



**District Governor
John D. Mitchell**

Governor's Newsletter

District 7490

**Serving Bergen, Hudson
& Passaic Counties**

New Jersey, USA

September, 2019



Governor's Message for September.

Dear Fellow Rotarians,

"Rotarians at Work" is a common phrase we have all heard many times or have seen printed on t-shirts and other Rotary apparel. It's pretty easy to understand but seeing it in action is always special to me. Bravo to District 7490 Rotarians for stepping up once again when "Rotarians at Work" was so desperately needed.

Much has been reported about the lead water crisis in Newark. A call went out to our District Rotarians and not surprisingly, cases and cases of water were collected and delivered directly to the residents of Newark. Thankfully, the City of Newark is breaking ground on a \$120-million project that will replace thousands of old lead pipes. Let's pray they move efficiently to remedy the problem. We'll continue to monitor the progress and no doubt be there for the people that need us. (See Article on Page 7)

A massive fire destroyed the Straight & Narrow rehab center located in Paterson that served 200 clients. The Paterson Rotary Club took the lead and worked with other District clubs by collecting clothing and raising much needed funds to help the fire victims get back on their feet. We are not done! (Article on Page 4)

Hurricane Dorian devastated the Bahamas and your fellow District Rotarians have stepped up. Duffel bags and other relief items such as water filters are heading to The Bahamas because of your generosity. Keep in mind that we are only in the beginning of the hurricane season! (Article on Page 3)

Yes, "Rotarians at Work" is what we are all about. Every Club I have visited has their own stories of how they are helping their neighbors or a community in the far reaches of our planet. Let's celebrate our fellowship and tell everyone we know!

In this Issue.

<i>In His Membership Corner Column, PDG Leonard A. Agrusti Talks of Coming Together in Both Recruiting and Service.</i>	2
<i>District 7490 and Disaster Aid USA Provide Powerful Sawyer Water Filters to Hurricane-ravaged Bahamas.</i>	3
<i>Paterson Rotary Club Leads Six Other Rotary Clubs in Coming to the Aid of Fire-damaged Rehabilitation Center.</i>	4
<i>Hoboken Rotary Club Sponsors Gift of Life Surgery for Young Woman from the Philippines.</i>	5
<i>Paramus Rotary Club Welcomes Baby from the Philippines Who Underwent Gift of Life Surgery in August.</i>	6
<i>Englewood Rotary Club Provides Bottled Water to Residents of Newark.</i>	7
<i>In Executive AG Column, Aleta Frezzell Discusses Her Role in Interacting with Clubs and Assistant Governors.</i>	7
<i>In Rotary Foundation Column, Jay Fowler Gives an Overview of the Committee and Urges Applications for DDF Grants.</i>	8

Newsletter Editor

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Membership Corner.

*By Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti
Chairman, District Membership Committee*



Past District Governor Leonard A. Agrusti, Chairman of District 7490's Membership Retention Committee.



Last week I was fortunate enough to attend the 2019 Rotary Zone Conference in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada.

The theme for the membership sessions was "Grow Rotary". As noted above, "We are a global network of community volunteers". Rotarians are people of action working together, connecting to the community. Besides creating new clubs, (Traditional Clubs, Satellite Clubs, Passport Clubs, E-Clubs, etc.) to grow Rotary, it is a proven fact that the strength of a club depends upon how the club stands in its community.

A club will grow if it provides a service to its community. Every community has specific needs. We can find out the needs in the community by reaching out to community leaders who are trying to come up with solutions to help those in need. Have one of these Civic leaders come to your club and speak about the needs of the community.

A great example of this is the Mayor or a City Council member. Other contacts may be physicians, real estate agents, public relations professionals, school administrators, social workers, etc. These are also great contacts to ask to join your club.

Once you see what the need is in the community, your club should decide to do a service project that will get recognition in the community and give these contacts a good reason to join your club. A successful service project must be relevant and address real and current community concerns.

Once your club has chosen a project, it is time to start planning. It starts with setting goals and objectives, developing a work plan, planning a budget and you must also consider liability and protection.

