

# ROTARY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION of GREATER NEW ENGLAND

— est. 2013 —



## Newsletter #18, February, 2017

### Welcome Readers From RAAGNE President

By David Gau, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar '11 and President of RAAGNE



Greetings again  
Rotary alums and  
friends of RAAGNE!

One goal of this newsletter is to provide an update on some of the progress that we have made in recent months. A second objective is to share information Rotary and international activities which offer opportunities for your participation, and put forward some ideas I have been thinking of as we move forward. Before my report let me thank everyone who provided content for our newsletter together, and our editor and board member Ron Goodenow, who pulled it all together and welcomes future content at [ron.goodenow@gmail.com](mailto:ron.goodenow@gmail.com). We look forward to your contributions in the future.

Your Board has been working hard to revise the RAAGNE constitution to make it more in-line with RAAGNE practice (more on the constitution in the next newsletter).

Beyond constitutional change, we have been working to form collaborations with various aspects of the Rotary world. One of the challenges posed by an organization the size of Rotary International is connecting the various components (i.e. alumni, Rotarians, Rotaractors, etc.).

RAAGNE has demonstrated in the past its ability to collaborate with Rotarians through our work with various service projects and more recently with our involvement with the Kosovo-2 project. Now, we are teaming up with Rotaractors, in particular, the Boston Rotaract club, to see if there are ways our two organizations can work together on projects of interest. In particular, we are planning a computer blast where members of the Boston Rotaract Club will assist RAAGNE with contacting past Rotary Alumni and work to re-engage them to the Rotary world either through RAAGNE or through Rotaract.

We hope to extend this effort and work with other Rotaract Clubs at the upcoming multi-district conference in Providence, RI, from April 28 – 30. Fellow members and friends of RAAGNE will receive an invitation in the

coming weeks to join us for an alumni reunion at that event. RAAGNE is also working to contact new Global Grant Scholars in hopes of connecting them with Rotary Alumni or Rotarians that may be able to mentor/assist them throughout their scholar year(s).

My hope is that RAAGNE can develop a model for a mentorship system whereby past Rotary Scholars work with new Scholars to enhance their experience during the years abroad. The first step for us, however, is to find contact information for the new scholars! If you are able to assist us with this effort, please feel free to contact us at my email below. In addition, we are still looking for other Rotary Alumni that would like to be more involved with our organization. If you have any questions or are interested, please contact me at [davidmgau@gmail.com](mailto:davidmgau@gmail.com).

### Boston Rotaract

By Mallory McCoy, District Rotaract Representative for D7930



Boston Rotaract is more than a club or network, it is also a home away from home for many 18-35 year old young professionals in the Greater Boston area.

The club boasts a diverse and engaged membership, with club members from all over the world and from dozens of different professions. Our members are a civic minded group of young doctors, lawyers, higher education professionals, finance and insurance professionals, graduate students, real estate specialists, software designers, artists, musicians, engineers and more. These Rotaractors are dedicated to service and to advancing Rotary's mission of "service above self", consistently participating in community events and two to three group volunteer outings each month.

Boston Rotaract is committed to providing a welcoming source of community to all who find themselves in Boston, and to working for good in our region. Our members have diverse interests, but our particular focus has been on education, homelessness, hunger, and access to opportunity. The club meets every first and third Thursday of each month, and we take this

opportunity to welcome all - Rotarians, Rotaractors, and guests - who would like to learn what our club is all about or to join us in our endeavors. To learn more about Boston Rotaract or Rotaract in general, please visit [bostonrotaract.org](http://bostonrotaract.org)

## The Kosovo-2 Project

By Klaus Hachfeld, District 7910 Past Governor



Kosovo, arguably Europe's poorest country following the Balkan war, has graduated a few medical doctors from the University in Prishtina who subsequently received Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarships for further studies in other countries, subsequently to return to Kosovo. Dr. Gani Abazi is one. He came to Harvard University in the USA, but also brought with him concepts of how he can help the medical needs of people in his country.

