

ROTARY CLUB OF YORK – EAST

District 7390 – Meetings: Tuesdays @ 7:30 a.m.

April 2022 Newsletter

Editor: Friedel Liebe-Elser

www.clubrunner.ca/york-east



Rotary Opens Opportunities

Table of Contents

- Programs
- Birthdays
- Rotary Anniversaries
- Monthly Programs
- Our Club & Happy Dollars
- Club Events, News, Information

Rotary Membership Anniversaries

*Thank you
for your continued service above self*

HEARFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR THREE SILVER JUBILEE ROTARIANS

Helt, Chris	25 years	Apr 11 1997
Izzo, Chris	25 years	Apr 15 1997
Lutz, Pete	25 years	Apr 22 1997
Andrews, Dave	12 years	Apr 27 2010

York East Board of Directors 2021/22

President:	Sandra Graham
President Elect:	Karen Comery
Treasurer:	Diane Yocum
Secretary:	Friedel Liebe-Elser and Bob Elser
Past President:	Kyle King

Sargeant at Arms:

At-large Members & Committee Chairs:

Becky Disney – Fundraising & Giving
William Gierasch – Club Administration
TBD – Rotary Foundation
Deb Klinedienst – Membership
Chris Izzo – Grant Committee
Greg Kern – Community Service
Tim Koller – Public Relations
Bob Straw – Vocational
Kris Pollick
Hunter Mink

Happy Birthday to you...

Yocum, Diane	Apr 07
Pollick, Kris	Apr 19
Arvin, Jim	Apr 30
Hooper, Jr., Morrie	Apr 30

*If your birthday is not listed, please contact
Bob Elser at navman9@comcast.net or
Friedel Liebe-Elser at friedel.liebe@gmail.com

Programs for this month

April 5: Joe Alfano, Director of Development, York County Literacy Council, will describe the important work this organization has performed over many years.

April 12: Diane Schmuck, public relations Director of the famous Haines Shoe House ice cream shop/tourist attraction, will tell us about this historic structure and its current use.

April 19: Ron Hershner, prominent York attorney and historian, will tell us about the fascinating relationship between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson – friends & rivals.

April 26: JT Hand, President and CEO of The York Water Company, will tell us The York Water Company story.

For ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING: Instructions on how to join the virtual meeting will still be sent to members - or guests upon request - via the email meeting reminder each Monday.

The in-person meetings are held at Heritage Hills Hotels with the venue – location advertised on a sign outside - opening at 7 am.

YORK EAST ROTARY CLUB BOARD MEETING

Board Meeting on Thursday, April 14th, 2022
7:30 a.m. via ZOOM Virtual Platform only

HAPPY



I would be grateful if
once you have pledged your HAPPY DOLLARS
PLEASE send an email to
friedel.liebe@gmail.com

asap with the amount, your story and if possible, a photo.
Since it is impossible to get any of the above details during
hybrid meetings, your help is very much appreciated.

THANK YOU

Your backdated Happy Dollar Stories are always welcome
At any time!

When searching for the most amazing diamond one often can't see its real sparkle until it is touched by a sunbeam, setting it ablaze, - almost blinding us. Then we ask ourselves why didn't we see this sparkle all along?

While we only know Connie as a consummate humanitarian, we rarely see the accomplished musician in her, the leader of a ladies band, who once took New York by storm, or the soprano, whose divine voice reverberated throughout a concert hall with such softness and vitality that critics found difficult to describe. There also is the talented ballroom dancer, whom we can see in action at certain Rotary events. And then there is Concetta, who stole the heart of a European aristocrat determined to make her the chatelaine of his ancient castle, confessing his love and proposing to her no less than five times.

*Yet Connie had a mission of a different kind!
During the recent annual training session for Presidents Elect our own (and only) Past District Governor Concetta Spark was invited to share a glimpse of her passion for humanitarian work.*

There was hardly a dry eye in her audience when she left the lectern. The responses – dozens of them streaming into her phone – were those sunbeams revealing the fire of this diamond, whom we are proud to call 'our fellow Rotarian Connie'.

