

ROTARY DISTRICT 5470

International Service News

D-5470 International Service Newsletter #22

May 2020



The Rotary District 5470 International Service Committee educates and nurtures Rotarians and clubs working in the six Areas of Focus.

- ◇ It connects clubs
- ◇ It builds relationships
- ◇ It educates, assists, and may help finance clubs' international project development and fulfilment efforts.

It also inspires Rotarians like you who chose to visit international projects and see first-hand how *Rotary Connects the World*

In the previous newsletter we primarily provided information about global grants involving clubs in our district. In this newsletter, we'll show some more of our many global grants as well as upcoming projects

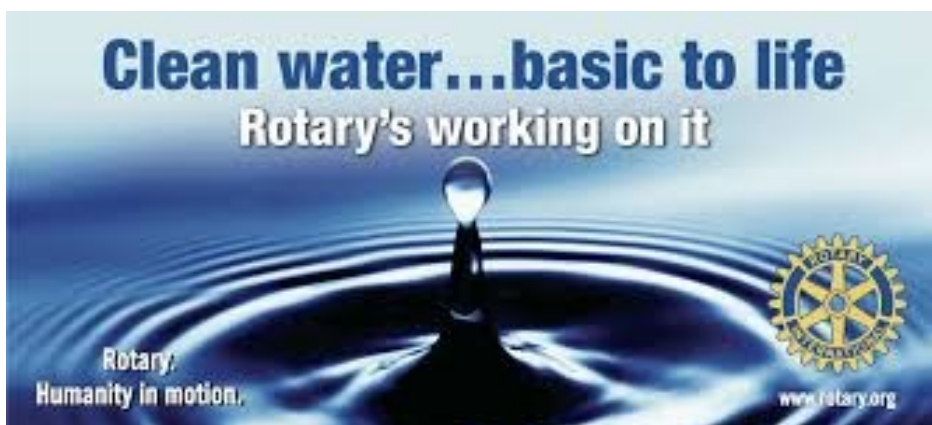
Share your club's international projects and interest with District International Service Chair [Peter Jeschofnig](#) who will share with District clubs.



“Volunteers are unpaid not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” – Anonymous

In This Issue

- An Easter Miracle - Ethiopia
- Health Education in India
- Installing chlorinators - Nicaragua
- Children's backpacks - Nicaragua
- Wastewater garden - Belize
- Botswana PC Service interrupted
- Botswana Friendship Exchange
- Internat. Travel & Hosting Fellowship
- Bubble helmets
- Joint Statement— Kiwanis, Lions, Optimist, and Rotary



An Easter Miracle -- April 2020

The Very Best Easter Basket (yet)

by Becky Kiser—East Colo. Springs RC

The basket idea began with the desire of the Special Task Force (STF), a special interest group made up of members of the Rotary Club of East Colorado Springs, Robby Dale Nelson of the Rampart Range Rotary Club, and Peter Jeschofnig of the Glenwood Springs Sunset Rotary Club, of how to help internationally with a “hands-on” project. We loved helping with The Christmas Tree Project locally in Colorado Springs; how could this Service Above Self zeal be expanded?

Rotarian Tesfaye Legesse, a chicken farmer in Ethiopia, mentioned to the East Club that Easter is the most important holiday in Ethiopia, but that inflation and hardships made it difficult for those with less to celebrate. The special traditional dish, Duro Wot, eaten on Easter takes about twenty-four hours to cook. It's heavy in onions and spicy red pepper but what makes the dish special is the way the chicken and eggs are boiled in the broth.

Tesfaye told the story about one man who waited outside Tesfaye's chicken farm gate early one morning last year to purchase eggs. The man told him that he is not able to afford a chicken, but he managed to have enough money to purchase five eggs the last year, one for each of his children for Easter. The reason he was waiting so early? Last year he had purchased five eggs from another farm and three of them were rotten.



Tesfaye with some of his chickens



Eggs almost ready for distribution

As the STF discussed the possibilities, the idea of gathering items for an Easter Egg Basket to raffle off was chosen. The funds raised would be used to purchase eggs for the indigent in Ethiopia. Little did we know what was about to explode. As raffle ticket sales began to pour in, we realized that we were going to be able to distribute 20,700 eggs to 1,446 families in the village of Dukem, Ethiopia. No family was expecting help. All were accepting that their family may not even have food for Easter. Can you imagine the surprise when Tesfaye began planning with the village leaders for an egg distribution? The mayor's office already had a list of 3,000 families that had been officially registered as “food scarcity”. The decision was made to divide the distribution up into four areas called Kebeles. The eggs were divided into groups of more than 5,000 eggs at each distribution center. Next, another miracle manifested. A small army of volunteers came forward, headed by Kassahu, a young university graduate who now runs a construction company in Dukem. His passion to help the poor began early and he knows the name and the location of every family on the list of three thousand.



