



Rotary Club of Carleton Place and Mississippi Mills

Meeting of January 17th. 2011.

Nine members were out this week for a fascinating presentation about the world of guide dogs for the blind. **Shona Kemp, a staff person at the Guide Dog School in Manotick** walked us through an engaging account of how these special dogs, mainly Labrador and golden retrievers, are first trained to be loving, friendly, well socialized pets by volunteer families who take them in, work with them, love them, and then sacrifice their personal attachment by giving them back to the Guide Dog School; all set to be paired with a blind or vision-impaired person to serve as their “eyes” for the next dozen years or so.

At any given time, there are about thirty dogs in training with their matched vision impaired owners, with twenty pups being reared in the volunteer homes. The owners come from all across Canada, to this special “school”, where twenty-two staff breed the dogs, coordinate volunteer homes, and train both the dogs and their visually challenged owners in this amazingly complex and wonderful pairing of animals with people to provide this truly valuable service.

Club News:

President Al distributed a letter of appreciation from the T.R. Leger School of Adult, Alternative, and Continuing

Education for the donation our Club has recently made to help get their recreational skating program up and running (er...skating).

Al then drew our attention to an article in the Ottawa Citizen on the declining numbers of people in Service Clubs. While the article focuses on the Shriners and Masons, it raises the general question of whether or not our society is actually losing its ethic of volunteerism – of “giving back”.

Al also circulated an announcement of the Sixth Annual Rotary Valentine’s Dinner and Dance. This is a fundraiser for Polio Plus that is put on by ten of the Ottawa area Rotary Clubs. A \$70.00 ticket price covers what looks like a great Italian multi-course meal, and a Big Band dance-band, as well as a Casino to provide some extra entertainment. Let Al know if you are interested.

Next Week:

President Al will be away next week, so President-elect George will be wielding the gavel. A further discussion of the suggestions put forward by the Public Relations Committee will be the main topic for the evening, as we get organized for our 2011 Rotary activities.