Victoria Dick, who has travelled the world with Connie's during many Medical Missions, celebrated Connie's resounding success at this year's PETs by donating **HAPPY DOLLARS** thereby drawing our own members' attention to this extraordinary work which has changed the lives of tens of thousands of people.

Here are just 2 of the many praises for Connie's presentations:



Bob Hobaugh

Connie Spark from York inspires us with the Uganda Vocational Training Team. Maternal and Child Health. Disease Prevention. Service has changed her life and the lives of those she served.

Bob Hobaugh added a photo of you. in Mobile uploads ·

Yesterday at 8:49 AM · 🧑

[View Full Size](#) · [Make Profile Picture](#) · [More Options](#)



Like



Comment



Share



Hector R. Ortiz and 12 others

Hector R. Ortiz

Great job, Connie Spark . What powerful message sharing the power of the Rotary Foundation and the Power of One.



on Sat Like Reply More

This is Connie's story – in her own words:

Presidents Training Foundation Speech By PDG Connie Spark - 2/26/2022

Imagine you are standing at the Pearly Gates, and you hear this question: What have you done with your life?"

"What have you done with your life?" When others are in need, have you turned your back? Or have you made a difference in the lives of others, so their eyes sparkle in good health and they dance for joy?

Your presence today shows that you have set your path to **SERVICE ABOVE SELF**, and you have chosen Rotary International for that service. Rotary and Rotary Foundation will open your world to a wide array of possibilities, and you won't have to go it alone. There is plenty of help, just for the asking.

My story is a robust example of this. It starts with one ordinary person, set on doing good, and grows to a world-wide team helping hundreds of thousands. When this team travels to a needy area, the cataract-blind see and the polio-lame walk.

Imagine how gratifying it is to hand over the keys of a fully equipped ambulance to a remote village of farmers in Africa. The closest hospital is miles away and few have transportation. Imagine being sick, or with a broken limb and having to walk that distance. It just did not happen, and many died. I know how good it feels to hand over those keys, because Rotary Foundation made it happen through a matching grant.



I'm an Optician and little did I know how Rotary would change my life. Back in 1994 I had a few retail opticals. I had no idea what Rotary was. That is until I was asked to participate in a Rotary program of international professionals called Group Study Exchange.

Curiosity guided me to join and I traveled to Denmark to meet fellow vision specialists, see how their systems operated and experience the Danish culture. There I met some amazing Rotarians and a new world opened before me.

Later that May, I was required to deliver a follow-up report at the at the Rotary District 7390 Conference in State College. One of the Foundation presenters spoke about changing lives by giving the gift of sight. It was that moment, listening to Dr. Albert Alley, that inspired me to find a way to help people.

Being an optician, I thought, "Too bad I'm not a surgeon." However, I realized I could do something through Rotary to help vision care by using my existing profession.

After the meeting I asked Dr. Alley if he could use an extra pair of hands on his next mission. He said I could help, by writing a Rotary Grant for school student computers.

I rose to the challenge and joined the York East Rotary Club. There I learned how to write my first international grant application and it secured a seat for me on Dr. Alley's mission to Guyana, South America. I invited my Designer Family Eyecare Optometrist, Dr. Amy Spots as well. We were thrilled and a little apprehensive. Neither Dr. Amy nor I were surgeons, but we wanted to observe and help if needed.

Day one in **Guyana**, 100 blind people were selected for eye surgery within the first hour. Dr. Spots and I were told our screening job was finished. So, we mentioned to the local Rotarians that we could perform Eye exams.

Day 2, we made our way to the local hospital and encountered a long line of people buzzing with excitement. They said they heard they could get eye exams today. I looked at Dr. Amy and we both realized they were talking about us. I realized there truly was another way to improve sight and Dr. Spots and I had just the right skill set. So, we set to work making it happen. My passion for service ignited.

