



Rotary District 5160 Newsletter



District Governor, Fred Collignon

Northern California

April May 2017



Rotary member Ann Sharpe helps Kawthar navigate the ice rink during the family's first experience with ice skating, a national pastime of Canada.

WOMEN & CHILDREN

BY KATHLEEN FRANKS

April is Maternal and Child Health month for Rotary International. Of all the ways to support this area of focus, reaching out to help a refugee family addresses a most timely humanitarian need. Women and children face the greatest risk. If you've ever wondered how you can help a refugee family, the following story from Rotary News will give you the basic outline of how to begin, where to gather community support, and why Rotary is your best avenue for success!

~

["8,000 Kilometers to Peace"](#), posted on Rotary International by Ryan Hylund, 4.4.2017

Ann Sharpe had joined Rotary specifically to get involved with projects to help refugees. In May 2014, she had attended the wedding of some friends in Turkey, which has taken in nearly 3 million Syrian refugees since 2011, more than any other country. While in Istanbul, Sharpe saw refugee children on the streets begging for food or money.

"I felt so guilty because I couldn't do anything. It really touched me in a way that I never felt before," Sharpe says. "We are fortunate that we don't see those types of things in Canada. For me, Rotary was the best way to do something about this."

At Sharpe's first Rotary club meeting, members started to put together a plan to bring a Syrian family to Amherst. Her enthusiasm about the initiative led the international committee to make her a co-chair of the refugee project that night.

The club began by gauging the community's interest in the project. They learned that two local churches, [First Baptist](#) and [Holy Family](#), were also looking for ways to support refugees.

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Governor's Message

by Fred Collignon



The end of the year is approaching, and the District Assemblies – just like the Governor visits and RI nationally in the U.S. – are emphasizing membership retention. We've written about best practices several times in past newsletters. We've learned we need to involve new members quickly in the club, but we need to make sure we're providing all members, even the veterans, with opportunities for service and a club voice. In this District, unlike the rest of Rotary, our loss of members has been greater among veterans than newer members the last few years. What can be done to counteract this trend? The best tactic is for the President-Elect and President to call each member and ask one-on-one how that member would like to be involved in the coming year. Just the fact that a club leader wants to hear what they like and don't like, and in what ways they now want or don't want to participate in the club's activities, is often enough to keep a veteran on board. If someone begins to drift away, don't prune your club roster thinking that's good management. It's not. If you have a member that's been paying dues and active over the years, don't quickly drop them if the dues don't come in. Work to keep them.

The bigger issue is the one I raised in my Governor's talk at each club. We've been stressing satisfying our customers – our club members – for several years. With newcomers, that means giving early value – helping them integrate into the club, access the networks in the clubs to the community, giving them early experience in hands-on service and a sense of the club accomplishments both internationally and especially in the local community. With veterans, we know that what they value may change. As an example, interest in international service greatly increases with time in Rotary, even though when asked, most members may emphasize local service. In recent international surveys, Rotarians were asked what they most wanted from their clubs that they were not getting: 65% said more international service opportunities. That's because almost all clubs already know how to deliver fellowship and local service opportunities.

Rotary's customer satisfaction challenge is a bit like the marketing problems Steve Jobs described with Apple. Customers don't understand what Rotary really is offering until they see and experience the product. The challenge is to get the Rotary member to that moment when, as Cliff Dochterman describes, the member realizes he or she is a Rotarian and not just a member of a Rotary Club. They're a part of something much bigger than themselves and their club. They're part of a movement, one that's unique in history and more needed than ever in today's deeply divided society.

Clubs provide the avenue for members to become Rotarians. We must quickly provide those opportunities to new members, and keep providing it to veteran members. We must also recognize that veteran members' abilities and personal resources may change over their life. Clubs need to make sure the veteran members also continue to thrive with Rotary experiences, even as their definition of Rotary experience adjusts and decreases over their life.

