

Rotary District 7780

Carolyn Johnson, District Governor

March 10, 2014

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District 7780 Rotarians Engaged in Changing Lives

In the last weeks, much of our focus has been the service of clubs to help local communities. In February, most clubs collected food and funds to support local food pantries - even the emphasis of the World Understanding and Peace Dinner was that “understanding begins at home, peace begins with our neighbors.” Rotarians provide support to supply heating oil to those in need, as illustrated by Boothbay Harbor Rotary and others. Clubs are involved in literacy projects, reading in local elementary schools on Read Across America Day and donating books to local public or school libraries to recognize program speakers. Much of Rotarians’ efforts begin locally. We also take pride in our outreach to communities and neighbors in far away parts of our world.

Two teams of D7780 Rotarians are traveling to far away places to build friendships and offer service. Six Rotarians, each with an interest in music, are in Uganda for two weeks, learning about the culture and music of that country. They will visit clubs and projects to learn how we might partner with our friends in Uganda in the future. There already exists strong bonds between D7780 and D9211 clubs, which this outreach seeks to strengthen and enhance. This opportunity is supported by a portion of our district’s designated funds from The Rotary Foundation. The decision to continue sponsoring cultural exchanges resulted from our district’s planning seminar held in October, 2012. Follow this [link](#) to learn more about the adventures of our Rotarian friends in Uganda



Three Rotarians are in Guatemala participating in a Rotaplast mission, providing corrective surgeries for children born with a cleft lip or palate. Dalit Wolfe (Brunswick Coastal), Ellie Andrews (Bethel) and Cate Rafferty (Dover) are working at the Military Hospital in Guatemala City helping children regain their smile and a chance at a productive life. Our district raised \$35,000 to partially sponsor the medical costs of this mission, the Rotarians pay their own travel costs. As each child comes out of surgery, they are wrapped in a quilt made by Wrap A Smile, a project of Terry Hodskins, Wells Rotary. Follow their [mission](#).

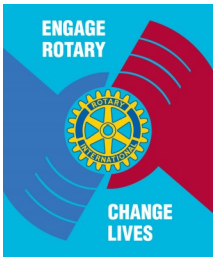
Engaged Rotarians Really Do Change Lives!

Carolyn Johnson

Next Year’s Club Presidents Prepare for their Leadership Role



The 2014-15 club Presidents and Assistant Governors from across District 7780 spent last weekend in Framingham, MA, along with the other 500 or so club presidents-elect and Assistant Governors from throughout New England. They all enjoyed provocative keynotes from senior Rotary leaders including our own Mike McGovern, they shared ideas, concerns, know-how and problem-solving techniques in breakouts, and they bonded with their fellow club presidents in District meetings led by Governor-elect Lawrence Furbish from **Sanford-Springvale** club (shown here). All agreed that the Presidents-elect Training Seminar (known affectionately as “PETS”) was a great training event and that they came away both enthused and better prepared to lead their clubs and help “Light Up Rotary” next fiscal year.



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Page 2

Exploring a Literacy Initiative in Nigeria

Saco Bay received a Rotary Foundation Springboard Grant from the District to explore the possibility of implementing a literacy project in Sauka, Nigeria. The club learned about Sauka from the Nigerian Group Study Exchange team last spring.

Kerstin Kirchner and Susan Schmidt (whose husband is a Rotarian in Frankfurt, Germany) traveled last November to Nigeria to assess the situation. The village has a private school, but only 10 percent of children in Sauka attend because parents cannot afford the few dollars required for tuition.

We realized early on that parents cannot afford books for their children, and schools do not have functioning libraries. Rotary Books for the World, a non-profit organization, has established a successful distribution center in South Africa, and we suggested establishing a similar distribution center in Nigeria that could supply schools in west Africa. The Abuja club is looking into this possibility, but a significant barrier is the high transport cost from the port city of Lagos inland to the Abuja or Kaduna regions.

Last year, the Rotary Club of Abuja Metro started a small micro-credit program, and as a result of our visit, Saco Bay is now joining with the Abuja club to expand this program to include needed vocational trades.

A lot of things have happened since we returned home. The Abuja Metro club has broken ground on a school with three classrooms, a clinic, and an office (see photo). The community will provide labor for construction. Abuja Metro and Saco Bay plan a Global Grant to furnish the school, health clinic, and also to build a toilet block.



Our hope is that Rotarians will provide long-term support for teachers through training sessions and classroom observation. The support of teachers and students is vital to make a significant difference in literacy and education level of the villagers in Sauka.

What is clear is that we are developing a long-term relationship with the Abuja Rotary clubs. Already, Tony Falodun, President of Abuja Metro, visited Saco Bay club in January, and I hope to return soon to deliver mobility devices and books and continue educational evaluations in Sauka.

—Kerstin Kirchner

Suit Up and Ride for Polio

South Portland Sunrise Rotarian Ilse Yanis is organizing an “End Polio Now” team of bikers — Rotarians, friends, family — to bike the Maine Women’s Ride on Sunday, June 1. Bikers can select route options as short as 10 or as long as 70 miles, and no fundraising is necessary! Buy your “End Polio Now” jersey and join the fun. FMI: go to District website home page.



On-Line Challenge Reaps \$\$\$\$ Benefits!

The **Boothbay Harbor Rotary Club** recently pledged \$8000 to the community’s home heating oil assistance fund and, additionally, set up an online donation fund via the website www.crowdrise.com and challenged the community to match that amount.

Bottom line: The challenge exceeded all expectations! Not only did the community collectively come up with an additional \$8000, but a local private philanthropic foundation learned of the community effort and pledged an additional \$20,000 to the Boothbay Region’s home heating oil fund!

Net-net: The Rotary Club’s \$8000 has turned into \$36000 worth of heating oil assistance for the community! Now, that’s leverage!

The Governors of District 7780



The Goves-to-be slowed down long enough at PETS to snap this photo. Left to right: Marge Barker (2016-17) from **South Portland-Cape Elizabeth**; Sheila Rollins (2015-16) from **Bridgton-Lake Region**; Lawrence Furbish (2014-15) from **Sanford-Springvale**; and our current Governor Carolyn Johnson from **Yarmouth**.