



La Rotariana

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New Year, New Hopes, New Commitments

We start 2013 with enthusiasm and renewed dedication to the goals and objectives of the Rochester Latino Rotary Club and of Rotary International. The club welcomes people of all ethnic and racial backgrounds who are interested in serving the community here and abroad. Even though the focus of the Club's Service Projects is helping the Latino community, many of the projects benefit the community at large. Some examples of this include donations to food pantry, Thanksgiving baskets and distribution of dictionaries and reading materials to parents of preschool children as well as toys given in celebration of the Three Kings day.

The Club's hopes to raise enough funds to continue its Service Projects, support Polio Plus and donate to the Rotary Foundation. To such effect, the Club has a very active Fund Raising Committee presently headed by Abe Hernández and a group of dedicated Rotarians including Joe Cipolla, Charol Ríos, Myrna Ortiz, Antonia Scott and Wim and Luisa Baars. The Committee meets regularly and is developing a plan to hold several different events during the year to attract participants to support the Club as well as to promote the Club in the community. The next activity planned is a dinner to celebrate the Club's Fourth Anniversary in April. The Club owes a big Thank You to the Committee in general and to Abe in particular for his inspiring leadership.

The commitments, rather than being new, are really re-commitment to the ideals and principles of Rotary International. Indeed, Service Above Self continues to guide the members' endeavors. The promotion of peace and understanding among people from all walks of life and from different parts of the world continues to be one of the Club's goals. To such end, members will continue to host Rotarians and their family in programs such as the GE Hospital-ity program, visit clubs in other countries and share with local people, and try to find out projects to be carried out in conjunction with other clubs and the Rotary foundation. The Club has participated in numerous District-sponsored activities such as the Assembly, Conference, Literacy training, and the like. This participation is encouraged and several members have enthusiastically embraced them.

The Literacy Committee headed by Dr. Miriam Vázquez, a dedicated educator, has developed and ambitious plan to help increase literacy levels among Latinos in particular, and the community at large. She has recruited several Club's members to tutor students, read to students, and help parents write their stories to share with their children, among other activities. Since the Club's early days, Dr. Vázquez has been the force behind the literacy projects, and has done an amazing job. THANK YOU!

Valuable Things

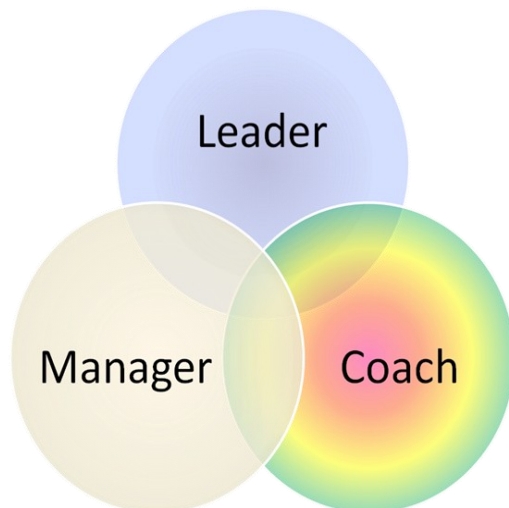
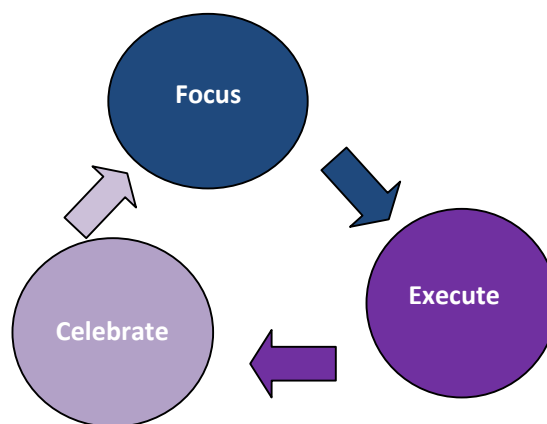
Often we wonder about the possessions we have and their value, or rather their contribution, to our quality of life. We soon realize that material things may be costly, but not necessarily valuable.