For most of us, there is great pride in what our Rotary clubs achieve – achievements we know we couldn't have pulled off by ourselves. That pride makes us want to stay part of our club and the Rotary movement. Wise clubs make sure to foster that pride, brag about our past achievements and celebrate the current ones. The Centennial sought to remind each club of their accomplishments. Continue the story! Continue to brag about all you've done this year, and are planning to do next year. Continue to involve each of your members in your club's work. The customer – our members – will be left with only one choice. They'll want to stick around for more!

Finding the Middle

by John Ferguson
Berkeley Rotary

Editor's Note by Kathleen Franks: At our District Conference, we were treated to a keynote speaker who, as they say, "needed no introduction". However, for those who may not know that Rita Moreno is not only a highly-talented and widely-acclaimed actress, but also one of the very few in the entertainment world who has received every major award, from a Grammy to an Oscar to the Tony and an Emmy, and to top it off, the Kennedy Center Honor! This remarkable woman graced our Rotary stage and regaled us with tales of her childhood days as an immigrant, and all the challenges of coming from a quiet village life in Puerto Rico to the raucous world of New York City. We got to hear about her early days in show business that presented enormous personal challenges and how she met every one with fierce determination. And as she stood before us, it was clear that her abiding sense of elegance has guided her all along the way of her astounding success. Here is an excerpt of a short portion of her talk. What she had to say about being in the middle, gave me pause to consider how much we have to appreciate about this great melting pot called America and how Rotary reaches across the continent and around the world. And by the way, John Ferguson, a Berkeley Rotarian, is Ms. Moreno's business manager.

In August, after filming the first season of the new Netflix series "One Day at a Time", my manager John, who had flown down on business, suggested he rent a car and we drive up the coast rather than fly back to Berkeley. I happily agreed!

Now, John knows that I've flown from city to city all my life and missed the wonderful places in the middle. Even in California! Until that trip, I'd only seen Hearst Castle from 30 thousand feet. And frankly, from that vantage point, the pool isn't all that impressive.

So as we're cruising up the coast we stop here and there to do some antiquing along the way and I'm noticing this reappearing blue and yellow sign that pops up in nearly every town. Rotary meets here: Monday lunch... Rotary meets here: Wednesday breakfast... Rotary meets here.... And I'm saying to John, 'cause I know he's a Rotarian - you people sure do eat a lot.

So for the rest of our trip John tells me the story of Rotary: 33,000 Rotary Clubs in 200 countries, 1.2 million Rotarians, Polio Plus, scholarships, water projects in India, Youth Exchange programs, education, local projects in every little town and hamlet... and I'm thinking, "Where the hell is this on the evening news?"



The Gift of Cliff Dochterman's Oral History

The final meeting of the District Conference on Sunday morning featured Cliff Dochterman as the closing speaker, and the audience was saddened to hear Cliff say at the end of his stirring talk that it would be his last major Rotary speech. We all hope he'll change that stance as his health continues to improve.

But prior to the talk we "surprised" Cliff with the presentation of the oral history our District had commissioned from the Oral History Unit of the University of California, Berkeley. Many District clubs and individuals contributed to the financing of this project. Cliff spent 30–40 hours in video-taped and audio recordings to tell his story. It is one of the first such histories to be done of an RI President and indeed of any world-wide nonprofit service organization of such scale.

Dr. Cristina Kim of the Oral History unit was in charge of the interviewing and made a brief presentation, describing the unique experience of getting to know and encounter Cliff. She has attached the clips of Cliff speaking as Mp4 files for us to share. The following two are also available on the OHC's Youtube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvls9JONVbs>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyZG3Bfp7v0>

To view Cliff's interview, you can link directly to [the PDF here](#) or you can consult the [Oral History site](#) which provides more metadata and information.

Last Chance to Attend a District Spring Assembly

by Gary Vilhauer

Club Leaders and Members – Get ready for the coming year!

