



## NAMIBIA, THE LIBRARY PROJECT

**Meeting Date: April 27, 2017 –**

Nancy Loughlin invited Marie Fitzsimmons to share with the club about her and husband Kirk's time in Namibia on the continent of Africa teaching school children. Kirk and Marie both served as Peace Corps volunteers as young adults and now, after raising their children, are pleased to be traveling and helping people around the world once again.

Marie began by providing some of the political history of Namibia. The German Empire established rule over most of the territory in 1884, eliminating much of the population in the area. After the end of World War 1, the League of Nations mandated the country to the UK, under administration by South Africa. South Africa applied apartheid. Their laws included racial classifications and rules. Namibia did not obtain full independence from South Africa until 1990. The country now has a multi-party parliamentary democracy with a population of 2.1 million. The current leader is pushing for a movement toward education out of poverty.

Marie and Kirk lived in a "teacher condo" as they spent their days with the children in the village. Marie invested herself in creating a creative, warm, and nurturing teaching environment for her students. She shared photos of the classroom filled with color and supplies generously provided by donors. There was no library when Marie arrived, so she and Kirk set to work building one, requesting donations from home, and filled the library with books, puzzles, and games to educate and entertain their students. The parents were amazed, grateful, and wanted to borrow books themselves. Kirk worked with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on a composting project to improve the soil for farming. Marie also showed photos of the kids playing soccer, climbing the dunes, a boy's yoga group she initiated for Saturday mornings, kids receiving pen pal letters from a class at Watkins Glen school, art clubs, gardening, the wildlife, and the picturesque views of the area.

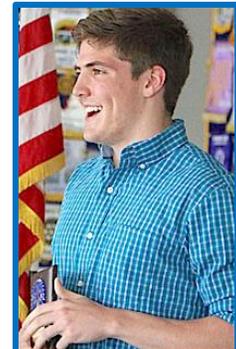
## NEXT MEETING: MAY 11

PROGRAM: Preparing to Be an Outbound Exchange Student

SPEAKER: Noelle Chamberlain

HOST: Michelle Benjamin

GREETERS: Chris Burns



## CONGRATULATIONS SOTM AIDAN DEBOLT

Kelly Muir presented Aidan DeBolt as Rotary's April Student of the Month from Watkins Glen. Aidan was nominated by both Kelly and Karen Armstrong. Kelly said his is a "strong student", who is a class and club leader. He is dependable and talented. An excellent swimmer, Aidan is a three time section IV champion. He also plays the guitar and is a beautiful singer. Armstrong added that is "always polite, kind, and hardworking." DeBolt plans to attend Ithaca College to study Emerging Media. He thanked his parents for making him the person he is today and Rotary for honoring his achievements.

Marie and Kirk's son Jared was even able to make a trip to be part of the experience working with the kids! Marie expressed her heartfelt thanks to Rotarians for donating class supplies for the library and for all Rotary does to contribute to those in need around the world. She and Kirk's next trip is to Rwanda, where Kirk will be able to work with veterinary students.

Marie chronicled her experiences in Namibia for readers on The Odessa File. You can read more at <http://www.odessafile.com/people-MarieInNamibiaTwo.htm>

# APRIL 27<sup>TH</sup> CLUB NEWS

**GUESTS:** SOTM: Aidan DeBolt, his father Len DeBolt and mother Gretchen, presenter: Kelly Muir; Our Speaker, Marie Fitzsimmons; Proposed member, Steve Briggs and Darrel Lewis, guest of Rich Greenberger

**WHO WON THE RAFFLE?** Nancy Peters

**MONTHLY AUCTION:** May: Judy Phillips, Bill Phoenix, Jim Preston

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**ROADSIDE CLEANUP:** Contract has been renewed with DOT for next 5 years. Our first cleanup for 2017 will be May 13, 9 – 11 AM. Please let Chris Burns know if you can't make it.

