



MARCH, 2021

THE PEN DOOR

THE NEWSLETTER of the ROTARY DISTRICT 5550 DG



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DG Gailmarie Anderson



SANITATION PROJECT IN JOYA VERDE, GUATEMALA

The Guatemala civil war, which ended in 1996, saw many Guatemala citizens flee the cities and take refuge in mountainous areas. People banded together for support and formed small villages. Joya Verde is one such village that continues to grow in the municipality of Fraijanes near Guatemala City. Until recently there was no running water or sewer systems in the community.

A few years ago the Municipality installed a sewer line so that homes could be connected to have proper sewage disposal. Although the line was available, homes remained disconnected.



Finished bathroom unit in Joya Verde

In 2019 a Global Grant for Joya Verde Sanitation Bathrooms was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Winnipeg and the Rotary Club of Guatemala Norte. A number of clubs in District 5550 as well other districts contributed to this grant. This phase saw the building of 52 bathroom units in 52 homes. Each unit is divided into two, one room with a shower and toilet, and another side for dish washing and laundry. Each unit is a standalone building near the home.

The grant provided the materials including fixtures, concrete blocks, cement, doors, and a ceiling at a cost of about \$1300 per unit. The construction of each unit was the responsibility of the home owner. Fortunately many community members worked in construction and were familiar with building techniques.

This project has greatly improved the living and hygienic conditions for the families. It is one of the "ripples" that began with the Ripple Effect Program when Club Norte built Joya Verde School. Now improvements have extended into the community to improve health and education. Another Global Grant is currently in the works for 54 additional bathroom units in Joya Verde. This is a great example of Rotary reaching across the globe to improve the lives of others. Together we can make a difference.

 [Zone 28 & 32 Beyond Borders Newsletter](#)

 [D5550 Board Minutes](#)



Upcoming Events

D5550 Evening Talk Show

March 4

District Board Meeting

March 9

Assistant Governor's Meeting

March 12

District Leadership Seminar

February 26, March 12, 13

D5550 Evening Talk Show (water & sanitation)

March 18

Click [HERE](#) for more details



VIRTUAL LEARNING & FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

D5550 EVENING TALK SHOW

March 4 @7:00 pm

Theme: Peace & Conflict Prevention/Resolution

The evening will consist of 3 speakers.

- Rotarian Nabil Oudeh from Ottawa - Resilience: Conflict prevention in a time of crisis
- Rotarian Debra LeMaistre of the Rotary Club of Kenora - Co-chair - Peace Park and the Peace Pole Projects
- Rotarian David Newman of the Rotary Club of Winnipeg (Downtown) - Chair, WPP - World Peace Partners initiatives.

Find more information [HERE](#)

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

February 26, March 12, 13

The District Leadership Seminar will be offered virtually over 3 days. President Elects, club officers, AGS, Board members and Rotaract reps are invited to attend.

ANTI-RACISM WEEK IN WINNIPEG MARCH 21-27

[CLICK FOR
NEWS STORY](#)

Rotary



TAIPEI
2021

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

The International Conference planned for Taipei will be held **ONLY** as a Virtual Conference. All existing registrations will be cancelled and refunded. For more information, please visit rotarytaipei2021.org.

AS I SEE IT

District Governor Gailmarie Anderson

It's ironic that our virtual conversation about Peace and Conflict/Resolution was so rudely disrupted and brought to a halt, a sad indicator for the need to bring discussions of this sort to the forefront of our dialogue about crucial global issues.

Rotary, as a world leader in charitable work, must help to foster positive peace and we do so by focusing our help in all seven Areas of Focus. By helping to raise children and families out of poverty, by providing opportunities for education and better health, by creating better living conditions for people, by responding positively and effectively to disaster relief, all of these actions promote peace and goodwill and understanding.

I am always amazed to learn about our response as Rotarians. We have such a commitment to helping those in need, with every local project that we do, with every national and international partnership that we align ourselves with, and most of all, with our "Service Above Self."

We are featuring our Youth and our International Projects in this newsletter, really what we are all about.

Thank you for all that you do, Rotarians, Rotaractors, RYLA, YEP and Rotex groups, WPP and HIP Committees, and Rotary Clubs in District 5550.

Together, we are *People of Action* making a difference.

SUPER SPEAKER IDEA FOR YOUR ZOOM MEETINGS

revised from an article by Rolly Ayotte - St. Boniface-St. Vital Rotary Club

Zoom meetings have their pluses and minuses. Many miss the social interaction of a face-to-face meeting but like the idea of hearing guests speak about Rotary from all around the globe. Even after the pandemic is over and we are once again meeting in person, Zoom will likely play a role in some, if not all, meetings in the future.