The “army” began their work early Monday morning. They bagged all 2,170 eggs in batches of fifteen. Then they spent the evening into the night going house to house letting people know that their prayers had been answered and to be ready to go to the assigned Kebele office at 9:00 am on Tuesday morning.

My day began early, as scheduled. I woke in my house in Addis Ababa and was on track to meet my driver a little before 8:00 to head out to Dukem to take part in the egg distribution. My morning was interrupted with the ring of my telephone. It was Tesfaye; the Kebele had just informed him that hundreds of families had been waiting in front of the gate for eggs since 6:00 am. They just couldn't believe that there were enough eggs to go around. It just seemed too good to be true.

An Easter Miracle -- April 2020 (cont.)

by Becky Kiser - East Colo. Springs RC

After a moment of wishing I had a helicopter to fly to see the reward of our love, I told the leaders to begin the distribution without me; “the people we are loving should not have to wait more.” Thus, began the release of what Tesfaye called, “A new hope for the future”.

I arrived at the Kebele closest to the chicken farm a little before 9:00. Although there were still about twenty-some families waiting for the distribution, the smiles of joy on everyone’s faces were huge. It had been an Easter Miracle. The time had now arrived for the distribution of eggs for the “even less fortunate” - those who were bedridden or shut-ins and had not been able to come to the Kebele. All situations were touching, but I’ll just share a few:



Etemola was waiting for us just inside her small home made of mud and dung. She could only stand at a ninety-degree angle either propped with her walking stick or leaning against the wall. Her little kitten was always close to her; in fact, Etemola told us that her kitten was her child. Etemola grew up on a sustenance farm with two older brothers and said her memories of her childhood are bright. She said she loved being obedient and happy. But now, she has no living relatives anywhere. She survived by cutting firewood in the now deforested areas but carrying more than her body weight everyday took its toll; she can no longer walk more than a few steps. Despite all these hardships, Etemola was a bright light full of love and laughter. We sat with her for some time on a small rustic bench. She was so grateful and blessed us again and again.

Tamarat was a farmer until he could no longer walk. It got worse and worse; he has spent the last two years on the same rock. His neighbors come daily to help him move to a small cot at night and then help him move back to his rock the next day. He thinks he became paralyzed one day by getting too cold. He is the lone surviving family member. He was so cheerful and kind. He blessed us again and again in gratitude.



Gabriel was thrashing on his cot in an iron-sheet home made by volunteers. Although his mind is sharp, he is completely unable to control his body movements. His big desire was to pronounce blessings on us and express his gratitude. We stayed together quite some time just exchanging love and goodwill.

One more touching story was about one who would not accept our eggs. Biz-zou is, what we call in Ethiopia, “attacked by an evil spirit”. When we arrived to leave her eggs, she started shouting at us and chasing us out. She asked us what was wrong with us that we couldn’t see that all her children were with her and that they were cooking together. The dark iron-sheet area was as empty as could be. I stayed and was able to look her in the eyes with love long enough to calm her down, but she remained convinced that she and all her children had things under control. The next day she was “back”, and the volunteers were able to deliver eggs to a grateful Bizzou.

An Easter Miracle -- April 2020 (cont.) by Becky Kiser - East Colo. Springs RC

Acknowledgements with gratitude:

As with any acknowledgements, the difficult part is the possibility of leaving anyone out. Thank you to everyone who helped in ANY way. Your part is invaluable. This was indeed a project where all the pieces came together in a magical way.

Special thanks to:

Penny Kelly

Erin Hickey

Carolyn Solseth

The Rotary Club of East Colorado Springs

The Rampart Range Rotary Club of Colorado Springs

The Colorado Springs Rotary Club

The mayor and staff of Dukem, Ethiopia

The volunteer "army" of Dukem, Ethiopia

Tesfaye Legesse and his chicken farm

ALL those who donated with items for our drawing or bought raffle tickets.

We appreciate YOU!



Health Education for K-12 students in India: An update by Rahul Mehra, Ph.D. – Cañon City RC

In the D-5470 Newsletter of Sept 2017 & May 2019, I reported on our program on Health Education of school children in India. This program was facilitated by two District Grants from my Rotary Club of Canon City. Generally, Indian children have poor health and for them to realize their full potential, good health is an urgent need. Health education is not given a priority in any school in India and there are no books on Comprehensive Health Education. We need to change education policy and make health education mandatory. Towards reaching this long-term goal of influencing policy, I wrote the Class 6 & 7 Student workbooks and Teachers Manuals on Health Education. The content was culturally sensitive. The Rotary grants paid for the printing of these books in English as well as for translating and printing of these books into Hindi.

