



December 19, 2022

Help Utica Rotary be on Santa's 'nice' list



Due to the holidays, there are no more regular program meetings until January, President Tina Pavlot announced.

But, she notes, planning for community service projects continues unabated, not to mention Rotary fun and fellowship -- perhaps making Rotary Club of Utica a shoo-in for the good side of Santa's "Naughty or Nice" list.

BED SERVICE PROJECT

Right on the heels of donating bedding and pillows and conducting the "Not So Silent Night" auction to raise money for children's beds, the club is planning a service project for Saturday, Jan. 14, to actually build beds for *Sleep in Heavenly Peace* (SHP) to give to families in need. The SHP production site is in the Meyda Lighting warehouse in Yorkville.

"We plan to be there from 9 to noon, so we're asking Rotarians to come out with family and friends," Tina said. "We'll produce as many beds as we can." To volunteer, contact Tina.

JANUARY PROGRAMS

The new year kicks off with the world of art; that is, an opportunity to appreciate the artists in our midst. Ceramic Artist Vartan Poghosian will introduce Rotarians to the community art center, 4 Elements Studio, which he founded. The program starts at noon on Thursday, Jan. 5, at Mid-York Library.

Then, the next regular program on Jan. 19 will provide insight into an element of the Greater Utica Area's immigrant population with a presentation by the Bosnian-American Community Association (BACA).



Want to start a business? There's help. PAGE 3.



Orphans in paradise beckoned. PAGE 4.

Deadline for next newsletter (1/2) is Friday, December 30, at noon; submit to news@uticarotaryclub.org.

BE PART OF OUR OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS COMMITTEE



If you would like to work with future leaders of our community and honor those who help mold them, then consider joining the Outstanding Educators Committee.

Chaired by Bart Gorman, the committee is looking for a few more hands to help out.

Working with area Rotary clubs, the committee oversees a year-long program during which students from six area high schools introduce themselves to Rotarians and learn about Rotary. The committee then

organizes an end-of-the-school-year luncheon to honor outstanding educators. The students are asked to select teachers whom they believe exemplify the Rotary motto, *Service Above Self*, and the values of Rotary as expressed in its *Four Way Test*:

- Is it the Truth?
- Is it Fair to all concerned?
- Will it build Goodwill and better Friendships?
- Will it be Beneficial to all concerned?

Contact Bart at bartgorman@roadrunner.com.



Rotary Club Of Utica Annual Ski Trip!

- Wednesday January 25th, 2023
- Bus leaves Utica 7:00am
- Returns approx. 9:00pm
- \$175 Per Person – Includes:
 - Gore Mtn. Day Pass
 - Bus transportation
 - Guaranteed good time!



RSVP @ uticarotary.org by 1/13/23

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 12/21 | Board Meeting
Noon, Greater Utica Chamber |
| 1/05 | Program 4 Elements Studio
Noon, Mid-York Library System |
| 1/14 | Service Project Build Beds
9 to noon, <i>Sleep in Heavenly Peace</i> |
| 1/18 | Board Meeting
Noon, Greater Utica Chamber |
| 1/19 | Program Bosnian-American
Community Association (BACA)
Noon, Mid-York Library System |
| 1/25 | Ski Trip Gore Mountain
Bus leaves 7 a.m. |



PROGRAM SPEAKER

There's help for budding entrepreneurs

Want to start a business? There's help available, according to Chris "C.J." Hanrahan, associate business advisor at Mohawk Valley Small Business Development Center.

He discussed the center's free services at the Dec. 15th regular Rotary meeting; among them are:

- Business plan assistance.
- Guidance in applying for loans.
- Market research assistance.
- Economic development and real estate referrals.
- Assistance with minority- and women-owned business certification.
- Government contracting assistance.
- Training events on such topics as "effective marketing", "from employee to entrepreneur", how to



use Quick Books.

They also work with BOCES and colleges on what it takes to start a business, including a business plan competition.

"We're transparent and upfront,"

C.J. said, noting, "Once in a while, we're dream crushers." But the goal is to provide a person with the tools needed to have a better chance of success.

He emphasized that their services are confidential.

Their clients run the gamut – from online to mail order to brick-and-mortar businesses. There have been a lot of people wanting to start restaurants, he said, plus mail-based services and craft makers selling on sites like Etsy.

The Mohawk Valley center, which is affiliated with MVCC, is one of 22 campus-based centers in the state. The local center is housed in MVCC's thINCubator, 326 Broad St., Utica.



You can change someone's world



Waves come rolling into the bay, lapping the sandy shore and caressing rocky outcroppings along its outer edge. A dense tropical forest borders the beach, with white billowing clouds touching the vast blue above.

It is a paradise in some ways. A place vacationers and other travelers would like to visit. It is a former Portuguese colony -- the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, a two-island nation in the Gulf of Guinea, off the western equatorial coast of Central Africa.

It is also where Franciscan friar Fernando Ventura – a linguist who interprets for the pope and others at the Vatican -- has been immersed in an effort to ameliorate the poverty that persists in the shadow of paradise and to care for orphans and the elderly.

I became friends with Friar Fernando at a meeting in Rome involving some 20

people from around the globe. He was serving as an interpreter. But it became obvious that his real mission, his passion was for the impoverished on the islands. Initially he was invited there to preach a retreat, but upon discovering 70 orphaned and abandoned children in a run-down orphanage, he decided to preach without words.

Friar Fernando and a group of friends established an NGO (non-governmental organization), partnering with other agencies and raising funds.

He puts it this way: “You can’t change the world, but you can change someone’s world.”

It all began with the Milk Bank of São Tomé and Príncipe (Banco de Leite de S. Tomé e Príncipe), an NGO project that Friar Fernando started (www.powderedmilkbank.com). “Together with
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a group of friends (including donations from Rotarians in Portugal), we have been providing for the needs of the local orphanage, covering practically 100% of the needs of these 70 kids.”

He has another saying: “With small

drops, you can make a river. That’s how we got a new orphanage (built with the help of the Portuguese government, several international agencies, and donations from people in a number of countries).”



Some of Friar Fernando’s orphans. BELOW: Fernando with Pope Francis.

