



## Battle Creek Rotary Club RotoScoop March 13, 2023

Zawadi Kibumba  
Uwezo Swahili Community Leader



Zawadi Kimbumba and Ken Masumoto confer after Monday's Meeting.

Zawadi Kimbumba was born in what is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is in the middle of the south part of the African continent. It is also known as Congo-Kinshasa and formerly known as Zaire. The Congo has a long history of conflict and was occupied by Belgium from 1885 to 1960. Ironically it is rich in natural resources, control over which has constantly caused conflict and hindered development of infrastructure. There are few employment opportunities and no school system. Many people are persecuted and killed without cause and try to leave the country for a better life.

Kimbumba left Congo in 1997 like many others fleeing to neighboring countries such as Rwanda, Zambia, Tanzania and Burundi. Kimbumba himself spent 27 years in a refugee camp in Malawi. Conditions in the refugee camps are challenging, as well, with poor living conditions and few if any paths to a better future.

Three years ago Kimbumba migrated to the Lansing area with hopes of building a better life for himself,

his family and other Congolese people who also landed in Lansing. Within the past year Kimbumba and approximately 240 others have moved to Battle Creek, which they found much more welcoming to them. There are approximately 500,000 Congolese immigrants disbursed throughout 47 of the United States, but he hopes more settle in Battle Creek and become part of the Uwezo Swahili Community (USC). This community has formally organized with the mission to welcome, empower, assist refugees from Africa to Battle Creek.

While Kimbumba speaks seven other languages, learning English is difficult for him and others, and not speaking English is an impediment to getting a driver license and employment. He cited support from over eleven different Battle Creek community organizations that have been helpful to the people in his community. They have worked hard to connect the new residents to English language lessons, local employers, health care, and the education system. As it works to build its organizational capacity and support refugees, the Uwezo Swahili Community especially needs help with translation and transportation. Additionally, office and household supplies and furniture are welcomed. You can support them financially by donating through the USC [Go Fund Me page](#) .

## OTHER NEWS....

Guests at this week's meeting included [Kathy Antaya](#) and [Mary Bourgeois](#), sponsored by Jill Anderson.

District 6360 Conference May 5th and 6th. [Click here to access conference information!](#)



Kathy Gallagher reminds us that the conference is coming up fast. There will be a Kentucky Derby Party on Friday Night, which includes a Hat Contest so start working on your bonnet! Click the link above for more information.

## Many Hands Make Light Work

The [Membership Committee](#) is in need of some leadership. Are you the outgoing sort that enjoys talking to people?

The role of the membership committee is to develop and follow an action plan to attract and engage members. The membership committee meets quarterly to review prospective members and their status in the membership process. The committee also helps to facilitate member induction and orientation. Let President Ed Guzzo know if you are interested in helping the club in this area.

The [Red Rose Committee](#) will meet for the first time this year right after next week's (3/20) Rotary meeting. The group will address some initial tasks then set a regular time to meet. If anyone wants to help plan this year's festivities please join us. You are more than welcome!

Left: [President-Elect Jill Anderson](#) is inducted at the Great Lakes President-Elect Training, March 11, 2023 at the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo. Her term starts July 1, 2023. Six Rotary Districts were



represented at the training.

Right: Jill Anderson shares banner from training with President Ed Guzzo.



## Two Habitat Events this April:



Saturday, April 15, 2023 9am-3pm **Rock the Block** brings together residents, municipalities and community partners to complete projects for low-income homeowners. These projects improve and beautify neighborhoods, increase property values and have a ripple effect on all homes in targeted area. This year we are teaming up with the Calhoun County Land Bank to work in the Washington Heights neighborhood in Battle Creek.

April 25-29, 2023 9am-3pm **Women Build** Since 1991, Women Build volunteers from all walks of life have come together to build stronger, safer communities. Our Women Build event provides the opportunity for women to take a proactive step in serving their communities and maybe learning some new skills along the way.

**Zoom No More** After numerous discussions the board decided to discontinue Zoom participation at our weekly meetings. A few of the reasons why include very low use of the service, frequent technical difficulties,

and poor quality transmission of meeting sound. Also, it is so much nicer to see everyone in person. We apologize for any inconvenience.

## Upcoming Programs and Events

03 20 2023      Student of the Month &  
Teri Noaeill for What-A-Do Theatre  
Lew Boyd Room

03 27 2023      Community Service at the Food Bank

04 03 2023      Torti Taco 5:01 pm Special Event -No Noon Meeting

Contact Jill Anderson if you have any ideas: [jillandersongrants@gmail.com](mailto:jillandersongrants@gmail.com)

### Board of Directors July 2022- 2023

Ed Guzzo, *President*

Jill Anderson, *President-Elect*

Rita McPhail, *Secretary*

Kelli Scott, *Treasurer*

Teresa Allen, *Community Service Chair*

Rod Auton, *Grant Chair and President Nominee*

Rob Benardo, *Membership Chair*

Tom Ebeling, *Immediate-Past President*

Kathy Gallagher, *Public Image Chair*

Desie Hardin, *Director*

Ron Monte, *Director*

Vince Pavone, *Rotary Educational Fund Chair*

Erik Smith, *Rotary Foundation Chair*

Wilhelm Sturhan, *International Service Chair*

Thom Unger, *Director*

Donna Gray, *Executive Secretary*