



November 7, 2022

## Rotarians deliver! Sheets and pillows galore!

It's not often that a Rotary Club of Utica meeting is filled with sheets, pillows, comforters and blankets. But that's what greeted Steve Sperbeck last Thursday when he arrived to talk about *Sleep in Heavenly Peace* (SHP), a program that provides beds for children in need.

The club's service fund donated \$250, with members adding about another \$125 for the purchase of 12 bed-in-a-bag sets (comforters/sheets) and 10 blankets. Plus, members donated approximately another 15 sets of bedding, and to top it off, President-elect Michelle Brandstadt contributed 20 pillows.



Steve Sperbeck and President Tina Pavlot pose with stacks of bedding to go to children in need.

## Rotarians plant good will along with trees

SEE PAGES 2-5



Deadline for next newsletter (11/14) is Sunday, November 13, at noon; submit to [news@uticarotaryclub.org](mailto:news@uticarotaryclub.org).



TAKE ACTION: [www.uticarotary.org](http://www.uticarotary.org)



# Rotarians plant good will along with trees



Photos by Joe Caruso

A combination of appreciative homeowners and pleasant weather “made for an enjoyable service project day!”

That’s how President-elect Michelle Brandstadt summed up the Urban Tree Planting Project, which saw Rotarians, family members and friends plant 26 trees around the City of Utica on Saturday, Nov. 5.

Project Chair Dave Jones reported that the volunteers included Rome Rotary Club arborist Christ Mercurio; Mohawk Valley EDGE staffer Chris Lawrence; Utica University international students Zainab, Dasha and Dunali; Proctor High School student Kare Ramahar; and from Utica Rotary: Tina Pavlot and husband Ryan, Michelle Brandstadt, Greg Benincasa, Jerry Kraus, Laura Williams, Joe Caruso, David Bagley and nephew Joe from Colorado; Jill,

Bill and Sam Koch; Stew Williams, and Bill Luley.

Past President Joe Caruso not only took pictures but also related “the most inspirational story I heard from the day, apart from the generosity of Rotarians and their families and friends.” One of the property owners benefitting from the tree planting was a Bosnian immigrant who came here in 1999.

“He was an engineer in Bosnia and here, he became a school teacher. He teaches at Proctor, MVCC, and BOCES. He owns a house in CornHill, and then bought a lot two doors down, which had been the site of prostitution and drug activity. He put a garden on that spot, and a place to park his car. We put a tree in front of that lot. He was very appreciative.”



# Urban tree planting project

*continued*





# Planning, cooperation key to tree planting project

*By Jerry Krause*

Planning for the urban tree planting project was done over the past few months, to determine the Utica homeowners and locations for the 26 trees, delivered and planted for free on Nov. 5. Funding for this project was made possible through money raised during a Rotary Club of Utica golf outing (Tees for Trees) held in August and a Rotary Grant.

This Urban Tree Planting project is a cooperative program with The Rotary Club of Utica, Mohawk Valley Community Action Agency, The Unitarian Universalist Church's 'Climate Action team' and the City of Utica Parks Department.

The goal is for the trees to thrive over many years and serve to enhance the value of these properties through pride of ownership, improving the air quality within

the community by reducing carbon emissions, provide a canopy of shade to lower the heat index during summer months, and as recent studies have found, trees planted in urban areas have served to reduce the level of crime.

Members of the Rotary Club of Utica were joined by members of the New Hartford Rotary, the Rome Rotary Club, Proctor High School and Utica University.

Varieties of trees available this year included White Birch, Hybrid Maple Blaze, Pear varieties, Northern Red Oak, Japanese Lilac, Flowering Cherry, Pink Spires Crabapple and more.



