

# Monthly Newsletter - June 2026

Your source for club events and news

## Adventure in Citizenship 2026 Report



The 4-day AIC program was a fabulous success again this year in its 75<sup>th</sup> iteration. Over 175 students from all 10 provinces and one territory came to Ottawa from May 23-27. Some new and renewed activities included a candid and informative introduction by Indigenous elder Gilbert W. Whiteduck, engaging and reflective sessions on citizenship by our very own Spencer Henson, and a participative activism through art workshop by artist and retired teacher, Lynda Hattin. The participants also were delighted to hear from and enjoy a Q&A with citizenship judge Marie Senecal-Tremblay and two opportunities to connect with MPs, including Green Party leader Elizabeth May, Conservative Stephanie Kusie, Liberal Yasir Naqvi and one of the country's youngest MPs, Liberal Jake Sawatzky. A last-minute change in transportation led the participants to have the chance to ride double-decker buses to and from the closing dinner-dance which made for a memorable final evening. There was also time for fun and socializing at the U of Ottawa residences, during a bus tour of Ottawa, a talent show, and a French-Canadian traditional meal, music and square dancing at a sugar shack. At the closing, we heard inspiring speeches from representatives of each province and territory chosen by their peers and awarded three \$1000 scholarships courtesy of the Young Citizens Foundation from over 50 essays and videos.



Here are some reactions from the youth participants:

Kyah from Newfoundland

*"I can't thank the Rotary Club and all you incredible people enough for making this an experience I'll never forget!"*

Loghan from Ontario

*"From this program I learnt what it means to be a Canadian, how I can influence politics to make change in my community and advocate for what I believe in. ... I learned why I feel prideful about Canada and what it takes to maintain such a beautiful country."*

Isabella from Alberta

*"The highlight of this trip, alongside the friends I made, was an invitation to join a new youth committee (or political club thingy) started by my riding's MP! (I accepted, don't worry.)"*

Thanks again to the many volunteers, sharing their time, experience, energy and enthusiasm! We're already looking forward to AIC 2027!

Geralyn Klassen and Laurel Hubber, Co-Chairs of Adventure in Citizenship Committee





## Volunteering at Breakthrough T1D Walk

On June 20, members from our club volunteered at the Ottawa Breakthrough T1D Walk as check-in volunteers, where we helped greeting participants in the walk.

Over 800 people came together in Ottawa—families, friends, and supporters united by a shared goal. The event in Ottawa raised over \$135,000, bringing us one step closer to a world without type 1 diabetes. At Breakthrough T1D, their mission is *improving lives today and tomorrow by accelerating life-changing breakthroughs to cure, prevent, and treat T1D and its complications*. Our help was very much appreciated by the organizers and the volunteers were happy that the Rotary Club of Ottawa could play a role in helping with this event that means so much to people living with type 1 diabetes.



## Exchange Student Bente Van Vliet

Arriving late August 2025 from Norway, our international exchange student Bente Van Vliet left on Monday June 8<sup>th</sup> to head back home. She had the opportunity to stay with three different host families during her time in Ottawa and attended Lisgar Collegiate High School as a grade 12 student.

Bente, in her presentation to our Rotary Club in April, mentioned how she had tremendously enjoyed her time as an exchange student. She made many school and Rotary friends during her time in Canada and she is hoping dearly to come back in a few years from now. Back home earlier than for most exchange students, she will be attending her brother's wedding in June.

The New Generation Committee is responsible for supporting the Rotary International Exchange Programs and we welcomed high school students' candidates to these programs. However, our most urgent need is for potential families that could host for about three months these amazing young international students.

We will not be able to send one student abroad nor host one this

coming school year since we didn't have the host families for 2026-27. Hopefully, you might help us in recruiting host families for 2027-28.

Pictured are Rotarians Angela Kelly, André Bourdon, host father Michael Walsh and exchange student Bente Van Vliet at the Ottawa airport for her flight back home

## Rotary Club of Ottawa Children's Foundation

The Rotary Club of Ottawa is very fortunate that a number of its former members had the foresight and ambition to create the Rotary Club of Ottawa Children's Foundation.