With the financial help of Rotary clubs in Turkey, the UK and USA, and medical know-how from surgeons at the University Hospital, Linköping in Sweden, he guided a US\$ 35,000 Rotary Foundation Matching Grant that



provided specific surgical instruments for reconstructive hand surgery to the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK), in Prishtina. Considerable help was provided by the National Guard of Iowa in the USA, who

flew the instruments to Kosovo and delivered them directly to the surgical department staff at UCCK.

So Kosovo-2 is looking for partners. As an indication of RAAGNE members' intent to serve humanity and be involved with Rotarians and their projects, our association has committed to donate \$1,000 to the project that will hopefully be offered by our members.

The expectation is that RAAGNE will become more significant by having our alumni members become involved in larger projects than they can do alone within RAAGNE. By connecting with Rotary Clubs and other Rotary associations we gain access to the entire range of tools available via Rotary International and The Rotary Foundation.

An essential component of such projects is that there has to be a partnership between at least two Rotary clubs, one in the country receiving the equipment and able to oversee the project locally, and a primary club elsewhere that drives the project.

Given the magnitude of the money involved, it is often necessary to invite other Rotary clubs and partners into the project.

The retired Dean of the Medical School (UCCK), Professor Mazllum Belegu, is a Rotarian in the Prishtina Dardania club who continues to be deeply involved in both Kosovo projects, for which we are truly grateful.



This Kosovo-1 project took two years to complete, but demonstrated the amazing networking that can be done through Rotary and the Internet, given some patience and perseverance.

Kosovo-1 was successful, so we have a new Kosovo-2 project in the works. This will be supported by a \$60,000 Rotary Foundation Global Grant, to provide a dual wavelength X-ray machine called a DXA scanner, which can scan the human body from the neck to the ankles, display the map of bone and tissue density, and work with the doctor to diagnose Osteoporosis and similar conditions. The machine will be the only one of its kind in a public hospital in Kosovo.



Once again, we hope to engage multiple Rotary clubs and associations to raise the money for the machine purchase, because the foundation does not simply give the money, but requires serious involvement by Rotarians in terms of providing significant funding, working out all the logistics, physically working on the project and ensuring that the machine will serve its purpose over the long term.

It requires measurement of need before the project and follow-up statistics of the benefit provided following delivery. Further, Rotary requires project sustainability; a guarantee that the machine will be functional and serve its purpose for at least five years following delivery. Gone are the days when you deliver the equipment and think the task is done. If you have questions or ideas contact [Klaus Hachfeld](mailto:klaus.hachfeld@rotary.org).

## Gift of Life in Kosova – Key Player Weighs In

By Dr Gani Abazi, Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar '06

The Gift of Life Program is a Rotary based program that has been established 4 decades ago, which facilitates free heart surgeries for children from developing countries, in the U.S. and other developed countries.

The initiative to establish the Gift of Life program for the country of Kosova was started in the year 2009 by Gani Abazi, MD, PDG Klaus Hachfeld and the Director of the Gift of Life International, Mr. Rob Raylman. Dr. Gani Abazi approached his former Professor and Mentor at the Prishtina University School of Medicine, Prof. Dr. Mazllum Belegu to join this initiative. Prof. Dr. Mazllum Belegu has helped tremendously to have the program started.



The first two children from Kosova were brought to Children's Hospital Boston in 2009 for open heart surgery, a procedure that cannot be provided in Kosova. In the same year the Gift of Life Kosova was established in Prishtina, Kosova's capital, as an NGO and a branch of Gift of Life International by Prof. Dr. Mazllum Belegu, Dr. Ardian Dika, the lawyer Pal Bala and Dr Abazi, to coordinate the efforts, screen and prepare the patients, facilitate the logistics and further the mission and the work of the Gift of Life Program.

With the recommendation of a Kosova community member in Boston, in 2010 Gani invited Ms. Albana Krasniqi in New York to join this humanitarian initiative and help the patients and coordinate the efforts for children coming to the New York area hospitals as part of the Gift of Life Program. Ms. Krasniqi has given a significant multidimensional contribution in fundraising for the screening missions of the Gift of Life team from the U.S. to Kosova and in the hosting of the Kosova children in the New York area when they come for heart surgery. She continues to help the Gift of Life Program and coordinates the efforts for the future screening missions of American cardiologists in Kosova.

