

# RotaryCanada

*A new leaf  
Un nouveau feuillet*

**October 2019**  
Octobre 2019

## **Root, root, root**

*In southern Ontario, you can  
see the forest — and the trees*

## **Bronco bucks**

*Calgary South club makes  
\$1 million donation*

**100 ans au service de l'humanité**

Rotary 





**ROTARY CONNECTS THE WORLD**, but does it connect you? For a number of years, Rotary in Canada has seen a decline in membership. Although recently that trend has been somewhat broken, we are still flagging in membership retention and growth.

Numerous studies have addressed this issue, and it is clear from each of them that a sense of belonging, a sense of making a difference, and a sense of connection enable members to find their Rotary passion and continue to serve.

So if *Rotary Connects the World*, shouldn't we start right at home in our Rotary clubs? Whether you are a traditional club that meets over a meal, an e-club that gathers via the internet, or a passport club that comes together in multiple ways, your service begins with a connection.

Over the next several months, I challenge each of you to make a deliberate connection with someone in your club whom you know only in passing. Seek out the club member who doesn't attend your meetings often, whom you only recognize when they wear a nametag. Get together over coffee, lunch, or an evening cocktail, and spend a little time getting to know them, and they you.

Who knows: You might make a new friend — and help Rotary connect one person at a time.

ROD THOMSON  
Chair, Rotary Canada Advisory Board  
Rotary Club of Abbotsford, B.C.

## PHOTO *of the* MONTH

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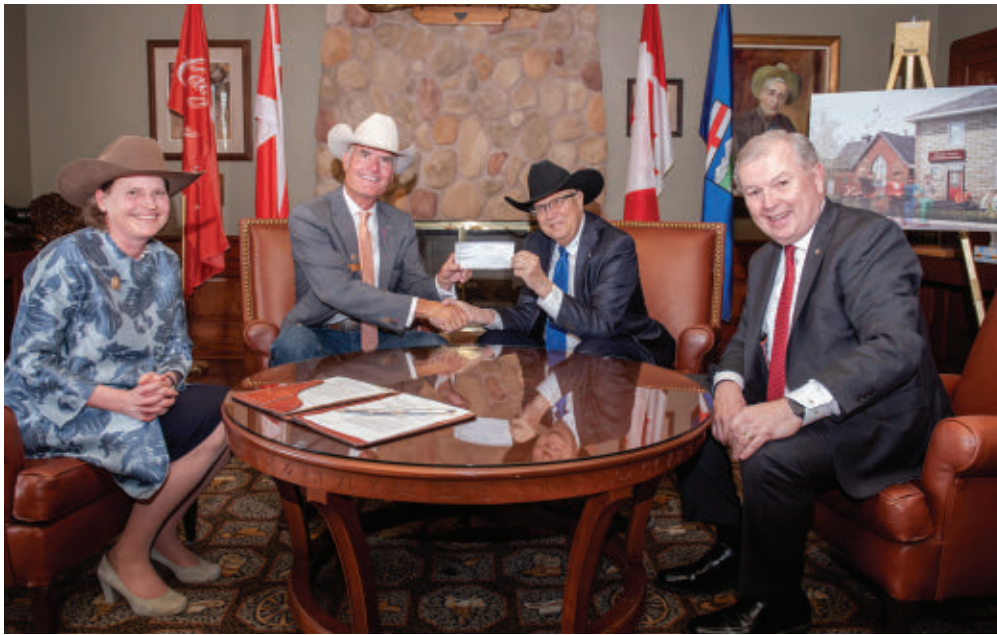
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PECOLD

The cover of the July issue of *Rotary Canada* featured a photograph of the Thunderbird House Post Totem Pole in Stanley Park, Vancouver. Carved in 1987 by renowned First Nations artist Tony Hunt (1942-2017), it is a replica of a house post carved in the early 1900s by Charlie James, a prolific artist also known by the name Yakuglas (1867-1938). Both men were members of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation.



## Calgary South ponies up bronco bucks

by GEOFFREY JOHNSON

The relationship between the Rotary Club of Calgary South, Alberta, and the Calgary Stampede goes back more than 60 years — to 1957, when the fledgling club began meeting at the Fort Calgary House on the grounds of the world-renowned rodeo and festival. Twenty-two years later, the club moved into its newly built home, also on Stampede grounds, and it has met in the comfortably rustic structure ever since.

That relationship took on a new dimension in April when the Calgary South club donated \$1 million to the Calgary Stampede Foundation.