Initially, I was working in Chandigarh, India with my Rotary partner there. We had an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding), which described the roles and responsibilities for each of us. Unfortunately, my partner did not adhere to the terms of our MOU and I had to stop my work there. I then decided to move the program to schools in Delhi, India. This transition from Chandigarh to Delhi was challenging and delayed the program by one year. With matching funds raised with the help of Unbridledacts.org, a local charitable organization in Colorado, I have temporarily hired two employees in Delhi to assist me in this Program. One is a Health educator and the other will collect and help analyse the data for evaluation of the Curriculum.

Our long-term goal is to make health Education mandatory in schools. I have been in contact with Policy stakeholders in Delhi. Our next milestone is to evaluate the Comprehensive School Health Program over a period of one year, in about 500 Grade 6 students in Delhi schools. We have enrolled 3 schools to teach Health Education (Intervention schools) and 3 Control schools in which Health Education will not be taught. The final outcome will be the improvement in Health Skills and knowledge between the Intervention and the Control school students. After our study is completed, we will present our data to the Policy stakeholders to influence them to make Health Education mandatory in Delhi schools.



Teacher training for the Comprehensive school health program being conducted at Modern School, Delhi in March 2020.

I was in Delhi in March 2020 to conduct Teacher Training in the three selected schools. Due to Covid-19 outbreak, my training, which had begun in one of the schools (illustration), was halted. Since then, I have conducted online teacher training for the teachers of Raghav Global School. They plan to start online health education classes very soon and teaching physically once the schools re-open. I am hoping to complete teacher training for all three schools very soon. The questionnaires and data forms for evaluating the success of the one-year program have been developed.

have learnt is that one must have an MOU with your partners to make sure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. These challenges have been overcome and I am hoping to complete the Curriculum evaluation by Summer of 2021.

Installing or replacing chlorinators - Nicaragua

Project help needed

by Reggie O'Brien, Vail RC

The Vail and Edwards Rotary Clubs and the Esteli Rotary Club of Nicaragua are working together on a \$56K Global Grant to provide clean water to 14,000 inhabitants of the Municipalidad de San Rafael del Norte. The project involves installing or replacing chlorinators for 44 rural communities located in the mountainous region of Nicaragua. Included in the project is the training of the local boards in the value, testing, and safeguarding of clean water for their communities. Also there is the collaboration with the local water boards to develop and implement a base tariff for their individual communities and inhabitants in order to assure the sustainability of the project.

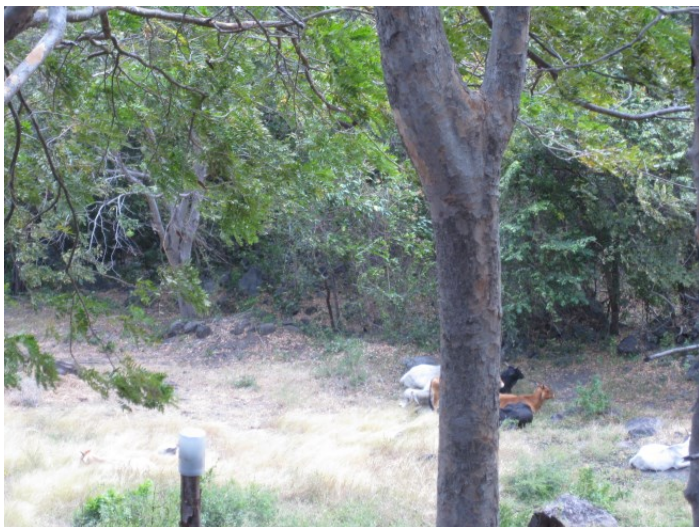


The project will be executed by EOS International, a local NGO that has over 10 years of clean water implementation experience. EOS was started by a Peace Corps volunteer who served Nicaragua and started the NGO with a local counterpart before the end of his service. Take a moment a click on the link below
<https://eosinternational.org/>

I went down to Nicaragua in January to see if there was a local Rotary Club that would like to partner in a larger water project in their community. The need was identified by EOS, which was looking for partners to help fund the need. Since the political unrest in Nicaragua in 2018, the country has been suffering from a lack of tourism and reduced interest in the country due to perceived safety concerns.

I found the country to be safe and incredibly welcoming. The Rotary Club of Esteli was very eager to partner on the grant. There are a number of health care providers and engineers in the Esteli Club who are very aware of the number of infirmities that occur due to the lack of potable water in rural areas. Their excitement transcends this project and looks to the future for other collaborative efforts to serve the marginalized communities in their country.