Do you ever wonder what happened to that exchange student from 3 or 8 years ago? For the past several months the St. Boniface - St. Vital club has been incorporating interesting guests to their virtual meetings. Past Rotary exchange students have been attending their Zoom meetings and have added “spice” and fun.

Their virtual meetings are suddenly again quite interesting. Club members enjoy catching up on what is going on in the past student’s lives and enjoy asking questions about their field of studies or work and chosen careers. Together both Rotary club members and past exchange students reminisce about their time spent in Canada. The students are quick to point out how the Rotary club has helped to “make a difference” in their lives.

Attendance at St. Boniface-St.Vital Rotary club Zoom meetings has also picked up since the introduction of their “special guest speakers”. Club members have commented that having past Rotary Exchange Students attend the Zoom meetings has been refreshing and rewarding for them and for the exchange students. To date the club has had 6 past Rotary exchange students.

Initial contact was made by Rolly Ayotte, Rotary member and past club Youth Exchange Counsellor-Officer. He reached out to past exchange students via email or Facebook Messenger and invited them to virtually come back and say “hello” to the club. A proposed outline conversation was provided as a “ice breaker” and guideline for the past Rotary exchange students.

Perhaps this successful idea might motivate other District 5550 Rotary clubs to invite and reconnect across the globe with their past Exchange Students and find their “Pandemic Silver Lining”.



Rolly Ayotte & Rotary Exchange Student Ana Karen Zajur family in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

DISTRICT 5550 2021 CONFERENCE GOES VIRTUAL

Rotary District 5550
DISTRICT CONFERENCE
THE FAMILY OF
Rotary
ONLINE
May 14-15, 2021
Hosted by
The Rotary Club of Melfort

Join us Friday May 14 and Saturday May 15 for the 2021 District 5550 Online Conference.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to keep us physically distant, the Conference will be presented as an exclusive online interactive experience. Here's your opportunity to connect, be inspired and to celebrate the **Family of Rotary** virtually working together. Your host, the Rotary Club of Melfort, is working hard to make this an outstanding event offering many options for learning and inspiration. Our program of outstanding presentations will include: Youth Engagement, Entrepreneurship & Philanthropy, Community Involvement & Fundraising, Mental Wellbeing and Indigenous Relations.

Mark the dates on your calendar and plan to join us May 14 and 15 for the 2021 Virtual District 5550 Conference. Watch for online registration coming soon.

Check out the conference promotional [VIDEO HERE!](#) We are Rotary Family!

SIoux LOOKOUT OPENING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF PERU

Tara Drew - Rotary Club of Sioux Lookout



Patients waiting for an eye exam

The Rotary Club of Sioux Lookout is partnering with Arequipa Primavera Rotary Club and Medical Ministry International (MMI) on a global grant for an ophthalmology van to go out to multiple sites in Arequipa city and rural sites in southern Peru. The mobile unit will serve the underprivileged in the poorest and most remote areas of southern Peru.

MMI-PERU has been serving the underprivileged for 20 years. They travel to many needy places carrying their supplies in suitcases and boxes utilizing outdated and manual equipment. In 2018, MMI-Peru saw over a 1000 patients in the Arequipa clinic and 4500 in mission projects. They also delivered 1500 eyeglasses and performed 150 surgeries.

Patients pay as they can for services they receive but MMI serves all patients, regardless of their ability to pay. The Mobile Unit will allow MMI-Peru to reach more rural communities, expand the number of patients served and the quality of the service delivered with more modern equipment.

The amount requested for the global grant is \$54,000 to cover the cost of a used van and eye care equipment including a lensometer, autorefractor, slit lamp, auto chart projector, retinoscope, and a number of other instruments that are foreign to most of us.

Sioux Lookout presently has \$31,000 of the \$40,000 they need to raise. Any clubs wishing to help out with this worthwhile projects would be greatly appreciated. If interested contact Tara Drew of the Sioux Lookout club at tara.m.drew@gmail.com

Any individual Rotarian or Club could collect glasses and send them to Tara Drew, and Sioux Lookout Club would send them on to MMI in Hamilton, who then sends them to Peru.

