her remarks she stated that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been present in Lebanon since 1967 and has carried out its humanitarian work through periods of conflict, including 1975-1990 civil war.

ICRC continues its activities in the fields of assistance, including health and water, distribution of food and basic needs to the displaced refugees, support of health services. ICRC cooperates with the Lebanese Red Cross and Red Crescent by providing financial and medical support. Workshops have been organized by ICRC to train the Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) Youth and Logistics departments on medical logistics and distribution of assistance. Since July 2006, the ICRC supported LRC with donations in kind and cash amounting to more than \$4 million for their Emergency Medical Services, blood bank, youth, logistics and communications department.

Hats off to this organization that is always there, providing different levels of comfort to beleaguered communities and assistance under all circumstances, in peace and war!

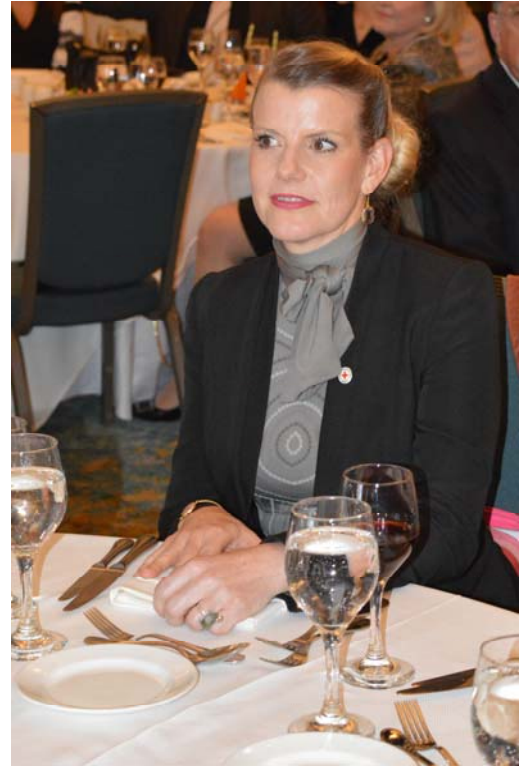


**Ms. Simone
Casabianca
Aeschlimann**

Head of The
Delegation of the
International
Committee of the
Red Cross in Beirut

**'THE
INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE OF THE
RED CROSS ON
THE SIDE OF
HUMANITY'**





Business Meeting

March 14, 2023
The Phoenicia Hotel



Mr. Omar Sakr

President - Lebanon
Mountain Trail
Association (LMTA)

**"LMT impact on Rural
Tourism"**

Lebanon has been for the past few years a mecca for local and international hikers. With its diverse beauty spanning 10,452 square km, an avid hiker can enjoy a variety of trails from north to south, exploring raw beauty and experiencing Lebanese hospitality in its authentic settings.

To shed a better light, RC Beirut Cosmopolitan hosted Mr. Omar Sakr, President of the Lebanese Mountain Trail (LMT), who took us on a virtual tour of beautiful Lebanon and presented information on the mission of LMT, its program, and its vision for the future.

The mission of LMT Association:

- Develop, maintain and protect the trail
- Promote the trail as a responsible tourism destination and make it accessible to all, including people with disabilities.
- Develop economic opportunities for local communities
- Protect the natural, cultural and architectural heritage and landmarks near the trail
- Foster community development and educational activities.

The association has ambassadors in Canada, Australia, UK, Holland, France, Belgium, Spain, Kuwait and the UAE. The April Thru Hikes and October Fall Trek attract an average of 250 participants of 20 foreign nationalities.

LMTA is always undergoing new projects like exploring new areas for hiking, Birdwatching Trails, Accessible tourism, training local guides and guest house owners. As a non-profit organization, LMTA depends on donations to maintain its current and future plans.

This was a very uplifting presentation, and a reminder of how not to lose hope in our beautiful country and to keep on supporting the vision of these individuals who showcase Lebanon's beauty to the world.





The Lebanon Mountain Trail

A Trail to a Shared Heritage



Current projects pending the receipts of funds from potential local and international donor

Education & Awareness-Raising Activities with Children : \$28,000 (\$4,000 per camp) to cover the 7 **Weekly Trail Camps** for kids and youth (Abtal El Biaa program) in private and public schools.

LMT as a Responsible and Accessible Tourism Platform: \$32,000 (\$8,000 per Nature or Biosphere Reserves): Ehden & Tannourine nature reserves, Jabal Mousa and Shouf Biosphere reserves) to complete the **accessible tourism project for blind people**.

Trail Conservation: Annual objective \$150,000 from which \$67,000 still have not been secured for the **Trail keeper** annual program to maintain and upgrade the 600 km LMT trail (\$250 per km).



**HIKE IT.
PROTECT IT.**
مشي لتحمي



THE LMTA IS WORKING TO MAKE TRAILS ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

TRAILS ACCESSIBILITY



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



JOËLLE OLGA FEGHALI

A Lebanese Greek born in Beirut, Joëlle Olga Feghali studied between Lebanon and France.

Since her young age, Joëlle Olga has been an artist and a painter. She received her Arts masters' degree from the Lebanese University IBA (institute des beaux arts) in 1999. In 2002, she created the Arts department at Saints Coeurs Ain Najm School, where she teaches Arts since. Today, she finished her thesis for her Masters' in Art Critics and Curatoriat at USJ.



Oil on Canvas

In her 'Atelier Privé', Joëlle Olga is an active painter on canvas, porcelain and ceramics.

Joëlle Olga's style is realistic. She does mostly portraits and still life paintings. She has a preference for sea and women themes.

Other than her oil paintings and to name a few, she did restoration works, mosaïque, la gravure plus other artworks. She also works on customized special orders.



Oil on Canvas

In 2016, and in order to expand her Artistic horizon and scope, Joëlle Olga completed hands-on painting courses in Contemporary Art at SCAD University, Atlanta. The result reflects in some of her recent works.



Oil on Canvas

Joëlle Olga has always been an active member of our community. Among other activities, She is a founding member of the St Charbel orphanage Baabdat.

Last but not least, Joëlle Olga is a proud Rotarian.

Joelle Olga Feghali Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan

- Fundraising Committee Chair 2022-2023
- Club Secretary 2018-19
- Member of several club committees

This issue highlights RC Beirut Cosmopolitan Rt. Joelle Olga Feghali who has been a pillar of support in the club and whose fundraising efforts and energy, together with her committee, have been exemplary in leadership and dedication to the motto of Rotary: Service above Self.

RC Beirut Cosmopolitan is very proud to have Joelle as a dedicated member of the club.

Banner Exchange



Exchange of banners
with Rotary Club Longmont Colorado, USA
Mr. Amin Tarhini
and
Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan
President Samir El Khoury.



March

Lina Shair – March (5)
Iman Aziz – March (13)
Rana Salhab – March (14)
Raouf Malak – March (24)

THE END