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*The Newsletter of the Westtown-Goshen Rotary Club*

**February 11, 2010**

**District 7450 Makes Request For Haiti's Injured** – The We-Go membership is encouraged to bring serviceable canes, crutches, walkers, and wheel chairs to our meeting so that they may be taken to the Hickman for ultimate shipping to Haiti. Reese Davis has volunteered to get them to the Hickman.

**We-Go Board Meeting on Friday, February 5<sup>th</sup>** – The meeting focused on future directions, events, etc. for the Club. The Board membership pretty much agreed on the following:

We should still have a spring event but should scale it down. Limit the number of people (50 – 100), have several poker and blackjack tables with We-Go members as dealers, no cash prizes, just a few prizes for the top winners, and a cash bar. This should bring in enough to cover our \$3,000 commitment to PolioPlus and hopefully more than that.

We should do a “final” Duck Race this year. Knowing it's the last year will hopefully motivate people to sell tickets and sponsorships, and will also give us time to find some type of replacement for the Duck Race the following year.

President Jeff indicated that both of these ideas will require Club approval. For the spring event, since time is of the essence, Jeff will ask for approval at this Thursday's meeting.

On February 25 We-Go will conduct a Club Assembly to address and discuss membership and fundraising. **Final** decisions will be made regarding a fall fundraiser, including whether or not to continue the Duck Race. **Prez Jeff states: “If you wish to have input regarding this important decision, please plan to be there with your thoughts and ideas. I look forward to a healthy and productive Assembly.”**

**We-Go Foundation Board Meeting on February 8** – David Moldoff provided the following agenda for the 7:30 p.m. teleconferencing call:

Review of the Proposed Project List for funding from the last Board Call, make final adjustments and approve.

Review of the Proposed We-Go Fundraiser (Poker Night), Date, Time Committee, Foundation Role.

Review of the Proposed idea to hold off on the Duck Race this year. What replaces it?

Review of the Proposed Clu Assembly and how does the Foundation fit in? When is it? What reports should be produced?

Discuss RI, District and Gundaker Funding requirements – see if any projects we are planning will be eligible for matching. Stan applied for the international project for WCU

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South African Event matching our donation. Stan wants to know if there are any local projects worthy applying for matching funds. Govinda asked to discuss the District Simplified Grants and RI Grant Opportunities.

Discuss the Foundation Bylaws and meeting requirements.

Discuss the Call for Nominations for the new Board. We need eleven Directors. Two Year Terms. Eight at Large. Officers include Foundation President, We-Go President-Elect, We-Go Immediate Past President.

**Message from Kristen Peck** – Hello Govinda, I also wanted to send you this article *Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis* from the Human Development Report 2006. I was required to read the introduction (p. 1-24) to the article for my Social Policy class. It resonated with me not only as it applied to my class in understanding the implications of political power and poverty, but it also connected me back to the root of my purpose here in Mexico: Rotary and my mission as an Ambassadorial Scholar of goodwill. As my time continues here in Monterrey, I have been able to see more commonalities among Rotary, global understanding and my path in social work. In the event that the article interests anyone in the club, I have attached the link below where you can find the entire report. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR06-complete.pdf>

A full progress report from Kristen Peck is attached to this newsletter.

**Program on January 28** – Our speaker, Mary Anne Feeley, was introduced by President Jeff. Mary Anne is manager of Community Engagement for United Way of Chester County. She stated that there is lots of hidden poverty in Chester County. There is a need for affordable child care and early childhood education. Education is extremely important and the earlier it is available to youngsters will mean less failure when they attend elementary and high school.

Mary Anne introduced to our Club a new program that was developed at the Pickering Center for Arts and Technology for disadvantaged pre-schoolers. The high school students at Pickering participate in this program. A private businessman provides support with materials. It is an effort to introduce to these young ones early education experiences. The program is called **Born Learning Trail**. We thank Mary Anne for great evening presentation.

**Funds for Haiti** – Our membership contributed \$2599 to our We-Go Foundation so that a check has been sent in that amount to **Doctors Without Borders**. The money is to be used in assisting efforts in Haiti.

**Program on February 4** – Our speaker after dinner was Aldo Magazzeni. He was introduced by President Jeff. Aldo was born in a small village in Italy, and came to the United States with his parents when he was six. He is a Penn State graduate, and he spent his early life in business. About ten years ago Aldo decided to change his career. He left the business world and became a world traveler to assist the unfortunate in Afghanistan, Haiti, Kenya, and Mexico. He lives with the people he assists in improving their lives. Aldo is dedicated to helping others while working to remove barriers between cultures so that individuals can share their strengths, assets and blessings with each other. His talk with us was truly inspirational. His love for all humans is truly evident.

