



# ROTARY CLUB OF APPLETON GUSTO

*Service Above Self*

## April 10, 2018 Upcoming Programs

April 17, 2018  
**RIVERVIEW GARDENS**  
Sierra Leone  
**Thought of the Day:** Elena Cannata (RYE student)

April 24, 2018  
**RIVERVIEW GARDENS**  
WI Technology Council  
**Thought of the Day:** Alan Blake

## Officers 2017-2018 President

Gary Hermsen

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Nancy Leipzig

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Ron Altenburg  
Gail Enke  
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Marlene Welter

**Sergeant-At-Arms**  
Dan Flannery

**Rotarian of the Year**  
B. S. Sridhar

**Admin. Assistant**  
Meghan Warner  
Phone 205-5255  
rotaryappleton@gmail.com

## **Membership – 134**

Downtown Gusto  
Meghan Warner, Editor  
Dist. 6220, Club 2656  
P. O. Box 703  
Appleton, WI 54912  
[www.appletonrotary.org](http://www.appletonrotary.org)

## MARY HARP-JIRSCHELE TRIP REPORT

Our Rotary Club has been supporting Mary Harp-Jirschele's eye care missions for about 5 years through World Service Committee grants. In honor of this being the 15<sup>th</sup> year of these mission trip, Mary provided a summary of the work done over the years. Mary's group is involved with Volunteer Optometric Service to Humanity – VOSH. Their mission is to deliver eye care to needy people of Central America, and in the past 15 years, they have been to a region of the Dominican Republic that borders Haiti, deep in the Rain Forest of Nicaragua, a wonderful little mountainside village in Honduras and an incredibly destitute region of Panama. All of these countries are poverty-stricken and a trip to an eye doctor is a luxury that 99% of them will never experience. The villages they go to are typically isolated from the world for the most part. They are places where people work harder than anyone should have to just to put food on the table, where there are no frills but much contentment, where access to things we take for granted – like running water – is a luxury residents will never see in their lifetime. Still, it doesn't seem to make much impact – few have any way out of their current state, and that seems to suit most of them just fine. The mission group typically includes three 3 doctors and 3 opticians – one of them Mary's sister, Marcy, who works in ShopKo's optical department – and a handful of other people with no professional optical skills but a willingness to help. People come from villages throughout the regions, many of them on horses or donkeys. Whole villages come at a time. One day a group of cowboys and cowgirls. Another day it'll be a group described as "round and happy." They all have a certain character. It takes many people a whole day to travel to the clinic, and a whole day to get back home. The makeshift clinics are set up in empty buildings and the news is spread throughout the region by word of mouth. Sometimes the first day is quiet – meaning 50 to 75 people are waiting in line – because in those countries they are promised many things that never happen. Once the word goes out that the doctors are really there, long lines are formed well before daybreak. Their patients have ranged from a 105-year-old man who got his first eye exam of his life to a 2-year-old girl with such bad cataracts that she was virtually blind. The elderly man went home happy with his Lions Club glasses and the little girl and her mother left heartbroken because there was nothing that could be done. Everyday there's a miracle and everyday there's a heartbreak. One of the group's favorite patients was a very elderly woman who was Haitian and obviously didn't know she was coming for an eye test, because one minute she was standing in line to be tested, and the next minute she was naked! It turned out she thought she was getting a mammogram and had slipped her dress off to be ready! After being tested at the eye charts, the patients have a close-up acuity check to determine whether they need bifocals. There is nothing quite so heartwarming than to find someone who needs bifocals and provide them. Because most elderly people can't read, they are tested in a unique way – they are given a needle and thread and they just sob when they can thread the needle thanks to their new glasses! Many times people with damaged or sightless eyes come to the clinic, not just those with bad vision. At the end of each day, numbers are tallied, and usually more than 150 people have been served. In a week's time, usually 1,000 people have received glasses. The children are almost always a joy to work with. And oh what problems they have – on TOP of everything else they deal with, they can't see! There was one boy this

year – 8-year-old Tony, dressed in his little Catholic School uniform – who was terribly cross-eyed. Turned out he had “accommodated exotopia.” The doctors put a pair of glasses on him and worked with him for a couple of hours, and by the time he left, he was reading. In addition to glasses, Mary brings hundreds of toothbrushes on the trip. When she learned that an entire family would share a toothbrush, she made it her mission to put a stop to that. Everyone who comes to the clinic gets one. When the mission group leaves those villages, they leave behind sheets, pillowcases, towels, washcloths, clothes, empty suitcases (that used to be filled with glasses), and anything else that might be valuable to the villagers. They know it’s all going to a good home. In summary, in 15 years, the eye care team has made a difference in the lives of not just the 16,000+ people served, but also in their own lives. The World Service Committee grant has played a significant role in the work, and the VOSH team wants you to know that Rotary has helped miracles happen for every single person who came to the clinics over the years.

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### 7 DAY NOTICE

The following individual has been proposed for membership in Rotary. She has passed all committees and unless an objection in writing is submitted to the secretary within 7 days, this member will be admitted to the Rotary Club of Appleton.

**Jennifer Thompson** of Neenah, WI 54956 has been proposed into membership by Dawn Nowakowski. She would enter under the classification of Healthcare – Independent and Assisted Living.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SAVE THE DATE:** Our annual Community Table Event will take place on **Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>** at Riverview Gardens. If you are interested in sponsoring or having your company sponsor please contact Meghan for more information.
  - Are you looking for a weekend getaway with kids or grandkids? How about a waterpark in Wisconsin Dells? **May 4-6** Tri-Con 2018 is coming to The Wilderness in Wisconsin Dells. This is a Rotary District Conference for Rotarians in District 6220, District 6250 and District 6270. All Rotarians from Wisconsin, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and eastern Minnesota, with their significant others and families, and other Rotarians and friends of Rotary are welcome. Register at <https://ridistrict6220.org/district-resources/district-conference-2018-registration-page.html>
  - SAS Committee is looking for volunteers on **Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>** to help cook and serve food at Homeless Connection. Please sign up at <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090445a5ab23a4f58-homeless1> if you are able to help!
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### GUESTS THIS WEEK

**Guests this week were** Jerry Wetter with Deborah Wetter, Kristin Ely-Bluemke with Ruth Ann Heeter, Barbar Weir, Dale Hulce, Erin Tyink, Jeff Buchta, Steve Dorosz, Kris Hietpas, Jamie Lohnis and Jeff Jirschele with Mary Harp-Jirschele

**There Were No Visiting Rotarians this week**

**There were No make ups this week**

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### TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 2018 – SIERRA LEONE PROJECT

Lawrence Prof. Dena Skran will report to the club on the successful completion of a new drinking water well at Comforti School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Along with Prof. Skran, Rotary members and Lawrence University Rotaract students will discuss the process of receiving matching grants from District and the Rotary Foundation, communicating with the community, contracting for the well, working with Freetown Rotarians and completing the grant requirements to bring clean drinking water to the school and its neighbors. Rotary International, Freetown Rotarians, District 6220 and the Appleton Downtown Rotary Club at work together!

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