**CHICKEN BBQ:** Club will hold its first Chicken BBQ of the year on June 3<sup>rd</sup> at Visions in Watkins Glen. Dinners will be \$9 including potatoes, roll, baked beans and ½ chicken. Donations for bake sale encouraged – this was a great fundraiser for the last sale. No pre-sale tickets.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**THANK YOU!** Thank you to Tom Weidemann and Trenton for hosting Angelika's family for a few days while visiting the area.

**iLead Class:** President Bill presented to the iLead Class at Watkins Glen High School that morning and encourages Rotarians to get involved if they can to have a positive influence on our area youth.

**Foundation 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – How can you celebrate?** Rotary International is encouraging individuals, organizations, businesses, schools, and communities to participate in celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rotary Foundation by marking a 100 milestone. It could be 100 steps for a baby, 100 jumping jacks for a sports team, collecting 100 pennies, etc.

**CLUB DIRECTORY:** Please see Bridgette if you have any updates for the Club Membership Directory.

**TEMPORARY RELOCATION:** Club meetings will be temporarily relocated to the Glen Motor Inn while the Elks undergoes renovations. Meetings will be held there on May 25 and June 1

**THOSE WE MISSED:** Jim Bacalles, Stan Beaver, Jim Guild, Matt Hayden, Dean Hillyard, Jim Howell, Brian Kenney, Mike Learn, Gary Mead, Terri Orbin, Nancy Ruda, Jeff Schultz, Kristine Somerville, Ken Bell, Jim Chedzoy, Tom Clifford, Ginny Eaton, Dave Ryan, Dave Sidle

## CELEBRATIONS AND CONFESSIONS:

**Chris Burns:** Congratulations SOTM

**Jim Preston:** Congratulations SOTM, Missed meeting

**Dennis Morris:** Congratulations SOTM, Forgot auction item

**Glenda Gephart:** Congratulations SOTM, Welcome Marie F.

**Rebekah Carroll:** Congratulations SOTM, Missed meeting

**Stewart McDivitt:** Congratulations SOTM

**Carl Blowers:** Congratulations SOTM and Family

**Bridgette Stewart:** Congratulations SOTM; Took a trip to Louisville for business

**Tom Weidemann:** Congratulations SOTM, Missed meeting, Marie F.

**Nancy Loughlin:** Congratulations SOTM and Family; For Kelly M., Missed a couple meetings; Visited with Angelika and her family who visited

**John King:** Missed meeting

**Rich Greenberger:** Congratulations SOTM; For cell phone ring

**Bill Phoenix:** Congratulations SOTM; Marie F.

**Michele Ray:** Congratulations SOTM; For Chris's acknowledgment of her daughter Katie being a former Rotary Scholarship recipient and returning to her hometown to pursue her career.

## ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

### ROTARY USES VIRTUAL REALITY TO INSPIRE OTHERS

We're producing a three-minute virtual reality film that emphasizes the two themes of polio and peace, and how Rotary's work to eradicate the disease is increasing stability across the world.

Through the power of virtual reality, viewers will follow the extraordinary journey of a child whose world has been torn apart by conflict. The film will immerse viewers in this child's world, and they'll experience for themselves the impact that small acts of compassion, protection, and kindness can have on others.

We'll premiere the film on 13 June at the Rotary International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. It will be widely released in time for World Polio Day on 24 October.

This isn't Rotary's first experience with virtual reality. With support from the U.S. Fund for UNICEF, Rotary premiered its first virtual reality film, "I Dream of an Empty Ward," in October 2016. In that film, viewers visit India, which has been polio-free since 2011, to follow Alokita, a young woman paralyzed by the disease as a child.

Traveling through the streets of Delhi, viewers get a close look at life in India and what's being done to keep the country polio-free. And, through a visit to India's only polio ward, at St. Stephen's Hospital, they witness Alokita's triumphant first steps after 11 years.

