

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Calendar

March 20 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn
Ashley Owen, "Services of the
Montgomery County Humane Society"

The Montgomery County Humane Society (MCHS) in Rockville, Maryland, is a non-profit 501(c)3 animal welfare organization that has provided animal sheltering services for Montgomery County since 1958. Funds to operate the Montgomery County Animal Shelter are provided under a grant from the Montgomery County government and from private donations. MCHS shelters approximately 10,000 animals and service the animal-related needs of approximately 100,000 people yearly.



MCHS programs are nationally recognized with a 92% adoption rate from January-October 2007, one of the highest in the country. They have been on the cutting edge of humane animal work attracting visitors from other municipalities and countries to learn about MCHS.

March 26 - Rotary Day@Gallaudet University
March 27 - No meeting
March 29 - 9am Rotary District
Mini-Summit on Literacy, Rockville Library
March 29 - 6:30pm International Night at
Hungarian Embassy, 3910 Shoemaker St.NW
April 3 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn
"State of the Economy"
John Call and Tom Leuchtenburg
April 8 - 7pm Manna Food Center
April 10 - 6:30pm Meeting-Hunters Inn
Jeff Miller, President, Manna Food Center
April 10 - 8:00pm Rotary Club Board Meeting
April 17 - 6:30pm Meeting-Normandie Farm
April 21 - 6pm Sophia House
April 24 - 6:30pm Meeting - Hunters Inn
Wine and Cheese Social
May 1 - No meeting
May 2-4 DisCon08 Gaithersburg Hilton

March 13 Meeting Report

Nabil Bedewi introduced the three speakers from Georgetown University, **Alex Siegel**, **Cole Magrath** and **Eugene Goldberg**, who



discussed the formation of the Hilltop Microfinance Initiative. They noted that poverty is a clear and evident problem in DC with 18% of the residents living below the poverty line, nearly 50% higher than the national average. Microfinance initiatives, both internationally and domestically, have been proven to help individuals successfully break the poverty cycle. Hilltop is a non-profit



microfinance company run by students to give poor entrepreneurs the financial and human capital they need to succeed in the business. Their model is the Elmseed Enterprise Fund founded in 2001 by undergraduate students at Yale. For the past four years, Elmseed has achieved a 100% loan repayment rate. Hilltop offers training in the basics of finance and accounting as well as practical skills necessary for managing a small business. Loans will be for one year and the client will be allowed to take out another loan upon

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timely and full repayment. Clients will be required to join a group of entrepreneurs and attend periodic meetings. Loan eligibility is dependent upon peer group performance as well as their own. Hilltop will have an independent board of directors with five to fifteen members. A core group of undergraduate students will be responsible for management of loans and regular reporting. The current status is they are filing for incorporation and non-profit status, obtaining investments from outside parties and are cultivating relationships with DC community organizations including Rotary. Thanks, Nabil, for arranging to have these bright business students share their plans for the Hilltop Microfinance Initiative.



President Elect **Todd Nitkin** read a letter from Senior Pastor Hanfere Aligaz of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church expressing their gratitude for our club's support of the Joshua Youth Academy in Ethiopia. The Academy

houses 50 children and gives education access to over 400 needy children. With our donation of \$18,000 they were able to buy desks, tables, board and other materials for the library and laboratory. The full letter is included on page 3. Todd also introduced the club to a new project, a Malaria Treatment Program in Mali. Through a partnership of the West Ventura and Bamako Rotary Clubs, a Rotary matching grant has been initiated with a goal of \$25,000.

Todd received a great education at the Multi-District Presidents Elect Training Seminar in Richmond, Virginia. He was impressed by the leadership of BCC President Elect France Pruitt who arranged for a group of Presidents Elect to get together to discuss projects. **Scott Janco** will be shortly transferring his Rotary Club membership from Rockville. He works for the Charles E. Smith Life Communities in Rockville.



Former member **Anil Alpay** has been named manager of the BB&T Bank in Potomac only one block away from our meeting location.



The 28th Annual International Night

sponsored by the Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club
Saturday, March 29th, 6:30 PM

at
The Embassy of Hungary
3910 Shoemaker St., NW, Washington, DC 20008



*Please join us in
honoring the area's
Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars*



Students representing:
Congo, France, Italy, Japan, Korea



and attending the following universities:
American, George Washington, Georgetown, Howard, Maryland

will present on:
What they liked and what they learned.
What the program meant to them.
Their impressions of the area and their plans.



Enjoy French/Mediterranean/International Cuisine & wine

RSVP before March 9, 2008. Attendance is limited
\$60 per person
with checks to Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club
PO Box 59311, Potomac, MD 20859-9311
Information www.pb-rotary.org
Questions: rotary.pb@gmail.com



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Rotary Disburses First US\$40 Million from Gates Foundation Grant

By Dan Nixon RI News - 13 March 2008
Nine countries and two World Health Organization regions have received The Rotary Foundation's first distribution from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's \$100 million challenge grant for polio eradication. Made in January, the US\$40 million disbursement is being used by WHO and UNICEF to carry out immunization activities in the four remaining polio-endemic countries – Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan – plus five others where "imported" polio cases have been reported. Surveillance and technical support are also being funded in WHO's African and Eastern Mediterranean regions.

