

THE STAFFORD ROTARY HIGHLIGHTER

December 6, 2023



Rotary Club of Stafford **People of Action**

December 6 Program - Myriam Brown, Stafford Junction



Stafford Junction
Where Lives Connect

I was born in Bogota, Colombia, and immigrated to the United States as a child. I spent most of my formative years in Northern Virginia, going through the Arlington County Public School system. I was fortunate to grow up in such a vibrant and diverse community, and it shaped the person I am today. In the 1990s, I helped start and grow a family business; I am grateful to have been part of a fantastic company where I had the opportunity to learn and develop my skills.

Ten years later, I took an opportunity in the nonprofit field, and although it only lasted one year, it sparked a new interest.

I spent the next stage of my career working in support of the Department of Defense and the Department of State, eventually leaving to start a family.

In 2019, our family moved to the Stafford area, and I was fortunate to find Stafford Junction for my entry back into the workforce. I fell in love with the organization, its mission, and the people we serve. I have over 20 years of administrative experience, and I look forward to igniting that passion for nonprofit work again as this incredible organization's Executive Director. I am grateful to have the opportunity to continue serving those in need in our community.



Club Calendar December Is Disease Prevention and Treatment Month

- ❖ December 6- Myriam Brown, CEO of Stafford Junction
- ❖ December 13 – Annual club election & AG Cheri Maea
- ❖ December 20 – Holiday Party 6 pm
- ❖ December 27 – No Meeting
- ❖ January 3 - Susan Sigmon. Empower House
- ❖ January 10 – Official DG visit.
- ❖ Feb. /March 2024 -District Grant Seminar - Feb/Mar 2024
- ❖ District Training Assembly - April 2024
- ❖ May 25-29, 2024 -Rotary International Convention in Singapore
- ❖ Fall, 2024 – District Conference

November 15 Meeting

President Elect Shekela presided. She welcomed guests Linda Moore, one of our Via Colori artists, and our online guest speaker Susan Mathison from the Common Man for Ukraine.

The thought for the day: The only thing stronger than fear is love.

We took a moment of silence to remember those suffering in Israel and Palestine.

Announcements:

- ❖ The signup sheet was passed around to schedule ringing the Salvation Army bell on November 18 at the Giant store on Route 610. We need volunteers for that as well as the Community Pallooza which is scheduled the same day. Our volunteers will be packing food boxes for Thanksgiving.
- ❖ Membership Committee reported several prospective members from Via Colori.
- ❖ Jake reported that our club 990 form has been accepted by the IRS.
- ❖ Club Service needs help finding speakers. Let PDG Sandy know of possible programs.
- ❖ PDG Sandy reminded everyone to make donations to the Rotary Foundation before December 31 for a 2023 tax deduction.
- ❖ The Youth Services Committee reported that we were still collecting for Operation Warm through November.
- ❖ Via Colori artists all showed up for our shortened event despite Tropical Storm Ophelia. We did better than last year. Our share was \$6,070.
- ❖ Our Holiday Party is scheduled for December 20. It will be held at Shekela's house.
- ❖ DG Rene's official club visit is scheduled for January 10.

Program: Common Man for Ukraine



Our speakers, Susan Mathison and Steve Rand, from Common Man for Ukraine had just returned from Ukraine. Common Man for Ukraine, a nonprofit alliance of donors and heroes working with Rotary Clubs in Plymouth, NH USA and Zamosc, Poland. The Plymouth Rotary Club established the organization soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They established a goal to raise \$2 million for humanitarian aid. The organization has funded an all-volunteer network to provide basic humanitarian aid to refugee orphans and children with parents in Poland and Ukraine. Their goal for 2023 is to raise \$10 million for

direct humanitarian aid.

Several Plymouth Rotarians first went to Ukraine to find out how to help. They met with sixteen Rotary clubs, with members speaking four different languages, and planned how best to help the 4.3 million Ukrainian children who have been displaced by the war – 1.8 million Ukrainian children are refugees in Poland and other neighboring countries, and 2.5 million children have been displaced within Ukraine.