We are looking for additional clubs that would like to partner with the Vail and Edwards Clubs to make this project viable. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Reggie O'Brien <regina.obrien.pchn@gmail.com> or the spectacular Dick Dangler <rdangler@hotmail.com>



Children's backpack Project - Nicaragua

Project help needed

by Reggie O'Brien, Vail RC

The Rotary Club of Leon, Nicaragua along with the Vail and Edwards Rotary Clubs are working together to provide backpacks to 120 children in the rural communities outside of Leon, Nicaragua. The challenge for rural students is the level of poverty that does not allow them to have school supplies. This in turn leads to shame and then to students not attending school. In order to level the playing field for these students and to influence their future success, the Rotary Club of Leon will purchase school supplies and backpacks to be delivered to the elementary school children in rural Leon. This is a projected District Grant matching fund project for the 2020-2021 year due to the current closed state for all schools.



This project is looking for additional clubs to partner with Vail and Edwards on the District Grant. Should you have any questions, please reach out to Reggie O'Brien, <regina.obrien.pchn@gmail.com>



Septic tank/Waste water garden at St. Benedict School, Belize via Punta Gorda Belize RC & Salida RC

The world may have come to a stand still but the Rotary Club of Punta Gorda is still going strong. The Belize government has lifted some of the restrictions imposed by their response to COVID-19 and the Punta Gorda RC is using this time to continue installing a much needed septic tank/waste water garden at St Benedict School. Please enjoy the latest pictures from the Punta Gorda Rotary Club. This project will help properly treat the waste water and also create a beautiful garden for all to enjoy.



For additional information about this project, contact Randy Rupp of the Salida Sunrise RC
<randy.rupp@ruppworldwide.com>

Botswana Peace Corps Service interrupted by Covid-19 via Amy McBride, Montrose RC

On the morning of Monday, 16 March, I walked to work—past the people waiting for the combis (minibuses) and the old woman selling airline and sweets, across the dusty football pitch at Gaborone Secondary School, and up the stairs to the office of the Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations (BONASO).

I sat, sweating, until Gobe showed up with the keys. As my coworkers filed in, I opened up my laptop and logged into Gmail. There was a message from Jody Olsen, Director of Peace Corps that began, “As of today, March 15, we are temporarily suspending all Peace Corps operations globally and evacuating all Volunteers. Please be assured that more information is forthcoming, and that we are together as a team and as a Peace Corps family during this challenging time.”

The message contained a list of the tasks we were to complete before our departure, including a medical evaluation, closing our bank account, canceling any contracts, packing up and distributing our belongings, and receiving administrative approval from Peace Corps that we had done all of these things. All Volunteers, from every corner of Botswana, were to get to Gaborone by Wednesday.

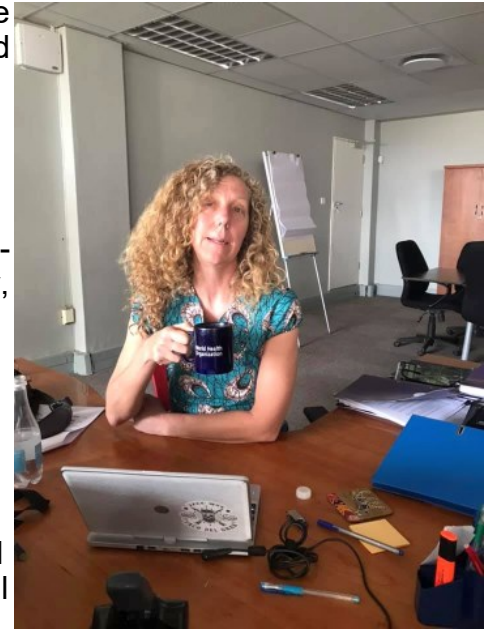
Over the next day, I plowed through the tasks while trying to tie up loose ends at my job at BONASO. On Tuesday afternoon, I found out that my flight to Colorado was leaving the next day at 1 pm, and that’s when the Rotary Club of Gaborone (RCG) came to my rescue.

The Club’s Treasurer, Roy Davies, called and asked if I needed anything. “Yes,” I told him, “boxes and a place to store my things until I make it back to Botswana.” He arrived at my flat at 5 pm with a carful of boxes. I packed most of the night, and Roy came by the next morning to pick up my possessions and put them in his garage. Then it was off to my office to say farewell to colleagues, to the security company to cancel my contract, and to the Peace Corps office to get my administrative clearance. As I was departing the office at 10:30 am, someone shouted to me that the airline had called and my flight was leaving at 12:30. Uh oh.

I hurried to the taxi rank and as I did, RCG Past President Bill McLellan called and asked how I was getting to the airport. Peace Corps had said something about arranging a driver, but they also said they would email my itinerary and they hadn’t done that, so Bill said he would meet me at my flat at 11:00. We got to the airport at 11:30 and as he parked the car, I went to the South African Airways counter and checked in. Two other Rotarians had come to the airport to see me off, so we enjoyed a bottle of wine and a plate of chips in the airport café. Thirty-one hours later, with flights through Accra, Dulles, and O’Hare, I landed in Montrose.

