

# Monthly Newsletter - December 2025

Your source for club events and news

## Chilly Chilli & “Love Letters”

Our annual Chilly Chilli joint event with the Rotaract Club of Ottawa took place on November 29th. We had several Rotarians make chilli and bring sides and desserts for hungry attendees that included Elsie, Vice-President of the Rotaract Club and Bente, our inbound exchange student from Norway, and a few ex-Rotaractors who are now Club members. Thanks to André Bourdon, Chair of the New Generations Committee for again organizing this long-standing club tradition.



During the event the Fellowship Committee organized to have attendees write over 60 “Love Letters.” These letters of encouragement will be delivered to patients at The Ottawa Hospital General and Civic campuses over the holidays by hospital volunteers. We thank Melanie who made stunning cards and conversation starters for the volunteers and Donald, our most prolific card writer, as well as his daughter, who drew lovely pictures.

## Annual General Meeting & Christmas Luncheon

On December 13th, club members gathered at the Canal Ritz restaurant for our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Christmas luncheon. After some welcome words from Club President Rady Osman, we awarded Paul Harris Fellowships to several families and two club members (see below). We also welcomed many of our new members who each introduced themselves so we can get to know them more. Welcome to Andrew, Reid, Rachel, Donald, Hakim, Chris, Carina, Noah and Joshua. We were also joined by our inbound exchange student Bente from Norway.



And we conducted our club business as part of the AGM, including approving our audited financial statements for 2024-25 and auditor for 2025-26 (thanks to Carol McCalla). We heard from our Treasurer Spencer Henson as well as Ché Weist on the Children’s Foundation and the presentation of donations to the club and from club members to the Foundation. Robert Therrien, incoming President for 2026-27 presented the slate for next year’s Club Executive.



Photos: Rady Osman, 2025-26 Club President and Ché Weist, Chair of the Children’s Foundation

Finally, we had some fun “ice breaker” type questions before we ended the meeting and lunch. Thank you to all those who participated and those who helped organize it.



## Paul Harris Fellowship and the Rotary Club of Ottawa

Paul Harris Fellowships are the highest honour that the Rotary Club can confer on an individual. On December 12th, 2025 the Club conferred 8 Paul Harris Fellowships.

In the Rotary Club of Ottawa a candidate must be nominated by a Rotarian in good. In order to be considered, the candidate must have achieved at least one of the following:

1. Led an EXCEPTIONAL initiative on behalf of the club in international service, social service or club management.
2. Have consistently performed at an OUTSTANDING level of service for the club over a period of at least five years, including serving in an officer or committee chair role.
3. Contributed a total of at least \$1,500 to the Rotary Children's Fund, Children's Foundation or RI Foundation. This can be through a one-time donation or accumulated giving over a number of years.
4. A non-Rotarian who is a notable community builder and whose efforts are widely recognized as exceptional and meeting the four-way test of Rotary.
5. A person or couple who have been a host for the Adventure in Citizenship program for over 15 years.
6. Be a non-Rotarian member of the community who has performed outstanding service to the community that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Rotary Club of Ottawa.



We awarded Paul Harris Fellowships to five families that have hosted students for over 15 years on behalf of the Adventure in Citizenship Program. These are:

- Scott and Louise Hannant
- Martin and Sylvia Munro
- Gavan and Camille Power
- Richard and Marianne Van der Jagt
- Richard and Karen Gilman

We also awarded Paul Harris Fellowships to Club members.

André Bourdon was awarded a Fellowship for his exceptional service to the Club through his support of not only the Adventures in Citizenship Program but also as Chair of the New Generations Committee and his enduring support for the international exchange program. He has truly provided “service above self” for over 20 years and this award is one small way of recognizing this commitment.

Ché Weist was awarded two Paul Harris Fellowships. The first was for her leadership and support for the Club during a time of grave instability. When Ché was elected President, the Club was losing members and many conditions present at the time were not aligned with the Four Way Test. Her courage and commitment helped the Club return to stability, and she also worked to ensure that our Bylaws were updated and in addition she mentored several people for positions on the Board. In summary her calm and effective leadership helped the Club to overcome dangerous instability and return to stability and strength.

The second Paul Harris Fellowship was awarded to Ché for her tireless efforts to attract and retain strong new members who went on to take leadership roles in the Club from Committee Chairs to the Club Presidency. Ché not only recruited capable candidates but she set a standard for recruitment that was so effective she was asked to speak to other Clubs on how she brought our Club from “below average” in recruitment to a leader in the District. At the December 12th meeting several new members received their name tags and membership kits, strong proof that Ché continues to bring hard-working and capable individuals to our Club.



.....

### **Toy & Personal Hygiene Drive for Maison D’Amitié**

On behalf of the Club, the Community Service Committee organized a toy drive to support a local women's shelter. [Maison d’Amitié](#) is a not-for-profit shelter located in Lower Town that welcomes women and children fleeing domestic abuse. In 2024-25, they helped 56 women and 54 children and provided a combined 9,391 days of shelter. Thank you to all the club members who donated toys for the children and items for the women’s shoeboxes and a special thank you to Rotarian Joshua Chmielewski for spearheading this project.

.....



### **Meeting with Republic Kosovo Ambassador**

Our Club President Rady and Ché, Chair of the International Service Committee and the Children’s Foundation, met with H.E Adriatik Kryeziu, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo, at his request, to discuss increasing Rotary collaboration between Kosovo and our club. Newly created Rotary Club in Prishtina will contact us to explore possible projects focusing on youth and health.

.....