Dr. Abazi has involved the Kosova Society of Boston and the Kosova community members in the Boston area to help and support the Gift of Life Program. For two consecutive years, the Kosova Society of Boston has raised up to 2500 dollars each time to support the operational costs of the Gift of Life Kosova Program in Prishtina. Those donations have been used to help the patients and their families with the visa expenses, laboratory tests, travelling and other miscellaneous expenses, which are indispensable to make possible for the Kosova children chosen for the lifesaving heart

surgery to actually make it from Kosova to the partner hospital in the U.S. or other countries. The Ministry of Health of Kosova has covered the flight tickets for most Kosova children who received surgery through the Gift of Life Program.

The Gift of Life Kosova program is led by Prof. Dr. Mazllum Belegu in Prishtina and significant help and contribution continues to be given by the many volunteers in Kosova, the U.S. and other countries. Since this initiative started in 2009, over 85 Kosova children have been helped through life saving heart surgeries (above right Agnesa and mom after NY surgery) provided through the Gift of Life Program, mainly in the collaborating U.S. hospitals, but also in the hospitals in U.K., Italy, Germany, Israel and South Korea. All the surgeries have been provided at no cost for the patients.



The ultimate goal of the Gift of Life Kosova Program is to facilitate the process of having pediatric cardiac surgery services provided in Kosova, so that children from Kosova and the region of Balkans could receive the heart surgery locally. With the facilitation of the Gift of Life Network, pediatric cardiac surgery teams from the United Kingdom and Denmark have gone to Kosova to perform surgeries locally and have put the basis of the first ever pediatric cardiac surgery service for the country of Kosova.

Lately, Dr. Abazi has been working with the Kosova born pediatric cardiac surgery resident in the University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, Dr. Ismail Vokshi to organize annual cardiac surgery missions from the United Kingdom to Kosova to perform surgeries locally and further the establishment of a modern pediatric cardiac surgery service for the country of Kosova. The goal is to include the medical education, organizational, management and institutional building components that will result in a local pediatric cardiac surgery service. Another key goal is the transfer of medical technology from the West to Kosova as part of the pediatric cardiac surgeries that will take place in future Gift of Life programs.

The Gift of Life Kosova program has helped over 85 Kosova children so far with lifesaving heart surgeries and continues to be an example of success of multinational collaboration and coordination in very important humanitarian work to save the lives of little children in critical need of heart surgery. Contact Dr. [Gani Abazi](#) with ideas or questions.



## My Family and the ESSEX Program....a Mom Speaks to Great Success and Fun

By Jeanne Reimonn



The Rotary Youth Exchange Program has blessed our family in countless ways. Our family learned about the Rotary exchange program from a Rotarian friend when we lived in Oregon some years ago. Then, more recently, we heard an interview of Maya Frost, who wrote the book "The New Global Student" (2009). My husband ordered the book and our oldest son (Thomas) read it. The book gives a hearty endorsement to the Rotary exchange program as being the best exchange program out there.

Our three sons went on Rotary exchanges. Here is where they went:

**Spain:** Thomas (now 23) went to Tres Cantos, Spain (a suburb of Madrid). He had three host families in a lovely Spanish town. He now speaks beautiful Spanish. He keeps in touch with his host families and has visited them several times since his exchange. We visited Spain as a family while he was there and I think our two younger boys were so impressed by the experience and Tom's Spanish language skills that they became interested in doing the program too. After his exchange, Tom got a degree in Chemical Engineering, worked at Biogen in Cambridge, MA, and is now an MD/Phd student at UMass Medical School in Worcester.



**Chile:** Our second son went to Victoria, Chile, a small town about 10 hours south of Santiago. He was probably the only non-Chilean in the town. He had a wonderful host

family that loved him and he's touch with them still. Patrick went to Patagonia and Easter Island during his exchange year. Tom and Pat both speak Spanish, but laugh at each other because their dialects are so different. Patrick will graduate from university in June 2017 with a major in Math.