This week, I submitted the progress report to The Rotary Foundation for Global Grant (GG) 1871731, which brought a Vocational Training Team of fundraising experts to Botswana last May. The Team trained 113 people, including representatives from 32 HIV-focused nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in how to raise money within Botswana. This is necessary due to steep declines in international funding for Botswana’s HIV/AIDS response.

I’m excited that the project has met or exceeded five of its seven impact measures. The project held two three-day workshops in southern and northern Botswana and trained 113 individuals. Of these, 67 were medical and health professionals and 23 were board members. In addition to the 32 NGOs that participated, there were 12 participants from eight government/agency offices.



Amy at her desk at the Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations, shortly before her evacuation on 18 March. Photo credit: Ashllah Mmusi

Botswana Peace Corps Service interrupted by covid-19 (cont.)

via Amy McBride, Montrose RC

Toward the objective of “inspiring charitable giving among the people of Botswana,” the project sought to obtain at least 19 media stories about the need for increased domestic funding for HIV/AIDS work in Botswana. The project generated 22 stories, in print, radio, television, and online, including a story on the Government of Botswana’s Facebook page.

We have not met two of the seven project impact measures, and COVID-19 has thrown a wrench in the plan to do that. The project had sought to establish ten mentorships between NGOs and the private sector, such as recruiting an accountant to help an NGO learn how to use QuickBooks. The plan was for me to work with my counterparts at BONASO to set these up, and I had begun the process to do that. Now, those NGOs are busy leading Botswana’s COVID response, and I am in Colorado.

The project also included a measure about the creation of “resource mobilization plans” at 18 participating NGOs (these were specially selected from NGOs with Peace Corps Volunteers who applied for the opportunity to receive consulting time with the members of the VTT). Twelve of the 18 NGOs have submitted their completed plans. Again, I was working with my BONASO counterparts to follow up with the remaining six organizations.

Each of the project’s six “Cooperating Organisations” (Peace Corps, Botswana Business Coalition on AIDS, Botswana Network of AIDS Service Organisations, Project Concern International, Bakgatla Bolekang Matshelo, and Stepping Stones International) made significant contributions, as did the Rotary Club of Francistown (Botswana), a project Partner.

The Rotary Club of Gaborone provided tremendous logistical support and financial oversight of the Botswana GG funds. The Vocational Training Team Committee of Rotary District 5470, led by Richard Dangler, provided invaluable assistance in filing the Global Grant application. District 5470 Foundation Chair Ann Harris graciously provided financial oversight for the US share of the GG funds.

So, where does this leave the project, and me? I will not be returning to Botswana as a Peace Corps Volunteer. My third year was set to end in November, and Peace Corps has said that there will be no Volunteers placed until September at the earliest and probably later. I am pursuing several options to go back as a “civilian,” once the borders open up. (As of 9 May, Botswana stands at 23 confirmed cases, one death, and no new cases since 28 April. The Government began a phased lifting of its very strict lockdown on 8 May.) If the Botswana options don’t pan out, I will look to getting back into fundraising/grantwriting here in the US. (Let me know if you know of any opportunities, please!)

As soon as the HIV-focused NGOs in Botswana return to their regular routines, I will work with my (former) BONASO colleagues to reach out to them virtually to try to satisfy the remaining project impact measures.

All in all, the project has been a big success. Through BONASO, I had contact with many of the participating organizations and I witnessed a big shift in the way that they think about sustainability and the need to find funding beyond international donors and governments. As far as I know, this was the first Global Grant to employ this level of cooperation between Rotary, Peace Corps, NGOs, and the Government of Botswana (which contributed more than \$34,000 to the project). I think it could easily be replicated in other southern African countries where Peace Corps is working to end HIV/AIDS, and I hope to reach out to the other Rotary Clubs and Peace Corps headquarters in Zambia, Lesotho, Namibia, and elsewhere to share the project.

I am grateful for you, the members of District 5470, for making this project possible through the District’s financial support (\$15,001) that The Rotary Foundation matched. And thanks for Peter Jeschofnig for editing this newsletter so I can share this story with you. Ke a leboga (Thank you, in Setswana)!

Potential Friendship Exchange with Botswana via Amy McBride, Montrose RC

[Note: Amy McBride is currently serving in her third year as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana. She is a member of the Rotary Club of Montrose, but has been quite active with the Rotary Club of Gaborone (Botswana).]

The Rotary Club of Gaborone invites you to Botswana as part of a Friendship Exchange planned for 2021. The Club proposes May as the month for Coloradans to visit Botswana, since the weather is neither too hot nor too cold, wildlife viewing is at its best, and Victoria Falls is at its peak. You'll need two weeks (four days of travel and ten days in Botswana) for the trip.