The Foundation is a professionally managed fund, the earnings and capital of which are to support the charitable activities of the Rotary Club of Ottawa. The Foundation provides that support in two ways. Firstly, it makes an annual contribution to the club which is a fixed percentage of the Foundation's assets and which in recent years has been over \$25,000 per annum. Since the beginning of Covid, this contribution has been absolutely essential to maintain our charitable activities since most of the club's own fund-raising activities have been suspended and fund-raising generally has become more and more difficult. Without the support of the Foundation, the club's charitable activities over the past few years would have been minimal at best.

In addition to the annual contribution it makes to the club, the Foundation has also provided direct support to a number of major Rotary projects over the years. These have included support for the Rotary Home; a significant contribution to the club's Syrian refugee initiative during the Syrian refugee crisis; funding the shipment of baby incubators to Zimbabwe; and refurbishing the kitchen of a local school in a low income neighbourhood in Ottawa to provide nourishing meals to students.

The Foundation is managed separately from the Rotary Club of Ottawa but is joined with it at the hip so to speak. It has its own Board of Directors but each of those Directors are members of the Rotary Club of Ottawa. The Board's main roles are first, to ensure that the money in the Foundation is invested wisely to maintain its ongoing sustainability; and secondly, that the contributions made by the Foundation are spent in accordance with its stated objectives solely on charitable projects.

When the Foundation was created, it was given a good start with the help of some major financial bequests from donors. Since then, it has benefited from ongoing wise investment decisions. Because of healthy investment returns, particularly in the past few years, and despite having made substantial contributions to the club over the years, the Foundation has recently grown to a value of about one million dollars. While the stock market is impossible to predict, it is hoped that the Foundation can maintain this value in coming years and thus will continue to be a major and important source of funds to enable the Rotary Club of Ottawa to continue to carry out its charitable works.

Ché Weist  
Chair,  
Rotary Club of Ottawa Children's Foundation

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### **International Service Committee Report**

The ISC assessed and voted to allocate its budget to the following worthwhile charitable projects abroad:

1) Elimu Familia Stawi Program, Kenya, \$2,500

The ISC funds supported Elimu Familia Stawi (“Thriving Families”). The program aims to reach 320 preschool and early primary children and 144 parents new to the program.

2) Tembo Girls Education Project, Tanzania, \$3,234.25

The ISC funds supported adolescent girls in Longido District, Tanzania by helping provide academic support classes, safe accommodation while attending secondary school, school supplies, and mentorship.

3) Warm Blanket Project for Ukraine, \$1,000

The ISC funds supported the “We Will Warm Up Ukraine” initiative led by the Rotary Club of Arnprior in partnership with the Rotary Club of Kharkiv-Friends. Funds helped provide insulated multi use blankets for civilians in Kharkiv.

4) EmpowerEd in Uganda, \$2,000

The ISC funds supported 201 students in elementary schools and 25 students in one high school. Every school day, all students received breakfast and lunch.

5) Guatemala Literacy Project, \$1,000

The ISC funds supported computer training for young students, especially girls in disadvantaged communities, helping them gain technology skills and improve future employment opportunities.

6) Colombia Education Project, \$3,000

The ISC funds supported training benefiting 580 children and youth at the Institución Educativa Técnica Ambiental Combeima in the rural Chapetón area of Ibagué, Colombia.

Ché Weist  
Chair, International Service Committee

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## Parkdale Food Center



Nutritious food is a human right and the Parkdale Food Centre (PFC) works tirelessly to build healthier, more connected neighbours and neighbourhoods through good food, innovative community partnerships, and by challenging inequalities in order to create lasting impacts. Our very own Che Weist is a regular volunteer at PFC and the club was happy to provide a financial donation to this important organization.



## Interact Club - Relay for Life



After six years, Colonel By Secondary School finally hosted Relay for Life again this past May, and our Interact Club played a huge role in bringing it back! Several of our Interact Club executives were on the planning committee, working hard to bring students, staff, and neighbours together to support cancer survivors and remember loved ones.

The day started with a moving opening ceremony and survivor lap, followed by games and booths. Once night fell, we lit decorated bags for a beautiful Luminary Lap.