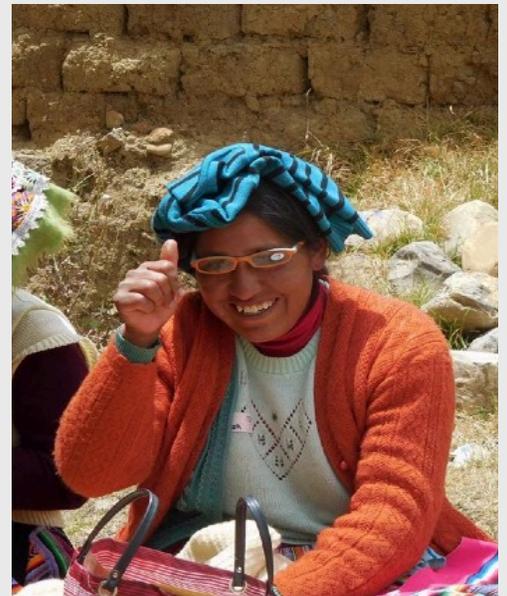
Mail to:

Tara Drew, 2 Hannah Cres
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1G8



Your Story STARTS HERE

What has your club been up to? How has your club evolved to respond to the pandemic? We would love to share your stories with the district. Submit your stories to gmanderson@sasktel.net



ROTARY 2021 THEME SNEAK PEEK

President-elect Shekhar Mehta encourages members to be changemakers and announces his theme for the 2021-2022 Rotary year, Serve to Change Lives.



**SERVE TO
CHANGE LIVES**



MEET OUR DISTRICT ROTARACT CLUBS



Rotaract Club at the University of Manitoba

The thirty or more members of the U of M Rotaract Club in our District meet year round virtually and whenever possible in person. Members can be found regularly giving back to their community as volunteers at Manitoba Harvest filling food hampers, at the Siloam Mission serving meals, or packing much needed clothing for northern Manitoba communities to name a few. They enjoy helping with and attending local Rotary Clubs events. Right now they are working on a fund raiser to support an International Rotary Project to supply Hippo Rollers that make it easier for people to access clean water in the developing world. They are People of Action and have lots of fun together while helping to make the world a better place.

For more information:

Instagram: @um.srotaract

Website: <https://umrotaract.org/>

Email: S.rotaractclub@gmail.com

Auxilium Rotaract Club of Regina

The Auxilium Rotaract Club is made up of seven members ranging from ages eighteen to thirty. The club was chartered in 2009 and due to lack of engagement went into a recession. Since August 2020 our current members have been rebuilding the club. Between our seven members, two were a part of Interact, six have attended RYLA, and six are former Rotary Youth Exchange students. We are a community based club and have been meeting on Zoom for the past six months. The club's first fundraiser was for the Saskatchewan Cancer Foundation. We recently completed a warm clothing drive for the YWCA warming shelter. We are constantly looking for ways to grow our club and are excited for future endeavours.

NORTH AMERICAN YOUTH EXCHANGE NETWORK

Twenty one Rotary and Rotex Members from our District took advantage of this year's Virtual NAYEN Conference in February, making us the largest delegation among almost 1400 participants from 50 countries. The information gained there and the contact made will definitely enrich our future Exchange Programs.

You may also want to check out our New ROTEX group on

Instagram @rotex5550 05

Facebook group: District 5550 Rotex

Learn about Changes for ROTARACT
<https://www.rotary.org/en/rotaract-rising>

Ask Patty or Gailmarie about our new
District 5550's Rotaract Committee
(4pattyvann@gmail.com)



LEARN HOW YOU/WE CAN HELP ELEVATE ROTARACT

in DISTRICT 5550

Canada's First Rotaract Conference
for Rotaract by Rotaractors

<https://www.rotaractcanada.org/conference>

FORWARD:

THE ROTARACT CANADA SYMPOSIUM

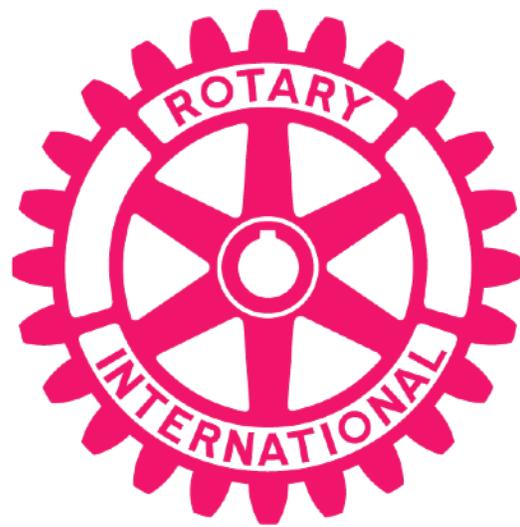
MARCH 9-12



Rotary Youth Exchange Rotex and Instagram

Calling all Rotary Youth Exchange alumni! We are looking to expand our Rotex club. Rotex is a club for exchange student alumni who are interested in being involved with the Youth Exchange program. If you know of any alumni who might be interested please have them contact Jacquie Grandmont (Rotex Representative) at jacquie.grandmont@gmail.com or, check out our Facebook page "District 5550 Rotex".

Looking to keep up with the District 5550 Rotary Exchange program? Check out our new Instagram page @RYE.d5550



Rotaract