Photos provided by Jerry Krause



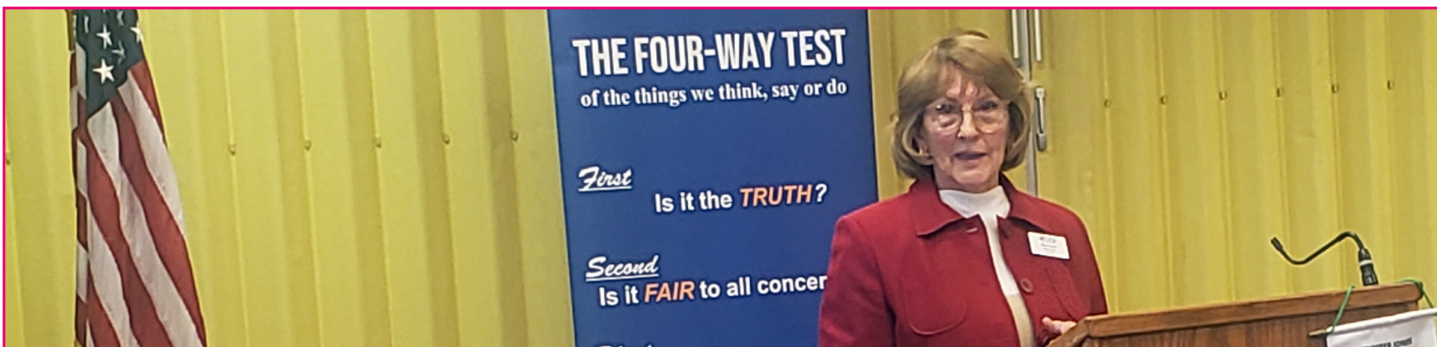
# Urban tree planting project

*continued*



**Photos provided by Stew Williams**





## Rotarians hear about 'Wreaths Across America'

A second speaker graced the club meeting last Thursday. Mary Bottini introduced Rotarians to "Wreaths Across America", a coordinated campaign

to place wreaths on military veterans' graves each December. The program seeks volunteers to help place wreaths and donations to purchase wreaths.

## Service project: 'Flags for Heroes' Part 2

by Michelle Brandstadt

The club's service project for November is assisting The Good News Center with its *Flags for Heroes* project. In addition to sponsoring a flag, we have indicated that we will assist with the taking down of flags on Memorial Parkway.

Volunteers will meet at The Parkway Center at 9:30

a.m. on Monday, Nov. 14. The flags and rebar will be picked up, loaded onto a truck and brought back to The Good News Center to be unloaded and brought into the building.

Depending on the number of volunteers, this will take around 3 to 4 hours. RSVP by Thursday, November 10.

**Please let Michelle Brandstadt (315-272-8425 / [fillableformdesigns@gmail.com](mailto:fillableformdesigns@gmail.com)) know by Thursday, Nov. 10, if you are able to assist at *Flags for Heroes*.**

### SAVE THE DATE!

Not So Silent Night  
Gift Auction  
Dec. 7, 2022



### Calendar of Events

- 11/16** Board Meeting | 3rd Wed.  
Noon, Greater Utica Chamber  
of Commerce
- 11/17** Program | AmeriCorps - Dave Zogby  
Noon, Mid-York Library System
- 12/01** Program | The Arc/Chef's Express  
w/Heather Evans  
Noon, Mid-York Library System



SAVE THE  
DATE!  
Ski Trip  
Jan. 25, 2023



## Angels Unaware in St. Peter's Square

With the global media full of positive and negative stories about migrants, it is refreshing to remember that the Utica area historically has been a welcoming community to immigrants and refugees. But no matter how welcoming a community is, the hardship of seeking refuge never lessens.

Migrants seeking refuge in Italy and other parts of Europe often come by overcrowded boats, with more than a few dying enroute and some craft sinking before reaching shore.

A stunning 20-foot tall bronze sculpture of a boat loaded with culturally and historically diverse migrants is a telling addition to St. Peter's Square at the Vatican.

Installed in 2019 for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Francis said he wanted the sculpture "to remind everyone of the evangelical challenge of hospitality."

Titled *Angels Unaware*, it is the work of Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz. The artist's inspiration was Letter to the Hebrews (13:2) in the New Testament: "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares".

