



# The Ramrod

Chartered in 1918

News of the Elyria Ohio Rotary Club

Visit the: Elyria Rotary web site: [elyriarotary.org](http://elyriarotary.org)



Tuesday, October 6, 2020

By Kimberly Wilhelm

**President Dan** called the meeting to order at 12:06 P.M.

Special thanks to **Pastor Nathan Russell** for providing us with piano accompaniment as we were able to sing "My Country 'tis of Thee" and "Smile." What a wonderful addition to our virtual meeting.

### Invocation

Given by **Mark Mroz**: "Heavenly Father, we thank you for the food that nourishes our bodies . . .for the fellowship that feeds our souls . . .for all things good and beautiful with which our lives are filled. We give our thanks today. Amen."

Teach us that even if we cannot do great things, we can at least do small things in a great way. May we always be sincere in our efforts to help others in need. May we fulfill these efforts through Rotary.

### **October 13, 2020 Program**

**Nicolle Bellmore-Pierse – The Benefits of Yoga**

Feel free to bring your own mat and participate as Nicolle explains the benefits of Yoga.

### Guests

**Jim Schrader** from Findlay, **Past Governor Steve Youtz** from online E-Club Ohio Pathways, and **Susan Hunt, Jim Hunt's** better half, and a member of the E-Club

### Announcements

**President Dan** made the following announcements:

**Fried ice cream event on 10/25** is being held at Smitty's, and we need blocks of vanilla ice cream. here is a prospect in Findlay and a couple others that are being contacted. Sales are upwards of 300 so far and there has been advertisement in the Chronicle Telegram as well as WEOL.

This month is **Polio month**. **Dan** will forward information to us regarding what other clubs are doing and we need to decide what we want to do. The District is having a Celebrity Chef event and the Lorain club is having a virtual reverse raffle/online auction.

There is a **virtual Board Meeting on Monday 10/20 at 8:00 am** via Zoom. One topic of discussion will be upcoming Foundation events to begin in November.

### Happy Dollars

**President Dan** gave a shout out to the social committee for putting together the recent virtual Happy Hour event.

**Mindy Nielsen** said that she was going to find out soon whether she was going to become an Aunt to a new Niece or Nephew.

### Today's Program

**Jim Hunt**, Past 6600 District Governor, and member of the Rotary Club of Ohio Pathways (D-6600), presented "The Guatemala Literacy Project."

Twenty-three years ago, brothers Joe and Bob Berninger went to Guatemala on a service mission representing the corporations that they worked for. They were witness to schools with no textbooks, and all lessons were written on the board. Guatemala is a beautiful country rich in history and culture. Land of the eternal Spring where the temperature is 70 – 75 every day. The beautiful pine trees are a sight to behold.

The brothers wanted to find a way to help, so grants were written with the help of Bob Kuck who was the youngest District Governor in our District at the age of 31 and started MESA.

- 41% of the population in Guatemala are of indigenous Mayan descent.
  - Poorest, least educated
  - 23 years ago, 4 out of 5 lived in poverty, and 2 out of 3 were illiterate.
    - Today 1 out of 3 are illiterate.
  - 59% are Latino.

The grant dollars from Rotary along with a partnership with the Cooperative for Education provide dedicated staff and teachers (who participate in a 2-year program in how to teach the methodology), and long-term sustainability. Rotary goes in and buys books for a school on a one-time basis and then they are self-sufficient from there, working with the Cooperative for Education.

The GLP is the largest grassroots, multi-club, multi-district effort in the Rotary world not directed by RI itself—the "gold standard" of Rotary projects, according to former RI President Ian Riseley. Over 600 Rotary clubs from 8 countries have participated in the GLP since its inception in 1996. GLP Textbook, Computer, Teacher Training, and Youth Development programs currently serve more than 50,000 impoverished children.

The program is divided into 3 parts

- Spark Reading: K – 6<sup>th</sup> grade (textbooks are purchased with funds from sponsoring a student, Rotary Clubs \$2,500 can buy books for an entire school, and also schools can purchase their own books from the money collected from "renting" the books).
  - Learning to read and build vocabulary
  - Develop reading comprehension
  - Build confidence
  - Program makes learning meaningful and exciting
- Computers: 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> Grade (Computers are purchased in-country to secure lowest prices. Students pay a small fee that helps for maintenance.)
  - 60% of entry to mid-level jobs required computer skills

- Students receive 60 minutes of hands on training per week
- They learn web navigation and Microsoft Office Suite
- Experience with basic programming
- There are 100 lessons over the course of their 3-year middle school education
- The “Rise” Youth Development Program: 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Scholarships given by sponsors that help offset the cost of education and put them on the path to be successful adults).
  - Assigned a counselor who meets with student monthly or more often if needed
  - Staff provides social work, academic support, and guidance
  - Serve as mentors and keep an eye on struggling students
  - Students attend workshops regarding entrepreneurship, women’s rights, career readiness, leadership skills

The cost is \$80/month or \$960/year to sponsor a student. Jim told us that the online E-Club with only 38 members are sponsoring 4 students with members signing up for \$10.00 a month. With individual members sponsoring students the club has a total of 10 students that are being sponsored.

All the programs are supported by the families of the students as well as the communities that they come from. There is a commitment from all to ensure that the

students are successful. The sponsorships are needed to offset the cost of education.

Many of the families cannot afford to have their children go to school because they are needed to work and make money so that families can eat. In addition to economic challenges, students face many other pressures to drop out including alcoholism, gangs, teen pregnancy, and abuse.

Of those who are helped through scholarships, 80% graduate and 63% of those go back and help their siblings get through school.

Questions: What is the mix of girls v. boys? Jim said there are a mix of both, however girls are at a disadvantage because they are needed at home to perform domestic type duties. There is a goal to reach 1,000 girls and are now at 789.

Why are we helping Guatemala when they want to come here to live? If we can educate them there and they have opportunities to get good paying jobs they will not want to leave. That is the goal.

Are there any plans to roll the program out to other countries?

The program can be shared and modelled, but for now the focus is Guatemala. It is easy to get to from Miami and there is still a lot to do there.

**Jim** ended his presentation by challenging Elyria Rotary to sponsor students or buy textbooks. President **Dan** said he would review funding that is available.

#### **Book donated to the Elyria Public Library**

On behalf of today’s presenter, **Jim Hunt**, the book titled “Everyone Loves a Parade,” by Andrea Denis, will be donated to the Elyria Public Library.