The Plymouth Rotarians have made seven trips to Ukraine and Poland to see the aid in action, to reinforce the relationship with local volunteers, and to stay nimble to be sure the aid changes as the war and children's needs change. The organization has two warehouses in Poland. Food and supplies are all purchased in Poland.

So far, Common Man for Ukraine has delivered:

- 900+ tons of food
- 10,000 sleeping bags
- Hundreds of generators
- Bloodmobile
- More than \$400,000 toward kids' mental health services

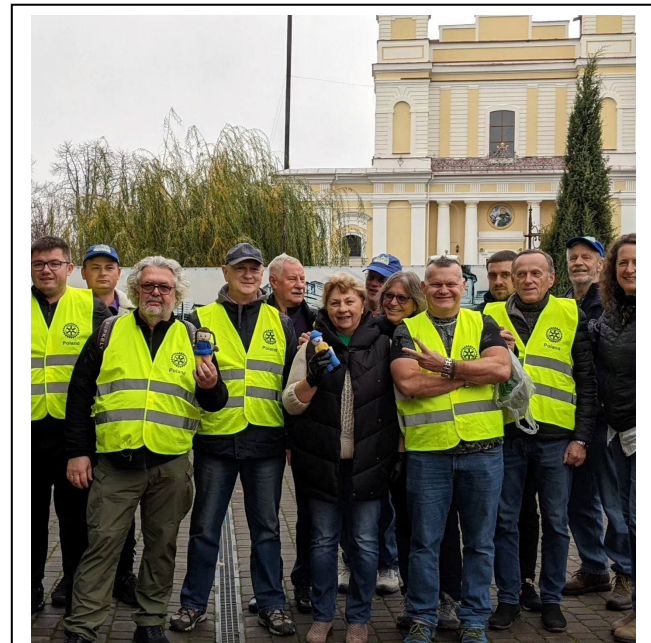


The group is working to expand mental health services for these displaced children. For children who have lost a parent in the war there are respite retreats where about 35 children can relax, play, meet other refugee children, and receive counseling during a three week stay. Sessions are held in a Polish mountain resort areas and provide psychological support for war trauma and loss.

There is a trauma and education center in Poland to help refugee children learn Polish and English. They also offer counseling and legal support.



A Donated Bloodmobile



The Plymouth Rotary Club and their partners in Poland are working on developing a global grant request to expand this program.

"The kids are living with this every day now for almost two years, and so we have to be as brave as they are. We have to." "We have to be brave, like the Ukrainians."

Thank you, Susan and Steve, for a very inspiring program.

A Triple Header Rotary Service Saturday: November 18

The annual Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army



Packing Thanksgiving food boxes at Community Palooza



Stafford Rotarians at the End Polio Now Caps game in DC!



A Bit of Club History



The antique red English telephone box that is outside the Stafford County Courthouse in front of the Tourism Office is a reminder of the historic link between this area and England. It was a gift to Stafford County from our Rotary club.

The idea for this project came from the late Rev. Joseph Kerr, who was our club's second president. He spotted the box at Governor's Antiques in Richmond and shared his idea with club members. Mark Osborn and T. Campbell took one of Campbell's company trucks to get the booth. On

the trip back to Fredericksburg, this cast iron booth that weighs close to a ton, nearly caused an axle to break.

Buck Jacoby, Graham Green and other club members helped with the project. The booth needed a lot of sand blasting and painting, as well as some replacement parts. In trying to locate parts, club members contacted Rotarians in Stafford, England. The restoration and presentation of the booth to Stafford County led to international relationships not only with Staffordshire, England, but also Stafford, Queensland, Australia; Stafford, Connecticut; and other Stafford Rotary Clubs around the world.

Stafford County has a formal sister-city relationship with Stafford Borough, England, that began in 1991 when the Rotary Clubs of the two communities first made contact. Visits and exchanges take place at all levels of the community, including college students from Stafford College and Germanna Community.



DECEMBER IS

**DISEASE PREVENTION
AND TREATMENT
MONTH**

"The prevention of disease today is one of the most important factors in line of human endeavor."

Charles Mayo

Rotary  

www.rotary.org