## Clothing and Cash Donations to Operation Come Home in 2025

Operation Come Home (OCH) assists youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their goals, and avoid the experience of homelessness as an adult. They offer a variety of crucial programs related to employment, education, housing, mental health and harm reduction for at-risk youth aged 16-29.

The Rotary Club of Ottawa is proud to assist this important organization through cash donations and the purchase/donation of winter clothing items.



---

## Meet Your Fellow Club Members

In this feature to our newsletter, we will spotlight fellow Club members so you can get to know them. This month, we feature two members.



### **Maria Reyes**

I joined this club in 2023, but my Rotary journey began in university, where I joined a Rotaract Club and made lasting friendships with purpose. Since then, I've been part of Rotary Clubs in several cities across Canada. I'm currently the club's Secretary—so you've likely seen my name in many emails!

I work for the federal government on spending and horizontal reviews, and I'm passionate about participatory program design and evaluation because of their power to support engagement, learning, and continuous improvement. Beyond Rotary, I also serve on the Board of the Canadian Evaluation Society's National Capital Chapter.

I've lived in Canada for 26 years, though my family (parents, sister, and extended family) is still in Colombia. My partner, Grant, and I enjoy the outdoors, cultural and community events, history and politics, and exploring new places. I learned French out of personal interest, but it has been invaluable here in Ottawa—so if you'd like to exchange French for Spanish, let me know!

## **Faruku Kibaba**

Faruku is a youth leader, a Charter President of the Rotary Club of Kasese Snow Peaks, District 9214, founder and Board Chair of Great Lakes Peace Center a Ugandan Charity. He is an international Sustainable Development Goals Trainer, Human rights and Governance enthusiast, Social accountability and Peace Advocate strong in developing training and mentoring programs for Youth



and Women focused non-profit organizations. Faruku joined Rotary as an Interactor in 2002 while in High school and later joined Rotaract at University in 2007 at Makerere University. Faruku later served as President of the Rotaract Club of Kasese a community club just after University.

Later, Faruku was appointed the Assistant District Rotaract Representative in then RD9211. These and many other attributes have led to his Award as Top 40 under 40 youth in Uganda in 2018 by New Vision a Uganda leading daily. Faruku was also awarded among the 100 most Positively Inspiring Youth in Africa 2017 by Positive Youth Africa. And later the Franco-German Peace and Reconciliation Award 2024 by the French and Germany Embassies in Uganda.

Faruku has worked with grassroots in Uganda and in the Great Lakes region on projects to support Youth empowerment and Peace Education through Rotary Global Grants in 2016-2018 that reached more than 1000 youth and women with peace training in the positive peace/ pillars of peace aspects. In 2018, Faruku trained Charities and High school in Berlin, Germany to support students understand and take action for United Nations Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs at personal and institutional level. Also, supported NIGH WORLD a Canadian UN-ECOSOC Accredited Organization in developing and SDGs International project that involved and SDGs song by a school in Uganda. Faruku has participated in seven (7) Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, six (6) Rotary district conferences and assemblies, two of which were in Lubek, Germany and Winchester in the United Kingdoms Rotary D1110.

Faruku's 23 Years volunteer career with Rotary through the various stages from Interactor to Rotarian has seen him participate in a number of Global Grant Projects including the one between the Rotary Club in West Ottawa and the Rotary Club of Kasese for assistive devices for people living with disabilities in Kasese, Uganda.

Faruku was a Rotary Peace Scholar for a Masters' degree in Peacebuilding and Reconciliation at Winchester University, United Kingdom with support from D1110 in 2019-2021 before becoming a Charter President of the Rotary Club of Kasese Snow Peaks. Faruku is a donor to the Rotary Foundation and currently at PHF level.

.....

## Rotaract Club of Ottawa Backpacks for Hope

### Backpacks Of Hope



#### What is Backpacks of Hope?

We collect funds and purchase essential items to assemble care packages for people experiencing homelessness in Ottawa.

Each backpack includes:  
- Hygiene products  
- Socks and warm accessories  
- Snacks and essentials  
and more!

Every contribution directly supports these packages, bringing hope and comfort to our community.

### Donate!



Rotaract  
Club of Ottawa

This season, we're coming together to support people experiencing homelessness in Ottawa by assembling and distributing backpacks filled with hygiene products, warm accessories, and comfort items. Every contribution goes directly toward creating these meaningful care packages and bringing warmth, dignity, and hope to our community. ❤️

#### ❤️ How You Can Support

This year, we're kindly asking for financial contributions rather than donated items. This allows us to:

- Ensure consistency across all backpacks
- Stretch every dollar further through bulk purchasing
- Maximize the impact of your generosity 🙌

A fully stocked backpack costs just \$25, and any amount you give helps us bring care and comfort to someone who truly needs it. 🧡

#### 👉 Ready to Make a Difference?

Donate securely here: <https://square.link/u/jg7GX0eN>

#### 17 Contribution Deadline

To help us prepare for assembly day, we kindly ask that donations be made by December 28th. Your support means more than you know. Together, we can brighten someone's winter by offering care, dignity, and a little hope. Thank you for your compassion and generosity. ✨



**District Conference 2026 Conférence de district**  
**24-26 April/avril 2026**  
**Kingston, Ontario**

See this link for information to register for the next District Conference:  
[Welcome / Bienvenue | District 7040](#)

[Rotary Club of Ottawa Website](#)

#### News from around Rotary International



[Rotary projects around the globe  
December 2025 | Rotary International](#)

[Woman's journey of  
self-empowerment leads to Rotary |  
Rotary International](#)