The Spring Assemblies provide an opportunity for club leadership teams and club members to plan and prepare for next year. Make your next year great! Attendees will learn about Rotary, membership, fundraising and projects. Find out how other clubs are achieving success – share what is great about your club. The spring assemblies have been brought closer to you and focus on the needs indicated by Rotary members. Following are the classes being offered:

- Must Know Info for New Members (ABCS of Rotary)
- Successful Service Project Strategies
- Awesome Fundraising Projects
- Member Development Today
- Planning Ahead for Your Club

There is no fee for attendance. In case you missed the previous assemblies, you can venture out and enjoy fellowship with those from outside your area!

June 3, 2017 by Barsheep
East Bay – Berkeley to Hercules
Salesian College Preparatory High School
2851 Salesian Ave., Richmond

To register for this assembly, click [here](#).

Upcoming District Rotary Events

Meet Me in Atlanta! Rotary International Convention District 5160 Social

Tuesday, June 13

5:30–7:30

Ventanas Room, 14th floor of the Hilton Garden Inn, Downtown Atlanta

There will be over 40,000 Rotarians at the Atlanta Convention in June. If you want to make sure to meet with fellow Rotarians from District 5160, join us for our Social on Tuesday. We will be enjoying the view of Atlanta from the top of the Hilton Garden Inn while sharing the occasion with three other neighboring Districts. It will be a great opportunity to meet and engage with other Rotarians from our District, neighboring District 5000 (Hawaii), District 5130 (Wine Country to the California North Coast) and District 5190 (Northern California Foothills, Eastern California, Nevada to the Utah border).

\$55.00 per person

Includes 1 drink and appetizers

Click [here](#) to request an EZ link by return email

District 5160 Awards and Installation Dinner and Party No Limit to Celebrating with Fun, Food, and Fellowship

July 8

Woodland Community Center

2001 East Street, Woodland

- Join with your Club members, your guests, and others from the District as we celebrate Clubs and individual Rotary members for their accomplishments for 2016–2017 Year.
- Kick off the 2017–2018 Year with the installation of the Club Presidents as we honor their commitment to their Rotary Clubs.

Look for upcoming registration for this event through District Email.

Fall Seminars 2017 – Save the Date! Join Leaders – Exchange Ideas – Take Action

Fall seminars give Rotary members a chance to meet with other Rotarians and learn and share more about membership, foundation, projects, and Rotary. Hear from others who will inspire you and your Club members to take action in supporting Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self".

September 9 North

September 23 South

Look for upcoming registration for this event through your District Email.

Spring Conference 2018

[Sign up](#) with a \$20 deposit before June 5th for a chance to win one of two free registrations for the conference.

District Conference Reflections

Rotary's Greatest Asset

by Taylor Lee

Lieutenant Governor, District 5160 Rotaract
Cal Rotaract Treasurer



As a student at UC Berkeley, I'm proud of our Rotaract Club's history of bringing people together on this campus for amazing events. In 2010, Cal Rotaract organized the first Big West Conference for the Rotaractors of Zones 25 & 26, and hosted again in 2013. Twice a year, our club's Interact Committee hosts Interactors from across Northern California for our Stayover Program.

I personally enjoyed the District Conference because it offered a unique opportunity to connect with folks from all programs of the Rotary family throughout the District. In a single weekend, I got to hang out with Rotaractors from different schools, hear some amazing speakers, and reconnect with the Rotarian advisor from my high school Interact Club. Through conversations with Rotarians, Rotaractors, Interactors, and Youth Exchange, the Cal Rotaract officer board is brainstorming ideas for future collaborations, including getting Rotaractors involved in Rotary Action Groups, joint projects with other Rotaract clubs, expanding our mentorship & menteeship programs (with both Rotary & Interact) and potentially inviting the next year's inbound Youth Exchange to the Cal campus for an event.