Make sure you promote your project on social media. Shout out to the public what your club intends to do and get as many volunteers involved who will be potential members.

When your project is complete, evaluate the project. Evaluation plays an important role in your club's current service project and its future projects. Knowing what worked and what did not helps you learn and grow from the experience.

Finally, don't forget to celebrate your success and recognize the hard work, time and financial contributions of all involved. Community projects are the key to getting new members and the adhesive that holds a club together. The main reason people leave Rotary is because they were disconnected from their community.

Yours in Rotary,

Lenny

**Leonard (Lenny) Agrusti, PDG
District Membership Chair**

My email is: mealen26@gmail.com.

District 7490 and Disaster Aid USA Send Sawyer Water Filters to Bahamas in Wake of Hurricane Dorian.

With Hurricane Dorian having struck the Bahamas on Sept. 1 destroying more than 13,000 homes and severely damaging the infrastructure of the Grand Bahamas and Abaco Islands, Rotary District 7490 joined with Disaster Aid USA in shipping 40 Sawyer water filters to the Bahamas.

In a notice sent to District 7490 Rotarians, Governor-elect Carl Hassett wrote that each of the filters “can clean water at a rate of over 250-gallons an hour” which he explained, is the equivalent of one pallet of water. In an attempt to explain how much water can be filtered by just one of these 40 filters, Carl wrote: “You would need 24 pallets a day to equal one filter.”

Holding one of the filters in his hand, Carl wrote that that one filter by itself can clean “roughly equal to 870,000 pallets of water at what would cost \$392,000,000. In contrast, he wrote, the 40 filters that were shipped to The Bahamas will cost no more than \$2,000.”

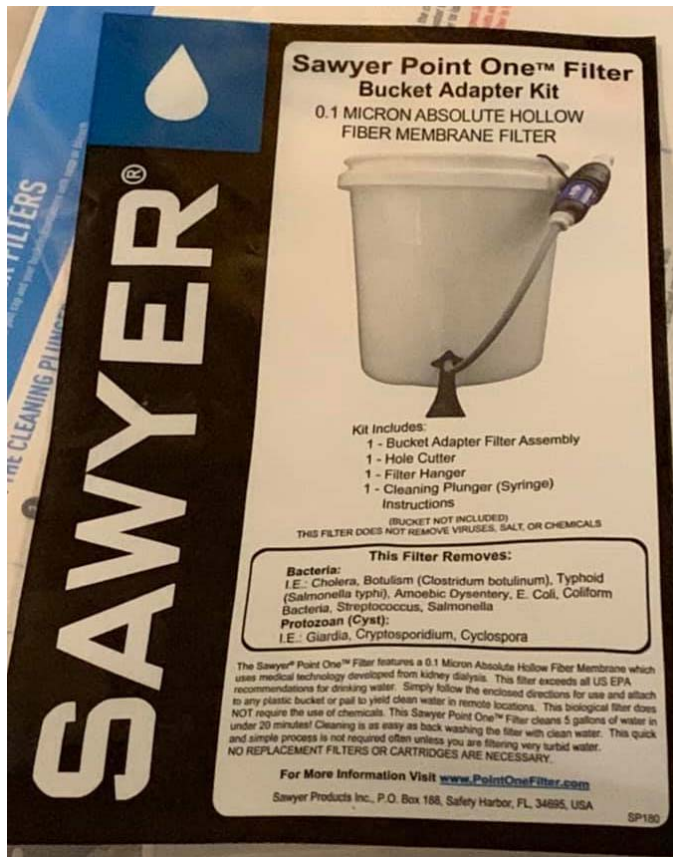
Disaster Aid USA, Carl wrote, chose to send the Sawyer water filters rather than pallets of water “because of the cost, ease to transport and we will not be burdening the locals with bottles that need to be stored out of the direct sunlight and the piles of trash from the leftover empty bottles.”

Want to help The Bahamas? A \$50.00 donation will give 6,000 gallons of clean water to those in need!

Please send you checks to DGE Carl Hassett at 337 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073, and make checks payable to Rotary District 7490 Walter D. Head Foundation.