The Club proposes August 2021 to come to District 5470, since they want to partake in hiking, jeeping, camping, flyfishing, mushroom foraging, and all the other great things to do in Colorado in August (and people from Botswana aren't keen on cold temperatures).

Here are ten reasons why you should visit Botswana:

It has the world's largest population of elephants.

Over 500 species of birds have been recorded in Botswana.

You can easily see the "Big Five"—Cape buffalo, lions, leopards, rhinos, and elephants.

It's the newly-declared "evolutionary birthplace of humankind."

Animals roam freely in the nearly half of Botswana that is protected through national parks, reserves, and management areas.

Victoria Falls, the world's largest waterfall (by surface area) is next door!

The climate is mild...with highs in the 70s and lows around 50 in May.

There are no vaccination requirements, and Botswana is one of the safest countries for travel in Africa. [Do note that malaria prophylaxis is recommended.]

The people! Extremely friendly! And fun!



Photo by Aidan McBride

The proposed itinerary has you flying to Gaborone (the capital city) and recovering for a day (with dinner, drinks, and a bird's eye view of the city atop Botswana's tallest building). Then it's off to Khama Rhino Sanctuary where you'll sleep under a baobab tree and go on a game drive to see wildebeest, zebras, kudu, and rhinos (of course).

Then you'll head to the Makgadikgadi Pans, one of the world's largest salt flats, to enjoy its incredible tranquility and flamingoes. You'll have two nights in Kasane, on the edge of Chobe National Park which is home to the highest concentration of elephants in Botswana. You will enjoy a morning game drive and hopefully see leopards and lions and amazing birds, like the Kori bustard (Botswana's national bird and Africa's largest flying bird). In the afternoon, you'll cruise down the Chobe River and see bathing hippos and elephants, crocodiles and Cape buffalo.

Potential Friendship Exchange with Botswana (continued) via Amy McBride, Montrose RC

Victoria Falls is next. You'll take a ferry across the Zambezi River and then stay in Livingstone, Zambia (named for the famed explorer and there's an excellent museum about him). You'll spend a day at the Mosi-o-a-Tunya National Parks (there's one in Zimbabwe and one in Zambia), taking in the glory of the Falls. If you'd like, you can bungee jump off the Victoria Falls Bridge, take a helicopter flight, or raft the Zambezi.



Then it's back to Gaborone, with a stop in Francistown, Botswana's second largest city and a 19th-century gold rush town. From Gaborone, you can either fly home, or book a side trip to Cape Town, South Africa to partake in its amazing beauty, wine, food, and penguins!

At this point, the Rotary Club of Gaborone is gauging interest to see if there are twelve people from District 5470 who want to join the Exchange. If you are interested, please let me know by sending an email to amylopermcbride@gmail.com or a WhatsApp message to +267 717 200 71.



The International Travel & Hosting Fellowship

Rotary



The International Travel & Hosting Fellowship is one of the largest fellowships in Rotary.

The mission of ITHF is to stimulate and facilitate connections and cultural sharing throughout the Rotary world by contact, hosting, visiting and travel.

ITHF exists to promote and facilitate regional, national and international "connections" between its members. ITHF members travel to all different parts of the world and host members from all other parts. Members' lives are enriched by these connections and cross cultural exchanges.



ITHF in Perspective:

Rotary Fellowships offer Rotarians and partners the opportunity to make friends with others in Rotary who share common interests. The ITHF is one of more than 60 officially sanctioned and recognized recreational fellowships. They range in interests from golf to wine to fishing to travel and hosting, and more. For a complete list, see Rotary.org.

ITHF was officially recognized by Rotary in 1989. ITHF is incorporated and is governed by a group of 20+ vice presidents from all regions of the world and a president and senior vice president, all of whom are elected by the membership every two years. A volunteer staff of secretary, treasurer, membership director, communications director and promotional director supplement the work and support provided by our full time administrator.

Members planning travel refer to the Members Only database on the ITHF website to identify other ITHF members living in the area. Prospective hosts are contacted 30+ days in advance. They consent to a "connection" subject to their own convenience. "Connection" details are worked out between the members.

THF "connections" are self-paced, subject to individual preferences and can coincide with business or pleasure travel. Membership in the ITHF implies a desire and intent to accommodate other ITHF visitors; however, such "connections" are always subject to the convenience of the hosts.

As an enrichment, the ITHF frequently offers "tours" led by dedicated and experienced Rotarians, and packaged at the lowest cost possible. These tours most often coincide with Rotary International Conventions and are limited to ITHF members and partners only.

The ITHF is NOT a bed and breakfast organization. It is not a home hotel association. There is no obligation to accommodate visitors in the home - the "connection" will be richer for it, but some members do not have space for visitors.