That was the beginning. Next, I wrote my first Rotary Vision-Team Grant application to accompany Dr. Alley's surgical mission to the **Dominican Republic**. Again, there was a deep need among the local folk for eye exams and glasses. The need was great there and, as it turns out, all over the world. It was apparent that a dedicated, skilled team of physicians and specialists would be a useful addition on missions.

So, when asked to give a presentation at the RIBI Convention in England I included a search for a surgeon who could be dedicated to our Vision-Team. It was there, following my speech, that an interested British surgeon and his physician wife, stepped forward.

They joined us on our next mission to **Ghana**, Africa, we worked in a cinder-block clinic where 23 young women a week gave birth on leather gurneys with the aid of a handful of midwives. Raw sewage ran in a channel along the side of the road, a perfect breeding ground for malaria infected mosquitos. However, the Rotarians and people of Pram Pram, were friendly, helpful and very grateful.

In that clinic, we performed two thousand eye exams, screenings, provided glasses, and sunglasses. With our newly expanded medical team, we added pediatric care, cataract, and other medical surgeries. In addition, we performed medical exams, provided basic meds and treated hundreds. Families turned out in their finest clothes with children in tow. These children were thrilled when one of the eye doctors pulled out balloons from his lab pocket and fashioned animals. Such a simple gesture, never seen before, had a very positive reaction from the children. It made them sing and dance for joy.



In 2002 President Richard King, invited me to the RI Convention in Barcelona, Spain to participate in the Avoidable Blindness panel led by PRIP Frank Devlyn. I presented a video of our successful African mission. There I explained that, I'm just one individual and If I can do it, you can do it. Word of this program spread throughout Rotary publications and an invitation to partner with a DG in Brazil came forth.

From there I began to build an international team of doctors, nurses, dentists, specialists, and a cadre of volunteers to carry out additional areas of focus.

Here in America, we take glasses and good vision for granted. But consider that if your family lives where these resources are not available, it can make all the difference between life and death. Education and poverty.

With only basic eyesight, adults are able to sew, cook, farm, fish and perform other activities that can provide an income. For example, in a mud hut in Africa, a grandmother told us she could see again after successful cataract surgery. This changed her life. Suddenly, no longer a burden taking up precious resources, she could now cook and garden again providing help to the family. Even though she cooked in an old soup can, she could now be an asset not a liability. Family is a big advantage to children growing up, and many children in Africa have no parents at all. She was so grateful, her eyes sparkled, and she wanted to dance.

After the successful mission to Ghana, I was inspired to write multiple grant applications for the next mission. Our services grew again to include general health, dentistry, and various specialists in order to meet the requested needs of partner countries. After more than 40 international matching grants, I now have a support team from many countries around the world including Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Denmark, and Japan. We became a Rotary family of international caregivers. During that first mission we treated a couple of hundred people, now it's a couple of thousand.

In Brazil 2011, sharing with my club, Foundation Dinners and other events, my passion for Humanitarian Medical Missions resulted in one of the largest Foundation projects in the history of Rotary with 85 medical personnel and staff. It was comprised of 15 separate matching grants in as many locations. These included Vision, Dental, Medical, Water, Mother and Child Care, and more. We gave computers to schools, helped secure a medical X-ray facility, trained medical students and planted gardens with locals providing sustainable food for the community. Thousands obtained eye exams and proper glasses made through local small businesses. Surgeries made corrections for common people who would not have been eligible in the expensive hospital facilities.



This program was so well received that 5 years later the Brazilian Air Force flew our team to a remote set of villages that never receives health care. Thousands were treated.



In Jamaica, there is an endemic problem of hearing loss and blindness. Here the average monthly wage is \$200 per month. A trip to the eye doctor runs around \$2,000. A trip to the dentist: \$3,000 dollars. So very few can afford health care. Our team was able to directly provide eye care to children in schools, and adults in several communities. Pediatricians attended children, and dentists worked nonstop.