I believe the greatest asset Rotary has is its people. Cal Rotaract has benefitted immensely from the guidance and support of Berkeley Rotarians in growing our club and organizing awesome service projects. The most valuable thing a Rotarian can offer a Rotaractor is mentorship, and the more opportunities Rotaractors have to engage with Rotarians, the more we grow personally and professionally. It is my hope that we can build on the great work done this year and continue to strengthen the ties among Rotary, Rotaract, and Interact! Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your District Conference. I hope you enjoyed your stay in Berkeley, and look forward to working with you next year!

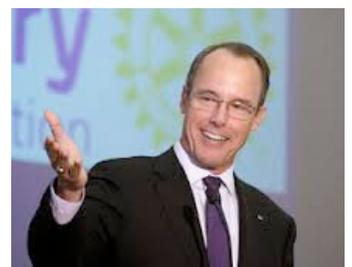
Rotary Reaches Out

By Jason Draught
Berkeley Rotary



At the Saturday morning session, Mitty Chang (former Interactor and Rotaractor and founder of Candeavor, a SF digital marketing and design agency) talked about how to reach younger people, especially former Rotaractors. He pointed out that 65% of Rotaract alumni would join Rotary if they were asked and gave some examples of how we can reach out to these graduates using technology. It's not hard to search for Rotaract alumni on LinkedIn and ask them to connect and then invite them to a meeting. (Maybe an idea for the Membership Committee?)

Brad Howard (charter member of Rotary Club of Oakland-Sunrise, past Governor of District 5170, and International Director of Zones 25 & 26) also covered this same topic in the Saturday evening session with a bit of a different focus. He talked about the benefits of Rotary to its members and how we need to promote these benefits when bringing in new members. His theme was that Rotary is a membership organization that does service projects, rather than a service organization made up of members. If we focus on our members and provide them with a network of friends and colleagues that will improve their life, both professionally (mentorship and networking) and personally (service projects and social events), then we will thrive as an organization and will succeed in attracting and retaining members while accomplishing our service goals.



Peace Grove Ceremony "Inspiration in the Rain"

by Maxim Schrogin
President, Berkeley Rotary

Interactors Today, Rotarians Tomorrow

During the District Conference, most of the Friday outdoor events were rained out – the bike ride, the gourmet ghetto tour, and the campus walk. But one event proceeded in spite of the rain – the annual ceremony inducting the latest honoree in the Rotary International Peace Grove in Tilden Park.

According to Rick Betts, longtime Peace Committee member, this year's Peace Grove award ceremony was both the worst and the best he has ever attended.

The ceremony was scheduled for Friday at 10 a.m., the moment at which a rainstorm was at its fiercest. Attendees slogged through mud and the heavy downpour to huddle beneath two canopies which needed to be held down against the fierce wind. In spite of—or perhaps because of—the meteorological challenge, the group's spirit remained astonishingly buoyant throughout the proceedings. Father Jay Matthews, Rector of Christ the Light Oakland Cathedral, graciously accepted the award plaque in behalf of our awardee, Pope Francis. We all sang "Amazing Grace" and "Bridge Over Troubled Waters," led by Michael Denten from the church who also started the ceremony with his own song.



We heard a recital of some of the Pope's statements about our environment, dramatically performed by Melana Schwartz of Glenview Elementary School in Oakland. We emerged from the event wet, shivering, and inspired.

One outside observer said that this ceremony was the most moving peace event of the many that he has attended around the world.

