

Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club News

Rotary Club Calendar

January 21 – 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Romi Bhatia: Kids Against Hunger

The mission of Kids Against Hunger, a humanitarian food-aid organization, is to significantly reduce the number of hungry children in the USA and to feed starving children throughout the world. In 2008 alone, volunteers at Kids Against Hunger's food packaging centers across the USA packaged over 40 million meals for children and their families around the world and around the corner. Kids Against Hunger DC Metro was established in October 2009 as an satellite organization affiliated with Kids Against Hunger, a Minnesota humanitarian aid organization, with a primary goal of packaging meals for distribution to malnourished children both in the United States and abroad. As a satellite, KAHDCEMETRO organizes packaging events where volunteers come together to package meal packets consisting of rice, soy powder, vegetables and minerals. The packaging events are hosted primarily at the GWU hospital facility in Washington DC and other locations throughout the DC region in partnership with community service organizations. Mr. Bhatia currently teaches microfinance to MBA students at the George Washington School of Business and does consulting in the field. Romi has worked in various capacities in microfinance over the past ten years as a researcher, portfolio manager and investment officer.

January 28 – 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

Alex Siegel - Georgetown University- Microfinance

February 4 – 6:30pm – Meeting - Normandie Farm

February 9 – 7pm Manna Food Center

February 23 – 105th Anniversary of Rotary

March 27 – International Night

District Sets \$100,000 Goal for Haiti Relief

Rotary District Governor Paul Frey convened a teleconference on January 20 with representatives of dozens of Rotary Clubs to discuss the goals and strategy for Haiti relief. \$50,000 is to be requested in the next two weeks and a total of \$100,000 is being sought. Donations are being sent to Rotarians in three neighboring countries that are coordinating the relief efforts. The Haitians are in desperate in need of water, food and medicine.

January 14 Meeting Report

Two days after the passing of charter Rotarian Dick Gordon's wife Jane, Dick came to the meeting to express his appreciation to the club members for their support. There was an emotional tribute to Jane both verbally and financially as \$1200 was raised for the Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club Foundation in honor of Jane supporting our Haiti project.



Our guest speakers were Past Governor Bob Grill, District Rotaract Chair, and Navin Valliappan, Rotaractor and past District Rotaract Representative. Bob left the discussion of Rotaract to Navin and gave a presentation on Shelterbox. Last June Bob was asked to represent the RI President at

a District Conference in Italy. Shortly before the conference a devastating earthquake hit, but Rotarians wanted to



support the area by continuing to hold the conference there. Bob toured the earthquake area and discovered villages of " ShelterBoxes" providing housing and



sustenance to those who had lost their homes. He was so impressed by the mission of ShelterBox that he became the regional representative. The ShelterBox project was conceived and developed by Tom Henderson, a member of the Rotary Club of Helston-Lizard, Cornwall District, in Great Britain as

their Millennium Service Project. Struck with the urgent world-wide need for a self-contained emergency shelter unit when disaster occurs, Tom designed a tent, researched suppliers and, through trial and error,

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developed the ShelterBox. The international relief agency Feed the Children, has called Tom's ShelterBox 'the best disaster relief tool they have seen in their 20 years of experience'. Working primarily through UK Rotary clubs, Tom and his Rotary club has succeeded in exposing the ShelterBox project to over 25 million Brits and, as a result, provided shelter for approximately one-third of a million people in the last six years. Each ShelterBox is a large, rugged, green plastic container that holds a 10-person tent and a range of other equipment. In general, typical box contents could include: Thermal blankets and insulated ground sheets; waterproof ponchos and bin bags; a multi-fuel stove that can burn anything from diesel to old paint; cooking pans, utensils, bowls and mugs; collapsible water containers and water purification tablets; a basic tool kit - hammer, axe, saw, pliers, hoe head, trenching shovel, rope etc; and a small, children's pack containing drawing books, crayons, pens etc.

Here is a report on ShelterBox's response to the earthquake in Haiti:

" ShelterBox has established three separate operational centers in and around Haiti to help distribute assistance to the estimated one million people left homeless by the devastating 12 January earthquake.