In Thailand, Dentists and Vision Doctors worked together in the local hospital. Dentists traveled to a jail facility providing much needed pain relief for inmates. Again, the eye team treated thousands, and improved the lives of special needs and income challenged families along the Mekong River.

In Kenyan slums, of crushing poverty, teeming refugees, and people eager for basic health appointments, our Rotary teams were able to

treat thousands. New wells were dug, providing fresh water to remote villages. This is a double blessing, because children no longer have to walk ten miles to a croc infested river to bring back heavy sloshing buckets of brown water.

In Ethiopia where nearly half the population is under the age of 15, we worked in a hospital that fitted polio challenged children with heavy iron leg braces. We fitted them with new lighter, plastic braces that we brought with us. And when we left, children were playing soccer. This experience was priceless for the team.



We tackled cataracts, advanced glaucoma, severe eye injuries, and basic eyesight. In addition, I was privileged to be on a team that participated in polio inoculations. What an honor to be part of Rotary's greatest effort to eradicate Polio from the face of the earth. This is the kind of successful, life affirming action that Rotarians are undertaking.



2017 In Uganda Marvin, a nine-year-old boy came to be tested for malaria. He had all the symptoms but no remedy. Even the hospital had very little or no medicine. Our multi-location Rotary grant helped. In addition, we distributed 2,000 mosquito nets to help prevent future malaria.

Our Vision-Team invited Africans with Albinism to the clinic for treatment. People with Albinism have an often misunderstood inherited condition characterized by abnormally light skin, eyes, and hair. They are very susceptible to ultraviolet light causing cancer to many by the age of 20, and often death by age 40. Those with Albinism also have very limited vision which prevents them from finding and keeping employment. But we learned that they are also often victims of myths and stigmas from birth on. Witch doctors claim that albino body parts bring good luck and wealth. As a result, people with albinism, including infants, are often victims of grizzly attacks, and their body parts cut up for sale to the highest bidder. Still to this day, there is a market for albinism parts. We were able to provide vision-aide.

We traveled to schools to give toothbrushes and tooth paste as well as instruction on how to use them, and much more.

In Uganda we implemented a new Global Grant Foundation program called VTT, Vocational Teaching and Training. This format requires our doctors and health professionals to present health education and practical instructions to local doctors. In many cases this provides a level of education not available in their own facilities or even their own countries. It makes an incalculable difference to the staff and the patients they treat.



A pair of Entebbe general physicians so excelled in the Uganda VTT, that we invited them to our next VTT to Malawi. This was the first time African physicians left their home country to educate and practice in another African Country.



Like many people who participate in these health and wellness projects, their lives were forever changed. At the close of the mission, they returned to their home country of Uganda and headed directly to the hospital, bursting to share their experience.

Upon their arrival home they were greeted by fellow health care workers who wanted to know all about Malawi. However, there was also a non-responsive woman lying on a gurney. "Don't worry with her," their associates urged. "She will be dying soon and there is nothing we can do. Please, tell us of your experience."



But the two doctors had learned how to recognize and diagnose sepsis and had practical experience in its treatment while on our Rotary Malawi Mission. They recognized it in this woman. Because of the educational training in Malawi, they knew exactly how to treat it. Ugandan nurses and doctors watched the two mission doctors go on to save the life of that woman, once left for dead. Recently, one of those doctors sent me a photo of that woman. She is dressed in a beautiful traditional yellow dress. Her eyes are bright, and she is dancing for joy. It doesn't get any better than this.

Back in 1917, little did one of the early Rotarians, the founding member of the Rotary Club of Cleveland in 1911, Arch Klumph, know where his initial contribution of \$26.50 to establish the Foundation,

would lead. His guideline of an endowment for "Doing Good in the World" has grown Rotary International into the largest non-government organization contributing to health and welfare of people the world over. Since then, it has been the Foundation that pulled together all the individual clubs and galvanized them into a force for good, that is changing the world one project at a time.