The most valuable things are often intangible. Things like the satisfaction obtained by helping others, giving back to the community, establishing new relationships across cultures and countries cannot be touched, tasted, admired, displayed in a beautiful case. No, this is something we carry in our hearts, enrich our lives, and can certainly be considered as the most valuable and treasured possession.

Mr. Sergio Esteban is the CEO of LaBella Associates, PC. He is a Spaniard who studied at the Polytechnical University of Madrid where he became an engineer. He also studied at Syracuse University and the University of Rochester. He is very active on several professional and community boards where he holds leadership positions. The LaBella Company is a full service engineering, architecture, environmental consulting and planning firm. Besides serving New York (headquarters located in Rochester), the firm has offices in Pennsylvania, North Carolina and their service areas include Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Florida. According to Mr. Esteban, the core values of the firm are: Employee Leadership and Initiative; Stewardship of clients and firm resources; Honesty and integrity in all transactions; and Growth of the company and its employees.

Mr Esteban spoke of his leadership style that includes paying attention to the importance of the corporate values and culture; treat people as you would like to be treated; listen, listen, listen; and give back to the community. He indicated that good leaders provide direction and focus; work for the team providing support, structure, providing resources, and removing obstacles. He went on to say that not everyone can be THE leader, but everyone can be A leader. It is important to exert leadership around you.

Regarding management style, Mr. Esteban had specific suggestions. Among these, get to know the people you work with; provide opportunities for continuous improvement and training; drive out fear; break down barriers between departments; eliminate management by objectives; help develop pride in workmanship; and convey the notion that transformation is everybody's job. The following diagram shows how the management style described works:



In summary, a good executive must function as a leader, manager, and coach.



Engineer and CEO Sergio Esteban epitomizes the leadership qualities of an excellent executive.

Once more the Three Kings return bearing gifts

On January 4, the Ibero American Action League Daycare Center received the annual visit of the Three Kings in the persons of Martín Pedraza, Peterson Vázquez, and Wim Baars. A project coordinated by Charol Ríos with the assistance of Elisa and Abdiel DeJesús, Raquel Pedraza, and Wim and Luisa Baars resulted in the delivery of gifts to over 90 children ranging in ages from 6 months to 4 years. The toys were provided by the Toys for Tots program of the US Marines. Several Rotarians were present for the distribution of the toys and reading of the story to the older children. A huge Thank You is owed to Charol, her assistants and, particularly, to the US Marines for providing the toys.



Wim, Martín, Peterson (front row, from left); Luisa, Raquel, Charol, Diana Hernández (Back row, from left) posed for a picture after task was done



Little boy shows two of his toys that are geared to stimulate his imagination and memory



Anticipation is shown by children waiting to receive and open their presents (below, left)

Children listen attentively as President Diana reads the Three Kings story in English and Spanish (below, right)



Adults also enjoyed a visit by the Three Kings

On January 7 during the regular evening meeting of the RLRC, guests were treated to gifts consisting of typical Puerto Rican pastries distributed by Roberto Burgos, Martín Pedraza, and Peterson Vázquez who were impersonating the Three Kings. This followed the excellent presentation by Sergio Esteban and the explanation of the festivity given by Elisa De-Jesús.

According to Elisa, Spanish-speaking countries celebrate the day (January 6) in commemoration of the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh that the Wise Men or Magi brought to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. They came from Asia, Europe, and Africa. It is also called the Feast of the Epiphany or El Día de los Reyes, and it marks the day on the Christian calendar when the magi brought gifts to the baby Jesus. Many Hispanic communities in the U.S. celebrate Three Kings Day with many different traditions including parades and performances. In Mexico a traditional sweet bread known as the Rosca de Reyes (King's Bread) is a staple of the holiday. Hidden within the sweet bread is a "baby Jesus" figurine -- the individual who finds the toy in his/her slice must then prepare *tamales* for everyone on the Day of the Candles, which is celebrated on February 2. Children leave their shoes right outside their doors so the Three Kings will leave their gifts inside, the bigger presents are placed around them. They also leave grass or hay for the camels in a box. Puerto Rican children left the box under their beds where the next day they will find the presents. Although Latin American countries and Spain continue the tradition, in Puerto Rico the arrival of Santa Claus has replaced the tradition for the most part. Children expect their gifts on Christmas Day. Some families still celebrate both dates, thus children receive gifts on both dates while adults receive their gifts on Christmas Day. It is still a tradition in many countries to have a family dinner in the afternoon of January 6. This was also a tradition in Puerto Rico where families gathered at the home of their elders and a big feast with abundant food, music and dance was held. This was the occasion to have turkey, and sometimes pork, rather than on Thanksgiving Day that was virtually unknown in Puerto Rico in years past. As the Americanization of the island evolved, many of the traditional customs in the continental US were adopted by Puerto Ricans.