Hello Govinda! I just wanted to take a moment to update you and everyone from the We-Go Club about my progress in Monterrey. First and foremost, I send everyone my warmest wishes for a very happy and healthy holiday season and New Year! Since the last time we touched based I have been very busy, taking advantage of every moment of my time here in Mexico and trying to represent the We-Go Club and The Rotary Foundation to the best of my ability.

In an attempt to foster international understanding, I was able to partner with another Ambassadorial Scholar from South Carolina, Emily Stanek, in order to bring the Thanksgiving holiday to Monterrey! Emily and I planned and cooked a traditional Thanksgiving meal from scratch and invited the Rotaract Club of Monterrey to partake in their first traditional Thanksgiving dinner. There were approximately twenty guests in attendance including the Rotaract Club members and a few other guests. One guest was a gentleman from England who was a co-worker of one of the Rotaract members. He had never experienced a traditional Thanksgiving dinner either and as elated by the invitation and intrigued by the food and traditions. After waking up in the early morning, Emily and I prepped and cooked until nearly 8 pm and as an end result we were able to serve a turkey, mashed potatoes, corn, stuffing and cranberry sauce. While we were eating, Emily and I shared a brief history of the story of Thanksgiving and invited all to participate in the tradition of sharing what each person wanted to give thanks for. Everyone really enjoyed sharing and many gave thanks to Emily and I for being apart of the Rotaract Club in Monterrey and infusing the club with a new perspective, for example, this very event. This was an awesome moment. I felt proud, humbled and honored. For me, this was a moment of personal importance in which I realized the profound impact the Ambassadorial Scholarship can have. The evening ended with pumpkin and apples pies (which I admit were store bought!!) and many hugs.

The last time I wrote, I informed you that the Rotaract Club had been working in order to collect food donations with the intention of bringing 300 food baskets to an indigenous village in San Luis Potosi for an event called NNI (Navidad para Niños Indigenos or Christmas for Indigenous Children). In preparation for the event, I was able to assist the club by joining them at local Soriana's (which is a grocery store chain equivalent to Giant or ACME) in order to ask local community members to contribute to our food collection. After weeks of collecting, we were able to compile nearly 300 food baskets. During the first weekend in December we headed to the indigenous community in San Luis. We were joined from Rotaract Clubs from all over the district. Each club was responsible for bringing a different

item such as blankets, school supplies, Christmas toys, etc. The actual day of the event, there was a small stage set up with music and dancing for the children while the clubs organized their donation stations along the perimeter of an open field. Once all was in place, families began to circle around to the different donation stations to pick up blankets, food baskets, etc. There were also several people dressed up in animal and character costumes to entertain the children. Yours truly had the privilege to put on a giant cartoon bear costume and dance around! The kids loved it and I never felt so famous but boy was it hot in there! I also was able to get to know a Rotarian from Chicago who is a part of the same club as my scholarship coordinator at Rotary International. It was nice to be able to connect with a Rotarian from the States. All in all the entire event was a huge success and we were able to help thousands of people who make on average only four dollars a day. Powerful.

In addition to the NNI event, December brought other accomplishments. Academically, I have had to work very hard to keep up with the coursework. I have only been able to view the final result for one class, which was posted online and I ended up with a final grade of a 91%! I was thrilled! Knowing that I have the capacity to succeed has given me the drive and focus to work towards continued success in the coming semester, which starts on January 18. Another academic highlight is that I have been approved for a university scholarship, which will pay for my tuition in full so long as I maintain my grades at an 80% or better. This is also very exciting news!

Needless to say, the semester ended very well for me. It also left me with plenty of down time to travel and experience the culture across Mexico. I traveled with several friends to the states of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Guerrero and Puebla among others. In two weeks time I was in six states and ten cities. Being able to travel was a great privilege and it also gave me the opportunity to learn about the different music, food, linguistic differences, etc of Mexico. In a small city Tlaquepaque, Jalisco, I ran into a Rotaract club which had a toy drive set up in a plaza. I asked them about their project and told them I was from Rotaract Monterrey. They immediately asked me if I had been at NNI and we made a connection right away. Small world.

Lastly, I decided to stay in Monterrey for the holiday season. It was a difficult decision to spend Christmas away from my family, but I really wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to experience a traditional Mexican Christmas. I spent Christmas with my friend, Bere from Rotaract and her family in the neighboring state of Coahuila in the city of Saltillo.

The family invited me into their home with open arms and it was a very wonderful experience. We spent most of the Christmas holiday eating pork and spaghetti, singing karaoke (which seems to be very common at parties and night spots), drinking a traditional punch and enjoying each other's company.

In closing, I have been very busy over the past couple of months but I am sincerely enjoying every second of my time here. I want to again thank everyone at We-Go for their continued support and interest in my Ambassadorial year. I will send more news within the next month or so as classes begin to pick up and I begin to schedule additional Rotary presentations.

Wishing everyone the best that 2010 can offer!

Saludos