On Saturday, March 25th, 2017, 500 Rotarians and Future Rotarians (Interact, Rotaract, and Youth Exchange), participated in a joint District Conference – celebrating 100 years of Rotary. Over 100 Interactors were in attendance and represented 65 local Interact clubs across District 5160. There were a plethora of breakout sessions, speakers and socials for the youth and those young-at-heart. Here are the top three quotes from our very own:

1. "The Conference App is too techie for me, I just need a paper program." – Karl Diekman, Past District Governor 2011-2012
2. "My mom wants me to take a photo with Rita Moreno so she can post it on Facebook." – Darla Chavez, District 5160 Interact Co-Governor, Clayton Valley Charter Interact President
3. "We get to go to Tahoe next year right?" – Paradise Interact Club Interactors

As Rotarians, it is an obligation for us to continue to challenge ourselves by finding a solution to grow Rotary's membership. A solution that I strongly believe in, is right under our nose. A key message throughout this District Conference was the importance to not only invest in our youth but also, to invest in our Rotarians – current and future. This is only the beginning to a bigger and even better Rotary.

–Rebecca Phuong, Interact Chairman 2016-2017 and Long time lover of Rotary (former Interactor 2008-11 and Rotaractor 2011-15) and now Rotarian!

An Overview of the Conference

(by someone highly biased)

I'm grateful to the large team of people who registered for or came out to all or any of the conference's many activities. Rarely does a Conference sell out so quickly, I gather, though as anticipated there were dropouts as the event approached and people's schedules shifted. The evaluations from attendees are overwhelmingly positive, but Rotarians who come usually love our conferences. We sought to celebrate the Centennial of the District and to integrate the leaders of our Rotary programs into the Conference so we could exchange ideas on the future of Rotary. Both objectives were accomplished. We sought to celebrate the Centennial of the Foundation and the near victory over polio. Mission accomplished. We sought to give Rotarians across the District a different kind of conference experience – inspiration and fun as always, but in a campus setting, mixing generations. Achieved. Could we have made improvements? Of course, that's true of every conference.

The Summer of Love party was super fun. Lots of dancing, great music, and adjacent rooms for those wanting to converse. The food was superb and bountiful for all events. And in between the reception and the party, we had a service project stuffing backpacks with essential items for youth in foster care in our District.

The Friday morning and afternoon fun events were hit by hard rain. But the Peace Grove ceremony proceeded – and was quite moving. Thanks to the Berkeley Club for producing an inspiring event. The annual Peace Grove awards ceremony is the one day the Parks District will caravan people the two miles to the Grove; the rest of the year you have to hike. The Gourmet Ghetto was apparently liked by all who went. The bicycle ride and the campus morning tours were pretty much wiped out or cancelled by the heavy rain. Many on their own toured the notable bars, breweries, bookstores and shops in downtown Berkeley; some discovered the Summer of Love exhibition at the UC Art Museum a block or two from the District Party. Playtime on Saturday. A fantastic Beer Tasting on Saturday afternoon, as well as a Young Professionals' Reception and an ice cream social.

A great deal of work went into the District Centennial show which ran prior to each plenary session and during meals before the formal program started. The video presentation highlighted the full range of what Clubs in the District have accomplished over the past 100 years.

Breakouts – 41 separate sessions. What a menu! You could learn how to shape your club to attract more young professionals (4); create locally focused peace programs and international ones (5); find excellent club projects your club could emulate or join (7); learn about the history of our District and RI and what lies ahead in the future (4); extended Q&A with the plenary session speakers (4); work on service projects (3); how to build and sustain successful Interact and Rotaract clubs as well as Youth Exchange (8). Additional speakers on mindful living and communication skills – Chao Yoder, William Wesley – filled auditoriums. Participants benefited from training courses in storytelling, public speaking, leadership, and how to make better use of social media. Attendees experienced how Virtual Reality is enhancing Rotary's fundraising and public education, which by the way, is a program started right here in District 5160 and picked up by Rotary International.

The Hall of Friendship was located adjacent to the dining room thinking it would get high visibility, but many didn't discover it until the Beer Tasting event. My apologies to those at the tables in the Hall of Friendship who did not get as much traffic as other locations did, but your presence was a gift to the attending Rotarians who found you.