This filter, which fits into Carl Haslett's hand, can clean 250-gallons of water an hour, and with a life span of 10-years, could by itself clean 870,000 pallets of water.



Instructions on how to use the Sawyer Point one Filter Bucket Adapter Kit.



A duffel bag which holds the 40 Sawyer water filters that were shipped earlier this month to The Bahamas in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian, which struck the islands on Sept. 1.

Paterson Rotary Leads Six Rotary Clubs in Response to Fire at Catholic Charities Substance Abuse Center.

The following articles by Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Paterson and by the Paterson Press highlighted the efforts of the Paterson Rotary Club in leading the Secaucus Rotary Club, Paterson Great Falls Rotary, Teaneck Rotary, Wayne Rotary and Paterson AM Rotary in their response to a fire at Catholic Charities "Straight & Narrow" rehabilitation center.

By Catholic Charities, Diocese of Paterson.

The Rotary International motto is "Service Above Self" and the Paterson Rotary Club and other neighboring clubs exemplified this, as they held a fund and item drive for Straight and Narrow.

On August 24, Straight and Narrow's 410 facility was destroyed by a fire. Thankfully, no service recipients or staff members were harmed; however, Straight and Narrow's Halfway House, Women's Counseling Center and the "warehouse" in which donations were stored burned to the ground.

Lori Mambelli, the President of the Paterson Rotary Club, knew that it was time for the club to jump into action.

"Straight and Narrow does so much for people in need. During times of tragedy, people rally together and that is just what the Paterson Rotary Club, our individual members and several other clubs did," Mrs. Mambelli said.

Catholic Charities Development Director, Chris Brancato, was presented with over \$3,700 in checks from the Paterson Rotary and neighboring clubs for Fire Recovery efforts. This is in addition to the dozens of bags of toiletries, clothing and other donated items.

In addition to the Paterson Rotary Club, additional participating clubs included the Fairlawn Sunrise Rotary Club, the Secaucus Rotary Club, the Paterson Great Falls Rotary Club, the Teaneck Rotary Club, the Wayne Rotary Club and Family Services of Passaic County.



Photograph from Catholic Charities/Diocese of Paterson

Pictured here: Catholic Charities Development Director Chris Brancato; Lori Mambelli, President, Paterson Rotary; Al Czeniewski, Fairlawn Sunrise Rotary Club; Rick Saltarelli, President, Secaucus Rotary Club; Danielle Richards, President, Teaneck Rotary; Ernestine Dukes, President, Great Falls Rotary; José Gonzales, Paterson AM Rotary.

"We are so grateful to Lori Mambelli, the Rotary and to all of those who enable Catholic Charities to provide help and to create hope. Straight and Narrow is resilient and inspired by our community which has banded together during this difficult time," said Scott Milliken, CEO of Catholic Charities.

For information on how you can help the fire recovery efforts, please visit www.ccpaterson.org/snfire.

By the Paterson Press.

Catholic Charities has received more than \$80,000 in cash donations in the aftermath of the fire last month that destroyed the Straight & Narrow prison halfway house in Paterson, according to a director at the nonprofit agency.

The organization also has gotten "hundreds upon hundreds" of bags of clothing and other items to replace supplies that were lost in the blaze, said Catholic Charities director Chris Brancato.

"We hope to rebuild in the same exact spot, but it's still early," Brancato said on Thursday, speaking at a fundraising event that Paterson's three Rotary clubs had sponsored on behalf of Straight & Narrow.

Brancato told the Rotarians that investigators had ruled out foul play in the massive blaze and are looking into the possibility that the cause was electrical.

Mayor Andre Sayegh spoke at the fundraiser, expressing his support for Straight & Narrow's programs. Afterward, the mayor said he wanted to see Straight & Narrow rebuild the facility in Paterson.

The fire destroyed the group's building at 410 Straight St., which housed the halfway house, a women's counseling program, and a warehouse where donated supplies were kept, said Brancato. The building next door, at 398 Straight St., which houses Straight & Narrow's inpatient substance abuse treatment program with 150 beds, was not damaged, partly because of the direction the wind was blowing that day, Brancato said.