The three-person ShelterBox Response Team (SRT) in Haiti has set up an operations base in the capital Port au Prince with the assistance of local Rotarians to co-

ordinate the delivery of aid in the country. They are working with the French aid agency ACTED to determine the areas in most need of assistance and are training personnel to put up tents ahead of their arrival into the devastated country. The Haiti operation is being supported by logistical hubs set up in Miami and the Dominican Republic capital Santa Domingo. ShelterBoxes have been flown to both cities for onward transportation to Haiti. ShelterBox Head of Operations John Leach said, "This is the largest, quickest and most complex deployment in our history. We are now very well organized across four countries to get ShelterBoxes to the people of Haiti quickly. We are now set up to channel aid to those in need efficiently and effectively in the days and weeks to come. This is a long term commitment from ShelterBox and we have to sustain our initial push."

Warehouse volunteers continue to pack ShelterBoxes day and night at the ShelterBox HQ in Helston. More than 3,300 ShelterBoxes have been committed so far, enough to help up to 33,000 people. Given the enormity of the disaster, more boxes are being packed ready to be sent to the Caribbean country. ShelterBox Founder and CEO Tom Henderson added, "The need in Haiti is huge. Current estimates are that there are over a million people who have lost their homes. We continue to rely on the support of volunteers and donors to allow us to help them in the days and weeks to come."



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Navin Valliappan described Rotaract. Rotaract is a Rotary-sponsored service club for young men and women ages 18 to 30. Rotaract clubs are either community or university based, and they're sponsored by a local Rotary club. This makes them true "partners in service" and key members of the family of Rotary. As one of Rotary's most significant and fastest-growing service programs, with more than 7,000 clubs in about 163 countries and geographical areas, Rotaract has become a worldwide phenomenon. All Rotaract efforts begin at the local, grassroots level, with members addressing their communities' physical and social needs while promoting international understanding and peace through a framework of friendship and service. Rotaract Clubs do Community Service Projects, Professional Development Activities and Leadership Development Activities.

Rotaractors may also

- * Assist in organizing Interact clubs or mentor Interactors
- * Participate in Rotary Youth Leadership Awards

- * Become Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars or Group Study Exchange team members
- * Seek membership in their local Rotary club.

With the guidance of Navin, the enthusiastic leadership of Nabil Bedewi and the strong commitment from our club to start a Rotaract Club at Georgetown University, we can forge ahead with membership recruitment, meetings, and projects. Once a Rotaract club has achieved a strong membership base, it must apply for a charter from Rotary International (\$50 fee). After the information has been received by Rotary International, an official charter certificate will be mailed to the president of the sponsoring Rotary club. Rotarians should consider



planning a special ceremony or celebration to present the charter certificate to the Rotaract club. Each Rotaract club is required to complete at least two major service projects annually: one to benefit the community and the other to promote international understanding.



*Please send news articles and photos to
Bob.Nelson@NASA.gov
for inclusion in the newsletter*

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'Building Communities – Bridging Continents' is 2010-11 RI Theme

By Donna Polydoros RI News – 18 January 2010



RI President-elect Ray Klinginsmith addresses district governors-elect at the 2010 International Assembly. Rotary Images/Monika Lozinska-Lee

After taking the stage to the tune of "California, Here I Come," RI President-elect Ray Klinginsmith announced the 2010-11 RI theme, Building Communities – Bridging Continents, during the opening plenary session of the 2010 International Assembly.

Klinginsmith said he arrived at the theme after reviewing RI themes of years past. He noticed that only a few spoke to non-Rotarians.

"As a result, I decided to search for a briefly stated theme that would fulfill two objectives: the first to explain Rotary to non-Rotarians, and the second to validate our work for Rotarians," he said. "The words I have selected to describe Rotary's current mission and to highlight our achievements are what we do best: Building Communities -- Bridging Continents."

The president-elect described how his 50 years of Rotary experience have contributed to his focus on communities at home and abroad. For example, as a Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholar, he studied for a year in South Africa, becoming the first student from his small town of Unionville, Missouri, USA, to study abroad.

The timing of the theme announcement, which took place in the evening, was a break in tradition

from past assemblies and a reflection of Klinginsmith's willingness to embrace change. He encouraged district governors-elect to reexamine traditional procedures that were no longer best practices and to begin new traditions where appropriate.

He also paid homage to Rotarians of the past who helped raise Rotary to a place of prominence on the world stage. He urged district governors-elect to meet the past RI presidents and other former officers in attendance to deepen their connection to Rotary's past. "I love it," says Governor-elect Robert Martin, of District 5020 (British Columbia, Canada; Washington, USA). "I'm going to be promoting Rotary pride in our district next year, and Building Communities – Bridging Continents is something we can all be proud of."