In accordance to the old traditions, the Trío Los Arpeggios delighted attendees with typical music of the holiday as well as old times favorites. The pictures below illustrate the activity.



Los Arpeggios (above, left); Peterson, Martín, and Roberto (above, right); Sergio and partial view of attendees (below, right)

It would be an understatement to say this was a unique, enjoyable meeting. There were many guests present, among them John White, President of the Rochester Club; and many distinguished members of the community such as Dr. Tina Pereda, Marta Dávila, and Maryanne Esteban.



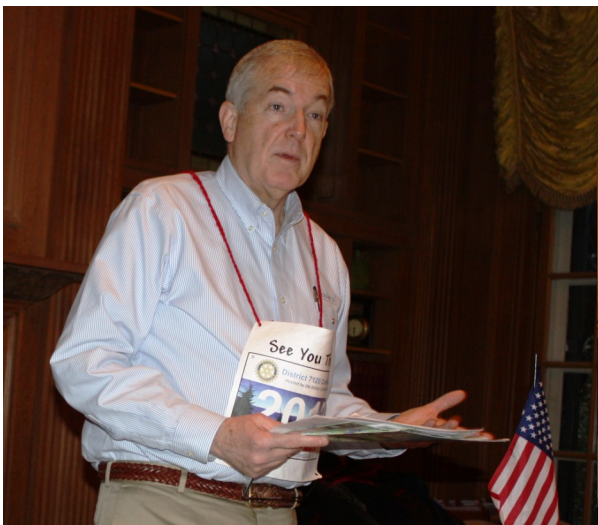
Literacy projects take center stage

Dr. Miriam Vázquez has dedicated her years with the RLRC to the furthering of literacy among the Latino population here and abroad. She has carried out the dictionary as well as the “Blue Shelf” projects insuring that students at the Eugenio María de Hostos Charter Schools get their bilingual dictionaries which they can take home. Many children appreciate having a dictionary of their own that will serve them well for many years as they develop their language skills in this school that offers a dual language instruction. Likewise, patients attending the health clinic on Clinton Avenue can take home books and magazines from the Blue Shelf that Dr. Vázquez maintains well stocked. She has started the National Family Literacy Project “Sharing Our Stories” engaging parents in writing their stories to be published and shared with their children. Several club members are engaged in this project as well. School supplies donations to El Sauce, Nicaragua have continued also. It is good to remember that due to her efforts, our club has been the recipient of the Literacy Award from District 7120 since its inception. There is also the First and Eight Grades Literacy Mentor Program. Thank you, Miriam!

James Murphy spoke about District Conference

The District Conference will take place on May 3-5 in Lake Placid at the Crowne Plaza Resort and Golf Club. The cost of the hotel for two people is \$605.00 (double) and \$412 (single), and this covers lodging for Friday and Saturday, dinners, breakfasts, use of fitness room, pool and tennis courts, and parking is free. Registration fee is \$60 per person. First time attendees get a \$25 discount of the Registration Fee. It is a beautiful place that offers many attractions for visitors. Rotarians are exhorted to attend, learn more about Rotary, and above all share with Rotarians from all over the District.

Several members of our club have attended past conferences and have had a great time. If you have not attended previous conferences, or even if you have, we urge you to take this opportunity to attend this year. Consider it as a short but informative and special time to share with your Rotary family.