After World War I, even Paul Harris recognized the potential for the Foundation when he stated, "Individual effort when well directed can accomplish much, but the greatest good must necessarily come from the combined efforts of many men. Individual efforts may be turned to individual needs, but combined efforts should be directed to the service of mankind. The power of combined effort knows no limitations."

Now remember all Rotarians can participate in Foundation Grants. Some serve best by simply donating money. Others want that full hands-on life changing immersion.

In this upcoming video you will see excerpts from some of our projects in Africa including polio treatments. Also in **Peru**, we installed clean water treatment facilities in remote areas of the Amazon, combating widespread water-borne diseases. We worked on steep bone-dry hills and in mountainous thin air

You can see how our combined efforts know no limitation. It's your turn to Re-imagine Rotary for your presidential year. Lead your club in this beautiful Rotary journey, big results through Rotary's Foundation. These are challenging times, so continue in your Rotary journey. Encourage giving to the Foundation. After all the world is large and the needs are many.

Show your club the good that comes through the Foundation. It will inspire you and your entire club year after year. Afterall, we are members of action.

Each District has a team standing by to assist you from start to finish. Just Re-imagine Rotary and reach out. Now, what is your passion? And one day, should you find yourself at those pearly gates and the question is: "What did you do with your life?" You will have an answer.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my success story through the Rotary Foundation. I am grateful to the Rotary Foundation, the leadership of District 7390, and most of all my York East Rotary Club.



I look forward to a world whose children all have sparkling eyes and dance for joy.

[kondormedia](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80KRdl4Fi1g)

In March 2017, eight Rotary districts, from around the world, came together to provide eye, dental & medical aid as well as training to the people in Uganda. This video, as lovingly as professionally prepared by Cher Kondor, is about that mission.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80KRdl4Fi1g>

"Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves."

As often in life, Connie's Medical Missions have become such an integral part of our club's colorful tapestry that another overseas trip doesn't cause much more than a ripple anymore. "Connie will be alright" is what we all feel, not knowing just how grueling and challenging each new Mission Impossible is – except for those who have joined her. They, her dearest Rotarian Friends and Allies, such as Vicky and Roger or Cher or Jin Jou – to name but a few – not only understand what it takes to spend the last few nights before departure – instead of in bed – in Roger's warehouse, packing up all those supplies needed on this trip.

Yet no one can even begin to plan how more than 50 huge crates of medical supplies will find space on the plane, and, worse still, how anyone can talk some obstreperous customs official into letting those 'highly suspicious' looking boxes pass through his inspection.

No one – but Connie. Solving insurmountable problems is her second nature. Turning a Mission Impossible into a hugely successful event, that changes lives, - not only those who are treated by her team but also the lives of every Rotarian who agreed to join her on these adventures.

Here Connie & Jin Jou putting final touches to the vast medical supplies they need during their mission.



Connie's bio is, in the words of one of our most senior members, Bill Gierasch, "Almost incomprehensible!"

Concetta Spark is a graduate of Duquesne University with a B.S. in Music Education. She currently owns two medical retail optical offices: Designer Family Eyecare in York and Designer Eyeglass, LTD in Selings Grove, PA.

Connie has one child, James Spark, who also lives in York. And one grandson Adian, now 17, who has lived with her since he was 2 years old and has attended more Rotary functions than many a long-time Rotarian. – This photo was published in 2009



Connie began her career in Rotary in 1996 when she joined the Rotary Club of York-East. Her desire to join Rotary was prompted by a GSE trip in the 1994-1995 Rotary year to Rotary District 1440 in Denmark.

She is a 2006 graduate of the Rotary Leadership Institute and has attended the last 16 International Conventions. In 2002 and 2003 she was a presenter and attended the Rotary International RIBI Conferences in England.

Since joining York-East, Connie has been very active at the Club and District level.