Those clients were evacuated for one night and returned to the building the next day, Brancato said. The men who were living in the halfway house have been moved to a facility in the city of Passaic, while the women's counseling programs are being run at another site in Passaic County, he said.

Brancato and Sayegh praised the fast response by Paterson firefighters for limiting the damage from the blaze, and highlighted the fact that no one was harmed in the incident.

Brancato attributed the community donations to what he described as a change in the public perception of people battling substance abuse problems, saying "the stigma" is diminishing. Rotary club members said they were happy to help Straight & Narrow in its time of need.

The Hoboken Rotary Club Sponsors Gift of Life Surgery for Mitchell Cerillo of the Philippines.

On Sept. 10th Hoboken Rotary Club Members and Hosts Greg Visconti & Nancy Morrison greeted the club's Gift Of Life Recipient, Mitchell Cerillo and her Mother, Maria Salvacion Cerillo. Upon their arrival at Newark Liberty International Airport from the Philippines via San Francisco, the group headed to the Host home and enjoyed a traditional Philippine dinner provided by Christine Bridgelal.

The Gift of Life program was originally established to help save the lives of Children in need of life-or-death surgery. Its success has been immeasurable and has now has been expanded to include adults.

Mitchell (pronounces Mit-shell) and her mother, Maria (who prefers to be called Mari-sa) live about 11 hours outside of Manila in Naga. Naga has a population of about 196,000 and was settled by Spain in the 1700's.

The stories on the medical system in the Philippines will simply break your heart. Mitchell was born with diseased heart valves. The disease had prevented her from attending school and she was home-schooled by her devoted mother.

Upon an initial visit to a medical mission being conducted in The Philippines in 2000, Mitchell was accepted into the Gift Of Life program and she underwent the original valve repair surgery in 2001 at the age of 16. The extensive damage to her heart valves later required the installation of a Boston Scientific pacemaker in 2017, which has kept her alive.

Since the 2001 and 2017 procedures, her valves have been leaking and Mitchell's surgeons and physicians have implored her family to have the valves replaced, warning that it was a matter of life and death. Her mother, however, explained that the procedure would cost approximately \$30,000 in United States dollars, which the family could not afford. She explained that while her family can afford food and housing, the availability of medical coverage in the Philippines is limited and insurance is not affordable.

With a tear in her eye, Maria explained to me that in an effort to save her daughter's life, she made the long trip to the home of one of Mitchell's cardiologists to inquire about the details of the surgery and it was then that the cardiologist told her that the Rotary Gift Of Life program was again sponsoring patients.

Since the original surgery in 2001 was performed at Deborah Heart & Lung Center in Brown Mills, N.J. her American cardiologist, Dr. Mariano Brizzio was able to meet Mitchell while in the Philippines on a Medical Mission earlier this year. He said that he would personally perform her valve replacement at Valley Hospital in Ridgewood NJ.

After hours of testing on September 12th at Valley Hospital, Dr. Brizzio and his staff completed the evaluation of the scans, tests and blood work and cleared Mitchell for her surgery, which was performed at 7:30 a.m. on Sept. 16th.

Mitchell underwent the with the expectation that surgeons would be required to replace three heart valves. The good news was that while they needed to replace one valve, they were able to repair the other two, with Mitchell being released from the hospital on Sept. 22.

On a lighter note, can you even imagine that she overslept on the morning of her surgery and we were half hour late for admission. A special thanks to The Ridgewood Rotary Club and their members who visited the hospital to support Maria during the six-hour surgery.

Mitchell and her Mom are very quiet and humble people. They have comfortably settled into the Host Home of Greg and Nancy. They have had the opportunity to see some of New Jersey's Gold Coast and Jersey Shore.

Their door is always open for a friendly visit or to drop off a meal or snack for our Guests (they have no allergies). The Hosts would like to especially thank Rotarians David, Christine and Jennifer, as well as their spouses and guests for their extra effort in welcoming Mitchell and Maria.

All I can say I feel so blessed to have been a part of this and owe you all a special thanks for your support and kind words. If you wish to send Mitchell or her Mom, Marisa an e-mail, I will gladly forward it on to them.