Sharon Jones is passionate about her work

Ms. Jones shared how working with women and children at Sojourner House at PathStone has enriched her life. Seeing the transformation the women go through while at SH gives her reason to continue her work. For the children, many having been living in shelters and almost homeless, coming to SH is like going to an adventure in a castle. SH is not an emergency shelter. It provides structure, a solid program that gives women the skills needed to become self-sufficient while addressing the physical, emotional, and mental health issues. There are rules that must be followed by the women and their



children. These women have suffered many trials and tribulations including substance abuse, mental health problems, domestic violence, lack of housing, and even involvement with the criminal justice system. While at SH, women learn parenting skills. The women exhibit low self-esteem as well. Thus, the life skills groups help them in this regard. For instance, they learn to quilt and other skills. The children's Dream Seeds program include music, program at the Memorial Art Gallery, and reading. Eventually, families end up having their own apartment. Kudos to SH for the splendid service offered.

"Lost Boy of Sudan" found his own way and now is leading the way

Sebastian Maroundit, accompanied by Judy Schwarts, Ambassador, Building Minds in Sudan, gave a compelling presentation about their work in Sudan. Sebastian fled his village in Sudan at the age of nine (his five year old sister was killed), walking with thousands of children for countless miles on a five year journey. Finally, Kenya offered safety at a refugee camp, and at the age of fourteen, he learned to read and write. He had to use fingers as pencils and dirt for paper. In fourth grade he had pencil and paper. In 2001, he had an eight grade education. Together with 3,800 children he came to the US. He was surprised when he arrived in Rochester and only women were at the airport to greet those who came here. Being too old for ninth grade, he was placed in adult education. It was not easy but in 1 1/2 years he was able to finish HS, attended Monroe Community College and in 2006 obtained a bachelor's degree from SUNY Brockport. He joined a peace group and in 2007 became a US citizen.

Sebastian's dream is becoming a reality forever changing the lives of thousands of children for generations. He started by helping his brother to study in Kenya where it is very expensive. Thus, he came up with the idea of building a school in the village. With the independence of South Sudan came the possibility of raising money, hiring a builder, and start ground breaking. The result was a four-classroom school to accommodate 200 children. Now, girls could go to school also. There are still students who study under a tree for lack of classrooms. During the rainy season these students cannot go to school. Many have to walk eight miles to go to school and there was no lunch program. Subsequently, a lunch program was started. The education is in English in preparation for college. The goals for the future include finishing a school, build a school for 400 girls, bring experts from Kenya to teach people about HIV and other diseases, build center for microenterprises, get another school with four classrooms and latrines. The cost of building four classrooms is \$130,000 due to the high cost of transporting materials. Illiteracy rate is 84% of the population; only 12% have a HS education; and the country's president has a ninth grade education only. At present, people in the community make the bricks, the government pays the teacher's salaries. Building Minds in Sudan is a worthy cause. It not only brings education to countless children but also hope for a brighter, peaceful future to a population that has suffered violence for many years.



Children greeted Sebastian and Judy with great joy



President Diana posed with Sebastian and Judy after their presentation (right)

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FUTURE EVENTS

1. February 6 - Orlando Ortiz, President, Puerto Rican Festival at PathStone at 7:30 am
2. February 11— Dr. Hector Flores, Dean of Graduate school at RIT; Recognition of Latino educators at the Holiday Inn at 6:30 pm
3. February 13—Presentation by ‘Somos’ at Ibero at 7:30 am
4. February 20 - Julio Vázquez, presenting his recently published book as a legacy to the community at PathStone at 7:30 am
5. March 6—National Family Literacy Project at EMHCS at 7:00 pm
6. March 11—Evening meeting, recognition Latino entrepreneurs at the Holiday Inn at 6:30 pm

Board of Directors

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Abraham Hernández, President-Elect

Roberto Burgos, Club Administration Chair

Elisa DeJesús, Past-President/Foundation Chair

Wim Baars, Treasurer

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Charol Ríos, Service Projects Chair

Diana Irizarry, Oratorical Contest Chair

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