



April 19, 2023 – In-person & zoom Meeting, 12:15

President Megan welcomed all to the greatest Rotary Club in the universe.

Thanks to **Harry & Marion C.** for picking up lunch and **Jim V.** for salad and dessert.

Program: Steve & Susan Mathison with Plymouth Rotary - Humanitarian trips to Poland and Ukraine

Steve and Susan spoke about the outreach program in Ukraine that was highlighted in the recent *Rotary Magazine*. They have been working on this program for over a year with Alex Ray, owner of the Common Man Restaurant, and Lisa Mure. Thanks to lots of media coverage and the support of the State of New Hampshire, they have received over \$2.7 million in donations so far.

They believe, "Love is the only thing stronger than fear." When the tanks rolled across into the Ukraine, they cast shades of World War II. Steve, Susan, Lisa and Ray wanted to make a difference and Alex said they had to go big. He agreed to match \$1 million, if they would raise it. It was a challenge and they did not know what they were going to do, yet they did know that they had to move forward.

Let's go to Poland they said. The group focused on Rotary and its influence in the world. There are 220 countries and over 1.2 million Rotarians. They connected with the Rotary DG in Poland, who oversees 80 clubs in all of Poland, asking, "How can we help?" They knew over 6,000,000 refugees had poured into Poland and the small Rotary Club of Zamosc Poland has just 17 Rotarians. After raising over \$2 million, the group flew to Poland and immediately met with 16 Rotary Club presidents to learn what small projects were going on and what ideas they had on expanding the programs. On the next day they

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Meetings:

Apr. 26: *A Rotary Story*
Mark Lampman

Events:

June 24: Gundalow Trip

Guest: Brian Hanson

Pledge: Gregg D.
4-Way Test: Phil R.

*Today's newsletter authored by
Melissa L.*

took a van into Western Ukraine to see where the children of families in Eastern Ukraine were sending their children to protect them from violence. They found the children in orphanages and safe houses.

They were to tour the war zone. Susan said, "It was scary." She was amazed at the resolve of the Ukrainians who adamantly believe that they will win the war. "We had to be as brave as them." Statistics show that there are 1.8 million children being brought into other countries, which means about 2.5 million have been displaced in Ukraine.

In December 2022, the President of the Zamosc Club said that the kids came from Eastern Ukraine by 2-3 trains by themselves. They arrived at an orphanage of about 21 kids. There were 30 trucks driven by volunteer Rotarians. They had two rented warehouses, knowing that it would take about 4 days to get there. Once there, they would have to be taken to an orphanage. They also brought Christmas presents, kids' books, junk food, and jackets. Nothing is shipped. It takes too long. Knowing that the two warehouses stored all the supplies, they purchase them in Poland. The Common Man for Ukraine Group has funded over 750 tons of food, hundreds of generators, and sleeping bags.

There was no electricity and kids were brave when they received the 1/2 bread, 1/2 potato, and an apple. Thanks to Rotary they now have canned meat, fresh fruit, sleeping bags and generators. Everything they donate has logo labels of the Common Man & Rotary Club of Plymouth!

The war has changed and the cold weather set in. The generators are available with instructions in Polish and Ukrainian. There receive small donations like the nuns, each giving \$5, the Granite United Way gave \$250,000 in donations, the Girl Scouts helping out with 1,500 notes of encouragement in Ukrainian from the local high school and stuffed animals were made by a grandmother who could not afford utilities.

Another form of shelter they are able to use is Senior Housing - repurposed from the Soviet (80's and 90's). It is filthy and dirty. To support seniors and children the group set up Trauma Counseling and Education Center & Family Support for 50 children, who come for the day while the moms work and seniors also come to the center. Luckily there is free legal aid available. The group brought in Israeli trauma specialists to help train counselors in the center.

The group also funds a 3-week residential retreat with the kids. The Rotary clubs find kids who have lost at least one or two parents, and bring them into the mountains. For 3 weeks, the kids do not hear any of the noises associated with war, they make new friends, and are given tools to help them move forward following the death of their families. The cost is \$30,000 a month and food is \$100,000 a month - \$130,000 needed each month. The hope is, in the end, kids will go back home better able to deal with the tragedy of war.

The Common Man for Ukraine Group would love to reuse another abandoned building to house refugee placement workers. It would hold 240 residents, with 6 people in one dorm room. There is currently no electricity and no heat, and black mold is rampant. There are also 40 safe houses that need good food and a good smile. Susan said the work is no fun and scary, yet they will do it as long as needed. She is extremely grateful for the Rotary Club of Plymouth, NH, and the Rotarians from Ukraine supporting their efforts and helping the people of Ukraine.

Since the start, they have raised over 2.7 million dollars and have reset the goal to 10 million dollars. We can help support their next fundraiser on Thursday, June 1st at the Fisher Cats game at Fisher Cats stadium & fireworks. Bring your family and friends!

We can spread the word - making a difference in Ukraine. Donations are coming in everyday - so are the kids needing help.

Questions

1. Assistance from Big Rotary?

Rotary Foundation is a slow process. Not for immediate aid. There were individual club and district donations.

2. How are you taking care of your own mental wellness?

So inspiring to see what the Polish Rotarians are doing every day. They used 30 trucks with 2 people driving into the turmoil.

Announcements:

District Conference: Saturday, June 10th - District 7780 Celebration (replacing the District Conference) on Bailey Island in Maine - 11:00am-2:00pm, Cost - \$45.00 (our club will be covering the cost of the registration, so if you are looking to attend, please let Marion know ASAP so she can have a final count) Information can be found here: <https://rotary7780.org/Stories/2023-district-7780-celebration>

Durham Great Bay Rotary is having their second annual flower sale – May 13 & 14

They have expanded their flower offerings this year to include three types of lilacs and an option for hydrangea plants as well. Plants are \$50 and can be picked up (or possible delivery) funds raised from this sale will support the scholarship program for high school seniors, a boot & shoe program, and lots of great organizations in the area. You can order Lilac plants and Hydrangeas at this link: [Lilac Fundraiser – Rotary Club of Durham Great Bay \(nhlilacsale.org\)](https://nhlilacsale.org)

New Member Orientation Ideas Wanted! If you have any interest in helping create our club's New Member orientation packet or have ideas that you would like to share for this, please let me know! Or if you have graphic design experience, please let Megan know!

Committee Reports

Bingo Report - 99 players and sold 18 boxes

The April and May position-based sign-up links are now live:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49AEAF22AAF5C61-april1>

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F49AEAF22AAF5C61-maybingo1>

April 19th - Paul Harris' Birthday - Foundation join the Paul Harris Society \$1000.00 per year

Thank yous from Haven for the materials for the youth \$1000, from the Ukulele for donation of \$1000 and Shelter Box for donation to help those in the Ukraine

Clean Up and Planting at the Rotary Gardens - Saturday, May 20, 9 am

Senior visits - starting in May - more to follow

Happy Bucks

Gregg D – for him and Liz to be heading to Pennsylvania for the upcoming 16th Annual Lee Valley Wine Gala, that has raised \$3,000,000

50/50 drawing - \$332 in the pot. Jim V. pulled the 2 of diamonds, not a winner!

April Birthdays:

Harry C. April 3

Jay S. April 4

Kim F. April 15

April Anniversaries:

Ken P. 15 years