This Rotary thing really works!

You can contact Greg Visconti at 201.275.9258 or greg@gvisconti.com for an update.



Greg Visconti, President of the Hoboken Rotary Club, with from left-to-right Mitchell Cerillo, who underwent a Gift of Life heart surgery at Valley Hospital on Sept. 16, with her mother, Maria Cerillo. Behind them in sunglasses is Greg's wife, Nancy Morrison. They are seen at Rockefeller Center in New York City prior to Mitchell's surgery.

Paramus Rotary Club Welcomes Child Who Underwent Gift of Life Surgery in August.

The best of what Rotary is all about...The Gift of Life. The Paramus Rotary Club was co-sponsor of this little guy's heart surgery.

He was born with a heart defect that prevented blood from fully flowing into the valve entering his heart. One consequence was that he didn't cry or laugh because that turned him blue. He had a very short life expectancy.

Thanks to Rotary, he and his mom were flown from the Philippines to the USA, housed with a Rotary family, (Paul and Carmen Platek of the Wyckoff/Midland Rotary Club) and provided with an opportunity for the baby's life-saving surgery. Thanks also to the hospital and doctors who volunteered much of their services.

The surgery completed three weeks ago, in late August. Two more operations will be needed but the baby is now well enough to travel back home, gain some additional strength, and return later for additional operations.

We were visited by his mom, Ciaralyn, the baby, whose name is Hans, and the Rotary host family. Marty Diamond introduced the family host mom, Carmen Platek, and the baby's mom. Both spoke about the baby's illness, surgery, and his road to recovery. While the mom was speaking the baby started to cry and ...cry - which was the sweetest sound in the world to the mom.

I have to say I teared up as I went to the podium to thank the mom and host family for attending our Rotary Club's meeting (as I'm sure many of our meeting attendees did).

Hard to beat the feeling of knowing another child's life saved by Rotary.



Ciaralyn, the baby's mother, speaking at the Paramus Rotary Club's Sept. 12 meeting.



The baby, Hans, doesn't seem all that impressed. He cried as his mother spoke – a very happy event indeed, since his illness had prevented him from crying prior to his surgery.



Carmen Platek, who with her husband Paul of the Wyckoff/Midland Rotary Club hosted the family, speaking at the Paramus Rotary Club's meeting on Sept. 12 which Ciaralyn and her infant son Hans attended.

Englewood Rotary Provides Water to Newark Residents in Response to Bergen NAACP Appeal.

Responding to an appeal from the Bergen County NAACP, the Englewood Rotary Club collected bottled water for distribution to residents of Newark during that city's water filtration emergency. In August, the city announced that two of three water filters that were supposed to filter out lead from residents' drinking water had failed, with the United States Environmental Protection Agency then urging the city to provide bottled water to 14,000 families in the affected area.



Bottled water that was collected by the Englewood Rotary Club for distribution to residents of Newark during that city's water filtration emergency.



Members of the Englewood Rotary Club on Sept. 5 after having delivered bottled water for distribution to residents of Newark during the city's water filtration emergency. From left-to-right are Joyce Grossbard, Jacqueline Guttman, JoEllen Knie, the club's President; and Aleta Frezzell.

The Executive AG's Corner.

By Aleta Frezzell, Executive Assistant Governor

I have had the pleasure of serving in a dual role as both one of the Senior Assistant Governors and as an Assistant Governor for the past two years.

In District Governor John Mitchell's year, one of his first initiatives was to change the title of Senior Assistant Governor to that of Executive Assistant Governor. Governor John respectfully did not want any of the female Senior Assistant Governors to be called by the nickname "SAG".

This was indeed something that I had never thought of. I must admit that out of habit, I still refer to myself as Senior Assistant Governor from time to time. My new Rotary District 7490 badge and the monthly reports are clear reminders of the new title though.

I have enjoyed both roles and it is an honor to assist the Assistant Governors and Club Presidents in any way I can. To be perfectly honest, I have not found there to be much "assisting" needed as the Clubs that I have been assigned to are vibrant, self-sufficient and welcoming Clubs.