GSE participant to Denmark D1440 1994-1995

- Group Study Exchange Team Leader to D2070, Italy 2000-2001
- York-East Director and International Lane Chair 2001-2004
- District 7390 Group Study Exchange Chair 2001-2005
- President-Elect 2003-2004
- Project Director and Participant – D7390 Polio Immunization Days
- in Awassa Ethiopia 2003
- and again in 2015 Debre Birhan Ethiopia 2015
- Rotary Centennial President of RC York East 2004-2005
- District Health, Hunger and Humanities Resource Chair 2005-2008
- America's Promise Committee 2005-2008
- Assistant Governor 2006-2008
- Group Study Exchange Committee Member 2001-2009
- District Governor 2009-2010
- District Foundation Chair 2010-2016
- Vocational Training Team – Ethiopia (Dental, Eye & Medical) 2015
- Vocational Training Team – Uganda (Dental, Eye & Medical) 2017
- Vocational Training Team – Malawi (Dental, Eye & Medical) 2018
- Assistant Regional Rotary Foundation Coordinator 2021-2022

Connie also participates in Rotary Resource Groups. She was invited by then RI President Richard King, to participate on the Avoidable Blindness panel, led by PRIP Frank Devlyn at the 2002 RI Convention in Barcelona, Spain. After sitting on the panel, Connie joined the Avoidable Blindness Action Group and the Rotarian Information for Fighting Aids Action Group.

Connie has a passion for Humanitarian Medical Missions. She has either led or participated in 35 Medical Missions. Besides writing the necessary Rotary International Foundation grants and organizing medical teams and volunteers, numbering 40 to 85, she was the project Director for the following: Ghana 2002, Ethiopia 2003, Brazil 2004 and 2010, Peru 2006, 2007 & 2010, Honduras 2007, 2008, 2009 & 2013, Kenya 2008, Ecuador 2009, Thailand 2012, Jamaica 2013, 2014, 2015, Ethiopia 2016, Uganda 2017, and Malawi 2018. Connie also lends a hand and participates in Vocational Service teams lead by other Rotarians in District 7390 when needed. She was a team member for the following projects lead by Dr. Al Alley: Guyana 2000 and Dominican Republic 2001 and also 5 Rotary Medical Humanitarian Eye projects and District grants, sponsored by the Rotary of Lancaster and under Dr. Bob McClenathan, between 2006 and 2013. Connie returned to Ethiopia with her team in March 2015 for District 7390's first 2 Vocational Training Team Global Grants and another medical mission and NID. Most recently, Connie completed 3 Vocational Training Team Global Grants to Uganda in March 2017 and Malawi in 2018.

These Humanitarian Medical Grants, Global Grants, and Vocational training teams have helped more than 40,000 persons of need throughout the world.

Throughout her Rotary career, Connie has received several Rotary distinctions. She was awarded the prestigious Rotary International Service Above Self Award by PRIP Glen Estess in 2004-2005 and the District 7390 Service Award each year from 2002-2016. In November 2013 she was presented with the Citation for Meritorious Service. In addition to her Rotary participation, Connie is also involved in several Community Service organizations. She served on the Harrisburg Capitol Beginnings Engagement Committee from 2006-2008 and the Harrisburg Mayor's Commission on Literacy from 2006-2008. In March of 2008 she received the Champion of Children Award by the Harrisburg Mayor's commission and Capitol Beginnings.

Contact Information: rotarylady7390@comcast.net or 717-781-5240.

Video links to Connie's Rotary International Medical Missions were kindly created by our fellow Rotarian Cher Kondor, who has travelled with Connie many times through the years, giving us the precious gift of seeing for ourselves what one Rotary Lady and her dedicated teams have achieved.

The **LINKS** are available on our club website.

York under a blanket of Spring Dreams



*As seen from Wyndham Hills
On the morning of March 25th 2022*

Club News:

On March 30th, Past President Linda Gorter has resigned with immediate effect, citing professional reasons for her decision.