



Date: April 23, 2020
Meeting: 6:00 – 7:30 pm
Place: Zoom Online – hosted by P-Elect Deb Wiggs

ATTENDANCE:

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| President | Roy Holman |
| President - Elect | Deb Wiggs |
| Treasurer | Terry Greer |
| Service Chair | Jill Greer |
| Membership & Engagement Chair | Pati Villhauer |
| Secretary | Joy St. John |

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| Sean Hogan | Hazel McDonald |
| Pat Bond | Keith & Heather Vernon |
| Julie Johansen | Trudy Gallant |
| Tim Villhauer | Patrick Drum |
| Patrick Drum | Rhian Piprell |
| Char Hart | |

Guests:

Carol Tichelman, District Governor Elect, 2020-2021
Joan Apel, Assistant/Area F Governor
James Monroe, Editor, Peace Arch Journal
Ken Smith, Retired Rotarian living in Vernon
Lornell Ridley, North Delta Rotary Club

Guest Speaker:

Christiana Flessner, Executive Director, Canadian Wheelchair Foundation

P-Roy: Welcomed all in attendance to the second virtual PNW Passport Rotary Club meeting.

Joy: Introduced the guests and our guest speaker.

P-Roy: Welcome guests. Delighted to see the interest in our Club. He reminded us that it was World Immunization Week: Rotary's focus on Disease Prevention and Treatment. Now more than ever, we recognize the importance of effective vaccines to protect against disease. As scientists

work to develop one to protect all of us from the new coronavirus, we recognize how far we have come this is World Immunization Week 24-30 April, encourage everyone to immunize their children and themselves against preventable diseases. It's important that we continue funding these projects when our help is needed most. Although this pandemic affects all of us, Rotarians need to continue to take action even in a time of crisis.

P- Roy: It was his pleasure to be inducting Rhian Piprell into the PNW Passport Rotary Club. It was a long overdue induction. He thanked Rhian for her patience and understanding through our Club's unforeseen circumstances during the past months. He said he had never conducted a virtual induction before but was happy to be able to do this. The Club would be getting all the necessary items of induction to Rhian when we can once again have a regular meeting.

P-Roy: highlighted the importance of Rotary and being a Rotarian. We look forward to having you, Rhian, in our Club. Welcome Rhian to the PNW Passport Rotary Club – there was a virtual round of handclapping.



P-Roy: Introduced our guest speaker for this evening, Christiana Flessner, Executive Director of the Canadian Wheelchair Foundation. Christiana has been with the Foundation since inception in 2002. She was instrumental in getting the organization operational & to where it is today. It is my pleasure to turn the meeting over to Christiana.

Christiana: Thanked the Club for having her join the meeting tonight. She said she was going to speak to the Club on a more personal note about being with the Canadian Wheelchair Foundation for the past 18-years. The Foundation has delivered 43,000 wheelchairs around the world.



Christiana spoke very emotionally about the personal rewards she gets especially when delivering the wheelchairs to people who need them. She allowed as how with each delivery she has made, which there have been a lot, she has met someone who makes a big impact on her personally. Because she has gone back to some places two or three times she has gotten to know some on a more personal note. People who have received a wheelchair will often seek her out on a return trip to tell her how their lives have changed because of the wheelchair. The recipients see that others care about them and their well being which means so much in their lives. The impact of giving people their freedom to move about freely is so exciting and she never tires seeing this happen over and over again.

PERSONAL STORIES:

She told us a horrendous story from her trip to Afghanistan of how the Taliban seek out people who have disabilities to become human bomb carriers. They pay them money and because the people with the disabilities feel they are such a burden on their families they do it as a way to give back to the family. When they receive a wheelchair they no longer have to worry about being a burden, the relief for them and their family is so wonderful.

She told us of a woman who carried her fourteen-year-old son to and from school so he'd get an education. The tears of joy from the Mother and the son when he received his wheelchair were so special.

She told us about a wife and mother who had lost the use of her legs. After receiving her wheelchair she finished school and went on to university to receive her degree in teaching.

She told us about a man who with pride in his eyes said to them "now I'll be clean – no longer on the ground – I have my independence!"

She told us about a wheelchair that was left for their taxi driver to hopefully deliver to a special man they had met on the streets begging, while in Ethiopia. The taxi driver with the help of others found the man and gave him the wheelchair. The taxi driver emailed Christiana with the news and how the man was forever in their debt for giving him his independence.

Christiana showed us a video of one of her trips to Ethiopia. Carol Tichelman was also there at the same time with the Polio Program. The video was very insightful.

Christiana mentioned that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have helped them along with the Polio Program. There have been other partnerships over the 18-years.

A donation of \$195.00 Canadian will provide a person with a wheelchair; a donation of \$210.00 Canadian provides a wheelchair with different wheels. They provide wheelchairs not only for adults but also for children. Every donation counts whether it is for one wheelchair or a whole container of 125 wheelchairs.

They have delivered wheelchairs to northern communities. Her goal is to be able to fill a container soon and deliver it to a First Nation community or maybe two.

Due to the COVID-19 they have a container in Nepal that is being held until people are able to deliver them. How do they choose a country is

usually by requests from others or a Club wants it to go to a particular country or it just some how happens.

Christiana left us with this note:
Two drops --- Two Wheels ---
are changing the world!



P-Roy: Thanked Christiana for the very educational and personal update on the Canadian Wheelchair Foundation. Thank you for continuing to work so tirelessly on this project.

P- Roy: Thanked Keith & Heather for volunteering with the Haney Rotary Club who along with the Salvation Army were delivering meals to the Legion House in Maple Ridge.

Keith & Heather: Found it to be very rewarding and would be signing up to do it again.

P-Roy Also, thanked Pati & Tim Villhauer for helping with packing bags of food for the Whatcom County children.



Jill Greer: told us that Days for Girls had made one million face masks for distribution to front line workers.

P-Roy: Asked Char Hart about the Ferndale Green Bag Project asked if they would like the Club to pursue a District Grant. Due to COVID-19 the project is on hold for now.

P- Roy: It was time for Happy Bucks we are using the honour system when we are able to meet again each of us who have donated HBs will deliver the money to our Treasurer Terry Greer.

Jill & Terry Greer: said they were donating because through all the bad there is something fun and wonderful happening they have become pen pals with grandchildren. Yes, they are actually putting pen to paper and sending them through the post. They have also taught their ducklings to follow them in and out of their pen.

Trudy Gallant: Said she would be sending her HBs to her local Animal Shelter.

Thanks to all who gave to the PNW Passport Rotary Club - HBs collection tonight. We all want to help so many at this time of crisis. We truly appreciate each dollar tonight to help us support our projects in particular Rotary World Help.

P-Roy: Reminded us our next virtual meeting will be on May 4, 2020 at 4:00 pm. The zoom invitation will come to you the week of the meeting.

Good night -- stay save -- and well.