The Plenary Speakers were highly inspirational and informative. Several said it was like being at PETS (President-Elect Training Sessions). We were kept laughing by our affable emcee George Chaffey. Besides the head-line speakers we tried to cram in a lot of short speakers of interest. Jim O'Meara, the Representative of RI President John Germ gave a fine Polio Plus review. And there were moving events like the Flag Ceremony of the Youth Exchange, the memorial service for Rotarians who had died over the past year, and the presentation to Cliff Dochterman of the oral history with the talk by the lead U.C. Berkeley interviewer. And who can forget Cliff's final talk "Sixty Years of Rotary Memories." As for the puppet and demonstration ending of the conference, your Governor started his role that way at Woodland's Conference last year, so we decided to finish that way. At least the Governor's final speech was short...

And there are all the little things – the table decorations and the stage decorations that most raved about, the reservation process, the greeters and Sgts-at-Arms, the Conference goodie bags, the awards to winners of the photo contest. People give the Governor compliments, but all the credit goes to the Conference team.

Thanks to all who came and made it so memorable an event! And register now for Gary's 2018 conference and bring others with you, so they don't miss these unique events each year.

R.I. Clarifies Its Long-Standing Gun Policy

by Fred Collignon

Two months ago, the RI Board clarified its long-standing policy on the books as to clubs raising money from raffling, auctioning and selling guns. The Board had been asked by a Texas club to approve a gun auction fundraiser to be advertised with flyers showing two guns crossed over the Rotary logo. RI then issued a policy clarification reiterating the long-standing legislated rule that no club should engage in raffling, auctioning, or selling guns, or accepting sponsorships from gun shops as part of fundraising for Rotary service work. The best summary of the [RI POLICY](#) to date is posted on the District website.

The RI Board's purpose in reaffirming and clarifying this long-standing policy centers on risk management, mitigating the financial and reputational liability that would come by someone using a gun acquired via Rotary as a party to the transaction, and afterward harming an innocent one. RI has the deep pockets that lawyers would come after and the resulting media coverage that could damage Rotary's international reputation. One can debate the wisdom or necessity of doing the policy clarification at this moment given the deep divisions currently in our country. It's probably an awkward time – but maybe there would never be a good time – to clarify the policy.

Your Governor would estimate that a dozen or more of our clubs have raffled or auctioned guns as part of their fundraising efforts. Each club must resolve on its own how it will respond to the policy. Most clubs already complied. Some clubs may buy insurance but otherwise ignore the new clarification just as they ignored the rules already in RI legislation, probably being unaware. Some clubs may do raffles that offer gift certificates at sporting goods stores where the certificate can be redeemed for any merchandise, including guns

There are no Rotary police. Clubs as always do as they think best, given Rotary's goals and RI's policy and Manual guidance. Any club can petition the RI Board of Directors to modify the policy, or submit proposals to the next Council on Legislation to amend the rules on the books about guns. And several of our clubs have done so, all using carefully reasoned petitions.

Lots of misinformation has been flying around via social media about the policy. Rotary has not become part of any anti-gun movement. Nor is taking on the public health issue of guns where our U.S. opinion is divided unlike most of the world.

Look at Rotary's overall posture on guns. If your club, venue, and locality are okay with it, you can still carry guns on your person into Rotary meetings. You can still have speakers advocating the best gun to buy for various uses. You can still have socials engaging in skeet or target shooting or hunting. You can still raffle off gift certificates to a sporting goods store or a Walmart where the user could use the certificate to buy a gun or fishing rod or other merchandise.

A Club can still sponsor gun education as a service locally. You can still honor our public safety officers and military showing their pictures carrying guns, and having them bring their guns with them to Rotary meetings. You can still display hunters with guns in advertising big game feeds. Rotary has taken no position on owning or carrying guns. And Rotary still honors the vocation of all who sell or manufacture guns; they provide a product many of us value and need. But it's clear there are frustrations and fears that RI wants to engage with the public health issue of gun regulation that is so political in the U.S. The Board of Rotary International insists it is not intending either. It is just seeking to reduce the liability if a gun sold by a U.S. or international club resulted in a lawsuit and media attention. What is clear is that you can't use the word "gun" in a sentence in the U.S. without it sparking a political concern.