**Taiwan:** Our youngest son, Gregory, spent a year in Taipei, Taiwan. He wanted to learn Mandarin. Greg was chosen "valedictorian" for his Rotary exchange "class" of 80 students in Taipei for his Mandarin



language acquisition and his commitment to the Rotary ideals of service to others. We also visited him in Taipei and met his two wonderful host families. Greg's host families also sent their eldest children out that year to Italy and the U.S. Gregory had such a wonderful time being an exchange student in Taiwan that he's applied to do a GAP year through one of the U.S. State Dept. programs. So, we'll see where he ends up next year after his high school graduation.!



Our family has also hosted inbound Rotary exchange students:

**Chile:** We hosted a young man from Chile (Louis) in 2010. He was sponsored by the Milford Rotary Club. It was at his encouragement that Patrick chose Chile as his first choice country when he applied for his exchange. Louis' father is a Rotarian.

**Germany:** We hosted a lovely young girl (Antonia) from Germany. She was sponsored by the Rotary Club of Framingham. We met her family when they came to visit the U.S.. Her father is a Rotarian. Our family has already visited them and we hope to see them again this June.

**Japan:** This year we hosted a delightful girl from Japan (Yuka), who was also sponsored by the Rotary Club of Framingham. Her family will visit in April and we look forward to meeting them. Her father is also a Rotarian.

Where do we go from here?

I'm continuing to volunteer with the Rotary student exchange program for District 7910. My goal is to get more Americans to do the program. Do you know the statistics? About 30,000 high school age students come to the U.S. each year to study (semester or year), but only 1,800 Americans go out. Sadly, we are not educating our young people about the rest of the world. A study abroad in college is nice, but it is not the same as living with a host family during high school -- total immersion style. In my view, the Rotary Youth Exchange Program is the best program out there.

THANK YOU, ROTARY, FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE FOR OUR FAMILY!

**RAAGNE Help**-- Each year District 7910 hosts 3-5 inbound exchange students and sends 2-3 students out. If RAAGNE could organize a sightseeing trip or a nice get together during the year that would be wonderful. The exchange students would enjoy meeting you.

The ESSEX website:

<http://www.exchangestudent.org/>

Here are additional ESSEX contacts:

### **The ESSEX Committee - Rotary District 7910**

Marcia Davis, Chair | [largetutor@verizon.net](mailto:largetutor@verizon.net) | (508) 883-

Jeanne Reimonn, Inbound Chair

[reimonnj@gmail.com](mailto:reimonnj@gmail.com) | (508) 435-4359

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Chair | [robin@robinhopes.com](mailto:robin@robinhopes.com) | (978) 400-6030

Kevin Sullivan, Short-Term

Chair | [kevin@dsaprint.com](mailto:kevin@dsaprint.com) | (617) 529-1676

Your editor would like to thank DG Pat Doyle for facilitating this wonderful Essex story.

**For more information, paste these links into the address line of your web browser:**

### **RAAGNE Facebook Page**

<https://www.facebook.com/search/people/?q=RAAGNE>

### **RAAGNE Home Page (undergoing revisions)**

<http://www.raagne.com/>

### **Rotary International Home Page**

<https://www.rotary.org/en>

Send us pages to post here.

### **Contact Us with Content and Ideas**

If you have questions about Rotary please contact Past District Governor **Klaus Hachfeld** at

[laserklaus@gmail.com](mailto:laserklaus@gmail.com).



Past Club President **Ron Goodenow** is newsletter editor and welcomes ideas for content...and your content.

Contact Ron at [ron.goodenow@gmail.com](mailto:ron.goodenow@gmail.com)

ron, [ron.goodenow@gmail.com](mailto:ron.goodenow@gmail.com).

### **Event Calendar**

Stay tuned for additional information

[Four District Conference](#), Providence RI, April 28-30 Districts 7980, 7910

[Rotary International Convention](#), Atlanta, Georgia, June 10-14, 2017