**BUILDING COMMUNITIES
BRIDGING CONTINENTS**

2010-11

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT
RAY KLINGINSMITH

GEMEINSCHAFTEN BILDEN
KONTINENTE VERBINDEN

FORTALECER COMUNIDADES
UNIR CONTINENTES

RENFORCER LES COLLECTIVITÉS
RAPPROCHER LES CONTINENTS

IMPEGNIAMOCI NELLE COMUNITÀ
UNIAMO I CONTINENTI

地域を育み
大陸をつなぐ

내 고향을 존중하
세계를 하나로!

FORTALECER COMUNIDADES
UNIR CONTINENTES

UTVECKLA SAMHÄLLEN
FÖRENA KONTINENTER

The 2010-11 RI Theme: Building Communities – Bridging Continents

"Rotary is the best in the world at linking people of goodwill around the globe and then gaining their cooperation and support to make the world a much better place to live and work."

Ray Klinginsmith, RI President-elect
2010 International Assembly, San Diego, California, USA

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The Rotary Foundation Establishes Haiti Earthquake Fund

By Ryan Hyland RI News – 18 January 2010

Top: Thousands of people are feared dead after a powerful earthquake crumbled government buildings, hospitals, schools, and shantytowns in Haiti. Bottom: Elda Exeuatug holds her 20-day-old baby, waiting for relief to arrive. Photos by Mark Pearson/ShelterBox

The Rotary Foundation has established the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund for U.S. Rotarians who want to donate toward recovery efforts after a powerful earthquake rocked Haiti on 12 January.

Use your cell phone to make a one-time US\$5 donation to the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. Text ROTARY to 90999.

Haiti government officials are estimating that as many as 200,000 people are dead and millions more injured after the quake, the impoverished nation's strongest in 200 years, crumbled government buildings, hospitals, schools, and shantytowns. Most of the capital, Port-au-Prince, is in ruins.

A ShelterBox response team of two U.S. Rotarians and one from the United Kingdom has already mobilized and delivered 1,700 containers of supplies to the affected areas. Another 1,600 will be dispatched from the U.K. to Port-au-Prince. Also, more than 100 Aquaboxes are being delivered to Haiti to provide safe water.

Claude Surena, a member of the Rotary Club of Petion-Ville and president of the Haitian Medical Association, is sheltering more than 100 people in his damaged home in Port-au-Prince. He is also leading the efforts of the 17 Haitian Rotary clubs to ensure that the ShelterBox containers will be deployed effectively to the thousands left homeless.



The Rotary Club of Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles, has committed US\$50,000 to clubs in the affected areas.

"Rotarians are working hard and fast to get help to those in Haiti," says Past RI Director Barry Rassin, of Nassau, Bahamas, who has previously coordinated relief efforts in the country. "We're at the same time working on long-term efforts."

More than \$75,000 has been donated to District 7020 in the Caribbean, according to Past District Governor Dick McCombe. The district will be coordinating much of the Rotarian relief effort through its Haiti Task Force, set up two years ago to administer all financial aid to the nation.

A six-member team of Rotarians from District 5890 (Texas, USA) has reported in safe after landing in Haiti for a humanitarian mission 45 minutes before the quake struck. They were scheduled to be there a week but returned to Houston, Texas, on 15 January.

Dawn Johnson, president of the Rotary Club of Verrettes, L'Artibonite, Haiti, says the infrastructure couldn't handle a quake this massive.

"The government is highly centralized in Port-au-Prince, which is now entombed in rubble," says Johnson, who was in the U.S. while the quake struck. "The scale of this disaster is so huge. It is way beyond anything Haiti has ever dealt with before."

Johnson plans to return to Haiti at the end of the month. Her club is already working on getting clean water to victims. "I cringe a little at what I might see when I get back."

RI President John Kenny and Rotary Foundation Trustee Chair Glenn E. Estess Sr. have sent a joint letter conveying Rotary's condolences to victims of the quake and asking for more information on how Rotarians can help.

[Editor's Note: Dr. Calude Serena spoke at our Rotary Club meeting on September 24, 2009. More information on the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund is found on the Rotary website www.rotary.org.]

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