

## Reporting ZOOM Meeting of 8 March 2021

### Calendar of Events

**Last Week:** 3/1 Mark Sheehan, Schenectady ARC

**This Week:** 3/8 Rob Raylman & Guillermo Trujillo, Gift of Life

**Next Week:** 3/15 Best Buddies

**Coming Up:** 3/22 Laura Max & Buddies – Capital Region Sponsor a Scholar

**Note: Regular ZOOM Meetings are held Mondays at 6:00 pm.**

Check your e-mail inbox the day of the meeting for the computer ZOOM ID# and Password, as well as the phone number you can use to phone in if using your cell phone to participate.

*Please give suggestions for future programs to Darlene Bower and Dan Stec.  
Find us at [bhblrotary.org](http://bhblrotary.org) and on Facebook*

*Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change – across the globe, in our communities and in ourselves*

### ROB RAYLMAN & GUILLERMO TRUJILLO - GIFT OF LIFE

Guillermo introduced guest speaker, Rob Raylman, the CEO of Gift of Life International, and president of the Manhasset Rotary Club. He referenced the Rotary Vision Statement above when he said that as a global network working “Together”, Rotary can do more because as Rotarians we are the Rotary Foundation, and that as Rotarians, we are by definition humanitarians.

Rob explained that Gift of Life was begun at a lunch-table conversation in 1975, when a 27-year-old member of the Manhasset Rotary Club described a child in Kampala, Uganda with a heart valve problem, in need of cardiac care where such care was unavailable. The Manhasset Rotary club brought this little girl to Roslyn, NY where she underwent a successful four-hour open heart surgical procedure. One month later they brought another child from Kampala to be given lifesaving cardiac surgery. That was just the beginning.

As Gift of Life expanded its reach, The Rotary District 7490 Gift of Life Foundation was founded, by bringing together the New Jersey Rotary Clubs of Bergen, Passaic and Hudson Counties. This Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation created for the purpose of providing lifesaving cardiac surgeries to children around the world. In addition to providing surgeries for children, Gift Of Life works in home countries to educate the medical profession, provide medical equipment and raise the standard of living, thus lowering the incidence of congenital heart disease and rheumatic fever.

Rob has traveled to 26 countries, visiting the Ministries of Health in each, to encourage development of a sustainable pediatric cardiac program. Country by country, he helped them identify a core program with the following criteria: government investment, a hospital with appropriate facilities, ongoing involvement/rehabilitation, a team in place at all levels, and

a Rotary Club in place to sustain the program. Something this wide-ranging could only be done by an international program such as Rotary. Rob went on to detail many of the countries where Gift of Life is now up and running.

Rotary is the largest organization in the world that helps a child with heart disease. In its 45 years of service, Rotary’s Gift of Life International has provided 38,435 surgeries (to date) in 80 countries on 5 continents. “Our mission is to provide lifesaving cardiac treatment to children in need from developing countries regardless of gender, creed or national origin. Our goal is to develop *sustainable* pediatric cardiac programs by implementing screening, and surgical and training missions which are supported by autonomous Gift of Life programs, Rotary Global Grants and generous donors from around the world. In May, a team from Albany Med. will move some equipment to Bolivia. Now most surgeries are conducted in country.

Amazingly, Gift of Life was able to continue during the 2020 pandemic when the strength of Gift of Life Global Network of Caring became even more apparent. Healthcare professionals in 16 countries stepped forward during quarantines to apply the skills they’d learned through training and mentorship to treat 1,616 children. Gift of Life programs and Rotarians worldwide supported these efforts by providing PPE as well as essential supplies and medications.

Guillermo reminded us that we can donate directly from our IRA taking from the standard deduction and donating directly and there is no income tax on that money.

It was noted that our very successful Rotary golf tournament is the ONLY fundraiser in our district for Gift of Life. The 2020 event was hugely successful and was sold out to capacity! There will be a Gift Of Life tournament this year. Build your teams now!

A lively Q&A session followed Rob’s wide-ranging talk.



### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Steve Geene will deliver the food donations this week.
- Baskets and items have been donated for an online fundraiser for Keith Clement, who is recovering from COVID. Contact Linda LeTendre for more information.
- Gregg announced the Rotary BOD will meet on Thursday, March 11 at 4:30 pm; club members invited to participate.
- April 21<sup>st</sup> Drive-Through Dinner at the BHBL High School: Chicken Parm, Eggplant Parm, Shepherd’s Pie, Crab Baked Shrimp. Sponsor a meal for a hungry neighbor or a four-pack family meal. Watch for the flier.



*Serve with us – the world is waiting*

*Reported by Gini Whetten*