Salim Habayeb, WHO's representative in India, calls Rotary International "a cherished partner" and says the funding "will ensure the continuation of high-quality surveillance and

the sustainability of technical assistance."

"This tremendous support comes at a crucial time for the polio eradication effort," says Gianni Murzi, UNICEF's representative in India.



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ETHIOPIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

7930 EASTERN AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20012

February 7, 2008

Matching Grants
The Rotary Foundation
One Rotary Center
1560 Sherman Avenue
Evanston, IL 60201-3698

Dear Sir/Madam,

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your support towards our Orphanage (Joshua Youth Academy) in Ethiopia. Your help meant a lot for the well-being of the children.

The Joshua Youth Academy currently houses 50 children and gives education access to over 400 needy children. It has levels from KG to 7th grade and we are in the process of opening 8th grade next year. Our plan is to raise the classes to high school and college levels phase by phase.

With your kind donation of \$18,000.00, we were able to buy desks, tables, board and other materials for the library and laboratory. It has made a great impact in our school system and the students were able to show significant change in their results. We will soon submit a report supported by photographs and financial documents.

Once again, we would like to thank you for your support of our orphanage in Ethiopia. We also look forward to working with you in the future with this and other projects.

Yours in Him,

Asgedich Seyoum
FOR Hanfere Aligaz
Senior Pastor

Tel (202) 726-8529

Fax (202) 726-8549

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Since the grant distribution, Rotarians have continued their hands-on support to maximize the push to end polio. A team of 54 Rotarians and friends from Australia, Canada, France, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States helped promote and carry out India's National Immunization Days (NIDs) in February, which reached more than 170 million children.



local volunteers who were dispensing the vaccine, but they were so pleased to have us assist them."

"It is the most amazingly exhilarating and dramatically humbling experience," reports Mark Brown, of the Rotary Club of St. John's Northwest, Newfoundland, Canada. "Immediately, we were poured on by people wanting their children vaccinated. No time to ponder. Just two drops in each child's mouth and a permanent

marker on the finger to show they'd been done. The mothers were so happy their child was treated....We met some amazing Indian Rotarians today."

Joined by members of the Rotary Club of Delhi-West and nearly 100 students from a local Rotary club-sponsored school, the team took part in a rally in Sohna to promote the NIDs. Among the students, who all wore PolioPlus caps, were many polio victims, as was one of the Delhi-West Rotarians. The team worked hand in hand with community members throughout the NIDs. "Along with us was a young girl, a Muslim, of about 17 years," Elias Thomas, of the Rotary Club of Sanford-Springvale, Maine, USA, reports on the team's blog (<http://rotarydreamteam-india2008.blogspot.com>). "She was a member of the Interact club in her town and served as our translator. There were always



"Now is the time to step up the momentum to get polio out of India forever," says Deepak Kapur, chair of India's PolioPlus committee. "Communication is necessary in getting families to understand the benefits of immunization, and is a critical piece of the overall strategy to make that happen."

(Upper Photo) RI Director Kjell-Åke Åkesson of Sweden, a member of the NID team, gets ready to immunize a child in India. *Photo courtesy of Kjell-Åke Åkesson.* (Lower Photo) Rotary Foundation Trustee Carolyn Jones of Alaska, USA, who was in India for a district conference, administers oral polio vaccine to a child during an NID. *Photo courtesy of Carolyn Jones.*

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News from Smiljka in Florida



It is the second month that I have retired. I really love Florida. Maybe winter is the best time to be here. Fedja and I are doing well. We have been extremely busy in Fairfax with moving and selling our condo. We have been very fortunate to do it in the last moment. I was homeless for 3 months but my brother opened his doors for me. Now I am still organizing things in my Florida home. I am working in the garden and finishing all paperwork about my pension. We go for a walk every day and one a week we go out in the restaurant. There are many Serbians here so sometimes we socialize a little bit. Venice is very beautiful place with magnificent beaches and nice parks. We still did not explore all places, but we have plenty of time. In January my family was here and we plan to go to Beograd and Paris in April. I might go back to work for one or two months as Dumbarton Oaks needs help. I was in the process of cataloging a database of Serbian monuments on Kosovo and Metohija. These are our most beautiful monasteries and churches built by our kings and Emperor Dusan. I do not need

to say how disappointed I am with decision of independence. This is a big loss for Serbia and I do not understand who needs another Albania or Kosovo.

I am glad that club is very active and continues to do good things. There are two clubs in Venice, but I did not join them. I am very busy, especially as my daughter is expecting baby so I hope to become grandmother soon.

I am sending pictures with my children. Regards to all Rotarian's. Good luck with all projects. At this moment I have only one project, to become a grandmother.

Sincerely, Smiljka



May 2 - 4
DisCon08 Gaithersburg Hilton
Rotary District 7620 Conference

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