**Above:** Flanked by Sarah Hayes, vice president of the Calgary Stampede Foundation, and Bill LeClair, a past president of the Calgary South club, Ron Prokosch (center, right) presents Bob Thompson with the club's \$1 million gift.

The money will support two youth initiatives: the revitalization of the 113-year-old Oliver House on the Stampede Youth Campus and the creation of a bursary to support participants in the foundation's youth programs.

"We are extremely excited and proud to continue our working relationship with the Calgary Stampede and the Calgary Stampede Foundation through the development of Youth Campus," says Ron Prokosch, the club's 2018-19 president. "Over the years, Youth Campus will support thousands of young people."

"This tremendous gift from the Rotary Club of Calgary South clearly exemplifies how we are 'Greatest Together,'" adds Bob Thompson, chair of the Calgary Stampede Founda-

tion, invoking the theme of the foundation's \$100 million capital campaign. "This donation will directly support two important initiatives and help drive Youth Campus' goal of supporting and advancing youth in our community."

The Stampede Youth Campus is devoted to developing young people's skills in the performing arts and in leadership. Following its restoration — and its rechristening as the Youth Leadership Centre — Oliver House will be home to programs offered by the foundation and other community organizations. Program leaders will use the house as a base to cultivate new ideas for youth achievement, develop best practices for community learning, and collaborate on education models. These leaders will in-

spire youth to take worthwhile risks, create opportunities for them to lead, and facilitate big-picture conversations. The new bursary will provide monetary grants as needed, ensuring that Youth Campus programs remain accessible to young people regardless of their economic status.

April's generous donation is nothing new for Calgary South. The club has been giving away money since its founding in 1955, when it was known as the Rotary Club of Manchester. To support that altruistic habit, members became avid fundraisers: selling ads for the game-day programs of the Calgary Stampeders (the city's Canadian Football League team) in the 1950s, staffing a concession stand on Stampede grounds in the '60s, and staging an annual Giant Garage Sale in the '70s.

But the club's longest-running fundraiser began in 1977, when Rotarians joined their families and friends to sell lottery tickets at the Stampede for a new "dream home." That first year the club raised \$42,000, and since then the annual promotion has brought in about \$10 million. All that money has gone into club projects — including parks and playgrounds, homeless shelters, medical equipment, and rehabilitation centres — locally and abroad.

And in July, Hayley Sandberg of Calgary became the 2019 winner of the dream home — a 2,455-square-foot "modern farmhouse" valued at \$1.067 million.





# 100 ans au service de l'humanité à Sherbrooke

*par François Bouchard, Rotary club de Sherbrooke (Québec)*

**C'est en 1919** que le Rotary club de Montréal parraine celui de Sherbrooke. C'est le premier club à voir le jour dans le l'actuel district 7850 qui réunit aujourd'hui Drummondville et 40 clubs situé au nord du Vermont et du New Hampshire. À l'image du club fondateur de Paul Harris, les membres du Rotary de Sherbrooke, notables influents, furent les premiers à unir leurs efforts pour aider de façon concrète la communauté estrienne en améliorant le contexte sanitaire de l'époque, ceci afin de combattre des maladies comme la polio et la tuberculose.

Aujourd'hui, c'est toujours 40 membres actifs qui s'impliquent avec dévouement en récoltant tout au long de l'année plus de 50 000 livres qui sont triés et classifiés, afin de les vendre lors de la grande Foire du Livre qui se tient, depuis maintenant 43 ans, au Carrefour de l'Estrie, le plus grand centre commercial de la région. Une vente spéciale est dédiée également au profit d'une

bibliothèque scolaire afin de permettre le renouvellement des livres.

C'est en 2006 que François Bouchard, appuyé par le Conseil d'administration de l'époque, démarra une librairie de livres d'occasion (la Bouquinerie du Rotary) avec les dons de livres offerts gracieusement par les habitants de Sherbrooke. Le but premier est l'accès à la lecture à très bas prix ainsi qu'un lieu d'échange dans le quartier. La Bouquinerie est ouverte trois jours par semaine et est gérée par une équipe de bénévoles qui reçoit, trie et range une quantité appréciable de livres chaque semaine. Ce n'est pas tout ! Le club de Sherbrooke a envoyé deux palettes de livres par bateau à Baker Lake à la communauté Inuit de Qamani'tuaq, située au Nunavut, grâce à l'appui de la compagnie minière Agnico-Eagle. Ce fut un périple qui a requis l'initiative et la persévérance de plusieurs intervenants.