What ITHF Offers

1. Opportunities to "connect" with other Rotarians and partners during your travel.
2. Opportunities to "host" other Rotarians and partners during their travels.
3. Opportunities to join highly specialized, Rotary-themed, professionally guided tours of other countries and points of interest.
4. Opportunities to experience a level of Rotary fun and fellowship you may never have thought existed.
5. Opportunities to discover sites and experience adventures not available through any other means.
6. Opportunities to belong to one of the closest "families" in Rotary, enjoying rich friendships on tours, during conventions and from the many "connections" we make individually.
7. Opportunities to stay informed about experiences of other members through quarterly newsletters and updates.

Several D-5470 Rotarians are members of this Fellowship. For additional information, follow this link: <http://www.ithf.org/>

Rotarians in Lithuania and the US promote the use of bubble helmets to help patients avoid mechanical ventilators

by Arnold R. Grahl – Senior editor, RI

Rotarians in Lithuania and Chicago, Illinois, USA, are using their influence to promote the use of “bubble helmets” and potentially lessen the need for mechanical ventilators for COVID-19 patients who struggle to breathe on their own.

The Rotary Club of Vilnius Lithuania International, Lithuania, participated in **Hack the Crisis**, an online event in March that brought together novators in science and technology to “hack,” or develop solutions to, issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the Lithuanian club, along with members of the Rotary Clubs of Chicago and Chicagoland Lithuanians (Westmont), joined a team to brainstorm ways to help COVID-19 patients breathe without using mechanical ventilators.



“Traditional ventilators used with intubation are a painful intervention into the body and require trained medical staff,” says Viktorija Trimbel, a member of the Vilnius Lithuania club, who was a mentor during Hack the Crisis. “There’s also a shortage of the drugs used for sedation. But you don’t have to be sedated with helmets.”

Bubble helmets are noninvasive and supply oxygen without the need for intubation, a procedure where a tube is inserted down a patient’s throat. A helmet fits over a patient’s head with a rubber collar that can be adjusted around the neck. The collar has ports that can deliver oxygen and air.

Before the pandemic, doctors typically used noninvasive devices to help patients breathe if their oxygen levels dropped below a certain level. If the noninvasive devices don’t boost those levels enough, mechanical ventilators are used to push oxygen into the lungs through the tube at a preset rate and force.

But some critical care physicians are becoming [concerned that intubation and mechanical ventilators are being used unnecessarily on COVID-19 patients](#) and suggest that more patients could benefit by remaining longer on simpler, noninvasive respiratory support.

[Helmetbasedventilation.com](#) connects researchers, manufacturers, medical professionals, and funding sources to increase the supply of bubble helmets.

“Being a Rotarian, I have in my network people from all over the world,” adds Trimbel, governor-elect of the district that covers Lithuania. “This pandemic has moved like a wave, first in Asia, then Europe, and then the United States. Yet countries like Mexico, Brazil, and India aren’t yet as impacted. We’re trying to get word out in time for the information to help.”

Beginnings of an idea

The idea to promote helmets actually began around a kitchen table in Chicago three days before the hackathon when Aurika Savickaite, a registered nurse and member of the Chicagoland Lithuanians (Westmont) club, discussed the crisis with her husband, David Lukauskas, who is Trimbel’s brother. Savickaite recalled a clinical trial she participated in that involved the helmets a few years earlier.

The [three-year study](#) found that using these kinds of helmets helped more patients with respiratory distress avoid intubation than masks, another noninvasive method. The patients’ overall outcomes were also much improved. The helmets can be used in any room equipped with a wall oxygen supply, not just an intensive care unit.

“You want to avoid intubation for as long as you can, because generally the mortality rate on intubation is fairly high,” said Savickaite.

“Through Rotary, we’re able to connect so many people around the world. It’s a great way to collaborate in this battle.”

Rotarians in Lithuania and the US promote the use of bubble helmets to help patients avoid mechanical ventilators (cont.)

by Arnold R. Grahl – Senior editor, RI

Lukauskas was surprised that more people weren't talking about helmets and called Trimbel, who had already signed up as a mentor for Hack the Crisis. Together they enlisted more than a dozen Rotary members from their clubs to explore noninvasive ventilation options and how to expand the use of helmets.

The group worked with intensive care unit clinicians, healthcare leaders, helmet manufacturers, technology professionals, and marketing managers. They developed a short questionnaire for clinicians and hospital leaders worldwide, gathered practice-based knowledge on noninvasive ventilation for COVID-19 patients, devised an online platform to connect suppliers with demand, and pursued funding to finance the production of more helmets.



Spreading the word

Trimbel, her brother, and Savickaite launched their website to encourage collaboration and link manufacturers, clinicians, and funding sources. Trimbel says they've also spoken with media outlets in the United States.