Stressing the importance of attending District Meetings is one area that the EAG's are tasked with. AGs, Club Presidents, Club Boards and all members should try to attend these important meetings in order to learn the direction our District is going in regarding goals.

Interesting speakers and the discussions on various Clubs' upcoming and current projects are all part of these meetings. Also learning about a host of events which include Rotary Leadership, the District Conference, R.I. Convention, Foundation Seminars, President Elect Training and oh yes – our fun District picnic.

EAGs collect and compile monthly reports from the Assistant Governors that they are assigned to.

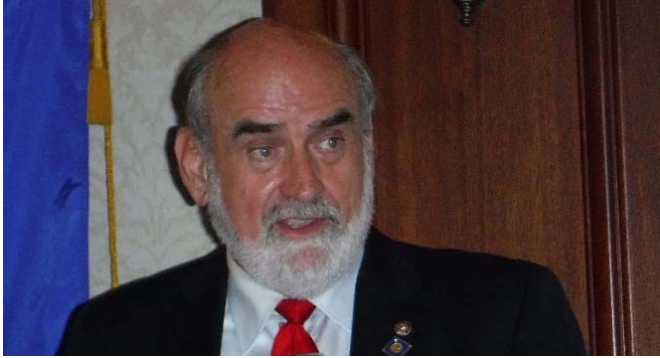
The importance of this is to determine the Club's strengths and possible weaknesses. This provides an insight into what is currently going on and to see how the Club's goals are being met.

Some of the AGs have advised that their Clubs are facing some challenges such as increasing membership and technical issues on Clubrunner which is a doable fix. I have also heard that the Clubs would like to see more advertising at the District level as to who we are. It is often said that Rotary is the best kept secret.

I just want to reiterate that the EAGs are here to help support the AGs so please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Report of the Rotary Foundation.

*By John C. "Jay" Fowler
Chairman, District Rotary Foundation*



John C. "Jay" Fowler
Chairman of District 7490's Rotary Foundation Committee.

Foundation Seminar Tells of New Programs.

On September 7th, The Rotary Foundation Committee conducted a Foundation Seminar for the members of the District. The focus of the seminar was to introduce the many programs of the Foundation, assist clubs in how to take advantage of the programs, provide guidance on the applications for District Designated Funds (DDF) grants, provide information on how to enter Foundation Goals on-line and the various ways to donate to the Foundation.

Plan to Honor Donors to PolioPlus Campaign.

Governor John and the End Polio Now Committee introduced a plan for the Committee to name a Paul Harris Fellow from one of the clubs in District 7490 for each of the next three years to benefit the End Polio Now Campaign. The goal is for each club to name one or more Paul Harris Fellows with the fund designated for Polio Plus in each of the next three years.

By doing so we will have significantly increased our support of the Polio Plus Campaign. A number of clubs have adopted a policy of donating the proceeds from their weekly 50 – 50 to the campaign.

Committee Accepting DDF Applications.

The Committee is currently accepting applications for District Designated Funds Grants. The deadline for applying is September 30th. The Committee will meet in October to review the application and decide on the awards. Clubs receiving a grant will have until June 30, 2021 to complete their projects. Applications are available on-line at the District Website or from the Grants Committee Chairperson, Maria Rini, maria@bergenhouses.com.

Club Donations to the Rotary Foundation.

Through September 18th, Clubs in our District have donated \$22,185.10 to the Foundation, including \$18,650 for the Annual Fund and \$1,335 for Polio Plus. The top five clubs in total giving are:

Ridgewood AM Rotary Club	\$9,354.00
Paramus Sunrise Rotary Club	\$2,100.00
Northern Valley Rotary Club	\$1,207.48
Park Ridge Rotary Club	\$1,095.00
Wayne Rotary Club	\$1,000.00

The top five clubs in donations to Polio Plus are:

Ridgewood AM Rotary Club	\$1,000.00
Garfield Rotary Club	\$100.00
Jersey City Golden Door Rotary Club	\$100.00
Paterson Rotary Club	\$60.00
Paterson Great Falls Rotary Club	\$50.00

Remember to request club programs from the members of the Rotary Foundation Committee.