Le club s'efforce également d'aider des écoliers par d'autres moyens. Afin de permettre à plus de 350 enfants de familles démunies d'avoir le même privilège que tous les autres élèves, le Rotary club de Sherbrooke tient une dégustation de vins et fromages depuis 23 ans afin de récolter les fonds nécessaires pour acheter les sacs d'école avec tout le matériel scolaire requis par leur professeur.

Suite à la tragédie survenue à Lac Mégantic en 2013, lors du déraillement d'un train pétrolier qui a pris feu et qui a dévasté tout le centre-ville de cette communauté, le Rotary club de Sherbrooke a contribué à rénover et à équiper la Maison des Jeunes d'instruments de musique et de matériel audio-visuel. Ces 125 jeunes peuvent dorénavant profiter d'un coin détente et d'équipement de base pour un studio d'enregistrement de musique attrayant et fonctionnel.

Sherbrooke : prêt pour un autre centenaire !

# SHE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS

## Melanie Rodriguez



**M**elanie Rodriguez sees Rotary reflected in unexpected places — even in a gilded room in Paris.

“When I think about Rotary,” says Rodriguez, a member of Toronto’s Rotary Club of Scarborough, “the things that stand out to me are how we try to help our local and our global communities. We’re a group of people from different backgrounds, whether it be religion, culture, or profession. And that’s what makes Rotary so strong: We value diversity, and we’re constantly trying to improve our diversity. The Youth-7 Summit is the same way.”

In June, delegates from the Y-7 Summit, as it’s commonly known, convened in Paris for five days. The event is a prelude to the G-7 summit, the annual meeting of world leaders that was held this year in Biarritz, France, in August. The Group of Seven nations are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States; the Y-7 Summit brings together 40 young representatives from those countries as well as the European Union and the African Union. At the most recent Y-7 Summit, Rodriguez led the four-member Canadian delegation. Other delegations also counted Rotaractors and former Rotary Youth Exchange students among their members.

“What attracted me to Y-7,” Rodriguez says, “is the idea that to create change, we need to engage all three pillars of society” — government, the private sector, and nonprofits. “The summit was an opportunity to understand more about what influences government decisions and how we can make that influence happen.”

The Y-7 Summit agenda focused on economic, environmental, technological, and gender inequalities — the same issues G-7 leaders would address two months later. Delegates worked 15-hour days crafting a 20-page report that, overall, expressed a concern that “youth have lost faith in our systems.”

“There was a consensus among the delegates that youth are getting really worried,” Rodriguez says. “We’re seeing this, for instance, with climate change. Young people are very concerned that governments aren’t doing anything. That’s something we need to focus on as Rotary members: If we’re going to make change, we have to have everyone on board and let them know that their voices are heard.”

Back in Canada, Rodriguez, 28, is working on her MBA at the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto. But she has long been interested in sustainability and global service. Since 2012, she has been volunteering at El Arca Children’s Home in Peru, where she developed and helped raise money for an environmentally friendly and money-saving solar energy system — while pursuing her bachelor’s degree and, after graduating, working as an analyst at Toronto’s TD Bank.

In 2015, Rodriguez’s interest in service led her to make the leap from banking to nonprofit work; she took a job at Global Brigades Nicaragua, where she managed training for volunteers from North America and Europe. She later worked as executive director of the Alma Children’s Education Foundation in Toronto before setting up her own social sector consulting firm in 2017 — the same year she joined Rotary. She is now the communications and network engagement manager for the Ontario Nonprofit Network, which represents 58,000 nonprofits in the province. In addition, she is the mother of a one-year-old boy, Christian.

One of Rodriguez’s particular passions is universal access to quality childhood education, which can have a profound impact on a child’s economic future. Although she notes that the issue can often be a hard sell because of the cost of good schooling, universal access was included among the Y-7 recommendations under the umbrella of fair and affordable education. “I was so happy about this idea of making it a right that every child in a G-7 country should be able to have access to day care,” she says.

With the summit behind her, Rodriguez now plans to find ways to engage Rotaractors in advocacy work. “There are so many amazing things being done by Rotaract clubs,” she says. “They have the potential to make a significant impact on our future. I want to help them improve their efforts.”

—NIKKI KALLIO 

# In southern Ontario, ambitious plans take root

by DANIELLE BREAU LT STUEBING

In January 2017, when Rotary International President-elect Ian H.S. Riseley addressed the International Assembly, he made the case that protecting the environment was essential to Rotary's goal of sustainable service. In keeping with his theme of *Rotary: Making a Difference*, he challenged every Rotary club to plant a tree for each of its members.