The website posts news such as the mid-April **announcement** by Virgin Galactic that it was teaming up with the U.S. space agency NASA and a U.S. hospital to develop their own version of bubble helmets to supplement scarce supplies of ventilators in hospitals in southern California and beyond.

"Because of trade restrictions and borders being closed, most countries are on their own," says Trimbel. "There's a Facebook group where people are designing their own helmets using balloons and plastics. Some may think it's funny, but it's also inspiring. The helmet part is not rocket science, as long as it works with the connectors. We believe this has very big potential."

The problem-solving team also worked on how to improve the isolation of patients who think they may have the virus, and how to match the supply and demand for medical equipment with available funding. Another team at the hackathon developed a digital platform that helps family physicians find up-to-date medical information on the virus for their patients.

Savickaite feels Rotary is in a strong position to find solutions to problems caused by the pandemic.

"Through Rotary, we're able to connect so many people around the world," she said. "It's a great way to collaborate in this battle."

Joint Statement from Kiwanis International, Lions Clubs International, Optimist International, and Rotary International

Woven through the fabric of virtually every community on earth, service clubs of Kiwanis International, Lions Clubs International, Optimist International, and Rotary International are working safely and diligently to maintain connections with each other and our neighbors so that we can cope with and overcome the effects of COVID-19. We are leveraging the strength of our combined networks of 3.2 million members to provide comfort and hope to those feeling the effects of isolation and fear. And we are focusing our collective skills, resources and ideas to support frontline health workers and first responders as they battle this disease and save lives.



In these times of uncertainty, your local service clubs remain committed to meeting the challenge of finding innovative ways to take action together to help communities around the globe heal and thrive – and become more united than ever.

"The global effort against COVID-19 depends on actions taken in every country. As people of action, this is our time to connect with each other to offer immediate help to people in need." – Mark Daniel Maloney, Rotary International President, 2019-2020.

"The scale and magnitude of this global pandemic requires our world's citizenry to heed the advice and cautions of the experts. The work and plans of our collective members and volunteers must not cease! Our immediate response after the crisis will be necessary to support local Governments respond to the many social and economic challenges that will ensue in its aftermath." – Adrian Elcock, Optimist International President, 2019-2020.

"Great challenges test us, but they also bring us together. Lions are finding new ways to safely serve. Our Lions Clubs International Foundation has granted over one million dollars to help communities facing extreme rates of COVID-19, and additional grant requests are being received daily. Our communities depend on service clubs, and we will be there, supporting and strengthening them just as we always have together." – Dr. Jung-Yul Choi, Lions Clubs International President, 2019-2020.

"During these difficult times, we're seeing everyday heroism across the globe. I encourage us all to recognize the health and safety professionals who are putting their own health at risk for the greater good. To the educators, grocery workers, delivery drivers and the countless professionals who can't stay home, the Kiwanis family thanks you. We all play an important role in keeping our friends and neighbors safe. Please follow the advice of the World Health Organization, your local health agencies and the instructions given by your Government. Please, stay safe." – Daniel Vigneron, Kiwanis International President, 2019-2020.

For further information, please contact:

Chanele Williams – chanele.williams@rotary.org
Shauna Schuda – shauna.schuda@lionsclubs.org
Rachel Webb – Rachel.webb@optimist.org
Ben Hendricks – bhendricks@kiwanis.org

Global Grants Projects Involving Our clubs

Many of our clubs are the International Partners of Global Grants (GG) Projects around the world.

Our clubs also contribute to projects conducted by other districts.

Whether your club is the international partner in a project or is simply contributing to a project, remember that D-5470 is usually prepared to match your club's contributions from District Designated Funds (DDF).

To request D-5470 DDF, you need to complete a simple request form and send it to the D-5470 Global Grants Chair, David Smith < dsmith7@unl.edu >

Contact Us

Do you want to have your International Service project displayed in a future newsletter? Send the story and a few photos to pjeschofnig@gmail.com



Water & Sanitation Projects Around the World

Global Grants Basics:

- Large, long-term projects
- Sustainable, measureable outcomes
- Alignment with Areas of Focus
- Real community needs (via needs assessment)
- International partnerships (frequent communication)
- Implementation plan
- Proper Stewardship of funds
- Involve Rotary clubs in two districts
- Minimum TRF match \$ 15,000
- Minimum budget of US\$35,000

For detailed instructions on Global Grants applications check out David Smith's **GUIDE TO GLOBAL GRANTS:**
<http://www.rotary5470.org/SitePage/global-grants>

If you would like to be the international partner of a Global Grant or simply contribute to an existing D-5470 Global Grant contact the Global Grants Committee chair, David Smith dsmith7@unl.edu or Peter Jeschofnig pjeschofnig@gmail.com