I ask that you click on the [link](#) and review the FAQ that Rotary Int'l has provided. I ask that you help your club to understand that little has changed – that the action we are hearing about is primarily a clarification of a policy that was already in existence. And, I ask that you help me to stop the circulation of rumors and falsehoods that are so damaging to the organization we all cherish.

Women and Children

continued from Page 1

There was a logistical benefit to working with the churches: Both are sponsorship agreement holders, meaning they signed an agreement with the government to bring refugee families into the country – something that would take the Amherst club two years to obtain. In return, the club handled administrative tasks, communicated with the Canadian government, and led fundraising efforts. It also donated \$5,000 in seed money to get the project off the ground.

“Because of the organization that Rotary offered, it was a no-brainer for us to partner with them,” says Frank Allen, a member of the Holy Family congregation and of the project’s steering committee. “This took such a weight off us; we were able to concentrate on other parts of the project. It was a gift.”

Within a few months, the partnership between the Rotary club and the two churches raised enough funds to sponsor one family – a minimum of \$27,000 per family is needed, the government estimates – and they filed the paperwork to be matched with a family. The group raised more than \$72,000.

The Canadian government and the UNHCR conduct an intense vetting process for refugees being considered for potential resettlement in the country. It includes biometric and fingerprint checks, health assessments, document verification, and several in-person interviews.

But successfully integrating a refugee family into a community takes more than paperwork and tests; it hinges on the community’s acceptance. The Amherst group held a public meeting in November 2015 at a local school to inform residents about the project, answer questions, and gauge opinions.

“There was zero resistance,” says Sharpe. “We didn’t know what to expect. There were many people in the country wondering if there was a security issue with bringing in refugees from Syria. I can honestly say I can’t believe how much the community embraced the project. They came out with donations, in-kind support, furniture, and anything we asked of them.”

With the Amherst community firmly behind them, the club welcomed its first Syrian family, the Latifs, in January 2016. The success motivated the group to work on bringing over a second family.

In August of that year, the Alchegade family boarded a plane for Canada to become group’s second family. Their long journey to a new home had ended. Their journey into a new life was just beginning.

The Rotary club helped connect Mazen with a job at Fundy Landscaping, which does stonework and builds retaining walls and decks. There, he is using the skills he learned doing construction in Lebanon.

“He does great work,” says business owner Peter Michels. “I don’t need to tell him anything twice. Everything we ask him to do, he runs with it. His skills and work ethic are very impressive.”

Michels, whose parents immigrated to Canada after World War II, says he sees a little of himself in Mazen and his family.

The town has rallied behind the refugee families, with teachers volunteering to tutor the kids and dentists offering free care. Mazen has earned his driver’s license, and Sultanah has joined other mothers in the community for cooking classes, even leading a class on preparing Syrian dishes.

The kids are learning to ice skate, Canada’s national pastime. These are small steps in the long process of integration that the club hopes will help them find their place in Canadian society. “We want them to be able to help improve this community and the country,” says Wilson.

Editor’s Note: The picture at the right is of [another refugee story](#) (scroll down on the page link for the story in R.I. News) in South Korea. Every member of the Rotary Club of Ulsan Freedom is a refugee from North Korea. Rejecting an oppressive regime built on the denial of individual freedom, they risked their lives to realize their dream of “living like a human being.” Each month, the Rotarians visit the Ulsan Home for Children, helping to clean the playrooms and take care of children. Most recently, club members sat down with children in an art class. With crayons in hand, grownups and children worked together to sketch their dreams of a peaceful future.

Yet another way that Rotary is taking action to help refugees around the world.

Photo courtesy of R.I. News