That challenge resonated with Rotary clubs in District 6400, which includes southwestern Ontario and southeastern Michigan — specifically, with the 12 Ontario clubs in Essex County and the city of Windsor. Richard Wyma, a member of the Rotary Club of Windsor (1918), is the general manager of the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA), which manages the region's natural resources.

"There was a lot of interest from Rotarians about how they could partner with us to fulfill President Riseley's goal," Wyma says. "With strong partnerships already established with many of the region's Rotary clubs, we believed something even more profound could be accomplished."

The district's grand dream was to exceed Riseley's goal of a tree for every Rotarian in the Windsor-Essex region

and carry out a 56-acre reforestation project. The "legacy forest," as it's known, "was a beautiful way of responding to several problems," explains Rick Caron, the 2017-18 district governor. "In addition to meeting President Riseley's call to action, the forest would be located in the Lake Erie watershed and help filter phos-



phorus [from agricultural runoff] before it reaches the Great Lakes."

Caron also worked with District 6380 in Ontario and District 6600 in Ohio to organize a public outreach session for the Lake Erie Millennium Network that would determine ways Rotarians could

best support restoring the health of Lake Erie, which has seen massive toxic algae blooms in recent years that affect tourism and recreation around the lake and pollute drinking water. In August 2014, the high concentration of algae blooms shut down the water supply to about 400,000 residents of Toledo, Ohio.

The Canadian part of District 6400 crafted a participation model based on what its clubs could take on, and in June 2018, as he passed the gavel to his successor, Paul Sincok of the Rotary Club of Plymouth, Michigan, Caron announced that all the Ontario clubs had come together to pledge \$72,000 to create the forest.

Over a four-year period, more than 46,000 trees will have been planted at a former agricultural site in the centre of the Windsor-Essex region, adjacent to the Cedar Creek Conservation Area. That addition aligns with ERCA's strategy of acquiring lands next to waterways and existing conservation areas. "This site hit a number of our priorities," says Wyma. "In 1973, when ERCA was established, the Essex region had only a 3.5 per cent natural area cover. Now, after 6.5 million trees planted and 10,000 acres of lands restored, we are at 8.5 per cent. That's a



significant increase, but it's still short of our goal of 12 per cent."

The Cedar Creek area is one of the most biologically significant areas in the region, and its expansion through the creation of the forest will improve habitat for species at risk and help mitigate climate change. The district's plan also includes planting 2 acres with native grasses and wildflowers and creating 5 acres of wetlands. "The additional wetlands will help improve overall water quality," explains Wyma. "They will also slow the flow of water into Lake Erie and help manage the nutrients and phosphorus that are a primary contributor to those harmful blue-green algae blooms."

All well and good, but nonetheless: The thought of planting 46,000 trees is a little, well, mind boggling. Are the district's Rotarians up to the task? "Rotarians are certainly an ambitious bunch," Wyma explains, "but ERCA will plant the bulk of the trees by machine." Planting began on 14 acres in 2018, when ERCA planted 14,450 seedling trees; in addition, the conservation authority planted 2 acres with grasses and wildflowers and created the first acre of wetlands.

This year, on 4 May, 70 Rotarians representing each of the participating clubs — many of them with kids in tow — gathered for their first hands-on tree planting. Though it was a wet and muddy Saturday, they managed to plant 300 trees, and this year ERCA will add 5,750 more seedlings. Rotarians will return in spring 2020 and 2021, each time planting 300 trees, and ERCA will add 25,000-plus seedlings over the course of those two years.

"It was amazing — a dream come true," says Caron, reflecting on the planting in May. "Seeing someone who had been a Rotarian for more than 50 years planting shoulder to shoulder with Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Kingsville Southshore, which had only been chartered the previous week, was truly inspirational." 🍁



From top: On a wet and muddy day in May, 70 Rotarians representing the 12 Canadian clubs in District 6400 gathered near the Cedar Creek Conservation Area in southern Ontario; over the course of the day, they planted 300 trees, an early contribution to the district's multiyear reforestation project; ultimately, this solitary tree will stand alongside more than 46,000 others. Opposite: Rick Caron (left) and Richard Wyma.

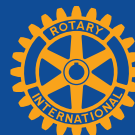




# Reinvent our wheel

What is your club doing? Every month, *The Rotarian* showcases:

- NEW MEMBERSHIP MODELS
- WAYS TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY
- PROJECT IDEAS
- FUNDRAISERS



Share your club's great new ideas.

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