We are so excited to share that we successfully raised more than \$20,000 for cancer research! Our Interact Club really helped make this happen by helping plan the behind-the-scenes logistics, volunteering to run the afternoon booths, and keeping the energy and momentum going all day out on the track. We even captured some great photos of our organizing committee, including our Interact executives celebrating the big win!

Inara Bajwa - Interact Club President

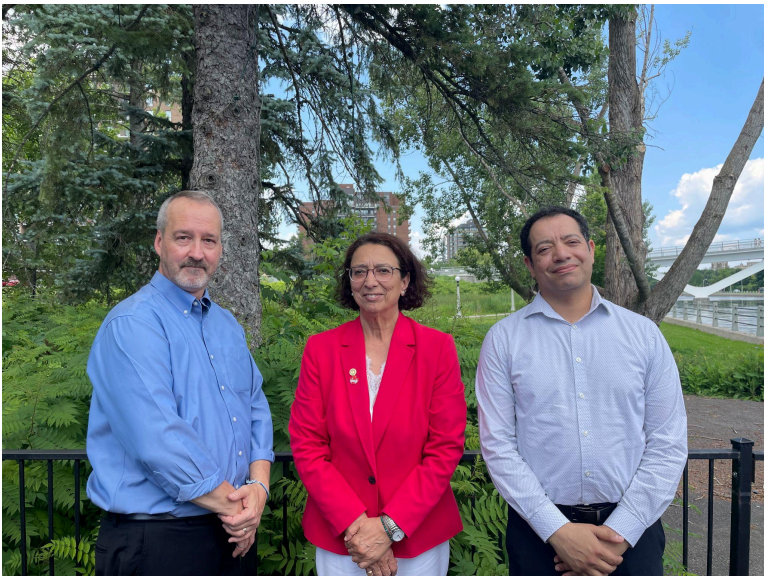
## Club Year-End Luncheon and Handover



On a beautiful and warm Sunday afternoon at the end of June, club members joined together for a year-end celebratory luncheon at the Canal Ritz. And there was much to celebrate.

The club has grown this year with the addition of several incredible new members. We've increased the funds in our Children's Foundation. We supported over 15 local and international projects. We hosted an incredible student from Norway and continued to foster our local Interact and Rotaract Clubs. We capped it all off in May with the delivery of another highly successful Adventure in Citizenship program.

We also took the opportunity to celebrate our dear colleague Ché Weist who will be moving to Victoria in July in order to be closer to her grandchildren. Ché has been an incredible force for good in our club, working tirelessly to recruit new members, raising funds, leading the International Service Committee and, more recently, chairing the board of the Children's Foundation. Words cannot express how thankful we are for everything she has done.



We also thanked Rady Osman for his work as president this year and welcomed Robert Therrien as the incoming president.

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer and we look forward to starting afresh in the fall.



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## News from around Rotary International



[Rotary International Convention draws 37,000 to a 'magical island' | Rotary International](#)

[Rotary International Convention in Taipei concludes with inspiration and a call to action | Rotary International](#)

['The rare good news story' | Rotary International](#)

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## Upcoming Club Events

There are no planned meetings in July and August as we will be taking a break during the summer.

The Fellowship Committee (Sherri, François, Donald and Joshua) will continue to organize speakers for our club meetings, the monthly Thirsty Thursday and other social events.

September 14: First In-Person Meeting  
12:00-1:00pm at Jack Purcell Community Center



September 24: Thirsty Thursday

Our first monthly social gathering is at Beyond the Pale at 250 City Centre @ 7:00pm

September 28: First Online Club Meeting  
7:00-8:00pm

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## Club Executive Meeting Update

The Club's Executive Board met on June 11 and discussed the following items:

- Last events and meetings in June
  - Treasurer's Report
  - Member Renewals for next year and closing of 2025-26 Rotary year
  - Committee reports for 2025-26
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## District 7040 Officers for 2026-27

Welcome to Barbara Fisk of the District Passport Club as District Governor for 2026-27.

[District Organization Chart | District 7040](#)

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Outgoing Rotary International President  
Francesco Arezzo



*I like the image of a relay race. No runner owns the race. The most important moment is not the running – it is the passing.*

*Rotary is a relay. We receive. We carry forward. We pass it on. And every generation of Rotarians must leave the organization stronger, kinder, and more hopeful for the generation that follows.*